

PRANAV KULKARNI

EMINENT researcher and a scholar in the field of environmental research, Madhav Gadgil was awarded the Vasundhara Honour at the second Vasundhara International Film Festival on Monday. With researches on population biology, conservation biology, human ecology and ecological history to his credit, Gadgil belongs to the league of few Indian environmental researchers who have carved a niche for themselves on an international level.

"When I left Pune 40 years ago, I was not quite happy with the environment scene in the city. But today, when I am back and I see peacock on the Vetal Tekdi, I feel happy," says Gadgil defining in one line, his simple interpretation of healthy and sound environment. "We always had environment awareness in our society. Taking care of ecology has been our culture and the *Devrais* that we had, have been a proof of this. As per my observation, most of the jungles were destroyed in order to cater to the increasing demand of wood during the British era and what further resulted in a downfall was the reduced dialogue between nature and man post the independence era," adds he.

Unlike most of them who blame the system for not being responsible enough to bring about the change, Gadgil feels, "Involvement of citizens is of utmost importance. Be it any part of the world, positive changes are brought about by responsible citizens only. One of

the most appreciable developments in fact is the Right to Information Act. We as citizens need to make

Environment *Friendly*

Indians and not Westerners should be generating environment-related reports about our country, feels Madhav Gadgil, who was recently awarded the Vasundhara Honour

full use of the RTI. I have a suggestion for the industries- while the RTI remains limited to government organisations, private companies also should allow citizens to know about the company's policies by developing independent RTIs for themselves."

"As responsible citizens, we need to keep our eyes open. We should not be happy about being tagged the third world. In fact I came across certain documents during my stay in the US that advised the US government to shift the harmful industries in America to India. But unfortunately, all the environment reports about India on Internet are generated by the same westerners. While ensuring that work happens at grass root levels, we must also ensure that the researches and reports published about our country are done by our own researchers and scientists and no one else. Action, supported by education about environment only can bring this change," he concludes.

Narendra Jadhav (right) presents the award to Madhav Gadgil

