



Hope  
Hope

## Don't Want A Polynium Bomb

Found here, there and everywhere  
red, yellow, green and blue  
do you need some more clues?  
Yes ! It is polythene  
Which makes our city unclean.  
Known to be non-biodegradable  
And the mess created is incredible  
It gets stuck in the gutter  
Chokes mother earth.

Polybags even kill cattle  
Like warriors dying without a battle.  
Polybags when spread over a mile  
Make the whole land infertile  
When burnt they give out poisonous  
gasses  
Which may prove fatal for the  
masses.  
This the current threat  
Which is making environmentalists  
fret  
Measures are being taken to ban  
polythene  
And spread awareness  
about the alternatives  
With the help of parents and  
teachers  
Let's pledge and say No to polythene  
And help to keep  
our mother earth green.

## Sitting pretty on waste!

India is fast degenerating into the world's biggest slum, thanks to inefficient waste management. Our attitude to waste management reveals our culture and civilisation. Considering the sheer volume of material resources consumed in modern societies, the corresponding amounts of waste generated defies an estimate. Given the absence of a proper recycling infrastructure, irresponsible littering of plastic wastes are the bane of modern societies. It goes two ways. In India our cultural upbringing leaves us expecting someone else to pick up what we discard. On their part the municipal authorities fail to fulfil their obligations in disposing off wastes efficiently.

Banning use of plastic bags cannot be the solution in India. Banning anything in India will never be effective because our bureaucracy does not have the nerve and energy to implement any law. The Babus will tell you in a very bemused tone and stunned look instead that NGOs and activists should educate the masses against abuse of plastics. So it is futile legislating against the use of plastics. Instead, a price deterrent will serve the purpose more effectively. In many European countries now, a small tax is levied against the plastic bags and the money so collected is used for recycling plastics through the state infrastructure. In Germany one has to buy a plastic carry bag. But in India people actually quarrel with traders if they do not get their free plastic bags. Awareness makes the big difference and NGOs and the media must play a significant role no doubt; but these institutions do not have the power to penalise offenders. The power is vested only in the state and, inevitably, the State is the patriarch of modern societies and has to pick up the chores where civic responsibility ends.

**NAGAR PANCHAYAT KHAJURAHO was amongst the first to foresee the threat of polythene bags and first to implement a ban on it**

## **Our Khajuraho**

The development of Khajuraho, as it is in present, began in late 1960's. Originally, planned to be a Tourist paradise, Khajuraho has fallen drastically short of its intended goal.....so much that this small township of amazingly beautiful temples looks formidably inhospitable even to its local inhabitants. The credit, above all, goes to its adverse climatic conditions rendering Khajuraho unworthy of visit for almost half of the year

It fills local inhabitant's hearts with pride whenever Khajuraho hits news headlines. But not so when its for being declared the hottest place in the entire state of Madhya Pradesh i.e. Central India – as the studies conducted by Meteorological Department in the year 2002 reveals. After a chilly winter, watching mercury soar is not a pleasure at Khajuraho where it is doomed to go almost as high as 50<sup>0</sup> C and destined to hang on above 40<sup>0</sup> C for pretty long.

This tourist destination of irresistible beauty and haunting charm has lost its claim of “paradise” to an unconventional opponent – unseen yet formidable – *its deteriorating environment !!!* this fight is still on.....and khajuraho's populace still holds the loosing end. The sides won't change until people's mentality and approach does.

The distress signals of environmental threat are coming.....and coming since ages. Much is already lost but a lot still remains to be safeguarded.

**Distress signals....  
threats towards  
Khajuraho.....**

### **SOIL POLLUTION**

The economy of Khajuraho is based entirely on two factors – Agriculture & Tourism. Both these human activities in their own way are responsible towards deteriorating soil conditions.

Khajuraho's soil is not known to be very fertile. Apart from its mixed variety and rocky character, the PH factor too is high rendering it better suited to citrus fruits such as Amla. The scanty rainfall also plays vital role in low productivity. But human role too cannot be overlooked. As is the situation in most other parts of the country, despite a huge number of livestock and therefore readily available organic manure, farmers in the vicinity are more inclined towards chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This is seriously affecting the quality of soil and making the crops and lands poisonous.

Land pollution in the urbanized area of Khajuraho can be ascribed to tourism and the growing population. Apart from its 15000 inhabitants, Khajuraho has a floating population of roughly 4 lac tourists per year. The garbage and litter produced by them is thrown in the open. There are 5 five-star hotels at Khajuraho but none is equipped with recycling, waste or water treatment plant. Worse still, most of these hotels are disposing off their waste and sewage in open grounds ! The lifestyle and eating habits of tourists includes use of tinned food and disposable items which further aggravates the situation. As per a recent survey, over 20% of the open land of Khajuraho is occupied by litter, waste and polythene based garbage.

Prior to the Polythene Management Programme started by **Global Village Development Foundation Khajuraho** since May 2002, approximately 6000 polythene bags were used daily and then thrown in the open. This accounts for a massive heap of waste weighing 60 tons per year ! Following the imposition of ban on use of polythene bags and the regular monitoring of market, situation has dramatically improved. But there are still miles to go.

### **INCREASING AIR POLLUTION**

The World Heritage Temples of Khajuraho are its lifeline.....almost the sole bearers of the local economy. But the heavenly beauty of the art and architecture of these temples is suffering due to increasing air pollution.

Though Khajuraho has no polluting industry in its immediate vicinity. But the increasing population and tourist inflow supplemented by heavily increased vehicular traffic is causing emission of noxious gases such as Carbon-mono-oxide, Carbon-di-oxide, Sulphur, Lead etc.

Vehicles such as diesel driven auto and tempos are very well identified polluting carriers. Yet their number is swelling on the roads in lieu of any governmental policy and resolution to contain and minimize air pollution in the region. As a result it is harming all – the environment, the public health and the temples on which depends the survival of the people of Khajuraho.

INCREASING CONCRETE  
JUNGLE.....DEPLETING THE GREEN  
ONE !

This factor has dual implications. While the increasing habitation is contributing a lot towards depletion of green cover, this factor is also acting independently. The result is – once known to be a densely thick forest, Khajuraho, today, is reduced to a dry rocky plateau with minimal greenery. The closest of the forest-covers that remains are :

- ~ Panna National Park, towards east of Khajuraho at 20 kms;
- ~ Ken Ghariyal Sanctuary, towards north-east at 17 kms.

The land around Khajuraho has been cleared for agricultural and other miscellaneous purposes and the remaining of its greenery too is being rooted off under increasing pressure of growing urbanization and vested human interests.

While deforestation is a regular process, *the afforestation programmes* (\*) undertaken so far have not been taken seriously either. The subsequent result is utter failure in safeguarding and restoring greenery at Khajuraho. Day by day, with increasing habitation, the pressures against the local ecological factors and the greenery of Khajuraho are further mounting....

**Are we civic at all ?**

- \* How many of us refuse to accept plastic bags which are so generously offered in all shopping complexes in India?
- \* How many of us take baskets and bags from home to do our shopping ?
- \* Worse, how many of us separate plastics from organic wastes ?
- \* How many of us voice our preference, if at all, to paper bags and recycled bags?

**Priorities in India** regarding waste management :

- 1 Separation of wastes and collection of separated wastes efficiently. The door to door collection, which is the correct way of handling things, is still a futile exercise, because despite separation of wastes at source all the wastes are still dumped together in the truck. It renders the whole exercise of separation of wastes futile.
- 2 The municipal authorities must collect organic wastes in the mornings, recyclables and plastics in the afternoons and hazardous wastes in the evening every single day of the year for atleast 3 years.
- 3 It is necessary to allot shift work for the municipal staff to accomplish this task.
- 4 Creating proper infrastructure to collect separated wastes.
- 5 Creating proper infrastructure to collect recyclables.
- 6 Creation of an Agenda Transfer Bureau to oversee the transition into a plastic free society.
- 7 Creation of appropriate infrastructure to treat hazardous wastes scientifically
- 8 Identify land for dumping of: Organic wastes Establishment of recycling infrastructure Creation of infrastructure to treat hazardous wastes
- 9 Using effectively, economic tools like selling plastic carry bags to shoppers.
- 10 Introducing very heavy taxation to the manufacturers of plastics to discourage manufacture of single use **plastic packaging ware**
- 11 Standardisation of packaging ware is so urgently called for. Banning thin plastics is a short sighted measure. 12 Immediately enforce a ban on plastic packaging wares and enforce it strictly till such time that packaging is standardised to conform to international standards of recycling.
- 13 Take up the task of collecting the littered packaging ware because the private/unorganised sector of recycling is utterly irresponsible and refuses to take up tasks which are not cost effective. Thin plastics of less than 20 microns have to be recycled at cost of the government as a price to pay for lack of a policy on plastics. The government can then levy a cess on plastics to recover this cost. Besides levying a cess to recover

this expenditure, the government must ban free supply of plastic carry bags and introduce drastically, (to shock consumers) buying of plastic carry bags. Money speaks a language every Indian understands. Use and abuse of plastic carry bags and the nuisance of littered packaging ware of less than 20 microns will stop just as drastically.

*Around 600 BC, the Greek philosopher Thales came to the conclusion that everything consisted of water. In our modern era, we will soon be able to say that everything consists of plastic. We are NOT against plastic. Use it sensibly. 3 R's of sensible use **Recycle it, Reuse it, Reduce it.***

## STATE OF KHAJURAHO

- \* Approximately 6000 polythene bags of sub-standard are used and disposed off in the open everyday, weighing roughly 60 tons per year.
- \* Over 20% of open land area and the major part of the landscape of Khajuraho is covered by polythene based garbage.
- \* As per an estimate, around 450 cattles in and around Khajuraho die of consumption of polythene.
- \* The few limited drains in Khajuraho in lieu of a complete drainage system are plagued with blockages due to polythene bags and waste rendering them useless.

For limited circulation only

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## Biodegradable plastic: Alternatives exist

*A recent discovery that may alter the character of plastic trade*

The Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI) has indigenously developed a strong and flexible starch based biodegradable plastic, which is going to be introduced in the Indian market in near future. These new polymers have many important end uses in surgical implants, agricultural mulches and controlled release formulations of pharmaceutical drugs and agro-chemicals. They are not only environmentally friendly but can be made cheaply from the abundantly available starch. Starch is a renewable resource, biodegradable and an ideal low-cost replacement for expensive petrochemical based non-biodegradable polymers. According to the research, synthetic polymers that are filled, grafted or blended with starch, either in native form or modified, have the potential to impact biodegradability to the fabricated plastic goods which will consequently prevent these products from adding to the environmental pollution.

## Need of the hour - *The green dot*

Standardisation of packaging wares is the need of the hour. "The green dot construes it adheres to packaging standards in Europe. In the Americas the symbol please recycle is used. In Africa not much is wasted while in Asia, a study conducted by the World Bank estimates that urban wastes amount to 76,00,000 tonnes today and it is estimated that by 2025 urban Asia alone will generate about 1.8 million tonnes per day and will spend around \$ 47 billion on solid waste management."

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