THE BALANCE OF NATURE

In the 1960's, in an attempt to eradicate malaria, the WHO embarked on a major campaign to rid the tropics of the mosquitoes that carry the disease. Borneo was to be one of the regions cleared and a massive spraying campaign was initiated throughout the worst affected areas. The chosen pesticide was DDT, a highly toxic and cancer causing chemical since banned in most western countries but still widely used in the third world.

Initially the programme was successful and the mosquito population fell dramatically. But it was not only mosquitoes that died. Numerous other species were poisoned by DDT, among them a minute wasp that preyed upon caterpillars living in the thatch of local houses. With the wasp gone, the caterpillars increased in number to plague proportions, devouring the roofs of houses and causing them to collapse. Nevertheless the spraying programme continued. The dead mosquitoes were eaten by gecko lizards which as they became sick, proved easy prey for the local cats. As a result, the cats accumulated large quantities of DDT, passed on from insect to lizard to cat. The cats began to die in thousands and local population of rats exploded. The rats not only ate local crops but brought an ever greater menace— bubonic plague. In desperation, the Borneo Government even thought of cats to be parachuted into the worst affected regions.

Today the mosquitoes have returned to the sprayed areas and malaria is still rife. Many pesticides are now ineffective, the mosquitoes have developed resistance to them. But, as in the other parts of the world, the spraying goes on unaltered. And the subtle balance of nature continues to be disrupted.

The same things might have happened recently in Surat of Gujarat. Not only in Surat but everywhere around us where people use pesticides. The "Mandari" issue in Kerala, mosquito eradication programme of Corporations and many more from our surroundings.....

The balance of nature is the foundation of life on earth. The balance flow to the "pockets" by pesticide companies influences decision making without any concern for well being. If you believe in justice and survival of life on earth, speak out.

Nature Club Council

P.B No. 815, Kaudiar, Thiruvananthapuram - 695003. Tel: 0471-311896.