

INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION AFFECTING BIODIVERSITY OF BHIMBETKA WORLD HERITAGE SITE!



■ By Tara Chettur

THE rich biodiversity of rock terrain area of Bhimbetka world heritage site which were one of the chief reasons for attracting early man to make their abode is under gradual declination. Now a days even to spot the regular rocky terrain bird species like larks one has to struggle. The world heritage site is located at about 45 km south east of Bhopal on the road to Hoshangabad. The site is known for rock shelters of Palaeolithic period. Dr Subash C Pandey, Environmentalist, claims that the Mandideep Industrial area is hardly 10-15 km from this world heritage site, the impact on flora and fauna is inevitable but there is no comprehensive environmental study undertaken yet to study the impact. As per the guidelines of Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) all ecosensitive areas must be developed 25 km away from the industrial set up

and world heritage sites come sunder eco sensitive area which needs to be given special attention. Shomy Gupta, bird lover, says occasionally lesser golden back wood pecker are seen in the premises, the number of birds visible have been reduced to larks. For reduction in number of beehives, changes in floral morphology could be reason. This has also affected the sighting of green bee eater. Suraj Singh, one of the locals deployed in site, says that there are total seven guards to look after and whenever the wild animals like bear and leopard are seen forest guards are called. The paintings of rock shelter at number 8 are exclusive, earlier Indian fruit bats were seen in good number in these areas but not now. Syed Akhthar Hussain, 75, historian who also claims to done research on Bhimbetka says that exclusive varieties of spiders, snakes, honeybees, bats, were available in the rock terrain some 15 years back as well. The wild bear, jack-

als, tigers and leopards from nearby Ratapani Sanctuary were also common sighting. The entire food chain ecosystem was available in the region. Untimely rains in March affected the ecology of rocky terrain food and nest sites for insectivorous birds. Pandey has also filed petition challenging the compilation of environmental norms and regulations by Mandideep Industrial Area at National Green Tribunal. As per the petition more than 375 companies in the region are violating environment norms. Green panel has also directed the State Government to inform about installation of continuous monitoring system for monitoring ambient air quality at Mandideep Industrial Area (MIA) which is discharging effluents to Betwa river. But the environment assessment study to look at the impact on biodiversity is a subject which no department is ready to undertake. The Archaeology Department has made their point of view clear that it

would be vague to co relate effects industrial pollution on world heritage site unless study is being done. Narayan Vyas, Retd Superintendent Archaeologist from Archaeological Survey of India says that the impact on the structure can be studied only after detail analysis of sampling of rock shelters. Like the work carried out for Taj Mahal conservation; the technical method can only be a solution to understand the impact on rock paints and rock shelters. However for environmental impact on Biodiversity a detail study can bring in some aspects about the problem. Earlier, Green panel had also ordered the State that to not to lease grant for establishment of any further industries until the master plan is finalised. Experts says that any development of city plan should be done after environment assessment of that area as effect on single species of food chain brings in entropy in entire ecosystem.

A local employee pointing to reduction in bee hive sightings in one of the shelters.



Untimely rains in March affected the ecology of rocky terrain

Lesser golden back Woodpecker spotted in rock shelter



WELFARE SCHEMES FOR WOMEN, HUGE BUDGET FAIL TO TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES

- In State, more than 10,000 women live in misery, begging to feed their family
- Women Empowerment Department not doing anything
- Under the Nirbhaya project, shelter homes yet to be approved by the Government of India

■ By Arun Kumar

THERE are number of welfare schemes to improve the lives of women. The Government of India and State Government spends crores of rupees for welfare schemes. The State and Central Government offices, especially those are supposed to be made to implement the welfare schemes for women, are these days engaged in finalising many programmes on International Women's Day on March 8. Even, the State Government has made a separate department as Women Empowerment exclusively to run welfare schemes

about two years ago. But still the condition of women has not changed. They may be seen begging to eke out living of their family but the Government does not make any scheme of projects to such women so that they might leave begging and live a respectable life. According to sources, there are about 10,000 such women in Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Ujjain and about all the districts who are forced to live on footpath and begging. Not only Women Empowerment Department, but there is also one more Government department as

Social Justice Department, but it has also failed to do justice with hapless women. It has also many schemes but only on papers. The Government sanctioned crores of rupees budget but the officers do ever think to improve the living condition of those women and girls who are far from the benefit of the welfare schemes started for them. The women and girls at all age groups might be seen begging the whole day in front of temples, at market places, bus stands, near the railway stations etc. Every year, both the Women Empowerment and Social Justice departments celebrate International Women's Day by organising various programmes, inviting top ranking women in all the fields art and culture, business, sports, politics and social works, they deliver lengthy speeches in the AC rooms. Govt of India did not sanction shelter homes: It is learnt that the Government of India was to sanction shelter homes for the



Office of Women's Empowerment Department.

state but it has not yet done so under the Nirbhaya project to provide protection to the women. The State Women's Empowerment Department is still waiting. The aim of the shelter homes under Nirbhaya was to give shelter to hapless and helpless women, making all arrangements of their lodging and

boarding and make them self-dependent. The little girls at all age groups picking waste: Those little girls who should have in schools are may be seen picking waste door to door. The school education department, that claims of ensuring registration of every child in school, might does not count



Beggars near a temple.

them or do not consider them to educate under the Sarva Saksharta Abhiyan. When contacted, Kalpana Shrivastava, Commissioner, Women Empowerment, said some shelter homes' scheme for women in the state is yet to be approved by the Government of India under its Nirbhaya project.

The work of improving status of those women and girls begging before temples or in market is under the Social Justice Department, she said. The Social Justice Department officers said they have no such scheme to improve living conditions of women begging before temples or elsewhere.