

Field Notes: Andra Pradesh: Jun 15-17/07

- a) Met Chakra Rao from Jana Jagruthi working on legal issues such as the SEZ in Vishakapatnam district and also in the area near Adathigala on some NRM and NTFP matters. Rao is a lawyer and was earlier with Samata during their work against mining in the Araku area. Jana Jagruthi being a locally based NGO with a decade long experience will be an asset in the building of an E.Ghats network. A visit to the field area is proposed in the near future.



- b) Met Mr Srinivas and his colleagues of VIKASA, based in Vishakapatnam as well as in the Araku Valley. Travelled with Srinivas (and members of LEAF) to the field area in Billaput, a village 16 kms from Araku on the Paderu road. This is one of the 9 villages that VIKASA is working in. Among their concerns and interventions may be mentioned:

- Shifting cultivation yield have declined over the years and people have stopped growing their traditional crops



- VIKASA has re-introduced some fruit trees to help in soil conservation: mango, guava, sapota, cashew and local varieties of brinjal; some crops,

such as tumeric and ginger have disappeared from the region and have been brought in from Orissa

- VIKASA has been working essentially on watersheds, soil conservation and composting, etc., and have done very good work in the area. After discussions with us they have been motivated to look into NTFPs in the region, mainly siyali leaves (*Bauhinia vahlii*), broom grass, wild mango.
- Wild mango and jackfruit are abundant in the region; seeds of both species were brought by the LEAF members to the Kakalura nursery.
- VIKASA too has agreed to help build a network along the E.Ghats and members of LEAF will begin visiting the Araku area.



- c) Also met Dominic and Nafisa of LAYA briefly. Discussed their work on NTFPs and have agreed to visit their field area soon, near Adathigala, about 100 kms from Vishakapatnam.