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EDITORIAL

Qamar, the Editor of Vana Premi, has left for Sydney (Australia) on a three month vacation to visit his son and his family. We wish him happy sojourn and enjoyable holiday until he returns safe to India. In his absence, the Executive Committee of our Association by a resolution appointed me to discharge the editorial responsibilities. This is how the mantle has fallen on me. The concern of Qamar for the magazine is commendable as is evident in his note; "**Your attention please**" at page 5 of Vana Premi for March 2017. He keeps writing to me from abroad by e-mail making enquiries about matters pending resolution, which I am bound by duty to attend to them. My request, and the request of Qamar before he left the country, to readers and contributors to send articles to me is noteworthy. The response to the appeal has not been very encouraging. Yet I hold an optimistic view and look forward to good response during the next two months and for ever thereafter.

Qamar has written well in the last month's editorial essay on **World Water Day**. To a question - what is the most important commodity that is offered by the forest? - An intelligent answer would be "**Water**". This is well

known to all foresters but it needs to be convincingly explained to gullible and ignorant folks. All tanks, be they minor, medium or major, are helpful in raising and maintaining indirectly rural economy. The total ayacut under small and medium irrigation projects will be more than an ayacut under a major irrigation project. As the tanks and reservoirs get silted up over a period, the natural process of silting up must be controlled. Desiltation in intervals is absolutely necessary. To reduce inflow of silt, catchment areas have to be well managed. Fore-shore plantations were raised during the past. They have given good results. This programme needs to be revived. Strengthening of tank bunds to prevent floods when they breach needs to be undertaken in a phased programme. There are some breached tanks within the forest areas. If these tanks are repaired and restored they will be useful for the wild animals to quench their thirst during summer. The Policy Makers and the Government Departments must implement preventive, protective and developmental programmes under various schemes like Kakateeya Mission, Telangana- ku- Haritha Haaram etc.

K.B.R.

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE KING OF FORESTS

By
Sri P.K. Sharma



I had taken over the charge as the Divisional Forest Officer of Karim Nagar East Forest Division on 11th of April 1983, after completion of “**On the job practical training**” in Adilabad Circle. I had got an opportunity to come over to Karim Nagar, prior to my posting here, during probation period for an attachment to the Superintending Engineer (Survey & Investigation) Irrigation for a week in January 1983. Hence even before joining as DFO of Karim Nagar (East) Division, I had come to know about the richness of the flora and fauna of the Division and specially about the presence of large number of Tigers and Bisons. That’s why I was very much excited on the prospect of sighting a Tiger on joining the Division as DFO.

Immediately after joining the Division, **Beedi Leaf season** had commenced. I toured extensively in the Division covering all the villages in the interior forest areas abutting Maharashtra State on the Northern side and Madhya Pradesh State (Now Chhattis Garh) on the eastern side. I learnt a lot about the forests, flora and fauna of the Division in a short span of time from my interactions with the staff and villagers. I heard lots of stories about the sightings and attacks of Tigers on cattle heads as well as human beings during my camps in the interior forest places like Azam Nagar, Panmalla, Pankena and Bhopal Palli and Mahadevpur. All these stories had aroused my hopes to sighting the Tiger.

I came across a large variety and number of many wild animals. My first chance of sighting a pack of **Wild Dogs** came near village Panmalla. I was returning to Panmalla after inspection of forests in the evening, I spotted a pack of 7 Wild Dogs. I was terrified, but the pack disappeared as quickly as it had appeared. Next came across a herd of **Spotted Deer** and **Black Buck** each; these were around 25 in number, dancing and jumping all the way to the bank of River Godavari, obviously for quenching their thirst. I was mesmerized and stood still watching them till the last animal had disappeared.

My wife was camping at Panmalla Forest Rest House (FRH). I reached there in 5 minutes and told her that I would show her a herd of Spotted Deer and Black Buck. She could not believe but without wasting time jumped into the jeep and we reached near the spot. And Lo! The herd was returning after drinking water in River Godavari, towards the forests. We enjoyed the amazing scene in the backdrop of setting Sun and returned to the camp. My wife was thrilled to sight the animals in wild. Next time I was proceeding to Mahadevpur from camp at Bhopalpalli (both Range Head Quarters). Barely had I crossed Bhopalpalli, spotted a **Neelgai (Bluebull)**. I was on the wheels, spotted a big dog sized animal down the road about 200 M away. On coming closer, it turned out to be a **Panther**. In the excitement, I had jumped out of the jeep; on seeing this the Panther leapt into the nearby Teak Plantation of Medipalli series. Not satisfied with a short sighting, I followed the Panther into the Plantation, almost chasing it. Probably the Panther was equally terrified and hence had quickly disappeared into the forests. My driver Usman called me to stop chasing the Panther and had almost commanded me to return to the jeep immediately. On return he wisely advised me not to chase wild animals, specially Panthers, like what I had done; it could have been dangerous as the animal could have turned back and attacked me. Thank God !it did not happen and I was safe.

I had heard lots of true incidents of sightings of Tigers in the forests of Mahadevpur, Beerasagar, Nashurpalli, Medipalli, Rampur, Nimmaguda-Ethnaram, Pankena etc. Many a times the bus passengers had seen the Tiger on Mahadevpur-Kaleshwaram Road. There were reports and evidence of movement of a Tiger family in Kudurpalli vagu (stream). I had thoroughly perambulated the nearby forests, both in the early mornings as well as evenings. I too noticed pug marks of Tigers and Tiger cubs in the stream. I once missed the Tiger family by a whisker as I had seen very fresh pug marks of the Tiger family with water drops.

The other day, my Range Officer Mahadevpur, Mr. Hanumanth Rao was returning to Mahadevpur from Kataram side on Motor Cycle with his Forest Section Officer. He was almost fatally attacked by a Tigress near Nashurpalli. It so happened that Hanumanth Rao noticed 2 Tiger Cubs in a bush near the road side, without their mother. He got down from the Bike and tried to lift the cubs. No sooner he touched the Cubs, the mother Tigress appeared from nowhere and attacked the Range Officer on the shoulder. The FRO dropped the cubs, was terrified with pain. The alert Forester had hit the Tigress on its head with an axe butt with electrifying speed. The Tigress retreated with equally fast

speed and disappeared in the forests along with cubs. The Range Officer was saved, though slightly injured. Both returned to Mahadevpur, where I was camping and narrated the incident. I rushed to the spot but could see only the faint pug marks.

Next time when I was camping at Azam Nagar, Forester Nimmaguda came to me in the evening and informed that a Tiger had attacked few cows and Buffaloes near village Nimmaguda. I along with Range staff rushed to Nimmaguda, which was about 4 km away, and saw a Buffalo running towards village with severe injuries on its neck and blood oozing out near Forester's Quarter on the outskirts of the village. We rushed to the spot, barely a furlong away and found a cow and a calf with severe injuries and blood streaming out; writhing with pain and dying. I felt totally helpless as there were no Veterinary care facilities nearby. No way could their lives have been saved. We noticed the pug marks of a Tiger, but the Tiger had vanished. Normally the Tiger after the kill comes back to the kill to fill its belly, so we decided to stay put near the spot. We parked our Jeep under a tree on a slightly elevated place so that it could act as a make shift Machan. We waited for the Tiger to come back till mid-night but it did not turn up. Probably it had sensed our presence near the spot and avoided coming till we were present there. We returned to the Camp-FRH Azam Nagar to come back early in the morning.

We returned at dawn, at about 5 am, at the spot. We noticed that the carcass of the Cow had disappeared from the spot where it was lying in the evening. Drag marks were visible. Evidently the Tiger had dragged its prey to the interior location. We decided to track down the carcass in the hope of sighting the Tiger. We were equipped with Lathies (Solid Bamboo Sticks) and moved in a group. This was the only method of ensuring our safety. After traversing a distance of about two furlongs, we spotted the half eaten carcass of cow. Again the Tiger was missing, probably hiding somewhere in the woods. The staff completed the necessary formalities so as to provide compensation to the cattle owner. Incidentally, the number of cattle kills was the highest in Karim Nagar East Forest Division in Warangal Circle, outside the Wildlife Sanctuaries. It was a sign of degeneration of the Habitat of Tiger and consequent reduction in the prey base along with increased biotic interference, not a good sign! Not much used to be done in the non-WLS/PA (Protected Areas) forests from Wildlife Management point of view.

I had heard from my predecessors that Tigers used to roam frequently in the forests near Azam Nagar-Maha-Mutharam locality, specially in the Teak Plantations. One was sure to sight a Tiger in these Teak Plantations and hence the locality was christened as "**Tiger Plot**". I did thoroughly scanned this plot a number of times, but could not spot the elusive Tiger. However sighted the beautiful herd of Spotted Deer and a Sloth Bear.

The other day I was accompanying (Late) **Sri R.P. Bahadur, IFS**, the then Conservator of Forests, Warangal from Bhopalpalli to Mahadevpur. When we neared Medipalli Teak Plantations Series, the Jeep was suddenly halted after crossing a small streamlet. Sri Bahadur ordered the Jeep to be driven backward stating that he had just seen a Tiger on the banks of the streamlet. I was thrilled to hear this, on the prospects of sighting the Tiger. As I was seated on the back seat, I could not sight the Tiger along when the Conservator of Forests had sighted it. Though the Jeep was reversed swiftly, without loss of time, by the time it reached the streamlet, the Tiger had vanished into the woods. Sri Bahadur informed that this was the first time for him to sight a Tiger in the forests in Andhra Pradesh!

Next day I along with Sri L.N. Goud, Sub-DFO Mahadevpur and concerned staff accompanied Sri R.P. Bahadur in his field inspection of a series of Teak Plantations of **Kudurpalli series** (1983 to 1980). Plantations were located on the southern and eastern side of Kudurpalli stream. We all crossed the stream and entered the Plantations, leaving the lone driver Md. Usmanuddin along with Jeep near the entrance to T.P. 1983. After the inspections we returned to the entrance to the T.Ps. after about one & a half hours. To our dismay, we did not find the Driver near the Jeep. We called him repeatedly, but there was no response. I noticed **chappals** of Usman strewn near the Jeep as well as fresh pug marks of a Tiger. My heart sank! I prayed within for the safety of my Driver. Then one of our staff spotted the Driver atop a tree. On sighting him, we all called him; but still no reply. Probably he was shocked and shaken terribly by the sight of Tiger from a close proximity hence could not hear or speak. We threw a small pebble at him draw his attention to us. This worked. Having seen us, he mustered courage and pointing a finger towards the stream, yelled "Saheb Sher, Sher" and climbed down the tree. We had a sigh of relief. He narrated the incident of close shave encounter with the Tiger, briskly to us. He was busy collecting "BodaKakarKayalu" (Wild Spiny Gourds) after we all had gone for inspections. He was all alone by himself. Suddenly he sighted a full grown adult male Tiger

coming in the same direction where he was sitting. He was so immersed in the act that he could not smell the specific odour of Tiger or hear the sounds of bushes and grasses made by walking Tiger. When he realized it, he was dumb struck & immobilized for few seconds; but the survival instinct got the better of him and he quickly but in total silence retreated and climbed the tree first struck, like a Monkey. In the process his footwear were strewn and left behind. He watched the Tiger from tree top for almost an hour and was still visible to him when we all had returned.

On learning this Sri Bahadur wanted to see the Tiger. We all jumped into the Jeep and raced in the direction shown by Driver. We reached the stream bank, jeep could not have crossed the stream; Tiger was not to be seen. We got down from the jeep and walked on the stream bed. We could see fresh pug marks of the Tiger on the stream bed. We had to be satisfied with the fresh pug marks only that day!

With so many incidents and Tiger Tales in and around the Division, I thought that I would also be successful in sighting the Tiger in near future for sure. And I did not have to wait for long. It arrived in December of 1983. I had gone to Beerasagar forests for inspections, a place about 14 KM from Mahadevpur. We were coming back to our camp HQ after completing the day's task. I was on the wheel, my Sub-DFO Sri L.N. Goud on my side and the FRO and Driver Md. Usmanuddin on the rear seats. It was dusk time, about 5.30 p.m., and we came on the Kaleshwar-Mahadevpur B.T. Road from the fair weather dusty road. Hardly had we travelled for 100 M, my driver Usmanuddin cautioned me, "**Sahab Sher**" I could not visualize the presence of Tiger anywhere nearby. I then spotted an animal barely 50M ahead on the right side of the road, whose back was splashed with fresh mud and nothing else was visible. There was no vehicular movement, however the entire forest was echoing with the calls of animals and birds. These calls are associated with the presence of Tiger; warning each other of the danger.

The animal was moving in the same direction as ours jeep. The driver asked me to bring the vehicle to a halt without putting the engine off and move to the other side so as to enable him to take to the wheel. The Sub- DFO quietly jumped to the back of the jeep, the FRO ducked in and the driver took over the wheels. By now the Tiger turned its back, and Lo it was an adult Tiger, now facing the jeep. This was my first experience of spotting a Tiger amidst dense jungle. This point of the road was having Bamboo thickets (plantations) on either side, flanked by Teak mixed deciduous forest. I

was literally frozen out of fear. Our jeep was an open jeep, with the sides and back open and the top only covered with rexine, and front glass wind-screen. All of us were exposed and very susceptible to Tiger attack. Placing itself in the middle of the road, the tiger started to move towards the jeep. I was terribly frightened and started thinking what would I do if the Tiger attacked the jeep? As it was an open jeep it would be very easy for the Tiger to tear it apart, attack us and make us its easy prey. What was going through my mind was that I should not be easily pulled out by the Tiger if it attacked, so I held on to a rod in the jeep tightly, though this would have all gone in vain if the Tiger did attack, as none of us carried any arms for safety, also these were not provided officially then. I just kept praying to God of our safety. Though the Tiger didn't seem concerned with the presence of the vehicle and all of us in it, all our eyes were on the Tiger as it marched very close to us, it was just 10M away from us now. The gait of the Tiger was majestic, with who cares kind of attitude! The Tiger who appeared to be moving menacingly towards the jeep, suddenly came to a halt and stood in the middle of the road like a statue. However it kept gazing at the jeep. This un-nerved me. When like this five minutes passed and the Tiger did not move forward, tension started disappearing and within short time I was fully relaxed. Evidently God had listened to our collective prayers! Could be the Tiger had its belly full and was in no mood to attack us! Now we started enjoying the scene. The Tiger was visible in full, unlike its back the front was not smashed with mud. Its golden yellow fur with characteristic black stripes was glistening in the light of setting Sun. What a wonderful scene, I can never forget it. The nature provided us a chance to enjoy the beauty of the magnificent Tiger from front for about 20 more minutes. The Tiger kept standing still. I was fully engrossed in the view. Suddenly I was jolted by my Driver who told "**Sahab peechhebhi Sher.**" I looked back, but couldn't spot the Tiger. Initially I thought that the other members of Tiger family have surrounded us as part of their strategy, if what my Driver said was true. However it turned out to be a false alarm because three Pea fowls appeared from behind a bush. Hearing the rustling sound of dried bushes due friction with Pea fowls, the Driver presumed it to be from Tiger. By this time the Sun had set but there was no evidence of moving away of Tiger. Hence we dared not go forward in the apprehension of attack by the Tiger. We therefore retreated to Kaleshwar village, had a cup of tea and thereafter proceeded towards Mahadevpur. As we didn't know if the Tiger had moved away when we approached the spot, accelerated the vehicle and zoomed past the spot and safely reached Mahadevpur!

I vividly remember this scene, even after a lapse of a period of more than 33 years. I did not have a camera, else I would have captured those moments for posterity through pictures. I had seen a variety of wild animals in the forests of Karim Nagar Division in the very first six months of joining the Division. Those include Tiger, Panther, Bison, Sambhar, Sloth Bear, Neelgai, Wild Dog, Spotted Deer, Black Buck and a host of lesser carnivore, reptiles and Birds. In the Wildlife Census of 1984, we had taken POP casts of Pug Marks of 13 different Tigers in Karim Nagar East Division limits itself. As we know the boundaries of Districts and Forest Divisions etc. were created by human beings for administrative purposes and not so recognized by the Wild animals like Tigers. They have their own territories where they roam freely. Hence Wildlife Wing of the CCF's office, after due analysis of the data came to an inference that 9 Tigers were resident of Karim Nagar East Division and the rest four were migratory, mostly coming from EтуруNagaram Wildlife Sanctuary located in adjoining Warangal District/Warangal North Division. There was no Wildlife Sanctuary in Karim Nagar East Division, but it was rich in Bio-diversity and a very good Habitat for Tiger and its prey base. I considered proposing part of Chintakhani and Azam Nagar Ranges to be declared a Wildlife Sanctuary. But it was dismissed at the discussion stage by the Chief Wildlife Warden on the ground of presence of a large number of villages and equally large population & cattle heads.

In the past three decades, specially commencing from late eighties, Habitat of Wildlife has been destroyed to a large extent, partly under the influence of the Extremists and partly due to the greed of wood smugglers. This resulted in shrinkage of the Habitat (encroachments on the forest lands) as well as degradation in the quantity and quality of the growing stock / Habitat (removal of trees of commercial value in higher girth class). Result was dwindling population of Wildlife in this bio-diversity rich forest Division. In the latest exercise on the "Estimation of Tiger and Prey Base" not a single Tiger has been reported from this Division. The number of Tigers has drastically come down even in the Wildlife Sanctuaries and Tiger Reserves in the State.

However, I am of the firm view that even now it's not too late! Provided effective protection is provided to the existing natural forests duly involving the people, measures are taken up to rejuvenate the degraded forests; then the forests could be brought back to its past glory and excellent Habitat provided to wild animals in the State.

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COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT - A FAILED EXPERIMENT

By
M. Padmanabha Reddy

India having 2% of the geographical area of the globe has 19% of world human population and 17% of cattle population. Over population of human and cattle is putting heavy pressure on land especially on Forests.

After independence most of the food grains producing areas of West Punjab have gone to Pakistan, with this, the country faced food shortage. To attain self sufficiency, food production was given importance in successive five year plans. An era of green revolution in the country has brought self sufficiency in production, but then it was achieved to some extent by cutting down forests and bringing them under agriculture. As against the National Forest policy of 33% of land area under forests, today we have around 23% mostly in degraded condition.

In the 70's, National Commission on Agriculture has observed that 50% of the trees cut are for fuel wood and recommended for growing of fuel wood plantations to relieve pressure on forests. Accordingly Rural Fuel wood plantation scheme was launched around mid 70's but it could not stop the degradation of forests. Then Social Forestry with the aim to involve people in tree growing took shape. Most of the states in India

took up Social Forestry programme with foreign assistance. The erstwhile A.P. implemented Canadian Aided social forestry programme (C.I.D.A.) in the state. The idea was to involve the people in tree planting outside R.F.s, Avenues, railway lines, waste lands, and tank foreshores were planted and are now the main source of industrial cellulose for many wood based industries. As the areas outside R.F. are greening at same time the forests are shrinking and degrading. Tree patta scheme - planting trees in R.F. by group of people with agreement of 50% share at the time of harvest was a good scheme. Large scale degraded forests were taken up under this programme by rural poor mostly with Eucalyptus. In some plantations stocking was 90%, and in few others it was less. Unfortunately at the time of harvest a dubious G.O. was issued denying the share in harvest where the survival is less than 80%, with the result many beneficiaries lost their share in harvest as the survival of plantations was less than 80%. By this G.O. the department lost the credibility.

In the mid 80's some new ideas and success stories started appearing about the village development with people's participation

through nature conservations and improvement. Arabhri village in West Bengal and Sukhmajri in Haryana are the example repeatedly quoted all over the India.

In the late 80's after the C.I.D.A. aided programme was closed Government of A.P. took up World Bank aided A.P. forestry project with a main component being people participation in protecting and improving the forests (Joint Forest Management). Since West Bengal has already taken a lead in J.F.M., a team of forest officers from A.P. were sent to West Bengal to study the implementation of J.F.M. At that time I was working as D.F.O. Kadapa and I was asked to join the team to go to West Bengal. Mr. R.D. Reddy was our team leader.

On day one in Kolkatta presentation on J.F.M. was given in the O/o Prl. CCF. The following 3 days we were taken to various divisions where J.F.M. is under implementation. Our observations are i) There is improvement in protection of Natural Sal forests through J.F.M. ii) No involvement of Women in V.S.S. iii) Involvement of people was limited and mostly managed by staff of the department. iv) The villagers already started demanding harvest of Sal forests and 50% of their share. After a decade it is reported that people started losing interest in J.F.M.

Government of A.P. in the year 1994 took up A.P. Forestry project with World Bank loan. The main component of the programme is Joint Forest Management (J.F.M.) and to implement J.F.M.,

Vana Samrakshna Samithis (V.S.S.) were organized in forest fringe villages and certain area of degraded forests was entrusted to the V.S.S. for development and protection. Department pays the wages to V.S.S. for the works like S.M.C., planting, tending etc. and also pass on 50% share in produce to V.S.S. at the time of harvesting.

With World Bank loan J.F.M. was implemented in a big way in the state. Continuous flow of funds for developmental works in forests coupled with many welfare activities to help the poor especially the tribal's has changed the entire scenario and improved the relations between staff and locals. About 7,700 Vana Samrakshana Samithis were formed with about 15 lakh members.

In the year 1997 I was posted as D.F.O. Mahaboobnagar. The district is a chronically drought prone area. Heavy biotic interference has degraded the forests into open scrub jungle. To improve the forests J.F.M. was taken up in big way, V.S.S. wise action plans were prepared which consisted of S.M.C. works, tending, gap planting etc. In 2 years time about 206 V.S.S. were formed covering the entire forest division Mahaboobnagar. Most probably Mahaboobnagar is the first division in the country where total forest area is brought under J.F.M. During this period government took a massive programme of 'Neeru-Meeru' (water and you). Soil and moisture conservation works

were taken up in all the forest areas. The periphery of the forest blocks were dug with cattle proof trench. As the forest works provided lot of employment, seasonal migration of labour stopped to a considerable extent. Apart from employment generation, lot of other benefits like providing funds to women thrift groups, agricultural implements, poultry units, high yielding fruit saplings etc. has improved the economy of V.S.S. members and they took interest in protection of forests.

First phase of World Bank aided A.P. forestry project was to close by 2001. Government wanted second phase for another 5 years to be sanctioned, accordingly proposals were sent. President of World Bank Mr. Wolfinson was interested to see the implementation of J.F.M. in the field. Kamdhan village about 60 Km. from Mahaboobnagar was selected for field visit. The village has about 600 ha. of degraded forest with good Teak root stock and many fruit trees especially Seethaphals which is famous in these parts. V.S.S. was formed in the village in 1997 S.M.C. works, cultural operations supplemented with planting of fruit trees and protection provided by V.S.S. gave good results. With coppicing, Teak root stock responded well and in 3 years time there was good growth of Teak coppice shoots and other fruit bearing trees.

World Bank president Mr. Wolfinson, Chandrababu Naidu Hon'able Chief Minister and Mr. S.D. Mukharji, Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests

travelled by helicopter from Hyderabad to Kamdhan village. When they reached the village Mr. Mukharji saw to it that the chopper they are flying takes few rounds over the rejuvenated forests. He explained to the World Bank president and the Hon'able Chief Minister how the degraded forest was improved with the participation of V.S.S. In the public meeting arranged in the forest area, apart from Chief Minister many cabinet ministers and senior bureaucrats from Hyderabad were present. A small photo exhibition was also arranged on the side lines of public meeting. The women V.S.S. members narrated the activities taken up and their feelings of J.F.M., while Hon'able Chief Minister was translating in English to the World Bank president. Appreciating the work done by V.S.S. the World Bank president has announced from dais itself the sanction of 2nd phase of A.P. Forestry project.

In the year 2001 Mahaboobnagar forest division was adjudged as best managed forest division in the country and Government of India awarded it with VRKISHMITHRA award. I retired from service in the year 2001 with a satisfaction that I could set up an institutional frame work for people's participation in forest protection. Once the second phase of A.P. Forestry project started few changes were made, the J.F.M. is renamed as Community Forest Management (C.F.M.). By 2007 the second phase of A.P. Forestry project was closed. It was presumed

that by end of A.P. Forestry project the V.S.S. will be self sufficient and self financing from the revenues realized from forest areas allotted for their management. Unfortunately few examples quoted here give different picture.

In Behranguda V.S.S. of Jannarum division the area allotted to V.S.S. contained Teak plantation, the V.S.S. protected it and at the time of thinning 50% revenue obtained was passed on to V.S.S. Likewise in Kagaznagar division naturally occurring bamboo forests were allotted to V.S.S. After 4 years when the bamboo was extracted substantial amount was passed on to V.S.S. Similarly in Khammam the revenue realized from Beedi leaves sales were passed on to respective V.S.S. These are the wind fall gains as the V.S.S. has not planted but only protected the existing forests. But in degraded areas where the gestation period was too long the returns were minimal, once the funds dried up the V.S.S. fell apart. Today barring (very) few exceptions the V.S.S. members lost interest and community forest management is functioning on paper only. In absence of funds the V.S.S. member and staff are not interested in C.F.M.

We have many experiments all over India where peoples participation in protection of forests and natural resources failed to sustain inspite of initial success.

Chipko movement : In the year 1973 women in their Garhwal Himalayan villages hugged trees, braving the axe of loggers with government permits and stopped the clear

falling of mountain slopes. This simple but effective way of protest that marked the Chipko movement. The movement has inspired eco-feminism in India. Initially the Chipko movement was a big success, not only the existing forests were protected, large scale tree planting was taken up in waste lands outside forests. A study by the space applications centre of Indian space Research organization Ahmedabad in August 1994 shows that between 1972 and 1991 at least 5113 ha. of forests has been raised outside the reserve forest boundary. The Chipko movement in 70's has made the Union government to enact Forest Conservation Act in the year 1980. As the time passed the agriculture in Tehri Garhwal is no more profitable and people started moving from villages to towns leading to many villages turning into ghost villages. In course of time in absence of people Chipko movement has lost its sheen.

Sukhomajri : Sukhomajri a poverty stricken village of Haryana state has shot into fame in the year 1980. The village located near Sukhan Lake has almost silted up by 1970's. Scientists from Central soil and water conservation Institute observed that run off from the denuded Shivalik hills was a cause of siltation in the lake. To check the soil erosion, check dams were constructed and saplings were planted on the hills. To prevent peoples from grazing their cattle their co-operation was achieved by providing water from the dam. With the

availability of water, in five years the community saw improvement in their income from high crop yields, live stock and revenue from Bhabbar grass which was growing on hill slopes. Under the official supervision a Hill Resource Management Society (HRMS) was formed to regulate the use of water and forest resources. In the initial years Sukhomajri was a successful experiment and shot into international fame, researchers and scientists from about 140 countries visited Sukhomajri. As time passed lack of maintenance led to silting of check dams leading to run off and drying of bore-wells and yields from agriculture were declining. People lost interest in H.R.M.S. Meanwhile, for roads and other development works state government started acquiring lands of farmers. Sukhomajri success story has prompted the state government to replicate the model in several nearby villages but failed in all most all villages. Failure of Sukhomajri model has left the rural India the benefit of the hope to achieve prosperity while conserving natural resources. Back home the failure of C.F.M. in erstwhile A.P. has many lessons to learn. In C.F.M. the Forest guard is supposed to perform dual role, one day he visits the village with forest Act, P.O.R. and seize hammer to book case against the tribal who brought few poles from forests to repair his falling hut and next day he has to visit with an olive branch and discuss with V.S.S. members about forest protection. This dual role was beyond his capacity to perform. Unfortunately

no forest college / school in India teach motivation and extension techniques. Uniform and the Forest Act are coming in the way of the forester to gain confidence of the villagers. Further, forestry has a long gestation period, the department while implementing J.F.M./C.F.M. presumed that in a decade of C.F.M. the degraded forests will rejuvenate and provide sufficient revenues to sustain the interest of V.S.S. but that was not to be. The V.S.S. was heavily dependent on funds to sustain interest.

Unfortunately since independence the political system in the country has encouraged doling out material benefits which included laptops, fans sewing machines, mixers, pressure cookers, Mangala Sutrams, houses, etc. An atmosphere of laziness, heavy dependence on government, quick buck without doing any work has become the order of the day. In this scenario, the forest department propagating C.F.M. where there are no immediate and visible benefits did not attract the people. As long as the funds were reaching V.S.S., people and the staff were interested to implement the programme, once the funds flow dried out the V.S.S. collapsed. Under the existing atmosphere peoples participation to protect the forests is too much to expect. It is now high time forest department think of some new ideas to improve the degraded forests – one of the solutions may be to handover the degraded forests to wood based industries to rejuvenate them - public private partnership.

TRAGEDIES IN TAGORE'S LIFE

By

Dr. B.Raghotham Rao Desai

1. Background :

1.1 It was late 19th and early 20th Century, Bengal was in the throes of discovering its identity. Dwarkanath Tagore, impecunious in the beginning accumulated wealth through shrewd business acumen and friendly dealings with the English — his son Devendranath, however, sought truth and looking good being very subjective, earned himself the title of “**Maharishi**”. Having been an active member of the **BrahmoSamajMovement**—which was an attempt to cure Hinduism of its ills, associating its way of life with the counter-culture — he established the **Jorasanko Branch** as some earnest, otherworldly fringe family, probably full of utopian ideas. Rabindranath Tagore was the last of his 15 children.

1.2 Those were no ordinary times — the clamour of self-rule for India was becoming increasingly louder. Worried and nervous by the rising voices due to hunger, sickness, illiteracy and ignorance, the partition of Bengal was being actively considered — to give effect to , at least arbitrarily — by the most insensitive British. It was also a time when Rabindranath, with great inner trepidation, claustrophobia, and bowing to pressure from friends while being an eternal optimist, though deracinated, published **Gitanjali** in English, finally pulling himself out of

it, which got rave reviews. Everybody wants success. However, success does not come to all and sundry. Success follows anyone who has the discipline, hard work, passion and perseverance to achieve his or her goal. The sense of purpose of Rabindranath had been epitomised in his “ BhageerathaPrayathna ” which we will do well to emulate if we hope to realise our most cherished dreams. His winning the Nobel Prize in Literature came as a shock to the world, because not only he was an Indian, but a first non-white to be awarded the prize! Knighthood followed close on its heels as the British rushed to claim him as one of their own. But those were uncertain times. History holds awkward surprises and Indians faced numerous problems over the next few years. The tragic killing of hundreds of innocent citizens by the ruthless General Dyer in the **Jallianwala Bagh incident provoked Rabindranath to an act of great civil courage and peremptorily return the Knighthood bestowed on him.**

2. Private Life:

2.1 Braided closely with the above picture was the private life of Rabindranath, which was studded with the loss of loved ones: Kadambari, his sister-in-law who was married into the family as a child and was closest to him in age — and therefore a playmate, and later his

mentor and his muse, and perhaps even his first love — committed suicide soon after his marriage. Mrinalini, his wife, died early, after bearing him five children— two of whom barely survived their childhood. The remaining children had their lives marked by marital unhappiness. The daughters found themselves in the grip of grasping men — obtuse and money-hungry. Yet those were no mean women— they were cultured, educated, beautiful but willingly yoked themselves to their husbands. At the centre of it was Rabindranath, a visionary who could put into gossamer poetry and yet so naïve and faulty in matters of family! Although a wealthy landowner, he was plagued by financial worries, finding it difficult to remind himself that it is a part of life, when he was in that down phase.

2.2 To right a wrong — for having arranged his daughters' marriages with unsuitable men that way — he picked a child-widow as a bride for his son against his wishes, focusing rather on what was within his control. His wrong choices for his children pulled and tore at him — **guilt being a common companion**. His sons-in-law used to get engaged in petty ego-clashes and make their wives' lives' miserable. Sadly Rabindranath found himself powerless to stop it — faced with the sordid behaviours of sons-in-law, he was reluctant to act : not probably condoning their behaviours, but perhaps by a

strong sense of empathy. He found it hard to raise and accusing finger, though his eyes might have been popped, for he had been very much there.

3. Conclusion:

What raised him to the status of Gurudeb was his creativity. Unable to save his daughter Beli from death, he mourned her loss in his own inimitable way in poetry — he turned to poetry whenever he was confronted with anger, sorrow, hopelessness or helplessness. **Like the Midas touch, it converted all that dross into exquisite fragments of poetry — he held the key to a secret place beyond joy or grief where the soul could frolic without a care and he was eulogised.** It appears to have given the strength to simply pick himself up from a curse and walk again into creativity, getting instant gratification, when his world was thus lying in shards about him. He was well aware of the fact that it is the emptiness that comes with the instant gratification that leads to depression and he never allowed the emptiness to come. He also knew that as a litterateur he was under constant scrutiny and realised that self-validation was the only thing he needed, while social media perhaps obliterated that. Without an iota of doubt it can be said that Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was a celebrity without any exaggeration and vicarious fascination.

THE REIGN OF ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE

The HINDU 19-2-2017

“Is there Science beyond English?” asked Drs R. Meneghini and A L Packer a decade ago in the journal EMBO Reports. They start their paper by pointing out that over the past 25 Nobel Prize winners in Literature, only nine wrote their masterpieces in English. The remaining 16 had to wait to get their work translated in to English to gain the attention of the Swedish Nobel prize committee! (Note, too, that Tagore got his Nobel Prize in literature after his poems were translated into English.) As the authors mentioned earlier note, “The translators faced the arduous task of transferring the splendor of the original text into a different semantic, syntactic and sometimes cultural context to make it appeal to a wider audience”. So it is with science too. Gems of knowledge and wisdom - be they in Sanskrit, Chinese, Spanish or Swahili - became available to the wider world of scientists only upon translation. Many of us learnt for the first time the genius of the ancient Indian doctor Charaka only upon reading the brilliant translation of the Sanskrit text into English by Dr M.S. Valiathan. Likewise, the translation by Drs K.S. Shukla and K.V. Sarma, who did the same with Aryabhata, the work of the fifth century mathematician - astronomer Aryabhata. And we came to know of Kautilya’s Artha Sastra, thanks to its discovery and first translation into English by R. Shamasastri during 1905-09. Taking a more recent instance, Dr. Tu You You, who received the Medicine Nobel Prize in 2015, found her clue in a centuries-old manual of clinical practice and emergency remedies, written in Chinese by Ge Hong of the East Jin dynasty. Most of Dr You’s papers,

including the one that identified the anti-malarial molecule, are in Chinese.

Contributed by: P.V. Krishna Murthy

*“Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves?
to recognize how good things really are.”*

- Marianne Williamson

“THE HATRED”

By

V.V.HARIPRASAD

Hitler who caused the death of millions of Jews
Met with his destiny by committing suicide
Winston Churchill's arrogance
Witnessed the demise of hungry faceless multitude
During Bengal famine
The hatred of a fanatic took the life of "Mahatma" a great soul
The afro-American leader Martin Luther King
Fell to the bullets of a racist
Nor did the incorrigible spare the life of John F Kennedy
History has been a silent witness and a mute spectator
To the destruction of culture and humanity
To the assassinations of statesmen carried out
To the cruelty and ignorance of fanatics
Fraught with dangerous consequences
The hatred driven killings in the so called great country
Occurred because of the provocative attitude
And apathy of the rulers
Which Speak volumes of the fact
That lessons are not yet learnt by some stupid rulers
And they pay a deaf year to the loud lessons of the silent history
The present political scenario
Witnesseth the opportunistic politicians not the Statesmen
One has to realize, be he a politician a fanatic or a chauvinist
That one has the Hobson's choice
To hate the "hatred" and not to nourish and nurture it
Let everybody recollect the saying
"VASUDHAIKA KUTAMBAM"
And forget the barriers, Be they
Racial, national, regional ,caste related, linguistic or economic
And strive hard *adhering* to the great saying
"SARVE JANA SUJANO BHAVANTU,
SARVE SUJANA SUKHINO BHAVANTU."

EGYPTIAN VULTURE SPOTTED AT BEJJUR

By
S. Harpal Singh

This is a key find as this species has never been reported from this region. Hitherto known as the habitat of the critically endangered Indian vulture or *Gyps Indicus*, the remote reserve forest of Bejjur in Kumram Bheem Asifabad district could also be home to the endangered species of Egyptian vultures.

A chance sighting of a juvenile flying around a dog carcass by a team of surveyors belonging to the Hyderabad-based NGO The Nature Foundation (TNF) about 2 km from Bejjur mandal headquarters village suggests the existence of a habitat of this scavenger bird somewhere in the vicinity.

The habitat could be in the sedimentary rock cliffs seen on the horizon which are similar to the Pala Rapu cliff habitat of the Indian vulture in Murliguda forest beat.

"We were busy in our survey at the Mathadi tank on February 5 when the juvenile was spotted," recalled Srikanth Bhamidipati, TNF secretary, who led a team of birders surveying biodiversity of the place.

"This is a key find as this species has never been reported from here and a proper reconnaissance is needed to locate the habitat, possibly a palm tree thicket," he added after he positively identified the bird from the excellent images of it which he captured on his camera.

Though distribution of the Egyptian vulture is throughout India, its population in South is known to be scanty. It has never been reported from these parts which includes the pristine surroundings on either banks of the perennial Pranahita river which demarcates Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and K.B. Asifabad and Mancherial in

Telangana.

An 8-member TNF team conducted biodiversity surveys at 10 sites as per the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) approach between February 4 and 6. Such surveys are aimed at identifying the most important biodiversity sites in given countries to take up protection and management on an internationally recognised system.

The TNF will submit its report, which includes spotting of many possibly keystone species of birds, invertebrates, mammals and plants in the mixed type forest, to the KBA secretariat hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Some of the important species of birds and wild animals found during the survey are the Eurasian Sparrow Hawk, Eurasian wryneck, Crested goshawk, Brown hawk eagle, chousingha, jungle cat, sambar, spotted deer besides the vulnerable species of Dusky palm squirrel.

Bejjur Forest Range Officer M. Ram Mohan, whose conservation initiatives has made the place famous, has himself collected images of over 200 bird species from the place. "Yes, Bejjur RF is an amazing place for species density as over 200 types can be spotted in a single day," asserted the Hyderabad birders who include TNF secretary Sudhir Moorthi, treasurer M. Lawrence, vice presidents Umesh Mani Mrutyunjaya Rao, joint secretary Hemant Kumar and executive member Gokul Krishna

Courtesy: The Hindu dated 09.02.2017. The author is a journalist and a nature lover based at Adialabad.

GUNS AND GUARDS, A LONELY VIGIL

By
Neha Sinha

The forest guard needs an institutional mechanism that will empower her in conservation efforts. 'Killing for Conservation', a [recent documentary film on the Kaziranga National Park](#) in Assam by the BBC, has seen the government [serving a showcause notice to the BBC](#) and suspending their filming in tiger reserves for five years.

In the documentary, the BBC asserts Kaziranga holds a "dark secret", that forest guards and staff are "given extraordinary powers", they learn "ruthless patrolling strategies" and "ambush" — in short, that people are being killed for the conservation of the highly poached flagship species, the Indian one-horned rhino. The documentary alleges there is a 'shoot at sight' order in Kaziranga, due to which a host of people have been shot dead by forest guards.

At the heart of the matter is the issue of conservation through guns — and forest guards holding those guns.

Guns and guards

The first thing to be clarified is that unlike what the documentary claims, there is no 'shoot at sight' policy in any Indian tiger reserve. The park has a policy of giving limited immunity to guards

— the idea is that they should be able to defend themselves in Kaziranga while carrying out their duties.

That is the limit of the "extraordinary powers". Armed poaching is a constant in Kaziranga, and despite systematic effort and patrolling, poachers still manage to kill rhinos and shoot at forest guards. To reduce the issue of Kaziranga to shooting — or to depict the forest guard as a trigger-happy Rambo as the BBC has done — is to do disservice to the issue.

The difficulties and disempowerment forest guards experience need to be factored into the analysis of an extraordinary situation like Kaziranga, which sees rhinos shot nearly every month (18 were poached last year). Forest guards douse forest fires, often without protection, respond to human-wildlife conflict, walk beats which are bigger than that of a policeman, check illegal mining, combat flooding, plant trees, and deal with poachers who use arms rather than snares.

In Kaziranga, forest guards also face guns apart from these other duties. This does not justify killings. But it begs the question of how much the state is willing to do for them. It would be

unfashionable, but not inaccurate, to say that difficulties may be leading forest guards to shoot; this is possibly because of defence rather than indoctrination.

'Killing for Conservation' also says villagers, not poachers, have been killed for conservation. It asserts that people have been shot during eviction drives from the national park. Last year, two villagers were killed in an eviction drive. Crucially, these shots were fired by policemen. While they were done for the purpose of securing habitat, the method was not prescribed by conservation. Policemen shooting at unarmed protesters tragically occurs throughout the country, it is not dictated by conservation or specifically by the 'Kaziranga model of conservation'.

The real issue still burns

If we are to start solving some of conservations problems, we must stop reducing them to just gun battles. The state of stress in Kaziranga is different from that of other reserves, but sadly the problems faced by the forest guards are the same.

Many personnel in uniform — policemen, paramilitary forces, army men — have a tough time, and may be feeling demotivated or isolated. But the forest guard stands out in that his or her work is far from the public or societal gaze — or acceptance. There are barely any

witnesses to forest fires being put out, or averting the illegal killing of an animal. In the case of policemen or army men, 'supreme' sacrifices are depicted in an institutionalised manner, and through a consumable ceremony — a bust, a medal, a commemoration, a plaque — all state-sponsored.

Very few legends are created for forest guards. Protected areas are low on state priorities — and most tiger reserves run for all purposes on centrally sponsored funding. The levels of demoralisation in forest staff — even upwards of forest guards — are very high, compounded by the poor infrastructure they inherit.

In February this year, 28-year-old Murigeppa Tammangol was fighting a fire in Bandipur National Park. Forest guard Murigeppa died while trying to douse the flames. He didn't appear to have equipment — he was reportedly stomping out the fire. Three of his colleagues were injured.

The forest guard needs support. He or she needs guns, but also an institutional mechanism that will empower her more than a token arm. As it is wrong to judge Kaziranga's conservation efforts only on the numbers of rounds fired, it would also be wrong to imagine just a gun empowers a forest guard.

Neha Sinha is with the Bombay Natural History Society. Views expressed are personal

HOW TO TAME OUR FOREST FIRES

Bharath Sundaram

The bulk of forest fires in India occurs in the tropical dry forests of our country, an umbrella category encompassing scrub, savanna grassland, dry and moist-deciduous forests. Almost 70% of forests in India are composed of these types.

Recent research on the ecology and biogeographical origin of these forests indicates that fire occurrence and light availability are important factors that maintain the ecosystem. However, forest management still suffers from a colonial hangover intent on keeping production forestry systems free from fire in order to prevent the loss of 'stock'. It is no surprise, therefore, that even today, the aftermath of a forest fire is accompanied by reports of how trees in hundreds of acres have been 'destroyed'. Field ecological research, on the other hand, indicates that many tree species distinct to dry forests have co-evolved with fires and have developed fire-resistance features like thick, spongy bark, and can re-sprout from rootstock in response to fire.

Blanket ban woes

The roots of our current fire crisis lie squarely in the blanket implementation of a no-fire forest policy. This 'one-size-fits-all' approach of fire protection is perhaps incompatible with the

ecology of India's tropical dry forests. For example, the fires in Bandipur Tiger Reserve were immensely difficult to control because of ample fuel supplied by the alien invasive species *Lantana camara*. Recent ethnographic and empirical research from the neighbouring Biligiri Rangaswamy Tiger Reserve indicates that a no-fire policy was likely responsible for the spread of *Lantana* in the first place.

Additionally, frequent, low-intensity forest fires possibly prevented the proliferation of *Lantana* in the past, a time when fires were not yet anathema for forest managers. Tribal elders of the area predict that future forest fires will be difficult to control unless *Lantana* biomass is physically reduced first.

Are frequent, small forest fires preferable to infrequent, catastrophic fires? Forest-dwellers of the area clearly seem to favour the former. Findings from conventional scientific studies also support these insights from indigenous knowledge, and indicate that early dry season fires burn less hot, and are far less detrimental to vegetation than peak dry season fires which burn much hotter.

Who has the power to wield fire in India's tropical dry forests? The answer exposes the

fault lines among contesting groups of stakeholders. Forest dwellers set fire to forests to clear walking paths, to collect non-timber forest products like gooseberry and mahua flowers, and to encourage the fresh growth of grass for their livestock, and sometimes as a part of ritual practice.

Agriculturists set fire to hill forests so that the fertilising ash from fire washes down to their fields with the monsoon rains. For the forest dweller, therefore, fires have cultural and livelihood significance. The forest department, on the other hand, has historically prevented fire in order to protect timber stocks, and initiated a system of fire-lines around valuable timber 'compartments' or coupes. By burning the fire-lines before the onset of summer, forest fires, if they occurred, could be confined to a few compartments. More recently however, fire has been used as a management tool to increase the density of herbivores in tropical dry forests.

The logic for this kind of burning is also related to the creation of fresh grass, but this time for consumption by wild herbivores rather than by cattle. In a centralised, top-down hierarchical system, these two broad ways of wielding fire are clearly incompatible. By enacting legislation that made the setting of forest fires an offence, the forest department gradually legitimised one world view of forests as timber and wildlife production systems and ignored other world views that envisioned forests as cultural and livelihood spaces.

Instead of viewing forest fires as being purely destructive in nature, forest managers should perhaps expand their world view and be more inclusive to information from ecological and local knowledge systems that view fires as being both rejuvenating and revitalising.

Bharath Sundaram is an Assistant Professor in the School of Ecology and Environment Studies, Nalanda University

Enacting of a law but tolerating its infringement is worse than not enacting a law at all

- Justice Kuldeep Singh

While thinking of the present, the future should not be forgotten

-Supreme Court

IN FURTHERANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

By
R. K. Raghavan

Amid the din raised over the case involving the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) leader J. Jayalithaa, an important and recent ruling by the Supreme Court of India in an entirely different domain has gone virtually unnoticed. This judgment was in the cause of good public administration, a sector vital to economic development. The message that the top court possibly wanted to send through its order was that an honest civil servant can bank on the Court if blatant injustice has been done to him or her by an unfair executive.

Black money case

The judgment possibly took cognisance of the fact that over the years, the Indian bureaucracy has become a spineless structure that cannot stand up to unethical pressures by the Executive or the moneyed in society, thereby belying the worthy dream of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, free India's first Home Minister. It was the doughty Sardar's vision and resoluteness that ensured that efforts in some quarters in post-Independence India to abolish the centrally recruited and overseen All India Services did not succeed. The nation has greatly benefited from the continuance of the Indian Administrative Service

(IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS) in particular. Certain events since 1975, viz., the period post-Emergency, have however been the cause for dismay among those who have been looking for a professional, honest and independent civil service that would bolster an equally dedicated political class. It is against this backdrop that one should analyse the recent Supreme Court decision.

It all began in 2010 when V.S. Pandey, a senior IAS officer, Uttar Pradesh cadre, joined hands with Julio Ribeiro, the former police chief, and a few others, under the auspices of a non-governmental organisation-styled India Rejuvenation Initiative (IRI), to file a writ petition on the need to ferret out black money owned by Indians and stashed abroad. The petition culminated in the Supreme Court decision (2011) known as *Ram Jethmalani and Others vs the Union of India*. Reacting to this, Pandey was served a charge sheet by the U.P. government on five counts for alleged violation of four clauses of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968.

Charges, exoneration

The gravamen of the charge against Pandey was

that, in being a co-signatory to the said writ petition by Ribeiro and others, he had endorsed an affidavit by one Jasbeer Singh that was critical of some senior officers of the Government of India (mainly from the Enforcement Directorate). The charge sheet added that in not having obtained the government's permission before joining the said NGO and deposing in an inquiry where the Central and State governments were likely to be criticised, he had violated the conduct rules.

An enquiry officer appointed to look into the charges against Pandey exonerated him of all the charges on August 30, 2012. Strangely, a copy of this report of exoneration was not served on Pandey. On September 9, 2012, a selection committee that was considering cases of IAS officers in U.P. for promotion to the super timescale ignored Pandey's case, although he had been exonerated and was eligible for promotion. The committee's decision was in a sealed cover, a usual practice in respect of officers against whom disciplinary action was pending. Worse was to follow. The enquiry officer's finding was rejected by the U.P. government on September 26, 2012, on the ground that his report was cursory and that he had failed to properly investigate all relevant facts. The State government went on to invoke the Public Servants (Inquiries) Act, 1850 and appoint a two-member committee to look once more into the

charges against Pandey. Significantly, the State government's action came on the same day as the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) dismissing Pandey's appeal seeking his promotion. Following this, Pandey went to the Supreme Court on a writ that was recently disposed of by a bench comprising Justices Chelameswar and Sikri in favour of Pandey. In doing so, the judges made some comments on what was palpably an act of rancour and vindictiveness by the government. What was striking about this remarkable judicial order was the thoroughness with which the bench demolished each averment against Pandey.

Upholding an individual's right

First, the Court held that since Pandey never disputed the charges made against him, there were no facts to be investigated by the enquiry officer. Second, relying on the decision (1971) of the Supreme Court in *K.R. Deb vs Collector of Central Excise, Shillong*, the bench held that a second inquiry against Pandey was untenable. There could at best be a further inquiry, but not a second one on the same facts. And, in the Pandey case, the facts were such that a further inquiry was hardly warranted. As regards violation of a stipulation of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules that an officer could not depose before an individual, or committee or any other authority without the sanction of the government, the bench held that joining in

avermments made in a writ petition before a court was equivalent to taking part in a judicial process for which no citizen needed to get the government's nod. An individual's fundamental right did not get diminished just because he was a member of the civil service.

The two judges were categorical that this was a clear case of harassment of a hapless civil servant. ("The purpose behind the proceedings appears calculated to harass the appellant since he dared to point out certain aspects of mal administration ... The whole attempt appears to be to suppress any probe into the question of black money. A part of the strategy to intimidate not only the appellant but also to send a signal to others who might dare in future to expose any mal administration.") They did not also fail to notice that while the government chose to proceed against Pandey, it ignored the action of another official, Jasbeer Singh, who had filed an additional affidavit that was critical of the government. The bench allowed Pandey's petition and went beyond, to award him the costs involved. In doing so it said, "The requirement of (a) democratic republic is that every action of the State is to be informed with reason. State is not a hierarchy of regressively genuflecting coterie of bureaucracy."

The need for support

This landmark judicial order comes at a time when, in my view, an intimidated civil service

needs support. In many States, public servant morale is at its nadir and it requires the oxygen of an unequivocal imprimatur from the highest court of the land that would help to halt the hands of a meddling political class. Nothing else would bring about at least a marginal improvement to what is an undeniably appalling situation. Wide publicity to its salient features would go a long way in reinstilling courage into large sections of the bureaucracy which is baulking in fear of reprisal for its legitimate actions and has been coerced into condemnable passivity.

Civil servant independence in the country is at best nominal. Nonconformity even to spurn whimsical and arbitrary directives received from above is widely recognised as a very risky proposition. Signs of defiance are fraught with such serious consequences that even the most courageous civil servant thinks many times over before turning down even a palpably unethical and illegal direction. The few mavericks who display a semblance of remonstrance are heavily penalised so as to deter potential dissenters. It is this sordid state of affairs that convinces me that Justices Chelameshwar and Sikri will have to be hailed for coming squarely to the rescue of a hapless senior official of the U.P. government for his alleged intransigence. I view the judgment as bold and imaginative. It sends out a strong signal that the honest and

upright civil servant can depend on the higher judiciary for unequivocal support. Wide publicity to the facts of the case and details of the judgment is a must.

I am not pleading here for a total licence to honest civil servants to do whatever they want or indulge in intemperate criticism of a constitutionally installed government. What is required is a freedom to speak their minds in furtherance of good governance. I am happy that Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his first meeting with the Secretaries to the Union Government exhorted exactly this and made

himself available to hear them, especially when they were at loggerheads with their Ministers. There cannot be a better way to get the best out of each government official whatever be his status in the hierarchy. The Prime Minister's Office has again to be complimented for issuing a directive to the bureaucracy that it should not act on oral instructions. I am confident that this stand would greatly promote transparency and honesty in governance.

(R.K. Raghavan is a former CBI Director.)

ALMONDS-PROVEN HEALTH BENEFITS

1. Help Prevent Heart Disease and Heart Attacks
2. Support Healthy Brain Function
3. Maintain Skin Health
4. Help Control Blood Sugar Levels and Prevent Diabetes
5. Help with Weight Loss and Prevent Overeating
6. Increase Nutrient Absorption
7. Increase Digestive Health
8. Can Help Fight Cancer and Inflammation
9. Help Maintain Dental and Bone Health

1. Almonds Deliver a Massive Amount of Nutrient
2. Almonds Are Loaded With Antioxidants 3. Almonds Are High in Vitamin E, Which Protects Your Cell Membranes From Damage 4. Almonds Can Assist With Blood Sugar Control 5.

- Magnesium Also Has Benefits For Blood Pressure Levels 6. Almonds Can Lower Cholesterol Levels 7. Almonds Prevent Harmful Oxidation of LDL Cholesterol 8. Eating Almonds Reduces Hunger, Lowering Your Overall Calorie Intake 9. Almonds Are Incredibly Effective For Weight Loss

Why soaked almonds are better - Firstly, the brown peel of almonds contains tannin which inhibits nutrient absorption. Once you soak almonds the peel comes off easily and allows the nut to release all nutrients easily.

Dosage 30 grams per day with breakfast

Source: internet Collected and contributed by Sri. P.V. Krishna Murthy

NILAMBUR TEAK SET TO ENTER ELITE CLUB OF PRODUCTS WITH GI TAG

Mini Muring

The timber has superior mechanical and physical properties, besides an incomparable aesthetic appearance

Nilambur teak, internationally known for its superior quality and elegant appearance, will soon be added to the list of Kerala produces with the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

The effort to obtain the GI status for this unique timber variety, pioneered by the IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) Cell of the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) with the support of the Nilambur Teak Heritage Society, the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) and the Department of Forests, is set to bear fruit within a month.

It was the Britishers who identified the superior quality of teak from Nilambur plantations and forests. Later, the region became the major supplier of quality teak in the world.

Global appeal

As its fame crossed the seven seas, Nilambur was christened the Mecca of Teak. Tonnes of timber, blessed with superior mechanical and physical properties as well as incomparable aesthetic appearance, were taken to London and other parts of the world. The Nilambur-Shoranur Railway line was laid for transporting the teak logs.

However, fake products with false tags started flooding the wood/ furniture markets as the fame of Nilambur teak increased. Understanding the potential risk, the IPR Cell and the College of Forestry of Kerala Agricultural University motivated the people of Nilambur to protect

their rights legally, by registering the unique product as a Geographical Indication under the GI Act.

The Nilambur Teak Heritage Society joined hands with the Kerala Agricultural University to register Nilambur teak as a GI product of India. The IPR Cell of KAU coordinated the legal procedures. Scientific studies to validate the unique qualities of Nilambur teak were done at KAU's College of Forestry. The KFRI Centres at Peechi and Nilambur and the Kerala Forest Department also supported the venture.

The preparations for registering Nilambur teak were initiated with a workshop of stakeholders organised by KAU in 2013. The application for GI registration was submitted to the GI Registry, Chennai, in December 2015. The modalities completed, the formality of bestowing the GI tag on Nilambur teak is expected at the next sitting of the Registry, according to KAU sources. Members of Nilambur Teak Heritage Society, Coordinator of KAU's IPR Cell and experts from the College of Forestry have been asked to attend the sitting at the GI Registry, scheduled for the end of February.

GI registration of Pokkali rice, one of the first Kerala produces to get the GI tag, meanwhile, has been renewed. Other Kerala products with GI registration include Vazhakulam Pineapple, Wayanadan rice varieties Jeerakasala and Gandhakasala, Tirur Betel vine, Central Travancore Jaggery and Chengalikodan Nendran, a banana variety.

NILGAI RAKSHA

By
Lt.Gen. (rtd) Baljit Singh

With drought-like conditions across India over the last three years, both man and beast have been in various degrees of distress. While human beings can leverage science, technology, diplomacy, or commerce to alleviate their predicament, wild animals have no such option.

So when the Environment Minister issued a fiat to “shoot at sight” the blue bull in Bihar, because their depredations in cropped fields were adding to farmers’ distress, did he nor remember that his mandate is also to ensure the protection of our forests and the creatures to inhabit them? And when the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 has “prohibited hunting” (it came into force in 1973), how does the minister empower “professional hunters” to do his bidding? How this breed of so-called “professionals” been allowed to exist for the past five decades when the law of the land does not envision hunting?

The blue bull is in fact categorized as an antelope, the largest of all antelopes on the planet. In the process of evolution, this exceptional antelope was confined to the Indian Subcontinent.

It was hunted to extinction in Pakistan by the

end of the last century, according to wildlife expert T.J. Roberts. In the event, India’s blue bull emerges as a frontrunner for the ‘living world heritage’ status, As I have suggested in an earlier article . Axiomatically, it implies that the blue bull must be ensured right to life in the wild.

The fact that the antelope fared much better in India is not out of pride arising from this animal’s endemic status. Rather, the saving grace for this magnificent antelope its old vernacular name ‘nil-gai’, which is linked it to ‘gao mata’, the mother cow. As the cow is held sacred by many in India, no one would take its life willfully. But now the Chief Minister of Haryana wants its name changed to rojh.

The minister defends its culling of the nilgai as a modern practice by all enlightened governments to keep the numbers of a wild species in consonance with the carrying capacity of its habitat. Even if we give the minister the benefit of doubt for his misplaced policy decision, does he have an answer to what the optimum numbers of blue bulls in Bihar should be? Did it not occur to his advisers to ask how many bulls need to be culled and, more

importantly, how many females should be culled per male to help curb the procreative cycle?

When Mao Zedong devised a similar strategy to boost agricultural production by exterminating house sparrows first, followed by the tiger, the free world termed it as an act of megalomaniac. Nevertheless, the house sparrow ceased to exist in China as also the tiger (except in state sponsored breeding farms) but their extermination did not add an ounce of China's bread basket.

Over time, the blue bull has become grazer of farming lands, but if it is given the soft, fresh leaves of the baer tree, the sheesham, the kikar and the khair to browse on, it will gladly give up grazing altogether. Unfortunately, those native

trees have lost out to quick-growing soo-babul, the poplar and the eucalyptus, none of which can sustain the nilgai. If we cannot sustain the forest habitats of wild animals, perhaps what we need is a welfare state that will come up with comprehensive crop insurance that addresses the damage to farmers.

After all if a non-governmental organization like the World Wide Fund for Nature in India can create a corpus fund to compensate in cash the predation on domestic animals by tiger, surely the state can follow suit.

NOTE:-*The author is passionate about nature and wildlife conservation and has served two terms as trustee of WWF- India. The article is first published in The Hindu (Sunday magazine) dated July 24, 2016*

You Cannot Change Your Future, but, You Can Change Your Habits, and Surely Your Habits Will Change Your Future

“Without your involvement you cannot succeed with your involvement you cannot fail”.

“Be more dedicated to make solid achievements than in running after swift but synthetic happiness”.

“Without your involvement you cannot succeed with your involvement you cannot fail”.

WILD FIRES IN P.As – TO WORRY OR TO CHALLENGE WITH SOLUTIONS!

By

B.M.T.Rajeev

A huge fire happened on 18th of Feb, 2017 in Bandipur TR and devoured huge junk of forests in three of its Ranges and continued for 2-3 days and took the toll of a young Forest Guard who was caught in the middle of a swirling windy blaze of burning Lantana bushes while fighting fire; and three more personnel sustained severe burn injuries and hospitalized. The summer in Karnataka was so severe even in February, 2017 that the wild fire incidences occurred even in the rain forests of Mukanbika WLS, Bhimaghada WLS, Bhadra TR and Kappathagudda WLS (A dry belt) within a week and became night mare to wildlifers. All these fires and public cry against fires forced the GoK to cause for unseating the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWW) for no fault of him. There was some relief from nature in March, 2017 due to summer rains in parts of Karnataka.

Introduction: The Wildlife Management in Tiger Reserves (TRs) of India remained and continued to remain with commitment to the policy of 'Project Tiger 1973' (PT)... 'non-interference with the vegetation... leave it to nature to take its own course... to ensure total protection against disturbances to vegetation and animals from human and fire; and the same strategies applied for the Protected Areas (PAs) net works too. This policy was made water tight with banning of harvest of dried, diseased, dying and fallen trees

including grass and also the drift wood from wind / water from NPs or PAs as per the orders of the Hon'ble SC in WP 202/1995 in IAs 548, 994 & 1120. But, no research data is available to substantiate this policy/ stand that 'the wildlife habitats have to be left to nature without interference or manipulations for ever'.



Pic: A tigress with its cubs in a water hole, By: M N Jayakumar,

Let us see the principles of Project Tiger.

- Elimination of all forms of human exploitation and biotic disturbance from the core area and rationalization of activities in the [buffer zone](#)
- Restricting the habitat management only to repair the damages done to the [ecosystem](#) by human and other interferences so as to facilitate recovery of the ecosystem to its natural state
- Monitoring the faunal and floral changes over time and carrying out research about wildlife

Analysis of the above principles in Karnataka: The principle no. one, is followed in total, but the rationalization of activities in the buffer zone was neglected without taking corrective measures either to assist the degraded habitats to rejuvenate or to manipulate the habitats if found to be not conducive in meeting the diverse requirements of the animals for food, shelter and space.

The principle no. two- habitat management was never initiated and the authorities did not made any assessment of the ecosystems; whether they have reached the stages what they were before the interference of human; or Made a plan to look, what are the stages of ecosystems expected to be in mountains/hills, rain forests, deciduous forests, scrub jungles, grass lands and water bodies etc after they recover due to the policy, non- interference of human; or did not fix what stages of habitats/ ecosystems the diverse wild animals need to meet their diverse food, shelter and space for spread of their genes. Consequently, different habitats reached the various stages of succession and some to climax. The ecosystems in climax, present the grey trees, weeds and the condition of no regeneration of tree spp / fodder grasses etc . E.g;TRs in Karnataka/ Bandipur.

The principle no. three is followed and limited to census of wild animals and periodical floral assessment was neglected and left to nature in the TRs of Karnataka, without data, none can interpret and say what was present, what has happened and to project what is needed in a conducive wildlife habitat.. E.g.Bandipur TR.

However, all care was taken to provide rigid protection against poaching of bio-products and wild animals and forest fires with creation of water holes to provide water resources to the animals within the cruising reach of 2 km radius for all animals. The TRs including PAs, shown tremendous improvement in terms of vegetative succession and in the population of wild animals with improved water regimes. The PT celebrated its success stories on completion of one decade, two decades and Silver jubilee. Then the problem of uncontrolled poaching of tigers and reduction in the population of tigers struck a blow to TRs in 2006 in India and not in Karnataka and forced the Gol to form National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to monitor PT with higher allocations.

With the policy of non-interference with the vegetation and rigid protection given; most of the vegetations in TRs and PAs progressed towards succession and some attained climatic climax, secondary climax and some are in pre-climax. The vegetative succession in climax -a stage of graying of trees brimmed with multiplied stock of dead wood trees/ dead bamboo; and went on causing accumulation of Dead Fuel Wood Load (DFWL)- an inflammable material to blow up when accidental fire occurred.



Pic: File photo of flowered and dead bamboo in Bandipur TR, 2013

In the meanwhile, the exotic weeds like Lantana camara, Eupatorium odoratum and Parthenium hysterophorus (L, Eu & P) and some indigenous weeds went on occupying the forest floors affecting the regeneration of trees and grasses in some PAs. The incendiary forest fires, become uncontrollable due to accumulated DFWL being aggravated by ever rising atmospheric temperature in summers, repeated failure of rains and occurrence of droughts on account of 'Global Warming' and caught the wildlife managers (Wildlifers) napping with complacency with the dawn of 21st century.



Pic: Photo showing the infested exotic weeds- L, Eu & P in Bandipur TR, 2008

Wild fires in PAs:

The vegetative conditions of the habitats in the famous TRs like Bhadra, BRT Hills, Nagarahole and Bandipur in Y2Ks remained vulnerable for ignition and faced worst fires accidentally occurred in 2003, 2010, 2012 and 2014 respectively, due to accumulated DFWL of gregariously flowered and dead bamboo in these TRs; and also in the Settihalli WLS in 2014; and suffered severe damages to the flora and fauna.

Again a huge fire happened on 18th of Feb, 2017 in Bandipur TR and devoured huge junk of forests in three of its Ranges and continued for 2-3 days and took the toll of a young Forest Guard who was caught in the middle of a swirling windy blaze of burning Lantana bushes while fighting fire; and three more personnel sustained severe burn injuries and hospitalized.

The summer in Karnataka was so severe even in February, 2017 that the wild fire incidences occurred even in the rain forests of Mukanbika WLS, Bhimaghad WLS, Bhadra TR and Kappathagudda WLS (A dry belt) within a week and became night mare to wildlifers. All these fires and public cry against these fires forced the GoK to cause for action against the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWW) and transferred for no fault of him. There was some relief from nature in March, 2017 due to summer rains in parts of Karnataka

The present fires are described as worst fires: The fires in PAs are causing severe damage to life forms of fauna- eggs and young/ small ones of varieties of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and scores of invertebrates and microorganisms that could not run, fly and escape from the blaze; and the life forms of flora- seeds and young/ small seedlings/ saplings of varieties of lichens, orchids, grasses, bushes, climbers, and trees including over matured and partly dead trees in addition to DFWL accumulated on forest floor. The DFWL in broad leaved forests causes dumps

of ash of devoured vegetative forms especially in deciduous forests after fires. Even rain forests are not an exception if DFWL is accumulated more. Eg: photographs of dead birds, langurs etc were reported by the press in Bandipur TR.



Pic: File photo of fire burnt area in Nagarahole TR, 2012

The question arises, were there not forest fires in the past?

Yes there were forest fires in the past. There was a huge fire in as far back as in 1965 in the rain forests of Western Ghats- Bhagavathi valley in Chickmagalur district. It was fought and brought under control and fire controlling measures were emancipated. The incendiary fires were fought and brought under control as and when occurred. The fires became conspicuous after the formation of PAs net work in 1973. Because, the burning debris of inflammable material like dead leaves, dead grasses and fallen dead twigs/ dead trees went on accumulating year after year due to ban of cattle grazing, removal of dead and fallen trees / fuel wood from PAs and control/absence of annual fires.

There were big fires in 1978, 1980s and so on in Bandipur TR and a huge fire in 1993 in Nagarahole TR. These fires were ground fires limited to

burning of dried grasses, fallen leaves, twigs and accumulated peat since there was no pile of DFWL since the TRs were under silvicultural system of selection and clear felling/ planting practices with harvest of matured and dead and fallen trees till 1976-77. The fire burnt areas use to reequipped fast in terms of vegetation till Y2K. The other advantage was, the exotic weeds were in infancy and the forest floors were open to check fires by staff and free to replenish immediately after rains.

What are the reasons for the present catastrophe of forest fires?

The non-interference with the vegetation of PAs was implemented in total in Karnataka since, 19973; whereas the neighbouring states like- Kerala & Tamil Nadu continued to remove dead and fallen trees/ flowered bamboo from the PAs till the ban form SC in Y2Ks basing on IAs to WP No.202/1995.

The non-interference with habitats policy in PAs of Karnataka advanced the vegetative succession to climax, accumulation of DFWL, overcrowding of teak plantations/ canopies, infestation of exotic weeds- L, Eu & P by Y2Ks and the Global Warming compounded the reasons for the uncontrollable wild fires.

What is our present fire management practice in PAs?

Right from inception of protected area net works and the TRs- Annual formation of fire lines of 10m wide and fire tracing is in practice. The fire lines are formed along roads, view lines, D.lines of the RFs and check lines across wind at strategic places to divide habitats in to blocks to check and control the accidental fires within

the block is followed. The fire lines are re-cleared every year in winter and fire traced before summer starts. Fire watchers are deployed with staff to watch and douse the fires as and when found with provision of facilities well in advance like roads, watch towers, vehicles, wireless communication network, firefighting squads and also to call fire brigades if found feasible under the direct supervision of officers etc. This was the plan since from the beginning of the PAs network and the TRs 1973; and there were no inputs basing on research or borrowed policies except providing some fire fighting implements and gadgets and improved funds.

Why the present fire management Practices are not working?

The present plan of fire protection measures in PAs are not working; because, they are as old as 4 ½ decades in the changed situation of accumulation of DFWL and the menace of exotic weeds and ever increasing temperature due to global warming. The relook is necessary to evaluate our old fire protection measures in comparison with our national fire management policy and the practices prevailing in developed countries. Hence, the need for relook of our fire management practices to challenge with workable solutions without worrying and wasting time.

Let us compare our fire management policy with other countries in PAs.

We are in the region of tropics, sub-tropics with montane sub-tropics/ alpine forest regions in the northern hemisphere and we have to look in to fire management followed in the regions of similar geo-positions like SEA and African

regions. European and Mediterranean regions are with coniferous forests and their fire management differs from us in tropics but, it hold good for Himalayan regions. Australian forests are dominated by Eucalypts and conditions are similar to our forests in fire risks as it has tropics similar to us in southern hemisphere.

South East Asian countries have rain forests and they indulge in burning the rain forests than controlling the forest fires in favour of agriculture.

Let us see the written fire management policies....

i. Fire management policy in India

India's National Forest Policy (1988) presents a visionary strategy for forest conservation and management and emphasizes protection of forests against encroachment, fire, and grazing. Government of India has prepared a National Master Plan for Forest Fire Control. This plan proposes to introduce a well-coordinated and integrated fire-management programme that includes the following components:

- Prevention of human-caused fires through education and environmental modification. It will include silvicultural activities, engineering works, people participation, and education and enforcement. It is proposed that more emphasis be given to people participation through Joint Forest Fire Management for fire prevention.

- Prompt detection of fires through a well coordinated network of observation points, efficient ground patrolling, and communication networks. Remote sensing technology is to be given due importance in fire detection. For successful fire management and administration, a National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) and Fire Forecasting System are to be developed in the country.
- Fast initial attack measures.
- Vigorous follow up action.
- Introducing a forest fuel modification system at strategic points.
- Fire fighting resources.

Note: Careful reading of the above six key principles of the written policy of fire management in India and the practices being followed in Indian PAs; it implies.. i) Silvicultural activities for environmental modification... as per principle no. one is forgotten in the PAs ie keeping the forests in vigorous condition without allowing it to become gray or reach climax has been neglected. ii) Forest fuel modification system at strategic points... as per principle no-5 is also neglected in PAs- i.e. that fuel wood load in fire hazardous areas has to be modified or removed. These are the two conditions that are causing for the accumulation of DFWL causing heart

burn in controlling wild fires in PAs of Karnataka.

ii) Fire management in Australia: the lessons of 200 years

Ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM) is the government policy in Australia. Five key ESFM principles are: maintenance of all ecological communities and processes; public accountability; maintenance of ecosystem health and vitality by reducing threats from diseases, weeds and unnatural fire regimes; the precautionary principle; and adaptive management.

Australia- a Known country for bush fires- since, bushes/ grasses stand dried in summer and if once fire caught means, a disaster. They follow the system of controlled patch burning well in advance in winter in Kakadu NP/ Katherine NP- Northern territory; where the forest areas are more than the human habitations as seen in 1994 by Author. A total control of fires method is observed in Tasmania and Victoria states of Australia as seen during the visit in summer of 2017, where, fire risk looks similar in forests as well as in human habitations since most of the farms are cattle/ sheep rearing farms with full of grass that remains dried/prone for bush fires in summer. In a drive in car for more than 1,500 km crisscrossing vast area in summer, I did not see any fire burnt area except a patch of pines plantation in Tasmania in the foot hills & fire controlled. Hence, people are more interested in controlling fire and cooperate with the government in controlling incendiary fires.

iii) Fire management in African countries-

Kenya is on equator and a tropical country with high density of wildlife. It follows the policy of USA in fire management as seen by the author in his visit in 2011 to the famous Masaimara NR. Nakura NP etc where fire lines are formed and fire traced in advance and accidental fire-controlled by fighting. Let us learn about **the fire management policy in US, America?**

US suffered heavy toll in the worst wild fires of 1988 occurred in Yellowstone NP, which burnt from mid July to mid of Sept, till snow fall started in spite of involving military and continuously fire fighting by spending huge cost. Yellowstone NP is 10 times bigger than Bandipur TR (800 sqkm) and it was said to be burnt 1/3 of its area in fire in addition to loss of buildings/ property. It has naturally reequipped after fire- the nature of pines forests. After this disaster, they formed a commission and brought out a comprehensive fire management policy in 1993.

Federal Forest Fire Policy of the United States:

- Restate the objectives of fuels management programs to be the reduction of potential fire behavior and effects.
- Adopt policies and programs that are straightforward and pragmatic and also reflect awareness of and sensitivity to their environmental and social impacts.
- Improve the budgeting process for both fuels management and fire suppression to ensure funding sufficient to achieve overall and annual program objectives.

- Initiate a vigorous adaptive management program that utilizes a rigorous program of monitoring , experimentation , a n d research to improve fire and fuels management policies, strategies, and projects. Create a national accounting system to collect accurate information on the location, costs, and effectiveness of fuels treatments.

- Periodically evaluate particular strategies and progress toward the overall objective of reducing potential fire behavior and effects. Have independent scientific panels conduct the reviews, with the results and any recommendations transmitted to the government for consideration by the executive and legislative branches.

- Utilize and publicize the results of adaptive management to educate land managers, other agencies, elected officials, scientists, and the public.

Note: In the above six policy principles, nos. 3 and 4 emphasizes the fuel management ie reduction of DFWL from the fire risky areas to deal with wild fires effectively.

The US follow the policy of mechanical removal of DFWL and formation of fire breaks in the area suspected to be fire hazardous, advance spot burning, and fight out the fire, if occurred successfully. The park Manger is given fully authority to deal with financial support and he has to submit a report of compliance to the council of representatives as seen by the author in Yellowstone NP in 1911.

Conclusion:

The fire management in PAs in Karnataka is in peril with fear for any concrete measures to put an end to the catastrophic wild fires year after year. The GoK is the authority to detect and control wild fires effectively with financial assistance from Gol and the CWW is the authority in State. The Gol is an authority to decide on policy matters and provide funds for fire management and has a DIGF for the purpose. In spite of the fire management policy to initiate silvicultural practices to reduce fuel wood loads in fire risky areas in advance to control wild fires, the DIGF office has ignored to file an objection for the IAs made under WP no. 202/1995 in the Supreme Court seeking ban against the removal of dried, dying, diseased and fallen trees and grass/ bamboo from PAs; and the CWWs of all the states also remained silent for the notices issued from the SC. The SC unilaterally passed order by obtaining opinion of the Central Empowered Committee appointed by it. This complacency on the part of the authorities forced them to allow the accumulation of DFWL in PAs that has made wild fires uncontrollable in PAs like in Karnataka being aggravated by infested L, Eu, & P and global warming. The wild fires automatically became night mares to wildlifers.

The DIGF, fire management of Gol and the CWW, GoK both have responsibility to find a solution for the catastrophic wild fires; and to move the SC to get the stay against removal of DFWL from PAs vacated and see that the fire hazardous

DFWL is reduced in fire hazardous spots of PAs in advance to put an end to wild fires. The formation of fire lines also needs to relook as follows;

- i) Formation of straight fire lines North to South and East to West with compartmentisation of the PAs to limit fires within a block by dispensing curved fire lines; since, fire runs east to west in summer along the wind.
- ii) Fire lines have to be limited to D lines of RFs and not to run along vehicle tracts like snakes.
- iii) Formation of wide fire breaks north to south - 50 m or 75 m wide at strategic intervals to check the wild fires if occurred and also to serve as oasis for grazing of herbivores/ observation.
- iv) Formation of a base line road with asphaltting to run in the center of all PAs for fast moving of the vehicles including fire brigades during fire season and also to facilitate for reduction of DFWL from fire risky areas in advance/ for easy monitoring / patrolling etc. This will serve as fire break with fire lines on either side. Eg: Tiger Road from Bandipur to Gundre in Bandipur TR.
- v) Patch burning of the fire risky areas in winter after removing DFWL to break the continuity of fire if occurred in summer.

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NEWS AND NOTES

Rhinos are protected at the cost of human beings?

Kazhiranga National Park over an extent of 430 sq.km, a world heritage, is in the news over a documentary made by the BBC. It is alleged that the Forest Guards are given powers to shoot and kill a poacher. This allegation is denied by the Forest Department. Rhinos are protected at the cost of poachers? Mr. Rowlatt made this allegation in the introduction of the documentary. Angered by the incorrect statement of Mr. Rowlatt, the MoEF & CC urged the MEA to revoke the visa of Mr. Rowlatt and his crew and prevent their entry into India for at least five years. The population of Indian Rhinos has increased to 2400. Rhinos are killed by poachers for their horn which is in demand in China and West Asia. Forest Officers of Assam feel that conservation of Rhinos is a major challenge with poachers to kill the animal looking for every opportunity.

Raising of Civet by TTD:

'Kasturi' or Musk is an essential ingredient for a particular *Abhishekam* to Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala Hills. 'Kastturi' otherwise known as 'Pungu' is a secretion from pereneal gland of Indian Civet. For the purpose of having their own source of supply, the TTD wanted to rear a pair of

civet; but the Forest Department objected to the raising of civets as it is opposed to the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act. The TTD was prepared to provide for the project for raising the civets in the Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park at Tirupathi, and the maintenance would be done by the Forest Wing of the TTD; but either side is unable to decide who should raise the animals and collect the musk. The problem remains without solution.

Conservation Zone within the University of Hyderabad:

University of Hyderabad is lately in the news. Within a fortnight between February and March, two instances of animal carcasses were found in the premises of the University.. According to the data furnished by the Forest Department, there are over 30 instances of animal carcasses being found in the last 2 years. Frequent among these are spotted deer, hare, peafowl, wild boar, porcupine and monitor lizard. The campus has 2200 acres of land and it offers shelter to a wide variety of wild animals which include 10 mammals, 15 reptiles and 159 bird species. There was uncontrolled check on the poachers and stray dogs. It is gratifying to note that there are research scholars interested in wildlife

protection. The University is not able to provide for guarding the area where the wild animals keep moving. The Vice Chancellor said the conservation zone would be demarcated on about 400 acres. The Forest Officers suggested to make provision for water resource. The University authorities will hopefully realize that protection of wild animals is a constitutional obligation of every citizen of the country and more so of the forest officers to guide the University in their conservation effort.

A person having only two legs and no arms:

Sebastian Selvanayagi, a Tamil girl of Sri Lanka, lost her arms at the age of 15 during Lanka's war in the intense shelling, 27 years ago. She was at the time preparing to take her class X exam. She did programming and data entry work. She has an office assistant who helps her in switching on the system. Ms. Selvanayagi, now 42, sits down and quietly types the pass-word with her toe. She has been typing for more than 20 years

placing the key board under the table with her toes. She pursued computer science at the Open University and upgraded her skills. Three years after the war ended, she went to Chennai to try out prosthetic limbs but they did not work. She manages her task with full time help from a care taker and her father's friends. She takes classes as part of the National Vocations Qualification programme. She is determined to work and fend for herself. She survived in the war without arms but works with toes on the key board.

Ek jhalak of Dakhani Urdu in Poetry

Buzdil hai voh jeete ji marney se dar gaya

Mayich tha jo kaam kuch our kar gaya

Jab mout aako karne lagi mujhko salam

My bola valekum salam aur mar gaya

(It is coward, he who fears death, when still alive

It was but me who did something else

When death came to me and did salam

I said valekum salam and promptly died.)

Biodiversity : We should protect biodiversity purely because no moral legal and ethical rights exist to destroy somethin not created by us.

Birthday Greetings

We wish the following born on the dates mentioned
“ A very Happy Birth Day ”

S.No.	Name of the member	D.O.B.		
	Sarva Sri		7.	M.J Akbar 26-04-1962
1.	Iqbal Singh	09-04-1953	8.	R.U Kasappa 01-05-1958
2.	V. Subbaraghavaiah	10-04-1935	9.	Kallol Biswas 04-05-1964
3.	S. Mahadev	10-04-1951	10.	P.MallikarjunRao 04-05-1958
4.	S.Krishnaiah	15-04-1952	11.	G.Kista Goud 08-04-1974
5.	J.V.K.T Prabakar Rao	15-04-1953	12.	B.Raja Rao 12-04-1965
6.	S.Veerabhadram	17-04-1950	13.	L.Bheemaiah 17-04-1963
7.	S.V.Kumar	21-04-1953	14.	K.Rajasekhara Rao 20-04-1968
6.	K.N. Benarji	26-04-1954	15.	C.Sreedhara Rao 24-04-1965
10.	N.Manohar Rao	01-05-1942	16.	B.Vijay Kumar 24-04-1968
11.	D.Basava Sankara Rao	01-05-1954	17.	P.Venkateshwarlu 01-05-1962
12.	C. Sammi Reddy	01-05-1951	18.	R. Hanumantha Rao 01-05-1961
13.	K.Prabhu Prasad	02-05-1946	19.	B.Nagaraju 01-05-1963
14.	G.Prabhakar Reddy	02-05-1952	20.	P.Sagar 03-05-1964
15.	P.Kanaka Ratnam	05-05-1949	21.	M.Joji 04-05-1967
16.	G.Satya Narayana	05-05-1950	22.	T.Sreenivasa Rao 04-05-1969

S.No.	Name of Serving Officers	D.O.B.
1.	Ms. Nandani Salera	06-04-1988
2.	Dr.Shanthi Priya Pandey	08-04-1972
3.	R.M. Dobriyal	10-04-1965
4.	R. Jagannath Singh	18-04-1985
5.	B.N.N Murthy	19-04-1979
8.	M. Siva Prasad	20-04-1981
9.	C. Selvam	20-04-1986



Secretary

LEGAL NOTES

M/s Gupta Exports Vs. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, T.N and anr.

The Petitioner, a partnership firm dealing in processing and export of sandal wood, participated in an auction of sandal wood held by the District Forest Officer, Tirupathur on 28.04.1999 and was successful bidder in respect of 15 metric tons of sandal wood for a bid amount of Rs. 51,29,000. The firm paid Rs. 1,00,000 towards EMD and a further sum of Rs. 10,36,500 towards 20% of the sale amount. The buyer firm claimed that they purchased sandal wood for meeting an export order from Hong Kong and that they are entitled to exemption from payment of sales tax under Sec. 5 (3) of the Central Sales Tax Act.

The sale was confirmed by order dated 16.05.1999. The firm was asked to pay certain amount together with sales tax of Rs. 4,11,346. The buyer was prepared to pay all amounts but not sales tax as there is exemption if the sandal wood is meant to be exported. When the Forest Department insisted on payment of sales tax, the buyer firm filed W.P. No. 15094/1999 and the High Court of Madras passed order to the effect that, if the sandal wood is meant to be exported, the DFO may consider the claim and pass appropriate order within a month.

In the face of the order of the High Court in the writ petition, the DFO issued a notice for payment of all amounts including sales tax within seven days. The amount that was demanded to be paid was the balance sale amount, penal interest, and demurrage as per the sale conditions. Further, the firm was asked to produce Foreign Buyer agreement for seeking exemption from payment of sales tax. A time limit of three months for producing documents was stipulated.

Following the demand from the DFO for payment of amounts, there was prolonged correspondence between the Forest Department and the firm, each side insisting on their respective contention. Finally the DFO passed an order on 23.01.2000 forfeiting the amounts already paid. The legality and validity of the order was questioned in W.P. No. 14418/2000 filed before the High Court of Madras.

According to a letter dated 16.09.1998 of the Special Commissioner and Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, produced before the Court by the Counsel for the Petitioner. For giving the benefit of exemption from payment of the sales tax, claim has to be made by the Forest Department in Form A-10 along with documentary proof. As a precondition, the

Forest Department may accept a bank guarantee and a time limit of three months may be fixed for getting the documentary proof from the foreign buyer along with Form H. When the H-Form etc. are presented to the Assessment Officer by the Forest Department, exemption can be granted and the bank guarantee can be returned. The elaborate procedure has to be followed by the Forest Department to give the benefit of tax exemption.

In the peculiar circumstances of the case, The Hon'ble Justice Sri P.K. Misra heard the rival contentions and found that the action of the DFO is not justified. Taking into consideration the correspondence between the Petitioner and the DFO, the court passed the following order:

1. The order regarding the forfeiture of the amounts is quashed.
2. The Petitioner should furnish a bank guarantee to meet the eventual liability of sales tax, if any, such bank guarantee should be for one year.

3. The petitioner is further required to make payments as indicated in the confirmation letter except the direction regarding payment of sales tax. The bank guarantee and payments should be completed within a period of one month.

4. If the aforesaid conditions are complied with, the Forest Department should deliver the goods within a period of one month from the date of furnishing bank guarantee. There shall be no demand for payment of demurrage.

5. The Petitioner should establish that it is not liable to pay the sale tax and it should be completed within five months from the date of judgment. If the petitioner is not able to establish their right to exemption, the Respondents may enforce the bank guarantee.

Subject to compliance of the aforesaid conditions by the petitioner, the writ petition is allowed without costs on 25.10.2002

Source:Internet

K.B.R

We must learn from the experiences of the past to make both the present and future brighter. We learn from experiences, mistakes from the past, so that they can be rectified for a better present and the future. It can not be lost sight of that while today is yesterday's tomorrow, it is tomorrow's yesterday

- Supreme Court

BOOK REVIEW

The Nallmalas – Emerald Paradise: Authored by Dasu Kesava Rao and Published by the Forest Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh. Price Not quoted.

Books on forests and forest tribes are rarely written. Sri Dasu Kesava Rao, an experienced journalist, by the publication under review, has filled the void. The book encapsulates very important aspects of the Nallamala region. It all began, forty years ago, when he toured Rampachowdaram forest where the legend patriot had sown the seed for fighting against the British for freedom of the country. He lost the way and went to police for help; but the cops mistook him for a naxalite. His pleading that he has nothing to do with naxalites, the police people were not satisfied. They asked for proof of identity. Fortunately his Identity Card of a Journalist lying in his pocket saved him from the predicament. Ever since, he got interested in the forests. His father was an employee of the Singareni Collieries at Kothagudem. That gave him an opportunity to visit forests around. His love for Mother Nature ever started growing. He was inspired by the writings of P.G. Wodehouse and tales of adventure by Kenneth Anderson.

While admiring the beauty of the forest and wildlife, Kesava Rao, got interested in the forest tribes, mostly Chenchus of Atmakur in Kurnool district. He describes in the book his observations about the forest and its denizens. He feels privileged to see large number of Great Indian Bustard. He also mentioned many anecdotes relating to the tribals, their living conditions and their age-old practice of being gatherers and hunters. Mr. Rao also made study of other tribes like Gonds, Koyas, Konda Reddis, Kolams etc of

other districts. The book is an insider's story. The author has done well in making the book interesting to tourists. He made a particular reference to Two Pillared Bagoda Bridge of Nandyal. The narration of the author's active involvement in the rehabilitation work following cyclone is informative.

Dasu Kesava Rao's study is not only confined to trees, animals, valleys, streams and rivers, biodiversity, shrines and spiritualism, beautifully described but also the arduous nature of duties of foresters living in remote and inhospitable areas. They work with dedication day in day out against all odds risking their life from smugglers and poachers. The author has done a commendable job by including ancient stories like Arunasura's death, Gundla Brahmeswaram, Maha Nandi and the celebration of Sivarathri. A good suggestion is made to protect some important heritage spots

Added to the aptitude of the author as a journalist, his posting by **The Hindu** as a "Roving Correspondent" for Rayalaseema was helpful in his study and recording all about Nallmalas. In all humility the author has called his work as Coffee Table Book. Many stories have been woven on Chenchus. The Front Cover Page is very well designed with the title of the book and portrait of a tiger in the background. The book is eminently readable by foresters, wildlife enthusiasts, nature lovers, bird watchers etc.

Sri Ramesh Kalaghatgi, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force of Andhra Pradesh State, deserves kudos for his encouragement to the author and for publishing the book.

K.B.R



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