

NR 16: Jyoti Ranjan Jena

The Messenger Sail – An art project protecting the biodiversity of Chilika- Lake, Odisha

The objective of this art project is to re-imagining the History of Chilika, its socio-cultural consequence and at the same time it will address ecological problems.

Concept

Chilika lagoon, situated on the east coast of India, is the second largest brackish water lagoon in the world, spreads over three districts Puri, Khurda and Ganjam of Orissa. It is the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian sub-continent.

Chilika lagoon provides highly productive eco-system to the livelihood of more than 15000 fishermen and provides valuable biodiversity hotspot to a wide range of species, including endangered species listed in *International Union for Conservation of Nature*. However, the lagoon environment has been under serious threat due to high anthropogenic pressure, especially after 1980's. The environmental deterioration caused the fishermen to get less profit and kept them poor as well as ruined its enriched eco-system rapidly.

When the economic condition of local villagers became worse, they tend to overexploit the natural resources for more profit. Due to dependency on erratic rainfed agriculture in and around Chilika lagoon, the farmer found it difficult to gain sufficient profit. Therefore, they began to expand their cattle-herds for financial security. As a result, it caused to over grazing in the catchment area of Chilika lagoon and then soil erosion to the lagoon. Besides, there had remained a large number lack of basic needs to be solved in the catchment area such as low sanitation, saline drinking water and poor health.

Therefore through this project I want to involve different community over there, like fisher man, different stakeholders and farmers, to spread message to save the lagoon environment. Involving them in this processes searched a unique indigenous art form called ***Ravan Chaya*** (a shadow puppetry dance). Taking advantage of the amusing and interesting characteristic of it, I'll utilize this folk theatre as a tool to represent chilika. Therefore I conceptualized a floating shadow theatre in the lake.

The project will reveal this extinct folk theatre (*Ravan Chhaya*) and utilize its folk values in contemporary manner. This theatre will be not only giving ecological messages but also I have visualized it as an interesting experiment accomplishing artistic needs. I hope this project will sensitise people to think about the safety of the lakes environment and also they will get an opportunity to re- imagine the magnificent maritime age, rich tradition and healthy lifestyle, which is gradually diminishing. After all it will be a wonderful exploration on the site of Chilika, meeting different people and communities and understanding their life style.

NR 17: Manasi Karthik**A project documenting the history of the adivasis in H.D Kotte district,
-Mysore**

In 1972 the Indian government passed the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA). The passing of this act has had profound effects on adivasi society. Ostensibly, the act was intended to conserve ecology and wildlife in protected areas. However, one of the many unfortunate consequences of this act was the displacement of the adivasi peoples of these forests. Historically, adivasi communities in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR) have relied on the forests they inhabited not only for livelihood, but also for their basic sustenance. Housing was often made of bamboo, food was gathered from the forest, and each community maintained specific ecological connections with the forest. To cite but a few examples: the word jenu of the community Jenu Kurumbas means honey, signifying the traditional occupation of this community as honey collectors, the Irulas are caretakers of snakes and reptiles, and the Betta Kurumbas are mahouts of Asian elephants. The cultural history of the adivasis is inseparable from the natural history of the NBR. As such, ecological concerns have existed in conflict with humanitarian rights when adivasis living in the forest were excommunicated under the pretext of conservation. H.D Kotte, Karnataka is one of the many localities in which adivasis were displaced as a consequence of the WPA. Adivasis here were forced out of forests and into resettlements (hadis) and this is now the second generation of adivasis living in these hadis. Traditionally, the concept of private property and land-ownership had not existed in these communities. As such, making claims to land was a challenging and uphill task for them. Further to this, the construction of the Banasura Sagar Dam resulted in the resettlement of still more communities. Widespread resistance and struggle occurred as a result of this displacement, however much of it has gone undocumented. With the help of Dr. Balasubramaniam of the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, adivasis in HD Kotte conducted protests and made claims to their rights. Now, almost two decades later some land and housing had been provided by way of resettlement. However, this is by no means adequate and many complications still arise as a result of the forced resettlement. Struggles such as these resulted in The Forest Rights Act (FRA), which was passed in 2006 as a response to the injustices brought about by the WPA. While the FRA does not return adivasis their right to live in the forests, it does recognize their right to collect what is termed as "Minor Forest Produce" (MFP) and "Non-Timber Forest Produce" (NTFP) (i.e honey, bamboo, etc). The Act has been a significant step towards regenerating adivasi culture and compensating for past injustice. However, there have been many shortcomings in its implementation. In the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu, the Adivasi Munetra Sangam (AMS) is doing pioneering work in the implementation of the FRA. Through the creation of 'Special Tribal Gram Sabhas' they have addressed the main problem of underrepresentation. These Special Tribal Gram Sabhas function as recognized governmental bodies, independent of any NGO. Furthermore, over one-third of the representations at these Gram Sabhas are adivasi women. The Sabhas are responsible for handling all claims that are filed. Along with Accord and The Shola Trust, the AMS has now taken up the task of mapping traditional forest boundaries and sacred groves in order to reclaim rights over these territories. Following this, they will be responsible for implementing community-based conservation programmes, wherein adivasi communities work with local NGOs to design and carry-out ecological and wildlife conservation.

Through community based conservation efforts, such as the one taking place in the Nilgiri district, there is an opportunity to resolve the tensions that have arisen following the WPA. Ecologists today argue that adivasi lifestyles and practices are not only harmless, but intrinsic to the proper management of the sensitive ecologies of the NBR. Such efforts to bring community and conservation together need to be highlighted in order to chart a path forward in the implementation of the FRA. The purpose of this project is to document the history of the adivasis in H.D Kotte district of Mysore and the contemporary reality of FRA in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu. We will do this by conducting a series of structured

interviews. We will interview activists of ACCORD and The Shola Trust, members of the Gram Sabhas and adivasi people who make use of forest produce. The interviews will, when possible, be recorded using audio and/or video recording equipment. We will also conduct participant observation by participating in the mapping of traditional forests. In doing so, we will attempt to situate this project at the intersection of academia and activism and use the lenses offered to us by ethnography and history. In H.D Kotte we will document oral histories in order to produce a narrative of the developments in the area over the last fifty years. We will be doing this in collaboration with the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) and Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM). Again, we will conduct structured interviews with Dr. Balasubramaniam (founder of SVYM) and unstructured interviews with ten adivasi leaders and capture oral histories through their individual biographies. We will be producing written documentation of all our findings, however we also want to create material that is accessible to everyone (most importantly the adivasis we will be working with). We will be collecting information through various media, primarily photographic and film in addition to written field notes. We are exploring many different possibilities for media documentation (photo journalism, short film, infographic, poetry). Further than documentation, we will also attempt to question what consequences these shifting relationships with land and forests have had and thereby shed light on some pressing issues adivasi society is facing as it comes into contact with the mainstream world.

NR 18: Sanyukta Sharma
Bungalow Ki Kandi Hygroscope project, Uttarakhand

Concept & Approach for Proposed Project

I have in mind a project to compare the influence of the different vegetation zones on the hygroscoy of their immediate environment. Study moisture content of the atmosphere and soil and the relationship with processes that are influenced by it. This is with a special focus on the oak forest, which is a source of many fresh water springs and rich flora and fauna. This study will engage both locals and outsiders, directly with the forests. For city dwellers the forest presents a 'Green Idyll' or a getaway of an ideal environment. Such a direct engagement can be an opportunity to understand the forest for its function as well as its idyll. For locals, it is a way to regenerate the knowledge of this landscape, passed down generations. We will create an art project to present to the community, nearby villages, Mussoorie town, and others. For Mussoorie town particularly to understand where their fresh water supply is drawn from and the processes behind it. There was a tentative plan of making a highway crossing the oak forest. This in my childhood shook me literally to tears. However, I feel through art one can engage in a positive way with changes and dare to imagine ideal scenarios of interactions between manmade structures and nature. I feel water vapor can be a key to unlocking this imagination. Understanding the exchange of atmosphere between all living and non-living surfaces. Understanding surfaces that breathe, and that don't (glass, plastic etc.) There needs to be a view of manmade objects as participating forms in the biosphere. All structures hold water, heat, houses life, and excrete back into the environment. Their interaction is not necessarily harmful or antagonistic to nature. Then what is actually the source of destruction? Perhaps the simplistic division of manmade and natural objects that keeps us thinking them as independent to one other and that one is necessarily harmful to the other. If we take the harm for granted, we do not give chance to possibilities of codependence. The project will inspire direct observation by participants, bringing us to the basic research methodology available to all human beings - observation and thought. The environment as heard, touched on skin, seen, as a kind of data gathered by our mind. Looking at this direct form of research is important at a time when we are naturally turning our observation away from immediate environment as our dependency on it becomes indirect. Also, we will gather information from the site, through conversations with local experts and through clues found within the landscape, of the characteristics of the different vegetational

environments. The individual impressions and gathered information will be aided with simple scientific experiments conducted to measure the soil and land water, as well as sound recordings of natural environment to gauge the density of fauna in the area.

NR 19: Shweta Bhattad

Project Gram Eco Sanitation – Paradsinga, Madhya Pradesh

My father is farmer and does farming in a village “Paradsinga” in M.P it is 59kms approx from Nagpur. I am connected to the village people and their lives and working with them from past sometime, there were certain issues in village which always bothered me a lot;

* It was about the conditions of women who were always the home violence victims due to alcohol addict husbands, poverty and their children who grow in such violent situations.

*The long evening time which village children spend sitting in groups watching all evening adult films, eating Gutka or liquor with no playground in village and also no recreational activities which made the life of young girls troublesome, unsafe and distrust as they could not leave homes because of such unhealthy atmosphere.

*The greater issue as the large number of villagers depends on farming for their bread and butter, and the ground water level is very low so only they depend on rainy season for sowing.

Eco Sanitations its structure, importance and usage:-

Paradsinga is a village with the population of 4thousand people and two thousand homes. At an average the whole village daily get 3lakh liters of tap water for daily activities, out of which 60% i.e. 1lakh 60thousand liter of water can be reused, which now with the help of nails flow to river or left open in land contaminating both soil and river. Villagers have ample of water but they are not aware of it, now for farmers the winter and summers they don't have any water for sowing as the village is on the rocky belt. We were thinking and talking about the eco sanitations, with villagers and Gram Panchayat, through which we can reuse the large water for farming.

This ecosan model is invented by Peter Morgan an economist, Shakti Bhatt is working on this model from past some years making changes and experimenting with it. He worked on a project in Rajasthan which he calls “oasis with grey water”, where with the use of waste water he successfully had grown corns on a barren land. Generally the corns grow 7-8 feet in height and one plant bear 3 corns, with the help of Grey water and human urine he had grown 10-11 feet corn plants bearing 5 healthy corns on each plant.

About Eco-San Model: This model is Indian sitting which has two outlets one for urine and another for solid waste. Human urine is considered as yellow gold and the right of the soil. The solid waste will be collected in one tank and urine in another. The solid will be processed and converted to manure and urine will be spread with water in fields. The waste water from daily activities like washing utensils, clothes and food can be stored and reused for farming. This will save contamination of soil, water and reuse and recycle of our naturally available resources. These tanks will be constructed decentralized near the farms, where the water can be pulled directly with the help of the machines for farming.

If the model is followed the village will soon be urea bank, as one liter human urine can produce 16 kg urea, market value of 50kg urea is 450/-rs, and water is invaluable... It will save a lot of economy of village with job opportunities to land less people who survive on labor from farms and farmers as well, providing them water in winter and summers too.

Awareness Program: Gram has adapted an agriculture land in village where with help of Shakti Bhatt we will make an ecosan model the construction will start from the second week of April 2014, where we invited farmers for community farming, the only thing they need to invest is time and trust. We're with the use of waste water and urine and dew drop farming technique we will grow some crops, This will be awareness and educational program for the farmers. Gram Panchayat is working on "Ghar Ghar Shauchaley" program i.e. toilet in every home, which will follow the eco san model which will be designed by Shakti Bhatt. There are such 300 toilets sanctioned for village, which can be calculated in large number of water and urea saving!

As it is always seen that toilets are made but due to unawareness villagers do not tend to use it, during the construction of toilets we will give the open call to central India artists to be part of the awareness program, where they will work with the village community inspiring them to use toilets. As in previous "Gram art project" we did and got very positive results. As the artists work with community they attract the eyes and sensibilities of children as well elderly people... They can reach mass... Through the open call we will invite artists whose concept for awareness fit the best. They can work on performances, dramas and paint the bathrooms.