



# COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

JOURNAL OF BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

INDIA

NO  
GOAT-SACRIFICE  
AT UDBUR

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# Beauty Without Cruelty



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Beauty Without Cruelty  
is a way of life  
which causes no creature  
of land, sea or air,  
terror, torture or death.

### Beauty Without Cruelty, India

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## MEAT AND LEATHER

### TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Goat meat or mutton, despite its poor quality, is the most popular meat in India. 95% of raising goats and sheep continues to be on traditional lines. These animals are owned by landless farmers who migrate from place to place with their herds which feed off mainly wasteland grass, also garbage. 60% of the animals, numbering over 16 million — one-third of which are kids, die due to untreated diseases and the remaining 40% are slaughtered for their meat and skins. Ailing animals or those below optimum weight and age are sold in the market to middlemen for slaughter and are subjected to the same cruelties as other slaughter animals. Lambs and young goats are also slaughtered for meat. Goat hair and the fleece of sheep is used by the wool industry; and goats' horns are commonly utilised for making buttons.

Sensing financial reward in raising goats intensively, more than one company has decided to turn the unorganised shepherd-centred activity into an industrial-scale business. We request readers not to invest in the so-called lucrative goat livestock ventures. Without sufficient patronage such projects will not be taken up or flourish.

The Central Institute for Research on Goats has organised seminars for making this 'poor man's cow' into 'rich man's *kamdhenu*' in spite of the mortality rate in farms being almost double than what it is in free-grazing conditions. Under new technology plans, training will be imparted for higher productivity, crossbreeds and broiler goats (like broiler chickens) will be created, and eventually goat producers' co-operatives will be established. If we do not protest now, 'goatery' in our country will follow in the footsteps of poultry and we will see the setting up of a National Goat Development Board.

The Nimbakar Agricultural Research Institute, Phaltan in Maharashtra, has imported South African Boer goats with whose semen Indian goats are artificially inseminated. The result is a creature with a goat's head and a cow's body — the aim being to 'grow' more meat.

Those who care do not eat meat, nor use leather. Footwear is the most common application for leather. It is also the only use of leather that is often defined as a need by vegetarians. The average leather footwear utilises several animals' skins: tough cattle hide for the sole, thinner and differently tanned and processed calf leather for the upper, still thinner goat skin for the inside lining and machine pressed leather fining made into a leather board for giving appropriate strength and flexibility placed in between the outer and inner soles.

Leather, hide and skin are also used in garments, belts, gloves, handbags, wallets, purses, watch and other straps, linings, trimmings. Most of it is from slaughtered cows and bulls although 20% of the world's goat skin is from India. About eighteen square feet of leather is obtained from an average sized cow or bull in India. For example, a leather jacket would be made from approximately ten square feet representing 55% hide of a single cow or bull and if also lined with leather, the skin of two medium-sized goats; and a leather briefcase from five and a half square feet representing 30% hide of a single cow or bull together with the entire skin of approximately three small goats used for the inside lining and the compartments.

If ever you are tempted to eat meat or use leather, remember Dr Albert Schweitzer's words:

*"I am life, which wills to live, in the midst of life, which wills to live".*



## BEHIND THE SCENES at Beauty Without Cruelty

Shefali Shah

**R**esearch work at **Beauty Without Cruelty** is a continuous process, but unfortunately somewhat frustrating. For the past three years we have been sending out to manufacturers our twelve-page **Beauty Without Cruelty** Product Research Questionnaire listing possible animal ingredients in foods and beverages, cosmetics and toilet preparations, accessories, household and office items and other consumer products. Tremendous follow up has been necessary in almost each and every case.

We 'pass' a product as vegan or vegetarian only after we have thoroughly checked on each and every ingredient (however minute its quantity may be) that has gone into its making. This is far from easy. We need to continuously refer to various books like *The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954* and *The Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940*, science and chemical dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other reference books. The task becomes more difficult as in most cases we get scant cooperation from the manufacturers even after as many as three to four reminders via fax and telephone. (We have learnt not to get surprised when we receive half-filled and unsigned forms even from reputed companies!)

We feel the reason for their indifference may be because they are ignorant about such details, or may be they mistakenly feel they are disclosing their 'trade secrets' or they simply do not care enough about the vegetarian ethic as their products sell well and they do not require any 'extra' publicity to market them.

There are certain companies who have a policy of not filling up questionnaires because we feel they are well aware that their products

do not conform to our specifications, or may be only one or two would, in which case they would be indirectly letting us know that the others are non-vegetarian. Vegetarians may be prepared to forgo using their items, but nevertheless, their non-compliance does affect our research to a certain extent like in the case of the Hindustan Lever group because they are the suppliers of many ingredients like glycerine, commonly utilised in other companies' consumer products which as a result cannot be passed by **BWC** because the origin is not disclosed.

A major difficulty has been that of explaining to companies that each and every substance can **only** have one of three origins: animal, mineral or vegetable. Therefore, chemicals made 'synthetically' in the laboratory must have one of these origins. For this reason, **Beauty Without Cruelty** has had to approach countless suppliers in order to find out the composition of the ingredients supplied by them to particular manufacturers. Response from them is usually forthcoming only after a reminder or two from the manufacturers. Sometimes such inquiries have necessitated **Beauty Without Cruelty** having to contact these suppliers' suppliers. Unless the manufacturer, who filled our questionnaire pressurises the supplier to reply, the matter remains unsolved. Many such 'pending' questionnaires are in our files.

Readers may be interested to know about commonly used but so-called hidden animal ingredients in certain products :

*Glycerol mono stearate*, **GMS**, goes into items like ice-creams, jellies, breads, biscuits, instant mixes and many more products. **GMS** may be directly added as an emulsifier or stabiliser to these items or else it may be an ingredient which has gone into 'harmless' substances



like guar gums. On the face of it, guar gum would be thought of as a vegetarian ingredient for the simple reason that it is made from guar seeds (cluster beans) but on probing into its manufacture, we found out that in certain gums GMS is added. This GMS is made using glycerine, which most of us are aware, can very well be of animal origin. So that could make the guar gum a non-vegetarian ingredient and consequently the consumer's food product non-vegetarian in content. Obviously therefore, we cannot recommend any product containing it in our forthcoming book *A Vegetarian Lifestyle*.

*Calcium glycerophosphate* can be found in many mouthwashes. An ingredient used in the making of this substance is called *alpha-monochlorohydrin* which in turn utilises glycerine for its manufacture. In other words, mouthwashes containing *calcium glycerophosphate* could very well be non-vegetarian. No vegetarian would like to put an animal origin substance in his mouth, even though it may be present indirectly and in a minute quantity. The brand name of such a mouthwash would not feature in our book.

The Food Act states that one of the standards *Vanaspati* (hydrogenated, refined, edible vegetable oil) should conform to is that 'it shall contain no less than 25 micro of synthetic Vitamin A per gram at the time of packing'.

This makes it compulsory for every *Vanaspati* manufacturer to add Vitamin A. The word 'synthetic' does not ensure it being animal-free. *Vanaspati* manufacturers buy Vitamin A coupled with Vitamin D from pharmaceutical companies. Both Vitamin A and D are usually derived from animal sources like fish liver oil. However, this fact gets hidden from public knowledge as the suppliers merely state it is produced 'synthetically' or 'chemically' in their labs. So we now know how 'safe' it is for vegetarians to consume *Vanaspati*!

These examples are cited to give our readers an idea about the research done for our book *A Vegetarian Lifestyle*. We are trying our level best to make it a very comprehensive guide for all those who wish to practise vegetarianism.

We advise our vegetarian readers to be very cautious and think twice before putting any processed food item into their mouths, lest it turn out to be against their ethics thanks to the loopholes and discrepancies of our Food Act. Unless we, the consumers, make the manufacturers realise that they can no longer include animal ingredients and additives to 'vegetarian' products, the situation will not change. It is up to each one of us to individually write to the manufacturers - remember, each and every drop goes to make an ocean.

#### Form IV (See Rule 8)

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Dated 1st March, 1998

sd/- Diana Ratnagar  
Signature of Publisher



# Ostrich Farming — PLUCKED NAKED

R K Ravindra

This advertisement, which the prevailing atmosphere of apathy would certainly not have generated any action beyond letters to the editor from such of the population that felt that Ostrich farming was a bad thing to do, stirred up a few

Courtesy : Animal Voice, South Africa

November 1997 saw the efforts of a unique industry trying to enter India: Ostrich Farming. Through advertisements in the newspapers and a seminar held in Bangalore, the promoters of this new venture, *Global Ostrich India Pvt. Ltd.*, tried to attract Indian entrepreneurs using slogans like 'Get rich with ostrich!' The qualities of ostrich meat, ostrich leather, and other products made from the ostrich's body as well as the worldwide market for such products were flaunted by the company. The proposal was to import day-old live chicks from Australia and raise them here as either breeder stock or for slaughter. Abattoirs would be set up for killing these birds at the tender age of 1-2 years, when their natural life-span extends upto 80 years. Since the products of slaughter would not find a domestic market on account of cultural (dis)preferences and their high cost, they would be exported to other countries where demand exists. The Ostrich was thus to be the next animal in the long line of animals that have been made to give up their lives for the sake of getting rich.

people of **Beauty Without Cruelty** sufficiently to make them decide that enough was enough and that this blatant commercial exploitation of animals for the sake of greed and with absolute impunity had to be actively opposed. Unless such efforts were brought down at the outset, they would then be too solidly entrenched into the economic structure of the country and would be made impossible to remove. Cases of evil abounding because the 'good' people who opposed it in principle and who wished to see it stop but did nothing to stop it are to be seen everywhere in our society. In areas that affect animals, the poultry industry is the best example of this. Everyone who did not want the mechanisation of the breeding and slaughtering of the hen but did not do anything to raise a voice against it is responsible in part for the runaway commercial success of the poultry industry that followed. Today it would be a gargantuan task to uproot it - the money power, the lobbying strength, the vested interests behind the poultry industry are too strong to be

overcome with any ease. But perhaps the worst outcome of the entrenchment of the poultry industry is that it has acquired social acceptance and respectability that makes its removal even more difficult.

It was therefore decided not to leave any stone unturned in opposing every move of the party that was seeking to introduce ostrich farming here. To begin with, it was decided to picket the seminar, which would be where the seeds of insensitivity and greed would be sown into the minds of the attendees. The venue of the seminar was Hotel Ashoka, Bangalore on the 3rd and 4th of November. **BWC** contacted some animal welfare organisations and sought their participation in the matter. Receiving enthusiastic response, meetings were arranged to concretise plans. It was agreed to picket the seminar by maintaining a silent, peaceful protest presence outside Hotel Ashoka. In addition, it was decided to formally register two candidates from the animal rights community into the seminar so that a voice of protest could be maintained among the voices of commerce and business, and to obtain all the information that was to be distributed there. *Global Ostrich India* was intimated by letter of the community's opposition to its planned activity and was requested to reconsider its plans, failing which the organisations' activists would be compelled to start a public awareness

campaign against it. In the letter, *Global Ostrich India* was also informed that the animal rights organisations would be happy to meet them before their seminar to put forward and explain their point of view. As expected, no reply was received from them. The plan to picket the seminar carried on. The necessary police clearance was obtained, though not without difficulty. Posters carrying the organisations' messages were made with the combined efforts of a very dedicated group of volunteers from across organisational lines. Articles and letters were given to the press to publicise our viewpoint.

On the morning of 3rd November, about thirty volunteers from all over the city assembled outside Hotel Ashoka. Organisations like the *Animal Welfare Group*, *People For Animals*, *Jain Jagruti Mandal*, *Veer Mandal*, *Akhil Karnataka Praani Daya Sangh* joined **BWC**. For four hours they maintained the planned silent and peaceful protest presence, holding aloft the posters for



Courtesy : Keshav Vitla



passers-by to see and distributing leaflets printed by BWC. The two activists who were registered for the seminar attended the event as delegates. They got to see the distastefully slick manner in which the organisers had advertised the project, crudely objectifying the grand Ostrich by showing it as a dollar-earning resource. As expected, videos and posters advertising only the good side of the activity - herds of ostriches shown enjoying the outdoor sunshine on Australian farms - were displayed. Mechanisation of the hatching by the incubation process was proudly displayed as a technological achievement! Naturally, there was no mention or display of slaughter, of the possible diseases that could break out, of the injuries suffered by many an Ostrich-handler from the kicks of the large bird as it tries to resist submission to its killer. Speaker after speaker glorified the industry, advertising the products made from the killed Ostriches and emphasising the financial reward awaiting those who invested in the activity. A range of Ostrich products like Ostrich meat, Ostrich leather, Ostrich oil, Ostrich feathers, Ostrich eggs etc. were on display.

In the question-answer session, the activists put pointed questions to the organisers regarding the method of slaughter, the proposed location of slaughterhouses, the ethics of separation of mother and chick for the purposes of profitability and production, and others. As expected, the nature of the questions embarrassed the organisers, and they tried in the most impolite manner to evade answering them. The issue of communicable diseases from the Ostriches causing harm to local life turned out to be an issue of general interest. The activists received a lot of questions and comments themselves

from the rest of the delegates regarding their stand and their purpose of attending the seminar. Many were very respectful of their stand, although understandably there were the cynics, too. But the purpose of raising the ethical, and non-commercial viewpoint was satisfied to a large extent. Delegates leaving the seminar in the evening were again met by the activists outside and handed the protest leaflets being distributed to all.

The picketing of the seminar was widely publicised in the newspapers the next day and made the issue one of city-wide discussion. Thus, the immediate purpose of the protest was achieved. In addition, the joint effort provided the very valuable side-benefit of bringing together the diverse animal rights and animal welfare groups in Bangalore for a common cause. Volunteers worked with the genuine interest of the animal (bird) in mind. It was an organisational success.

The role of information technology proved to be of utmost importance in the protest. At the touch of a button, information regarding Ostrich farming the world over was possible to be availed of, by using the Internet. One of the most vital pieces of information - that of the outbreak of Congo fever on a South African Ostrich slaughterhouse - that has worked in favour of the protesters would not have been available just a few years ago when the Internet was not in existence.

The picketing was followed by a massive letter-writing and signature-collection campaign. A wide cross section of society was canvassed for their opposition for the project and to provide statements of support to the protester. A detailed factsheet on ostrich farming was sent to each to educate them on the issue. Along with the factsheet, a picture



of defeathered Ostriches, obtained from *Animal Voice, South Africa* was also sent to sensitise the people to the cruelties inherent in farming Ostriches. The picture depicted the cruelty of live defeathering, one of the practices in Ostrich farming. The response from the public has been very favourable.

Simultaneously, a video containing footage of Ostrich slaughter was obtained from the *Humane Society of the United States*.

This is planned to be publicised through the local and national television media so that people can see for themselves what it is that is being proposed to be started here. Gone would be the images of Ostriches enjoying sunshine on idyllic farms. The reality of Ostriches being lassoed and dragged to the slaughter pen, and of being hooded and gassed to death would replace these fairy tale images of intensive farming.

As a result of the letter-writing campaign, the support of the Karnataka State Forest Department was obtained. They were very disturbed by the possibility pointed out by the protesters in their literature of diseases

spreading from the foreign birds to the local flora and fauna of Karnataka, especially since the proposed location of the Ostrich farming pilot plant was Periyapatna, a place situated not far from Nagarhole wildlife sanctuary, home to many of Karnataka's wildlife. In addition, the dangers of communicable diseases hit the headlines when Hong Kong's

hens contracted the bird flu, resulting in the

unfortunate

destruction of the

entire poultry

population of

the state. The

disease was

learnt to have

spread to

humans too.

The protesters

have impressed

upon the

officials here the

importance of

avoiding such a

situation in India

through ill-thought

projects like Ostrich

farming. The Chief

Minister's categorical

assurance has been

obtained, promising that

"...his government would

not support any project that

had the potential to harm the

environment of the state or

that carried the risk of

spreading diseases." It is

hoped that his verbal

assurance translates to concrete

action.



Courtesy : Viva!



**COMPASSIONATE FRIEND**



The arrival of *Sankranti* usually bodes ill for the animals of Karnataka. What is a festival of happiness for the people of that region is a festival of torture and death for our four-legged brothers. Foxes, cows, bulls, goats, sheep, and hen are all the unfortunate victims of our unthinking, insensitive, and superstition-laden minds. Depending on the size of the village, upwards of 100 goats and sheep are butchered in front of the deities of each village temple in the belief harboured by the villagers that the 'offering' thus made would forestall impending calamities, bring good fortune to their families and farms, and keep the Gods happy. As a result of this unfortunate belief, rivers of blood are seen flowing inside village temples, accompanied by the pathetic bleating of the ill-fated innocent animals. Hunting and torture of foxes and making bulls walk on fire are some of the other rituals practised by villages of Karnataka.

1998, however, was a year with a difference for the village of Udbur in Mysore district of Karnataka. Instead of blood flowing over the sacrificial altar in the temple, there was to be seen sweet coconut water. Instead of the offering of the goats' heads to the goddess, people were seen offering bananas and flowers. Instead of writhing bodies of beheaded animals lying all around in the temple courtyard were to be seen flower petals. The children, instead of watching in fearful puzzlement the sight of animal after animal being butchered in front of them got to run around in the temple in the fun and merriment that is in keeping with the true spirit of *Pongal*. Instead of leaving the temple nauseous at the sight of the barbarism inside, peace-loving devotees got to enjoy the *Sankranti prasad* of sesame sweets offered at the temple gate.

Udbur, under the leadership of G Murthy (see *A Progressive Panchayat President*), led the way

## VILLAGE FORSAKES ANIMAL SAC

in celebrating *Makar Sankranti* without the usual ritual of animal sacrifice this year. In what was an astonishing pace of progress, it demonstrated its commitment to reform by bringing down sacrifices in the village temple from above 150 last year to zero (0) this year! In other words, eliminating it entirely. And **Beauty Without Cruelty** had a leading role to play in achieving this reform.

This transformation was initiated a year ago, in 1997, when **BWC** and *Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA)* had worked together to get a court ruling directing the forest department and the police to ensure prevention of the custom of fox hunting. It will be remembered that last year two **BWC** activists from Bangalore, accompanied by people from Mysore, had visited Udbur to act as observers and, if needed, as enforcers. By insisting upon implementation of the court's orders by the police, success was achieved in enforcing a reduction in the cruel treatment of the fox. The usual tradition was learnt to be to capture the fox, tie up all its four legs together tightly, sewing up its mouth, pierce its ear, and similar other mutilations, to incite fights between stray





*Dr Ranjit Konkar*

dogs and the helpless fox resulting in the fox getting badly mauled. But with the police's help and the cooperation of G Murthy, Udbur last year discontinued the practice of piercing the ear and of the fight with the dog. In addition, the mouth, instead

of being stitched shut, was simply muzzled. Upon the insistence of the activists, the fox, after being led through the village in a procession and worshipped in front of a deity, was let free to return to the wild without being subjected to any more physical torture. Thus, although the fox hunt could not be prevented, the cruelties that routinely follow were substantially reduced.

What came as a great shock to the activists in 1997, however, was the mass sacrifice of goats and sheep in the village temple. Having gone totally unprepared for the sight and unaware of the practice, they were unsuccessful, despite trying hard, in getting the

authorities to prevent the butchery. It was estimated by the activists, who were direct witnesses to the carnage, that more than a hundred animals must have been thus sacrificed. The ghastly sight, however, provided them with the determination to prevent a recurrence of the event the

following year. It was decided by the activists to concentrate upon the issue of goat and sheep sacrifice instead of the fox the following year because of the enormously greater quantity and worse quality of suffering that the former represents.

In preparation towards that goal, the activists, S. Maruthish and Ranjit Konkar, decided to make early contact with the village this year. Taking advantage of the acquaintance established with the *Panchayat* president the previous year, they managed to arrange a couple of meetings with the village elders to discuss the issue. It was recognised by them that a conversion of minds was the best and most lasting way to change custom. Hence, since popular sentiment in the village was still in favour of the prevalent practices, and since the police is not motivated enough nor equipped to effectively enforce laws in this regard, it was decided to adopt the path of moral persuasion. Initial suspicion on the part of the villagers regarding the motives of the activists and a reluctance to abandon age-old customs were, expectedly, the main obstacles to overcome. However, the patience, gentleness, and humbleness of Maruthish combined with his eloquence and his command over the Kannada language and his sincere and undoubted devotion to the cause went a long way towards winning the confidence of the villagers. The villagers appeared reluctant to admit that such practices were prevalent in their village. It was also obvious that they did not consider it an important enough problem to warrant pro-active steps to tackle it. They expressed the opinion, that left to time, the practices would disappear. However, this was not acceptable to the activists, and they insisted upon concrete steps instead of passive disapproval to improve the situation. In addition to Maruthish, Alka Parikh, another committed volunteer, proved instrumental in



*The Altar saw no blood this year*



obtaining the commitments that were desired from the villagers. She pointed out that the issues of meat-eating and of religious sacrifice should be separated. The phenomenon that occurs in villages is that the animal is 'offered' to the deity to propitiate the God or Goddess in the unfortunate belief that the divine God would be appeased by such a display of obeisance and would not punish the person, his family, or his property/farm, etc. The animal is brought to the deity in front of which the priest performs the ritual *pooja*, following which the animal is killed and then taken away to be consumed for its meat. It was suggested by Alka that if the ritual was viewed as consisting of two parts, one the religious offering of the animal to the God and the other the person's feast, that it would enable the goal of at least keeping the temple free of blood to be achieved. The killing of the animal might not be avoidable but its motivation and circumstance could be changed. Therefore, the limited cause of preventing sacrifice within temple premises was adopted as the immediate goal. Meat-

eating is a universal phenomenon: every culture (excluding the Jain and strict Brahmin cultures) is known to celebrate occasions by eating non-vegetarian food. Therefore, the villagers are no more culpable of unnecessary slaughter than their city-dwelling counterparts if they choose to have a non-vegetarian feast. Propaganda on vegetarianism would continue as an ongoing task, but demanding the instant conversion of a traditionally meat-eating population to vegetarianism was considered to be an impractical and unachievable goal. Therefore, it was decided that if the villagers would promise a blood-free worship in the temple, then they would not be dictated to as regards the manner in which they should feast. Based on this view, it was decided by the volunteers to limit their request of the villagers to an undertaking to not kill any animal on the premises of the temple. They could well bring it inside the temple, have the priest perform the necessary *pooja*, symbolically offer it to the deity, but to not kill it there and thus spoil the sanctity of the temple by bloodshed. Put this

### Humanity in Uniform

In India, where police personnel are rarely known for a willingness to enforce the law, the attitude of Sunil Agarwal, Superintendent of Police, Mysore district, comes as a refreshing change. When approached by BWC to assist in this matter of curtailing animal sacrifices, he surprised the volunteers by showing keen personal interest in the issue and an active desire to bring about change. Being used to having their petitions on these matters not receiving any importance or priority from the police authorities, it was a marvellous change for the volunteers to come in contact with Supt Sunil Agarwal. Recognising the evil of the custom and the need to eradicate it, Supt Agarwal not only promised to put the law enforcement apparatus at the service of the volunteers to assist them in their plan, but lived up to his promise to the last word with great personal effort. Spending hours convincing his own officers of the need to implement change in this area, motivating them to be active in eradicating social evils using existing laws, and serving strict instructions to the troops posted in the village to ensure the implementation of the volunteers' plans all were the personal commitments of one man, Supt Sunil Agarwal. People who were happy to see the temple free of blood that day owe much to him.



way, the logic of the argument appeared to be acceptable to the villagers and a promise to ensure such an undertaking was obtained from them. To the volunteers' joyous disbelief, the villagers even offered to ensure that no slaughter happens at all, within or outside the temple, the following year.

Following this achievement in negotiation, a plan for ensuring the implementation of the undertaking was drawn up. It was felt that since the villagers had agreed to take a first step and give up part of their traditional custom (however reprehensible), it was necessary to compensate them with a positive alternative which would make them feel better. This positive alternative took the form of a *prasad* service. In addition, to match the sacrifice of custom that the villagers were making, it was decided that the volunteers would observe a fast for the village that day as their gesture on the occasion.

While it was felt all along that just recourse to law enforcement without human contact with the perpetrators of the sacrifice was the wrong policy to follow as far as obtaining commitments from the villagers was concerned, it was nevertheless recognised that the police would have an important role to play in ensuring the adoption of those commitments. The volunteers' experience with the police last year was not unfavourable: the police appeared ready to assist the volunteers if the latter did some preparatory groundwork to give the police a viable strategy to follow. Since this groundwork had been done this year, the police were approached for assistance. The reception received from the concerned official, Sunil Agrawal (IPS), Superintendent of Police,



*The Fox being carried in procession, without ornaments!*

Mysore district, was heartwarming and beyond expectation (see *Humanity in Uniform*) for the activists. Himself a vegetarian and a sympathiser with the cause, he turned out to be very willing and, indeed, keen to have the police also tackle socio-legal problems like this one. He assured us of all official help from his side if BWC, as a social organisation, did the part of interacting with the villagers. It was impressed upon him by the volunteers that the police should play a firm but gentle role instead of antagonising the villagers by arrogant assertiveness. It was agreed that the police would help in distributing leaflets in the village publicising the volunteers' plans and that they, the police, would maintain a presence in the village on the day.

On the 15th of January, a group of 6 volunteers (Alka, Arthi, Maruthish, Rama, Ranjit, and Vasant) representing BWC, CLUPA, the Jain Veer Mandal and as individuals left Bangalore at 6 am, carrying with them posters pictorially depicting the requested avoidance of animal sacrifice within the temple, and 40 kg of *Sankranti* sweets for distribution to the villagers as *prasad*. They were joined in Mysore by Ramesh Jain and Geeta, local animal welfare activists representing PFA. At



Udbur, the team of eight touched base with G Murthy, the *Panchayat* President, to find out how things had developed since the last visit, and to express their hope that villagers' promise was to be kept. They learnt to their great shock that far from unanimously agreeing to abjure the practice, people were going ahead with their plan to conduct the sacrifices. Another prolonged session of persuasion and pleading followed, resulting in the *Panchayat* finally offering to limit the sacrifice to five, one each for the five main streets of the village. With shattered hearts, the volunteers accepted this compromise, their expectation that the temple would remain free of blood belied by the villagers' reluctance to comply.

Help and hope, however, came in the shape of the Sub-Inspector, Niranjan Raj Urs. A thorough gentleman, educated and progressive in his views, he acted as the intermediary between the volunteers and the villagers and with remarkable efficacy, got the latter to agree to desist from sacrificing any animal at all in the temple. The volunteers rejoiced but waited with trepidation till the end to see whether the villagers' word would be kept. It was.

The hours that followed saw the village people arriving at the temple bearing plates of flowers, bananas, and coconut to be offered to the God. The coconut would be broken at the same sacrificial altar which used to receive the blood of butchered animals earlier. Coconut water now sanctified the same place. The devotees would be greeted at the temple gate by the volunteers with a welcoming smile and the traditional *namaskar*. All of the villagers expressed pleasant surprise at being so greeted and they all reciprocated with a smile from their hearts. On their way out, each person received a handful of sweets from the volunteers. Again, the devotees reciprocated by warm gratitude. People bringing in their animals were taken through the ceremony of *pooja*, sanctification of the animal by sprinkled water, garlanding of the animal, and symbolically offering it to the deity. At the end, they were led out with the animal after being given the *prasad*. From the volunteers' wanderings, no killing could be seen happening in any public place (that is, in full view of others) near the temple either. Thus, the self-imposed and limited target of preventing animal sacrifice for religious reasons was achieved to a very large extent. However, it was only with great difficulty that

### A Progressive *Panchayat* President

Udbur has the privilege of having the highly educated G Murthy, an M A in Economics, as its *Panchayat* President. In addition to running the affairs of the *Panchayat* competently, he has shown a remarkable openness to external influence, a willingness to entertain outsiders, a readiness to implement change where he deems necessary. These are the qualities that made the job of the police and the BWC volunteers much easier than it would have been in his absence. By allowing the BWC members to have discussions with the village elders, the *Panchayat* members, and the *Yuvak Sangh* of the village, he set the tone for change to come in slowly but surely. Himself a vegetarian he understands the moral aspects of the issue very well, and acknowledges the basic wrongness of such customs. His village would have much to remember him by in the future when it reflects upon the changes that it has undergone and the progress it has made.



the activists could overlook the fact that the fate of many of the animals saved from death for sacrifice was regrettably a death for the dinnerplate. The activists' target for the next year is to persuade the villagers to desist from slaughter entirely.

More than three hundred devotees are estimated to have visited the temple that day. The remark of an old woman who had obviously seen many a *Sankranti* being celebrated, was the one that made the effort seem well worth all the trouble for the volunteers: "Because of all your efforts, so many lives have been saved today," revealing the distaste in her heart at seeing blood in the temple year after year. The temple doors were closed for the day without a single drop of blood on its floor.

As far as the fox-hunting ritual was concerned, it wasn't abjured, but was changed much for the better. This year, Udbur went a step further in the humane treatment of the fox: the captured fox, instead of being trussed up, having its mouth muzzled, and being grabbed by its legs, was put in a cage with no part of its body constrained in any way. Its legs were not tied; thus it could move and turn around in the cage, and its mouth was not muzzled, allowing it to carry out its normal functions unhindered. There is no doubt that it was a frightened animal and must have suffered a lot of trauma when captured. However, it is important to recognize that changes don't happen overnight and all at once. The villagers are to be commended for having unilaterally decided to not tie up the fox but build, at their own expense, a cage for housing it. The improvement in conditions was very evident to observers of celebrations last year and this year. It is to be hoped that the improvements continue in the same direction and that the hunting is stopped altogether, and another means of celebration adopted that does not

cause any creature of land, sea, or air any terror, torture, or death.

The activists consider it a matter of pride that their goal was achieved using only moral persuasion and appeals to the conscience of the villagers and never once using threats of law-enforcement, although the latter could well have been applied since animal sacrifice is a cognizable offence under *The Mysore Prevention of Animal Sacrifices Act, 1959*. It is the author's opinion that a change of heart and of customs is best brought about and in many cases only possible, by using human relations in a positive manner, by appealing to the goodness of each person, and by impressing upon the subjects the benefits of the change, and by a process of give and take. Surely the villagers couldn't have been sad that no animal was killed. Surely, they could not have desired to see the suffering caused to the animal. Surely the clean and blood-free premises of the temple proved a much more spiritual atmosphere to them in which to worship God. It is these points that need to be impressed upon them to make them accept change.

The activists also acknowledge the advantage of dealing with a very accommodating population and a progressive leader. The village folk demonstrated a remarkable openness to new ideas and an exemplary tolerance towards and acceptance of reform efforts directed at them. The activists, expecting to be rudely dismissed or having their right to interfere in the village's customs questioned, were pleasantly surprised to find that they were patiently heard out and their ideas and suggestions given very fair consideration. In the end, it was a combination of moral persuasion by **Beauty Without Cruelty**, law enforcement by a very sensitive police, and the progressiveness of the Udbur residents, that enabled such a change to happen in such short a time.



# A performing Circus within a Sanctuary!

Meenal Kaushik

## Living hell for elephants in 'A paradise for Wildlife'

A brochure distributed by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department for attracting tourists to the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park boldly claims it to be 'a paradise for wildlife'. Situated in sylvan surroundings adjoining Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka) and Wynad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) lies the Theppakadu Elephant Camp within the boundaries of Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary.

Immediately, one conjures up images of majestic elephants leading tranquil lives in the post-Supreme Court ban on logging operations in India's forests. Elephants originally trapped and trained to assist the Department to pull down forests to cater to the human greed for timber, would now be

leading a quiet, retired life, is what one naturally expects to see.

The long winding road through the forest to Theppakadu is really a treat with deer and wild elephants being sighted en route. It would truly be 'a paradise for wildlife' if it were not for the horribly cruel 'Elephant Camp'.

At this camp, well within the boundaries of the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, the Forest Department of Tamil Nadu organises every Saturday and Sunday, during the peak tourist season, a most bizarre 'Elephant Show'. The show is actually a circus performance. The elephants' trunks are tied to their forelimbs and they are made to race across a field for an 'obstacle race'. Then, for 'logging' elephants are made to lift logs of wood and perform difficult manoeuvres. A football

match is also organised between two elephant teams for which the *mahouts* mounted on elephants make the pachyderms kick a ball. However, the most shocking is seeing these elephants, living within a sanctuary, being made to sit on pedestals and



A view of the 'Elephant Show' Paddock



perform tricks no different than at a circus. The show concludes with a *pooja* performed by the elephants in front of a small temple. Of the twenty-eight elephants at this camp, twenty-one are used for the show and thirteen give joy rides as well. One can't help but keep wondering how this is happening **inside** a Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park and that too **only** for so-called entertainment!

### **Monarchs of our jungles exploited for peanuts**

Revealing, first hand and authentic information has been gathered from various officials including labourers, *mahouts* and forest guards at the Theppakadu Elephant Camp. The major source of revenue for the Forest Department are the rides conducted through the Wildlife Sanctuary in four Maxi Cabs. Rs 22/- per person (inclusive of Rs 2/- for the guide) is charged for a half hour ride. Each such trip brings in Rs 1584/- by the four vehicles. Even if only ten such trips are undertaken per day (they do make more) the Department gets a revenue of Rs 15000/-.

In addition to this, the Department raises Rs 720/- per day by renting 7 suites and 4 dormitories for tourists at Theppakadu and Rs 560/- from 14 other suites within the Mudumalai Sanctuary. Tourists bringing in still cameras are charged at the rate of Rs 5/- and this fee itself amounts to nothing less than Rs 1000/- per day for the Department. Thus, the Department earns at least Rs 100000/- every week.

In comparison, the revenue gathered from the 'Elephant Show' attended by a maximum of 200 tourists at the rate of Rs 20/- and the elephant joy-rides brings in no more than Rs 8000/- and Rs 10000/- respectively. Moreover, the show is not the main attraction. Leave alone being able to provide details as

to days and timings, most tour operators and travel agents contacted, didn't even know of its existence; and forest guards said there was nothing much in the show. Consequently, the few tourists the show attracts are the ones who drive into the Sanctuary in their own vehicles (the camp is situated very close to the highway with huge open grasslands interspersed with trees) and some of those staying at the rest houses in the Sanctuary.

### **Jumbo cruelty for entertainment**

It is claimed that all the performing elephants are the ones which were originally trained for logging operations, but now, although this work has been stopped, the authorities are unable to release them in the forest as they are 'domesticated'. **The truth is quite the reverse : these elephants have been and are being trained to perform!** A mahout proudly told me that a baby elephant had just turned one and was ready for training. They are trained in a contraption consisting of wooden logs placed horizontally in slots of huge pillars. It is next to impossible for the elephant trapped inside to move once the logs are in place. It is with the help of this claustrophobic trap that young elephants are trained to perform circus tricks within one of India's leading Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks.

### **Forest Department's warped ideas and non-action to uphold the Act**

How does one classify entertainment? To what extent does one go to entertain guests or for money? Would we tie our childrens' noses to their legs and make them race to entertain our friends? Would we make our spouses perform tricks, like jumping across stools or other feats which would require a lot of physical and mental strain to gain a little extra money? Of course not! But, that needs



to be understood by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

It is very sad that even 'responsible' humans fail to realise that animals also suffer mental and physical pain when made to twist their bodies in unnatural ways. For example, walking on two legs is natural for man, but to impose this upon an animal is agony equivalent to making a man learn to walk for a long duration up-side-down on his hands.

In 1996 **Beauty Without Cruelty** wrote to the Chief Wildlife Warden, Tamil Nadu to stop this inhumane practice of torturing elephants in the name of entertainment. We reasoned that elephants are Schedule I animals under *The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 (as amended up to 1991)*. We also pointed out that organising this show constitutes an offence as elephants are being subjected to torture within the confines of a Wildlife Sanctuary. To date, no action or even response has been forthcoming in spite of the Forest Department

being the custodians of the area and are in fact expected to set a good example in conserving wildlife; instead of which they themselves are indulging in unimaginable and cruel exploitation of elephants. It is but disgraceful and unfortunate that the Chief Wildlife Warden of Tamil Nadu does not wish to prevent such violations from being committed by stopping the 'Elephant Show'. The law is on his side. All he needs is a will to act and it makes us wonder why it is lacking.

Although **Beauty Without Cruelty** will continue its efforts to stop the ghastly 'Elephant Show' it is hoped that wildlife enthusiasts will also take it upon themselves to individually protest. We also urge organisations working for wildlife to put pressure on the authorities.

The address of the Wildlife Warden is Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Mahalingam Building, Coonoor Road, Ooty 643 001.

## Poaching Must Stop

### Ivory kills!

**Beauty Without Cruelty** is most distressed that poaching of elephants is on the rise in India particularly in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. We feel the reason for this is because international trade in ivory may be partly legalised by *CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)* due to great pressure from some African nations.

It is high time that the Ministry of Environment & Forests (Government of India) and State Governments acknowledge the need to be extra vigilant and come down heavily on poachers, otherwise the fate of our pachyderms is in peril than ever before.

### Tigers too!

In fact, poaching wild life is not only restricted to elephants. As we all know, tigers are being systematically killed well within the areas where they are meant to be protected. We therefore hope that the Government will seriously appreciate the importance of taking immediate steps (funds/equipment, administrative and field implementation) which will bring in the desperately required positive results.



## **The Cruel Practices of McDonalds proved!**

**Beauty Without Cruelty** joined in an unsuccessful signature campaign to protest the setting up of fast-food outlets of McDonald's in India in 1993.

Now McDonald's have plans to open six more outlets in India. But, they wouldn't be doing so if they had no customers.

In England two vegetarian activists, Helen Steel and David Morris, were sued for libel by McDonald's because in the 1980s they distributed the leaflet "What's wrong with McDonald's?" The longest libel trial began in 1994 and ended last year involving 180 witnesses and 40,000 pages of documents, when Justice Roger Bell in his verdict ruled that substantial and significant parts of this London Greenpeace Factsheet criticising McDonald's proved to be true.

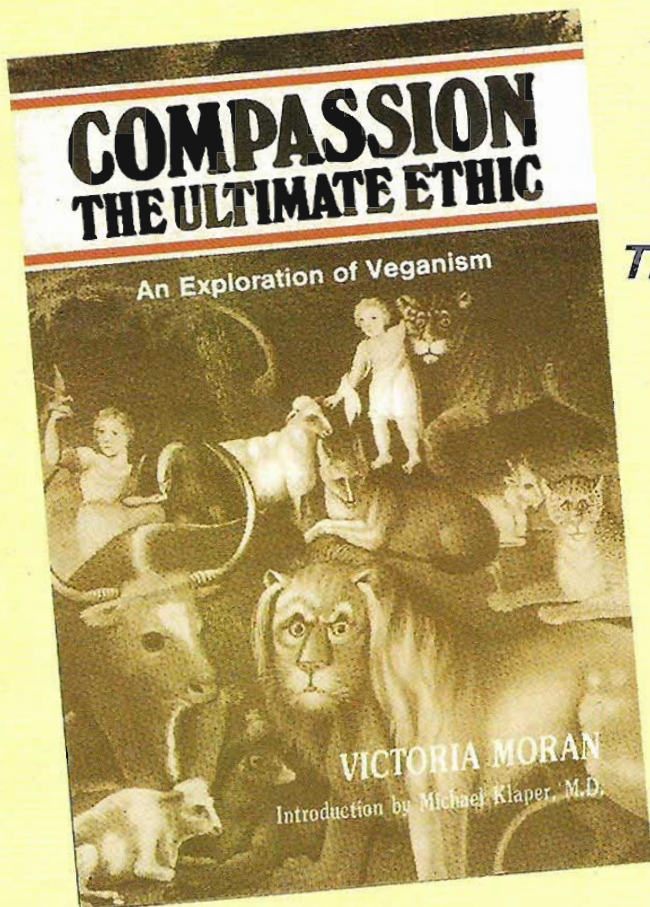
The Judge found that McDonald's advertising takes advantage of susceptible young children, that the company is anti-union and pays low wages; the food is high in saturated fat, animal products and sodium and they are deceiving the public by promoting it as nutritious. Above all, McDonald's have been proved to be culpably responsible for cruel practices in the rearing and slaughter of some of the animals used to produce their food.

McDonald's won a hollow victory when the Judge awarded £60,000 damages to be paid by the Defendants, only half of what McDonald's had asked for. In fact, not only has the sum been generally considered a derisory award, but McDonald's have repeatedly stated that they do not intend to pursue the damages. The case has been a public relations disaster for them, cast in the role of a huge, rich corporation using its financial muscle to suppress debate on important issues. Far from the offending leaflet being suppressed, over two million copies have so far been handed out around the world. Readers wanting a copy may write to **BWC** with a self addressed and stamped envelope.

## **CIRCUS ANIMALS TRICKED**

In 1991 **Beauty Without Cruelty** submitted a comprehensive report on **Circuses in India** to the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (Government of India) on the basis of which a Notification banning the use of tigers, panthers, bears, monkeys and dogs was issued. Disturbed, the Indian Circus Federation obtained a High Court interim stay order. The latest in this legal battle is that the High Court has ordered that the Ministry review its stand. This development took place because the Federation submitted a book entitled 'Animals in Circuses and Zoos Chiron's World?' by Dr Marthe Kiley-Worthington, claiming it was endorsed by the Royal SPCA stating that circus animals can be trained with love and affection! Although the Royal SPCA refuted this for the Court, the result of it is that **Beauty Without Cruelty** and other animal rights organisations in India (who are justifiably enraged) had to convince the Ministry of the cruelties very much prevalent in circuses so that they in turn inform the Court that they wish to maintain their original stand and Notification ban. **BWC** has also forwarded a copy of the Animal Defenders' video 'The Ugliest Show on Earth' to the Ministry. This video undoubtedly proves the cruelty involved in training circus animals in the UK.





*The American Vegan Society*  
has generously gifted to  
Beauty Without Cruelty  
copies of the book entitled  
**Compassion  
The Ultimate Ethic**  
An Exploration of Veganism  
by Victoria Moran

This informative and highly  
readable book projects the vegan  
ethic and highlights the potential  
health benefits and ecological advantages of vegan living

Each book costs US \$6.95. However, on a first come, first serve  
basis, Beauty Without Cruelty Life Members can avail of a free copy  
of this book against a donation of Rs 100/-

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