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FOREWORD

Western Ghats are blessed with a rich biodiversity and hence they are known as one of the biological hotspots in the world. There are different ecosystems along the Western Ghats. The intertidal forests of mangroves form one such tropical ecosystem along the Western Ghats facing the Arabian Sea. It has been scientifically proved that mangroves are one of the richest coastal ecosystems. It is both economically and ecologically a most valuable and productive system. Mangrove ecosystem is rich in flora and fauna (from microbes to huge crocodiles). Mangrove ecosystem is detritus rich and supports several physical, chemical and biological processes and components. Besides, it also plays a significant role of providing protein rich food and functions as a feeding, breeding and nursery ground for estuarine organisms. It protects the coast and population from cyclones, floods and tsunamis.

In spite of these very important functions, mangroves in India have not received the required attention. In megacities like Mumbai and Kolkata and the coastal states with extreme land scarcity, scarce and exorbitant housing and population pressure, mangroves are under constant threat and are adversely affected. There is “Man versus Nature” conflict. We must always include the element of 'Nature' in our developmental actions. The Govt. of India and the coastal state Govts. have therefore formulated and implemented various rules and regulations for the conservation and management of mangrove forests. The Govt. of Goa way back in September 1990 issued a Notification banning the felling of 15 mangrove species with a view to protect the mangroves.

Mangrove Society of India (MSI) an NGO with its network and members spread throughout the Indian Coastal belt, is actively working towards creating mangrove awareness. MSI through its various programmes and projects, conferences, exhibitions, lectures, wetland day celebrations and by publishing the mangrove literature has greatly helped in creating awareness in the society of the important role played by mangroves.

The book “Mangroves of Goa” is an effort jointly undertaken by MSI and the Forest Department, Govt. of Goa with the main objective of creating awareness among the public at large. I, strongly feel that these types of joint ventures should be encouraged and promoted. I hope this book will serve to fill up the knowledge gaps in the minds of students, common men and also the policy makers. I feel it will also encourage ecotourism in beautiful, biodiversity rich mangrove forests of Goa.

I wish the MSI all success in its future endeavours and hope there will be many more occasions where it can team up with the Forest Department, Govt. of Goa in order to preserve and promote the mangroves of Goa.

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