

Annual Report 2002- 2003

Introduction to the Centre for Environment and Food Security

The Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS) was founded in April, 2001 by some eminent scholars, writers, environmentalists, scientists and activists like Prof. Ashis Nandy, Dr. Kamla Chowdhry, Dr. Pradipto Roy, Mr. Anupam Mishra, Prof. P. S. Ramakrishnan, Dr. T.N. Khoshoo, Mr. P.N.Singh and Mr. Parshuram Ray. The CEFS was founded with the broad objective of knowledge-based activism on the issues of poverty, hunger, food security, sustainable livelihoods, sustainable development and ecological security. Research, Advocacy and Campaign on these issues is the core mandate of this NGO based in New Delhi. Parshuram Ray is the Founder Director of CEFS.

In last two years , CEFS has been documenting and carrying out secondary research on the issues of hunger and poverty in tribal areas of India, globalization, agrarian distress and farmers' suicides and the challenge of sustainable development and sustainable livelihood.

The main aims and objectives of the Centre for Environment and Food Security include:

- To promote study and research on environment and food security to create awareness and knowledge among the people.
- To disseminate environment and food security knowledge among the people by conducting training programs and holding lectures, workshops and seminars.
- To implement and encourage all kinds of projects, plans and programs for promoting ecological balance and food security.
- To build a resource centre on environment, food security and sustainable livelihoods.
- To mobilize people and build a network of grassroot organizations, civil society groups, NGOs, activists and experts for promoting sustainable development and food security.

- To publish books, research papers, monographs and occasional papers on environment and food security related issues.
- To carry out intensive campaign with media for covering and highlighting the issues of environment and food security.
- To promote strategies for conservation of natural and human-managed biodiversity, which have implications for food and human security for all sections of the society, especially societies living close to nature and natural resources.

Introduction of CEFS Founders and Board Members

1. **Ashis Nandy** is presently Senior Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and Chairperson of the Committee for Cultural Choices and Global Futures, both in Delhi. He has been Director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (1992-1997); Woodrow Wilson Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Washington (1988); Charles Wallace Fellow, Department of Politics, University of Hull (Summer, 1990); Fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities, University of Edinburgh (Summer, 1991); UNESCO Professor, Centre for European Studies, University of Trier, Germany (Summer, 1994); and Regent's Fellow, University of California, Los Angeles. Trained as a sociologist and clinical psychologist, Nandy's research interests are political psychology, cultures of knowledge, utopias and visions, popular culture, and futures. Among Nandy's books are *Alternative Sciences* (1980,1995); *At the Edge of Psychology* (1980); *The Intimate Enemy* (1983); *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias* (1987); *The Tao of Cricket* (1989); *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* (1994); and *The Savage Freud and Other Essays in Possible and Retrievable Selves* (1995). He is also co-author of *The Blinded Eye* (1993) also published as *Barbaric Others*, and *Creating a Nationality* (1995). Nandy has edited two books, (ed), *Science, Hegemony and Violence* (1988); and *The Secret Politics of our Desires*; and co-edited *The Multiverse of Democracy* (1996). Oxford University Press is now bringing out an omnibus edition of all his works. Nandy's works have been translated into a number of languages, among them Bengali, Chinese, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Malayalam, Marathi, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Tamil. He has also

contributed to major human rights reports on ethnic and communal violence and democratic elections.

2. **Dr. Prodipto Roy** has an M.Sc and Ph.D. in Rural Sociology with a minor in Agricultural Economics from the Pennsylvania State University, USA and a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the Agricultural Institute of Allahabad University. He started his professional career as an Assistant Professor of sociology, Washington State University, (1957-61); Director (Sociology) National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad (1961-68); Director and Executive Chairperson, Council for Social Development, New Delhi(1968-1979); Visiting Professor, Tribhuvan University(1979-81) and then Sociologist, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu (1984-89). Important Assignments: UN Centre for Regional Development, Nagoya, Japan 1974; ILO Bangladesh 1975; UN Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia(1981); IBRD Consultant (1982-83); Australian AID project on R & R of project affected people due to Coal-mining, Jharkhand, 1994-98; appraisal of a Tree-growing programme, Palamu, Jharkhand (1998-2000). Publications: *Manual for Block Level Planning* NIRD, Hyderabad, Macmillan, Delhi, 1977 with BR Patil; *Planning with People: Decentralization in Nepal*, with Sant B Gurung, Orient Longmans, New Delhi 1987; *Third World Surveys: Survey Research Methods in Developing Nations*, New Delhi, Macmillan 1976; *Ecological Responsibility in Social Change*, Vol 31 Nos 1 & 2, 2001.

3. **Prof. P.S. Ramakrishnan**, Professor Emeritus of Ecology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, is an internationally recognized ecologist working in the interphase areas of linking ecological processes with social processes, directed towards sustainable livelihood/development of traditional societies. For his work, involving over 350 research publications and 8 books in this area of study, he has received a variety of national and international recognitions. He is currently involved in networking with a large number of scientists through many national and international programmes.

4. **Dr. T.N. Khoshoo**, was (expired in July 2002) one of the foremost environmental scientists of the country. His environmental canvas widened considerably when he was secretary to the govt. of India in the dept. of Environment. He was fellow of all the major science academies in country, and had to his credit a number of prestigious medals, prizes and awards including the Padma Bhushan, Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskar, Government of India (1993) and Sasakawa Award of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-2002).

5. **Dr. Kamla Chowdhary**, currently heading the Vikram Sarabhai Foundation, is former Chairperson of the National Wastelands Development Board, Govt. of India, former Director of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, former Chairperson of the Central for Science and Environment. She was faculty at Harvard University and has worked with the World Bank and Ford Foundation too.

6. **Shri Anupam Mishra**, currently General Secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, is a distinguished social and environmental activist of India . Mishra's contribution in popularizing and reinventing the role of traditional Water Harvesting Practices of India has earned him a special name in the country. He is author of the celebrated book on traditional tanks of India titled *Aaj Bhi Khare Hai Talab (Tanks are still alive)* which has been translated in many languages and the print - run of the original Hindi version is a record 75,000 copies till now.

Programmes implemented during 2002-2003

1 Dossier on Hunger and Food Security in India

In 2002-2003, CEFS carried out comprehensive documentation and secondary research on the issue of food security in India. On the basis of this documentation and secondary research, we decided to compile a dossier on hunger and Food Security in the country. This dossier contains startling facts, revealing figures, stunning instances, shocking stories and enlightening analyses on the state of hunger and food insecurity in India. This dossier is essentially a compilation of published research papers, articles and reports related to various dimensions and processes responsible for dehumanizing starvation deaths and soul-killing deprivation prevalent in large parts of rural India. This dossier includes important and instructive published articles and writings of social activists, academics, food security experts, journalists and social scientists like Jean Dreze, Colin Gonsalves, Utsa Patnaik, Videh Upadhyay, P V Rajagopal, Srilata Swaminathan, V Radhika, Dr Ganesh Devy, Shiraz Bulsara and Priyadrshini Sreenivasa etc.

2 Documentation and Research on Hunger in Jharkhand

During 2002-2003, CEFS carried out a random field survey on hunger in tribal areas of Jharkhand, mainly in the districts of Palamau, Bokaro and Ranchi .We decided to conduct this preliminary survey because three starvation deaths were reported from Kusumatand village of Manatu Panchayat in May 2002.

Kusumatand is a hamlet of about 75 houses on the outskirts of Manatu panchayat. A majority of the village residents are Bhuiyas, others are mainly Muslims and Adivasis (Cheros). They are all landless. Most of them survive from seasonal labour migration, for example, to Rohtak district in Haryana where they earn 3 kg to 4 kg of grain a day for harvesting, transplanting and related tasks. This is supplemented with small earnings from self-cultivation, collection of tendu leaves, and whatever casual labour

they find in the area. Local employment opportunities being extremely limited, most households in Kusumatand face serious survival problems during the lean months.

We found that the entire hamlet was on the verge of starvation. Most people survived on small quantities of khudi (broken rice), supplemented with whatever wild food may be available in the season, such as mahua, chakora (a local saag) or gethi (a root). At the time of our visit, the mahua season was coming to an end and many people were eating lumps of plain chakora. Some of them had nothing else to eat. The state of hunger in Kusumtand was shocking.