

## Elephant and Landscape Foundation

*Elephant and Landscape Foundation is India based (New Delhi) and recently announced :*

The decades of the 20th century – particularly those that followed the First World War – witnessed mind-boggling and unprecedented advancement in the field of science and technology. Not only was Nature forced to yield many of its 'secrets, but humanity became increasingly familiar with many laws of nature and increasingly concerned with using or ignoring these laws in the quest for immediate gains. It appeared as though we were willing to persuade ourselves that God had created man to lord over the universe, and that nature was Gods largesse to humanity to exploit without let, hindrance or end.

Nowhere was the impact of this new found power and new found mindset more evident than in the attempts to increase ones power over means of production and destruction, and means of dominating the minds and lives of other human beings. New knowledge was used to invent and augment weapons of destruction and machines and methods of production. Power and profit became the motive and the justification for ones assault on nature. This led to the use of new chemicals and minerals and processes, the quest for and control of new sources of power and the limitless multiplication and diversification of production to seek profit through pandering the desire for multiplicity of goods of consumption, production – including the production of weapons of destruction or consumer goods – depended on the resources of nature, and the 20th century therefore saw an unprecedented, profligate, mindless assault on nature – forests that were the storehouses of minerals, mines, timber, sources of energy including hydro-electricity, and so forth. The thoughtless assault on forests and waters in all zones of the world – led to the depletion of irreplaceable natural resources – deforestation and defoliation, destruction of bio-diversity, pressure on the lives and habitats and survival of forest dwellers – human beings – aboriginal tribes – as well as animals.

Nearly a century of such relentless and systematic assaults on forests and natural resources has now brought humanity and the planet itself to a serious crisis: severe threats to biodiversity, threats to sources of water and pure air that sustain all life. The habitats of animals have shrunk; the inroads made by human habitation, industrial and mining projects, hydro-electric schemes, timber felling, the quest for trophies or "aphrodisiacs" etc; have led to long term prospects of extinction and short term prospects of constant confrontation, poaching, mutual hostility and aggression, and so on. The effects of these are evident in the lives, habitats, habits etc. of forest dwellers as well as wild animals – like the tiger, the elephant and so forth, posing problems of prevention of extinction; preservation; preservation of habitats, grazing, transit routes, hostile interaction with human beings or animals in the periphery of habitats and so on.

These problems have become acute the world over, and can be solved only by appropriate governmental policies, appropriate changes in the mindsets and motivations and

approaches of human beings, societies in the peripheral regions, measures for rehabilitation, preservation, conservation etc. A massive movement has become necessary to influence governments, influence inter-governmental cooperation, influence international non governmental organisations, voluntary organisations of forest people, etc. to collect valuable data, to correct practices that are adding to the problems of endangered species, and work out steps of support at various levels. The Indian sub continent is home to innumerable forest tribes, bio species, big and small animals, birds, all forms of life, and efforts will therefore have to be made without further loss of time to save, preserve, and enrich the lives of the existent species in our continent. It is as an effort to undertake work in this direction, that this Foundation is being set up.

### **The objectives of the Foundation will be:**

1. To study and survey the reasons for diverse dangers that the Asiatic elephant is facing, the threats to its survival and the strength of its species; its shrinking habitat in the Rajaji National Park and its surroundings area and to conduct similar studies in other national parks and forests in the Indian sub-continent and elsewhere.
2. To collect basic data regarding grazing and breeding habits, habitats and grazing and transit routes, food and water-resources, co-existence and interaction with other species in its habitat and proximate regions and routes; the interaction with human beings and human habitations in forest or tribal groups or peripheral residential and agricultural colonies; population structure; food sources; water sources; habitat; seasonal migration patterns.
3. To establish a concrete plan of conservation activities for villagers living in the edge of the forest and the creation of conditions for non-aggressive coexistence.
4. To foster understanding and positive sentiments and goodwill towards wild elephants.  
To create awareness among the local people in the surrounding villages and educate them.
5. To create a working plan to reduce the adverse impact arising from confrontations with animals or in human habitations.
6. To create awareness among people including children and students, about the importance of biodiversity, environment, and water resources and about inevitable interdependence and interaction, and to carry out such programmes that will protect the environment, biodiversity and water resources, and human habitations.
7. Bring about participatory preservation from all social entities, including government, NGO's, the forest department and national and international government and non-government agencies.

8. To involve people living inside the forest and the surrounding villages in carrying out such programmes.
9. Act as a pressure group on the state and the central government to bring about necessary changes in policy that would help to save the elephant and its habitat.
10. To collect and exchange information and other relevant research material with national and international agencies, at both the micro and macro levels.
11. To bring naturalists, and like minded environment friendly people to a common forum for creating awareness, and disseminating information through meetings, conferences, exhibitions, workshops etc.
12. To work with the forest departments on specific and continuing projects, provide voluntary support towards census and other forms of surveys and studies.
13. To publish status reports, and results of study and research on various aspects relating to the above, including research papers, tracts, books and audio- visual materials. To set up research and awareness centres at or near various national parks providing help in research work, and also to enlighten the tourist on the ways of the jungle.
14. To undertake any projects or activities that may be incidental and germane to or necessary for the prosecution of the above objectives.

#### The Board of Trustees

**M. S. Apparao** (Chairman): Well known freedom fighter, and educationist. He has taken special interest in public affairs, policy formulation; environment, wild life, especially in South India, photography, sports (including tennis at the national level):member of governing bodies of many educational institutions and organizations.

**Harshawardhan Varma** (Managing Trustee): Is a Film Maker and an environmentalist. As a film maker, he has worked on social, cultural, art and environmental issues. His films have been selected for screening at festivals. He has been producer and consultant with various television networks, and has also anchored documentaries. He lives at the foothills of the Himalayas near Dehradun.

**E.R.C. Davidar**: Is noted naturalist active in the field of conservation in the Nilgiri hills area, and elsewhere. He has been a member of various conservation organizations. He has written guide books on wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation. Also Member Emeritus (Honorary Consultant) species survival service Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)

**Rajendra Singh**: founded the Tarun Bharat Sangh in Rajasthan, and is an expert in traditional water resource management techniques. He recently won the Magsayasay Award for his contributions in this field. He has also won the Esso Honour for Tiger Conservation and has been felicitated by the Ministry of Rural Development for his efforts in greening the arid areas in Alwar, Rajasthan.

**M.V. Rajasekharan, M.P.:** from Karnataka, is the Founder and Director of the Asian Institute for Rural Development. He has held many positions of responsibility in organizations associated with FAO, UNESCO, Canadian Aid, and Consultant and Adviser to Development Innovation and Networks (IRED), Geneva, Switzerland for India and South Asia. He was formerly Chairman of the Indian branch of the World Assembly of Youth.

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