

Structural Adjustment vs Environment

Miloon Kothari

Ashish Kothari

More than a year and a half after the adoption of the new economic policies and the structural adjustment programme, there has been almost no serious analysis of their implications on the living environment of our citizens. While it is no doubt difficult to predict their impact with accuracy because of the complex interplay of various economic, social, political and ecological factors, it is possible to make some assessment based on past developmental trends in India and the experiences of other third world countries under similar programmes.

THE last couple of years have seen drastic changes in India's economic policies. The thrust towards socialism and egalitarianism which has characterised planning in the last four and a half decades (though not very successfully), has been all but given up, and moves made to usher in full-scale capitalism, domestic and global. Also gone is the emphasis towards self-sufficiency (somewhat more successful), displaced by an increasing dependence on agencies like the IMF and the World Bank, and international capital of other kinds.

Under the New Economic Policies (NEP), drastic 'stabilisation' and 'structural adjustment' programmes are being put into effect in an effort to meet India's severe balance of payments crisis, and to propel its economy into quicker growth and global integration. Apart from direct fiscal policies, the major components of the new package include boosting exports to earn foreign exchange, liberalising industrial production, dropping barriers to the entry of foreign companies and goods, expanding privatisation and cutting government spending. Some of these are a part of the IMF-World Bank-led structural adjustment programme (SAP), a set prescription which these multilateral agencies have forced onto dozens of third world countries.

The drastic nature of the NEP package has understandably set off considerable debate on issues of economic management and national sovereignty.¹ But the debate has only marginally, and in a very general way, touched the vital question of how the new economic policies will affect the environmental and living conditions of our citizens. It is surprising that a year and a half after the adoption of the new policies, there has been almost no serious analysis of their implications on the living environment of our citizens.²

The natural environment has so far been looked at by conventional economists and development advocates, whose vision is the driving force behind the NEP, as either or both of two things; an exploitable resource, and a sink into which the effluents of affluence can be thrown. This view ignores the fact that for the vast majority of Indians, the natural environment forms the very basis of their subsistence economy. Forests, land, and waterbodies directly meet their food, water, housing, energy, medical, and

cultural needs. When these resources are targeted by development planners for commercial use, or for appropriation by a small elite in the name of some unspecified 'national interest', it is the lives and livelihoods of these people which are threatened. In adopting the NEP, has our government been mindful of this?

It seems not. It is, of course, difficult to predict the impact with accuracy, for the interplay of various economic, social, political and ecological factors is complex, and there are pulls and counter-pulls of all kinds within Indian society, including among its decision-makers. But important lessons can be drawn from the experiences of other third world countries which have come under similar SAP regimes, and some analysis can be attempted by juxtaposing past developmental trends in India with the new policies. The overwhelming impression we are left with is that the NEP could lead to an acceleration in the already deteriorating environmental situation, and consequently further marginalisation and alienation of communities that are already living in economically and ecologically vulnerable conditions. This includes the landless and the marginal farmers, the tribals and the so-called OBCs, and amongst these groups particularly the women and children.

FOREX, THE NEW GOD

Take, for instance, export-orientation. With foreign exchange (forex) as the new god, the government will be keen on earning it any which way, regardless of the environmental consequences. This of course is not a new phenomenon; export of iron ore from Goa has devastated its once-lush forests, granite mining for export to Japan has laid bare hills in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, processing units for India's fourth largest export earner, leather, have polluted water over vast stretches in Tamil Nadu and along the Ganga. Yet these are only precursors of what could come if the SAP aim of converting India into an export-led growth economy is fulfilled. What this could entail is a further and rapid transformation of staple food and subsistence crop lands into cash cropping, intensification of commercial fisheries in marine and freshwater areas, increase in mining for raw mineral exports and so on. The accelera-

tion of this trend is already evident. In a bid to "tap the country's vast marine resources on a priority basis", the government recently cleared eleven 100 per cent export-oriented deep sea fishing ventures in the private sector, with foreign collaboration (*Economic Times*, Delhi, May 30, 1992). Indian companies are also quickly cashing in: the powerful house of Tatas has moved the Orissa state government to clear a large-scale shrimp farming project adjoining one of India's most valuable brackish wetlands, the Chilika Lake. The proposed project is aimed at exports primarily to Japan, and the language used in a glossy brochure aimed at quelling rising environmental and local opposition is revealing: "Several countries are enriching their national exchequers through aquaculture. The opportunities for India to net this 'new-wealth' are limitless!"

It has been argued that export-oriented development in itself is not destructive. The export value of a product/resource could theoretically be an argument for its conservation. Experience from India and other countries, however, strongly suggests otherwise. When the predominant motive for change in an economy becomes short-run profit-seeking and foreign exchange earning, the neglect of long-term environmental and social responsibility grows. Cash cropping in many parts of India has already led to severe problems of water overuse and pollution, fertiliser and pesticide-based contamination and land degradation. Large-scale commercialised fishing has led to destruction of aquatic and coastal ecosystems, and the marginalisation of traditional fisherfolk. If export-orientation could indeed be made more environment- and people-friendly, there is nothing in the current SAP package which could make it so.

Recently, an agri-business consortium has been proposed by the government, ostensibly to help small and marginal farmers, which is to give a boost to commercialising Indian agriculture to cater to expanding consumerist markets, both locally and abroad. M S Swaminathan, chief architect of the Green Revolution in India, praised this proposal, stating that this 'second Green Revolution' would shift the present emphasis on meeting minimum needs to tapping the full commercial potential of agriculture. Suddenly it seems that meeting minimum needs (like

food and water) is no longer important, so long as money (especially forex) can be generated.

The experience of Latin American countries is indicative. Under SAP policies, the Costa Rican government has since 1985 encouraged beef exports, clearing thousands of hectares of forests for conversion into ranches. The burgeoning cattle population has overgrazed the land, increasing topsoil erosion and killing the country's only coral reef due to silt deposition. Under IMF recommendations, the government reduced credit to subsistence farmers, replaced indigenously grown basic grains with imports from the United States, and subsidised cash crops (strawberries, melons and ornamental flowers) for export to the US market. The resultant ecological damage has been accompanied by a rapid growth of poverty, and increasing income disparity.⁴ As an analyst commented, "real minimum wages have declined and the rich-poor gap has become a chasm. According to Otton Solis, a former minister of economic planning, "the wealthiest 10 per cent of the population used to enjoy an average income 16 times greater than the bottom 10 per cent; now, it is 31 times higher"."⁵

In Guatemala, export-orientation has led to the replacement of the staple crop maize by cash crops such as cardamom and macadamia, produced to meet the demands of the international market. Ironically, maize has now to be imported! SAP-led policies have also led to excessive commercial timber logging at a time when the Mayan people have been forbidden to cut even a single tree for their daily subsistence.⁶

Similarly, over a large part of the African continent, SAP policies of export-orientation have aggravated ecological degradation through excessive cropping, overgrazing, soil erosion, and deforestation. For example, Zimbabwe was till recently hailed as one of the few 'successes' in Africa, with an efficient public distribution system and self-sufficiency in foodgrains. Not any more. In the current drought year, the country is facing critical famine conditions. Part of this is a direct consequence of the IMF-influenced forex chase, which forced the government to sell off one year's stock of foodgrains, depress the price of the staple crop maize, and encourage farmers to switch to cash cropping. As an analyst has recently remarked "In Zimbabwe, there has been strong criticism of the running down of the country's large maize stockpiles in recent years. World Bank officials agree some strategic stocks are necessary, but argue that carrying stocks sufficient to deal with drought does not make economic sense. 'A country needs financial reserves, not large grain reserves', one Bank official comments."⁷

Exports are one way of earning forex—tourism is another. The last few months have witnessed an aggressive new thrust

to tourism promotion. Many areas previously restricted to foreigners—Ladakh and Lahaul-Spiti, the Andaman Islands and others which had so far been saved from hordes of insensitive and uncaring tourists, have been thrown open. And it is not only India's image which is being sold. Recently the government announced its intentions to lease out entire islands in Lakshadweep, India's famous coral island union territory, to international hoteliers for developing as tourist resorts.

LIBERALISATION VS ENVIRONMENT

The other major component of SAP is the liberalisation of the economy. Unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles definitely need to be removed, but the tendency seems to be to throw the baby out with the bathwater. In no country in the world has industry on its own shown social and environmental responsibility; there has always been a need for appropriate regulations. Such regulations are in grave danger now. The first hint of this has come in the strong opposition to a proposed central government notification of January 1992, which would make environmental clearances for major industries and development projects mandatory.

Such a notification is long overdue, to control the haphazard and often politically motivated siting and planning of development projects in India, with severe social and environmental impacts. Not surprisingly, the strongest objections to this move came from chief ministers of several states, industrial houses, and export conglomerations, all of whom argued that such a notification would create barriers to the new-found industrial 'freedom'. To his credit, the prime minister defended the notification in a meeting of India's National Development Council, but has not yet, over 11 months after it was proposed, okayed its final gazetting.

Indeed, in the new 'liberalised' (read: free-for-all) atmosphere, the environment departments in all states and at the centre are going to become everyone's punching bag, and will find it harder and harder to enforce their regulations. In Gujarat, several private sector industries have been cleared adjacent to a Marine National Park, despite objections from wildlife officials.

Yet another example of the destructive potential of the new 'liberal' era is the strong revival of the proposal for a 'Free Port' in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Scientists and ecologists have justifiably identified these tropical islands, with their incredible wealth of rainforests, coral reefs, and marine waters, as one of the world's most important genetic storehouses. By their very nature, these islands are also extremely fragile, their ecosystems easily disrupted and leading to a chain of consequences which have repeatedly rebound on human settlers themselves. In addition, the islands are home to some of

India's most ancient tribes, two of whom have already been reduced to near extinction by the activities of outsiders. It is sheer common sense that a Free Port here would be folly of the highest order, especially when the greed for foreign exchange is threatening a tourist boom in the islands. The proposal had been dropped for the last couple of years, following strong protests from various quarters. Yet, in a recent meeting of the Island Development Authority, chaired by the prime minister, the proposal has been revived, and a group reportedly asked to look into its feasibility.

PRIVATISATION AND FOREIGN INVESTMENTS: HOW WISE?

Accompanying liberalisation is an emphasis on privatisation. Resources which are considered for the common good and are under public control may increasingly come under private corporate control. This sector has shown scant respect for the environment, let alone for the needs of the poor.⁸ Particularly severe will be the adoption of 'user charges' on essential services such as drinking water, sanitation and medical care, regardless of whether people can afford to pay. Such a measure has been recommended by the World Bank for years, ostensibly to increase the economic viability of social services by adopting the principle of 'cost recovery'. For families that are burdened with these charges, it becomes increasingly difficult to meet other basic needs.⁹

Yet another thrust of the SAP is the opening up of the country to foreign investment and goods. A limited amount of competition from abroad in specific sectors may do our own industrial sector some good. However, the environmental consequences of what is proposed may offset the gains. An extreme, but not uncommon, form of this mindset is evident in by now infamous internal memo circulated by World Bank's chief economist Lawrence Summer. He suggested that the Bank should be "encouraging more migration of dirty industries to the less developed countries", where concern for the economic and social costs of pollution are less than in developed countries!

The transfer of hazardous industries and commodities, as has already happened in Africa, becomes much more possible with the new open-door policies. So does, on the other hand, the transfer and growth of pollution control and 'clean' technologies. But if trends in other countries are an indicator, this positive prospect may be far outweighed by negative ones. Our government is currently wooing Japan's giant corporations, many of whom have a horrendous environmental record. These multinationals have caused the decimation of rainforests in south-east Asia, and the consequent dispossession and displacement of entire tribal and poor peasants communities. Prime minister Rao's recent

visit to Japan with a begging bowl, and the talk of a 'mini-Japan' being established to provide special privileges to Japanese investors residing in India are chilling indicators of things to come.

At the current juncture in our country, the government will have to continue to play an important role in harmonising developmental and environmental interests. This was recently reiterated by the prime minister. But will the NEP allow this? It is here that the IMF-World Bank insistence on increasing government efficiency by cutting spending is of particular concern. Though these agencies do not necessarily specify which sectors to make budgetary cuts in, countries under SAP conditionalities invariably end up chopping allocations for those social or 'soft' sectors which cannot show immediate tangible returns. The last three budgets (since 1989) have seen mild to severe cuts, or no appreciable rise in allocations, in a number of social sectors: education, health, developmental and employment-generating expenditure, and environment.

Indian finance minister Manmohan Singh's 1992-93 budget is particularly harsh in this respect. While some of the cuts may be justified on account of under-utilisation in the previous year, the severity of the cuts indicates another logic at work. Allocations for the prevention and control of pollution have been cut (*in real terms*) by 35.5 per cent at a time when the policies outlined above are likely to increase the pollution problem. Rural sanitation programmes have suffered a cut of 46.8 per cent, and the rural water supply project of the Water Mission has been sheared of 39.3 per cent of its budget. In a situation in which lakhs of children and adults die or are afflicted every year by water-related diseases, this cut is extraordinarily callous. Other programmes which have suffered are wastelands development (down by 23.5 per cent) and promotion of non-conventional energy sources (cut by 26.3 per cent). But the heaviest reduction (61 per cent) is in the biomass development programme. This cut, coupled with increasing privatisation of common property resources displays total insensitivity towards the 30 crore people (40 per cent of our population) whose very existence is tied to the health and availability of biomass fuels and fodder.

These spending cuts are already having their impacts on the rural poor. Several voluntary organisations working in the drought-hit areas of Rajasthan have reported intensified distress as allocation of foodgrains under the public distribution system (PDS) has been severely curtailed.¹⁰ Cuts in the water supply and biomass development programmes may undermine long-term anti-drought measures. Further desertification could result where the government reduces investments in conserving or regreening, while the rural poor have no option but to overuse the meagre natural resources left to them.

Experiences from several sub-Saharan African countries under SAP indicate the clear co-relation between SAP policies and intensified desertification.

The health impacts of the NEP are particularly worrying. Reductions in investment towards improving civic infrastructure, particularly water supply and sanitation, have resulted in sudden outbreaks of cholera in several Latin American countries. The IMF, in the case of Peru, was directly held responsible. In mid-1991, Hiroshi Nakajima, director-general of the World Health Organisation stated that: "The economic adjustment programme dictated by the IMF is responsible for the increasing cholera epidemic in Peru... without doubt, in order to comply with payments claimed by the IMF, Peru now finds itself in a position that it cannot allocate more resources to fight the cholera epidemic".¹¹

Many communities in India live in perilous conditions where epidemics of water-borne diseases (cholera, diarrhoea, typhoid and hepatitis) already occur without warning. Witness the death of over 1,500 (officially 600) people in the cholera epidemic in Delhi in 1988.¹² Poor communities all over India are in urgent need of health and housing infrastructural inputs to reduce the incidence of such outbreaks. Instead, the government is reducing allocations, which will result in even more severely debilitating and life-threatening conditions.

In its eagerness to maintain a 'honourable' record of repayments so that even more money can be borrowed from the IMF, the Philippines' government has diverted money from primary health care, drinking water schemes, employment generation, housing and nutrition. The results are horrific on women and children, as has been repeatedly pointed out by UNICEF and the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) and other Filipino NGOs. One child is reported to die every hour from the diversion of resources for debt servicing. This particularly telling example exposes the hollowness of the claims that SAPs are only short-term measures and do not involve any severe hardships in the long run. As Richard Jolly of UNICEF says, "If you miss the opportunity when a child is one, five or even ten years old, to provide the basic nutrition, early education, and a secure loving home, the consequences will show when that child is an adult. I fear that we will see these consequences and have to deal with them 20, 30, 40 years from now." It is, of course, another matter that today's planners will not be around then.

Finance minister Manmohan Singh in a recent lecture on 'Environment and the New Economic Policies',¹³ correctly stated that environment is 'here and now' for the majority of India's people. Unfortunately, his severe budget cuts do not reflect any concern for this 'here and now'. According to the minister, such cuts are

only temporary, and greater allocations will be possible once the economy stabilises. Such logic is not only small compensation to a drought-hit Rajasthan struggling for survival 'here and now', but also exposes the insensitivity of a minister sold to the neo-classical world-view of economics. Nor do the experiences of other nations, trapped in the SAP tunnel, inspire confidence that there is an escape from the debt trap even in the long run, so long as the development model is not fundamentally changed. Examples are available from around the world that indicate the increasing inability of governments, who indulge in SAPs, to grapple with the devastation caused by natural and human-made disasters.¹⁴

Spending cuts and other measures also entail a massive laying off of workers, about which much has been said. An estimate by the ILO and UNDP states that by 1992-93 between 4 and 8 million people will become unemployed. Many of these people, who are currently employed in rural development programmes, are likely to either migrate to cities, adding to the environmental and social and environmental stress already faced there. Those who are already in the cities are unlikely to leave, but will probably be forced to live in environmentally degraded slum settlements. If they do go back to rural areas, they will probably end up further degrading the environment by being forced to cash in on common lands or moving into marginal, ecologically sensitive zones. Certainly SAP appears not to provide any alternative employment for them.

Indeed, an often overlooked consequence of SAP is the large-scale displacement resulting from the dispossession of people and communities. The rise in unemployment, changes in modes of agricultural production particularly affecting small farmers, intensified extraction of natural resources to fuel foreign trade, favouritism to the urban or commercialised sector to the detriment of rural development, the acceleration of five star tourism and so forth could all lead to displacement.

The case of the maize farmers in rural Mexico is a telling illustration of this process. The fall in the support price of maize (on IMF recommendation) and the attendant fall in real wages, the flooding of the domestic market with foreign grains, and the official favouritism towards export crops all contributed to a deepening recession in rural Mexico, forcing many maize farmers to migrate. The plight of the Mexican peasants and the existence of a viable rural economy are now in serious doubt. As has been pointed out "Small and medium-size national companies are being rapidly eliminated by competition from transnational companies; foreign dependence will increase as imports of technology and materials increase; and foreign capital will exercise greater control and influence on the types of produc-

tion in the primary sector and on the patterns of consumption, with repercussions on the diet and nutrition of the majority of people in both urban and rural areas. . . . Transnational corporations are today involved in the production of 90 per cent of processed foods and 84 per cent of animal feeds. . . . and the law has been changed to permit foreign capital 100 per cent ownership of certain non-strategic branches of Mexican industry."¹⁵

In the Philippines, policies resulting from debt servicing (to the tune of \$6 million a day!) have displaced hundreds of thousands of people from their productive lives and driven them into huge squatter settlements that surround the cities. In Brazil, the conversion of agricultural lands into export-oriented cash cropping (soybean, etc) has displaced thousands of small peasants, who have been forced to clear the Amazon rainforests to eke out a perilous living.

The irrefutable evidence of environmental damage from a majority of SAP affected countries should have cautioned our government to proceed only after a thorough understanding of the likely consequences in India. Yet, *there was no environmental or social impact assessment of these policies by either the government or the funding agencies.* Indeed, it is unlikely that the ministry of environment and forests and other relevant ministries were even consulted.

Keeping in mind the adverse impact that SAPs have had on living conditions all over the world, it is shocking that the IMF has not even bothered to conduct social and environmental impact studies of the SAP that it recommends. As has been pointed out "the IMF has taken no effective measures to protect the poorest sectors of society or the environment. . . . Since poverty and vulnerability are an integral part of the crisis, any adjustment programme that does not seek to reverse this from worsening is wholly inadequate. . . . Currently, unlike the World Bank, the IMF does not conduct studies of environmental and social consequences of its action. This is partly the result of the absence of qualified personnel on the IMF staff in the areas of natural resource, development, poverty and related subjects, as well as the lack of contact with the affected populations."¹⁶

SAP VS DEMOCRATIC AND HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the worst aspects of the NEP is the thoroughly undemocratic process in which it has been adapted. There was no prior public debate, no attempt by the government to explain its consequences. In his June 17 lecture Manmohan Singh said that a debate should take place now. This is like throwing open the stable door to let the horse out (or rather, to let the multinationals in!), then asking everyone to debate whether the doors should have been opened or not!

For those who question these policies, democratic space is being further squeezed. Thousands of workers were arrested in pre-emptive moves all over the country, before their June 16 strike protesting the new economic policies. So keen is the government to appease its donors that peaceful demonstrations organised by grassroots movements against the NEP have been often brutally dealt with.¹⁷

In the face of such opposition, which is mild compared to the food-riots and indeed the toppling of governments that have occurred in other countries, the IMF's stand remains tragically irresponsible and bereft of the lessons of history. In September 1991, the IMF told the United Nations that "programmes supported by the Fund are the programmes of the countries themselves. Indeed, they cannot succeed unless they have the full support of the population, including those whose full economic, social and cultural rights may be infringed upon."¹⁸ If full support is the criteria for success, then SAP is bound to fail in India, since our government has neither sought nor received the support of the majority of its citizens on this issue.

The immense loss of social and human capabilities that accompany the adverse environmental impacts of the NEP is a violation not only of constitutional rights of India's citizens, but also of numerous rights recognised in international legal instruments which India has ratified. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The latter in its Article 11(1) places the obligation upon States Parties to recognise "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions". The ICESCR in Article 12(b) also recognises that "The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realisation of this right shall include those necessary for. . . . The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene".¹⁹

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recently noted in a legal interpretation of Article 11(1) that "external factors can affect the right to a continuous improvement of living conditions, and that in many States Parties overall living conditions declined in the 1980s. . . . It would thus appear to the committee that a general decline in living and housing conditions, directly attributable to policy and legislative decisions by States Parties, and in the absence of accompanying compensatory measures, would be inconsistent with the obligations found in the Covenant (the ICESCR)."²⁰

All this is not to say that the pre-NEP days were ideal from an environmental and social justice viewpoint. There is no denying that structural transformation of our society and economy is required. But

such a transformation must tackle the patently unequal control over natural resources (especially land and water) which allows the minority elite to race towards a luxurious 21st century, at the cost of further dispossessing the poor of whatever little they have. This transformation must also redirect the present model of development, which is socially iniquitous and ecologically unsustainable. The NEP shows no potential for this, but rather reinforces the *status quo*.

Alternatives to the IMF-World Bank led policies have been put forward by regional groupings and popular movements throughout the world. One such effort that carries universal lessons is the African Alternative Framework (AAF) to SAP co-ordinated by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. Rooted in the cultural traditions of African societies, its "fundamental ethos is the intrinsic sanctity and dignity of the human person, the collective spirit in social endeavours and mutual support under reciprocity". The African Alternative seeks a Global People's Coalition and a spirit of global solidarity because the mission it is promoting is "a mission for all democratic forces the world over". The AAF "in addition to stressing the need for democratisation and effective popular participation, human-centred development has a clear environmental obligation to maintain sustainable ecological balance between people and nature". As further stated "The traumatic experience of the 1980s has demonstrated abundantly that it is easy enough to reel off statistics of increasing GNP, GDP, savings, capital stock, exports, etc, while human misery, starvation, unemployment, mortality rates, diseases, literacy and environmental degradation worsen".²¹

Within India too, the true alternative to the economic crisis lies in getting away from both an over-centralised system, which has been the case since independence, and an excessively privatised one, which is looming on the horizon. Community management of resources needs to be revived, with a clear set of rights and obligations for local communities, governmental agencies, and voluntary organisations. Nor is this an empty slogan; if sustainable development is the goal of economic policies, then there is much to learn from the many genuine people's and governmental developmental efforts that are scattered throughout India. The watershed and land management experiments of Ralegan Siddhi (Maharashtra) and Sukhomajri (Uttar Pradesh), involving villagers with the help of some enlightened individuals who had their feet firmly on the ground, have turned food- and cash-deficit villages into surplus economies.²² Ralegan Siddhi is in fact quite an eye-opener, for it is in one of India's most drought-prone areas (an average rainfall of 400 mm), and has achieved adequate water supplies for drinking and agricul-

ture through rainwater harvesting, without the help of a costly, debt-incurring big dam.²³ These experiments have also ensured a greater degree of equity in the distribution of the resultant benefits than has been possible in most government programmes. Such equity has been the hallmark of another unique effort, the water management and distribution system of Pani Panchayat in villages of Pune district of Maharashtra. Then there are the dozens of efforts at switching to organic farming, either through traditional methods of new ones, reducing or eliminating completely the need for expensive, ecologically disastrous, and fossil-fuel guzzling chemical fertilisers and pesticides.²⁴ Gloria Land in Pondicherry, Narayan Reddy's farm in Karnataka, Bhaskar Save and P D Baphna's orchards at Bordi (Maharashtra), and myriad others come to mind, yet remain neglected by the dominant agricultural establishment. As for governance, there is a lot to learn from the tribal village of Seed (Rajasthan), which is managed by a gram sabha (village council) having the legal and executive power to decide all matters relating to local land and natural resource use, under the Rajasthan Gramdan Act of 1971.²⁵ Stringent rules regarding the use of common lands ensure their conservation and sustainable use. But in many places, local community structures have broken down; they will need to be revived, and collaborative management strategies between them and the government 'thought of to complement each others' strengths. There are, for instance, the joint forest management systems evolved in many parts of India, between villages and forest departments,²⁶ which are proving to be successful not only in afforesting degraded lands but also in providing employment and economic security to impoverished village communities.

The ideas and models are there, the solutions staring at us in the face, if only we care to look. The danger is that the new policies may wipe out these genuinely sustainable alternatives even before we have learnt from them.

Notes

[Help in the preparation of this article was received from Arun Kumar and Manisha Marwaha, and comments on an earlier draft from Shekhar Singh. Our thanks to them.]

1 See, for instance, *India and the IMF Loan: Sold for a Few Dollars More!* by Indian People's Front, New Delhi, September 1991, revised and reprinted in June 1992. Also see 'Economists, Trade Unionists, Social Scientists, Mediapersons, and Social Activists Appeal to Members of Parliament on the New Economic Policy: Its Implications and Alternatives' by Working Group on Alternative Strategies, August 18, 1992, New Delhi.

2 Exceptions include *Sapping India—Sapping the Indian People: The Impact of the IMF*

Structural Adjustment Package on Housing and Living Conditions in India, by National Campaign for Housing Rights, Bombay, July 1992; and *Seminar* No 395, issue on 'Real Concerns: Sectors Neglected by India's New Economic Policy', in particular the articles by Mira Shiva (health), Miloon Kothari (living conditions), and Lawrence Surendra (environment), New Delhi, July 1992.

3 *Breeding New Wealth for the Nation: Chilika Aquatic Farms*. This glossy booklet bears no name of a publisher, but has obviously been produced and distributed by the Tata industrial house.

4 *Recolonisation or Liberation—The Bonds of Structural Adjustment and Struggles for Emancipation*, Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, Canada, 1990.

5 See 'Sapped—Structural Adjustment Puts Third World in Jeopardy' by Bob Carty, *Journal of World Council of Churches*, October 1991.

6 Oral statement by International Federation of Human Rights, to the United Nations Sub-commission on Human Rights. UN Document No E/CN4/Sub2/1992/SR25, August 25, 1992.

7 'Drought Dims Hope of Faster Recovery', Roy Laishley, *Africa Recovery*, Vol 6, No 2, 1992.

8 For an analysis of the take over of common property resources by the corporate sector (and by the state, acting on behalf of the corporate sector and elite consumers), and the consequent ecological and social impacts, see *This Fissured Land*, by Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992.

9 See *The Poor Die Young: Housing and Health in Third World Cities*, by G Hardoy, Cairncross and D Satterthwaite, Earthscan, 1990. Also see, 'Social Policy-Making: Restructuring, Targeting Efficiency' by G Cornia in *Adjustment with a Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth*, UNICEF, Oxford, 1987.

10 'Report of the Meeting on the Management of Drought Distress in New Economic Scenario 1991-92, May 16, 1992, Udaipur, Rajasthan', Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, 1992.

11 Press statement by Hiroshi Nakajima, Director-General of WHO, as reported in *Third World Resurgence*, No 10, Malaysia, 1991.

12 *Crime Goes Unpunished: A Report on the Cholera Epidemic*, Nagrik Mahamari Janch Samiti, New Delhi, October 1988.

13 'Environment and the New Economic Policies', Manmohan Singh, Foundation Day Lecture, Society for the Promotion of Wastelands Development, June 17, 1992.

14 For a particularly telling example, see 'Repudiate the Unjust International Economic Order in the Philippines and Elsewhere' by the International League for the Rights and the Liberation of Peoples, oral statement delivered to the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights, August 1991.

15 *Economic Restructuring and Rural Subsistence in Mexico: Maize and the Crisis of the 1980s*, Cynthia Hewitt de Alcantara, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Discussion Paper 31, January 1992.

16 *Funding Ecological and Social Destruction: The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund*, Bank Information Centre, Washington DC, 1990.

17 A rally of tribal movements, held in March 1992 in Delhi to protest against IMF and World Bank interference in India, was stop-

ped 3 km short of the Bank office, and told it could go no further. Unprovoked roughing up, and arrests followed. Such 'long-distance' protection is not given even to the prime minister of India! A similar peaceful rally outside the five-star hotel where World Bank president Lewis Preston was staying, in November 1992, was broken up by a vicious lathi-charge, followed by arrests and beating up not only of activists but also of two journalists.

18 Written submission by the IMF to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, September 9, 1991, UN document no E/CN4/Sub2/1991/63.

19 For full texts of this and other human rights instruments see *Human Rights—A Compilation of International Instruments*, United Nations, New York, 1988.

20 General Comment No 4. 'The Right to Adequate Housing', adopted during the Committee's Sixth Session, November-December 1991, UN document no E/1992/23, E/C12/1991/4.

21 'A Critique of Structural Adjustment Programmes and a Proposal for an African Alternative', Bade Onimode, *Third World Economics*, No 33, Third World Network, Malaysia, 1992. See also *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation* by AAF-SAP, Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1989.

22 *Towards Green Villages*, Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, 1990.

23 *From Poverty to Plenty: The Story of Ralegan Siddhi*, Ganesh and Vasudha Pangare, INTACH Studies in Ecology and Sustainable Development 5, New Delhi, 1992.

24 *Ecological Visions: Exploring Alternatives for Co-Evolution*, Classic Books and Service Centre (DRCSC), Calcutta.

25 *Towards Green Villages*, op cit.

26 See, for instance, a description of the joint forest management experiment in West Bengal in *Joint Management of Forest Lands: Experiences from South Asia* by Mark Poffenberger, Ford Foundation, New Delhi, 1990; and *Joint Forest Management Regulations Update* by the Society for the Promotion of Wastelands Development, New Delhi, 1992.

ATTENTION

Scholars/Readers

For your requirement of Rare, Out-of-Print and New Books and government publications on India, write to or visit:-

Prabhu Book Service

Sadar Bazar,
Gurgaon, Haryana 122 001
India

Tel: on STD 01272-20588,
From Delhi 83-20588

We are also interested in purchasing single books/individual collections/whole libraries of antique/rare books. Books signed by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Tagore and other nationalist leaders are of special interest.