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CHENNAI

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Now, a green call to conserve Eastern Ghats

Deforestation, mining blamed for the sorry state

B.Venkat Sandeep

TIRUPATI: The Eastern Ghats, over the decades, has been subjected to deforestation, mining and encroachment, environmentalist K. Purushotham Reddy has said.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of a two-day national conference on 'Conservation of Eastern Ghats', organised by Greens' Alliance for Conservation of Eastern Ghats (GrACE) - an initiative of the Council for Green Revolution (CGR) - at Sri Venkateswara University (SVU), here, Prof. Reddy summed up the need for conservation with the saying, "The wealth of plains depends on the health of the mountains."

According to him, the Eastern Ghats has not received its long-pending due and, therefore, it is not as fortunate as the Western Ghats.

"The neglect can be attributed to a multitude of reasons including apathy of policy makers. The government of India should convene a special session with the National Development Council and take steps for maintaining balance of existing natural resources," he said.

Prof. Reddy stressed the need for defining the term

LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED



ENVIRONMENTALISTS SPEAK

- The govt. should involve tribal people in conservation efforts, which will augur well for the Eastern Ghats
- There should be an end to plundering of natural resources which the Eastern Ghats has been subjected to
- Eastern Ghats need to be declared a 'biodiversity hotspot', and people should do their bit to protect it

Centre along with National Development Council should take steps to maintain balance of existing resources

'development' and taking up measures to make it sustainable.

'Involve tribal people'

GrACE chairman R. Dileep Reddy was of the view that involving indigenous population in conservation efforts would augur well for the Eastern Ghats.

"The government should chart out a focused approach and protect the rights of tribals, besides offering them an option of livelihood.

The Eastern Ghats has been subjected to a severe plundering of natural resources, and this has to stop, so that we can give something to future generations," he said.

Mr. Reddy called for the declaration of the Eastern Ghats as a 'Biodiversity Hotspot' and wanted people to do their bit in safeguarding it, as the optimum impact on the environment would only be felt by individual intervention.