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**Launch sea care movement, says M. S. Swaminathan**

By Our Staff Reporter

CHENNAI, JUNE 5. It is high time we paid integrated attention to conservation of coastal and sea water resources, M. S. Swaminathan, chairman, M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation, said today.

Stressing on this year's World Environment Day theme — Do we want our oceans alive or dead?-, he said it was essential to start and sustain a `sea care' movement, considering that the country had over two million square km of sea zone in the Exclusive Economic Zone. Issues such as preventing sea pollution and ensuring sustainable development of marine resources must be addressed. Education and awareness building, regulation of the use of resources and community mobilisation were some of the means by which a successful `sea care' programme could be implemented.

These issues must be introduced to children in schools, not as part of the syllabus but as extra-curricular activity.

The MSSRF was awaiting permission for starting a community radio service, combined with Internet access through the coastline, to provide aquarian information to fishermen. Data on wave height and location of fish shoals could be transmitted for their benefit.

Dr.Swaminathan was speaking at a seminar on Coastal Wetlands: Mangrove Conservation and Management, held at the MSSRF here.

J. C. Kala, Principal Conservator of Forests, said there were three key factors in the world conservation strategy: maintaining the essential eco-system, preserving biodiversity and ensuring sustainable utlisation of resources.

The eco-system comprised forests, fresh water and marine resources.

The Forest department worked with around 2,000 villages, where the sustainable development programme providing alternative sources of income to locals improved their standard of living and helped to avoid water scarcity, despite drought. He said the department had done a lot of work on mangrove forests along with the MSSRF.

The members of the faculty of rural management, University of Sydney, Kevin A.Parton and David Goldney, presented a paper on the need for an integrated approach to sustainable landscape management.

The experts compared the natural environment in Australia and Tamil Nadu and detailed the major forms of degradation: water erosion, soil erosion, salinity, soil acidification, structural degradation and weeds, resulting in land degradation.

Researchers at the MSSRF earlier presented papers on community participation in mangrove management, application of remote sensing in mangrove wetland conservation, sea water farming for coastal area prosperity and management of enterprises by coastal communities.

A film on the `Biological Paradise of Andhra Pradesh' was screened at the beginning of the seminar.