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ISSN: 2584-2633

VANA PREMI

Nav Se Nawvey Saal Tak Ke Bachhon Ka Saathi

Life Time Subscription - Rs.7500/- | Published Since 1994 | Single Copy Rs. 75/-

Vol.27 | JANUARAY - 2026 | No.01

Vanapremi wishes its readers
' A Happy New Year 2026
& Makara Sankranti'

Asian Barred Owlet

(A symbol of Prosperity & Wisdom)

Photo credit: Sri.Bhola Datt Suyal, IFS (Retd)

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS, TELANGANA & ANDHRA PRADESH
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TELANGANA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Ltd

DECCAN WOODS AND TRAILS

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- The TGFDC has undertaken the ambitious task of developing Eco-Tourism activities within the State. Existing attractions open to the public include the Botanical Garden, Vruksha Parichaya Kshetram, Virtual Wildlife Safari and Pala Pitta Cycling Park in Kondapur, the Mahavir Nischalvan Eco-Tourism Centre in Vanasthalipuram, Aranya at the Shameerpet Deer Park, and Mrugavani at the Chilkur National Park. These initiatives are proving to be highly appealing, resulting in a growing influx of visitors.
- The TGFDC has also developed urban parks at Lalgadi Malakpet (Vanadrushyam), Thumkunta (Veduru Vanam), Gowdelli (Chandanavanam), and within the Chilkur Reserve Forest (Forestrek Park).
- The TGFDC has introduced new commercial species within the Regional Ring Road region, including Seethaphal, Sandalwood, Red Sandalwood, Rosewood, Teak, and *Casuarina Junghuhniana*, among others.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives 2021–2025: Empowering lives through the distribution of three-wheeler scooters to the differently-abled, support to schools with sports kits and furniture, and establishment of modern pre-fab health sub-centers — driving inclusive growth with care, commitment, and compassion.
- Eco-Tourism projects have been launched at various locations under the brand name of "Deccan Woods & Trails".

Smt. Sunita M. Bhagwat, IFS
Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Vice Chairman & Managing Director (FAC)
Telangana Forest Development Corporation Ltd.,
(A Government of Telangana Undertaking)

VANAPREMI

Vol. : 27 **JANUARY - 2026** **No.01**

An English monthly on forestry, wildlife, environmental issues, and topics of general interest that blends in-depth knowledge with engaging content for all age groups.

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From the Editor's Desk...

Dear readers, wish you a Happy and Healthy New Year 2026.

New year, new beginning, new resolutions, everything new. It's time to rejoice the achievements of last year, and also time to reflect on what hasn't gone well; and resolve afresh to do well this time over. It is said that New Year resolutions fade away by the middle of January. I hope it's not the case this time around.

January is full of festivals and celebrations: harvest festival Makara Sankranti/Pongal/Lohri, a pan-India festival (13-15 th); National Youth Day on Swami Vivekananda's birthday on the 12 th, Vasant Panchami (23 rd) marking the arrival of Spring and the Republic Day on 26 th,

January issue of Vanapremi has some thought-provoking articles covering the issue of gallantry awards for foresters, the historic exhibition of forest products at Allahabad in 1910-11, history and future of forestry, unlocking the potential of NTFP, deep analysis of achievements and failures at CoP30 and green energy initiatives. Development vs devotion to forestry: the Ethical tightrope explores the subject and enlists various ways in which balance could be struck.

Just like the forestry sector, Wildlife sector is also facing tremendous pressure on different fronts. We have an informative article from Arunachal Pradesh on wildlife wonders there. In recent times, with increasing human-wildlife-livestock interface, some new behaviours are observed among tigers. But can it be generalized as a change in preying behavior? is explained with examples in an article. Migration occurs not only in Wildlife but even in domestic livestock.The latter involves the livelihoods of human beings as well. This socio-economic angle is explored nicely in one of the articles. Higher forest areas have seen establishment of tea/coffee gardens all around bringing in new threats to wildlife via Dogs. A humane experience of saving a Sambar from dogs and the philosophical question of 'saving some and depriving some', touches a raw nerve.

Tangers are called the 'Butterflies of the Bird World'. An article on the Tangers of Costa Rica showcases the beautiful plumages of these lovely birds.

Farewells are times to remember and rejoice and foresters are known for their elaborate and well organized farewells. These events brought together the past, present and the future at one place. Are these farewells losing their lustre? Is the thought explored in one of the articles.

Green Quiz, Legal Notes continue ……

'Where Roots Run Deep' is a book written by Late Sri.S.Parameshwarappa, IFS (Retd), a former PCCF of Karnataka. Sri.BMT Rajeev presents a review of the book.

Happy Reading…..

Dr.K.Tirupataiah,IFS (Retd)
Editor

Are Presidential Gallantry Awards for Forest Personnel Just an Illusion?

D. Venkateswar Reddy

During my thirty two years of service in the Forest Department, I have worked across many forest terrains and witnessed firsthand the struggles of our frontline staff. I saw Forest Guards, Foresters, Range Officers, and even higher officers dedicate their lives to protecting our forests, often under extremely harsh and dangerous conditions.

During my career, I have seen officers from many other uniformed services receiving state and national awards, including the prestigious Presidential Gallantry Awards. Watching this, I often felt a sense of inferiority, not because our forest personnel are any less, but because their sacrifices and bravery remain unnoticed. I would often console myself by remembering that our people work with equal, if not greater, courage.

The fact is simple. Forest personnel risk their lives every singled ay. They face armed poachers, dangerous smugglers, wild animals, forest fires, and extreme weather. Many officers have even sacrificed their lives in the line of duty while safeguarding India's forests and wildlife.

Yet, their recognition remains far less than what they truly deserve. Unlike other uniformed services, forest personnel are not considered for the Presidential Gallantry Awards announced on Republic Day and Independence Day. This is a major injustice to a force that protects the very lungs of our nation.

Honouring our martyrs and hardworking staff with such awards will not only bring dignity to their sacrifices but also motivate thousands of forest personnel working silently in remote, tough locations.

My Efforts for Recognition

Keeping this injustice in mind, I strongly felt that the nation's highest authorities must be approached. Therefore, I wrote to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India requesting that forest personnel be granted Presidential Gallantry Awards at par with other uniformed services.

In response, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a letter on19.02.2024 to all Principal Chief Conservators of Forests(PCCFs) across the country. They directed them to examine the matter as per existing guidelines. Shockingly, none of the states responded.

I personally wrote separate letters to all PCCFs requesting support for this cause, but again, there was no response.

Not giving up, I wrote multiple times to:

- Hon'ble Minister for Environment
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Hon'ble President of India
- Hon'ble Vice President of India
- Senior officials in New Delhi

But till today, nothing has moved forward.

This raises a painful question: Are the contributions and sacrifices of fores tpersonnel not considered important enough at the national level?

It is disappointing that officers sitting at the top take work from front line staff, but do not stand by them when it comes to recognition or welfare.

Different associations exist for different cadres, but often their focus remains on personal benefits rather than fighting for a noble cause like this.

A Call for Change…. !

This attitude must change. We, as a fraternity, must stand united and demand:

1. Presidential Gallantry Awards for forest personnel on par with other uniformed services.

2. State-level awards for forest staff at every national occasion.

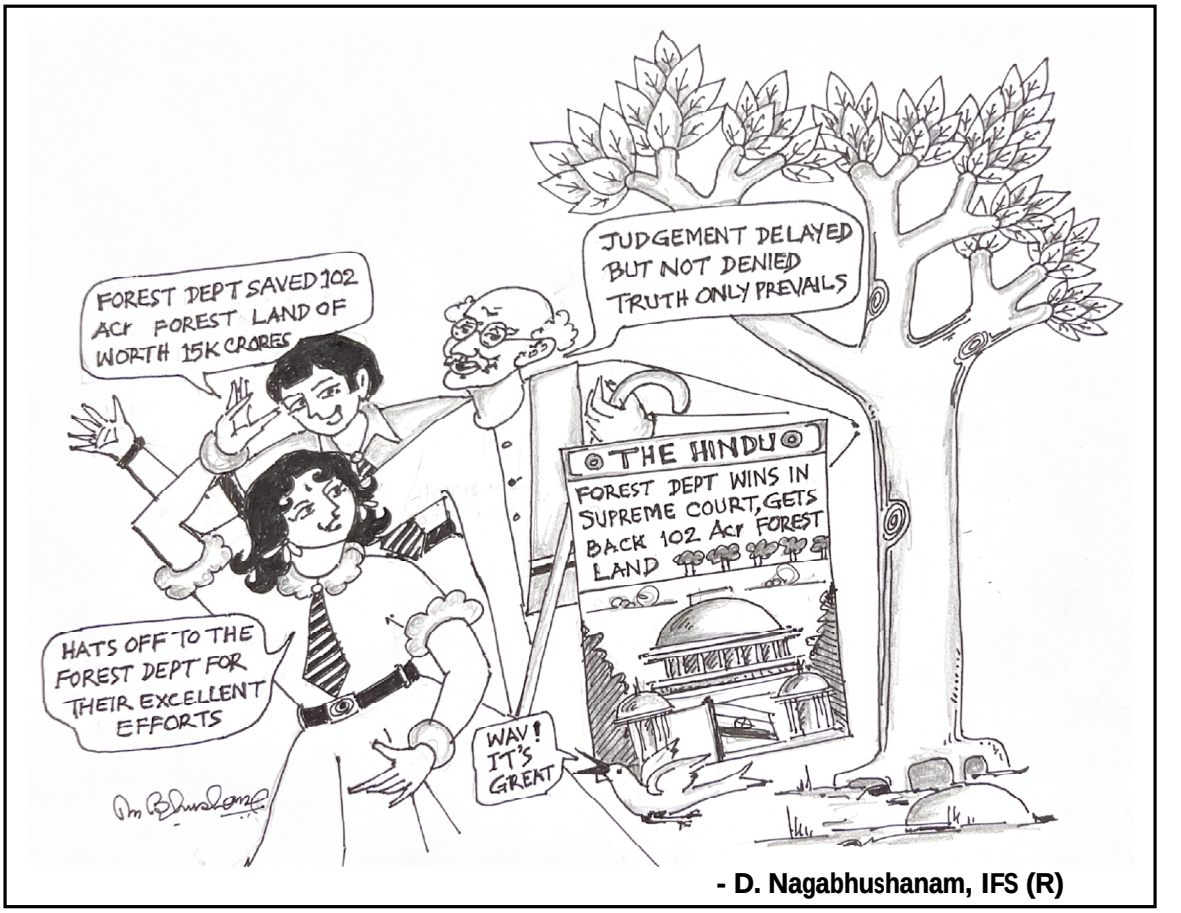
3. Better welfare measures and support for the families of martyr sand frontline warriors.

If we do not raise our collective voice now, it may continue to appear as though forest personnel are not deserving of national-level recognition—which is absolutely untrue.

Let us move forward from today with unity, purpose, and determination.

Let us fight for the honour that our frontline protectors rightfully deserve.

The author is a Dy. Chief Conservator of Forests Retd. Hyderabad, Telangana. M-94408 10158



- D. Nagabhushanam, IFS (R)

When Teak Met Technology: The Forgotten Forestry Pavilion That Stood Witness to History's First Air mail

(A Tale of the 1910-1911 United Provinces Exhibition, Allahabad)

Dr. HS Gupta

On a crisp winter morning in December 1910, as Lieutenant Governor John Hewett inaugurated what would become one of the most spectacular exhibitions ever held in colonial India, few noticed the unassuming timber-and-bamboo structure standing at the agricultural quarter of the sprawling fairgrounds. Yet this Forestry Pavilion—built entirely from Indian hardwoods and adorned with samples of sal, teak, sandalwood, and bamboo from across the United Provinces and Burma—would become the silent witness to an event that would change the world forever.

Allahabad (Prayagraj), December 1910– February 1911

The Exhibition That Dared to Dream

The United Provinces Exhibition of 1910-1911 was not merely afair; it was the British Raj's ambitious attempt to showcase India's industrial might and natural wealth to the world.

Spread across vast grounds near the sacred confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna, the exhibition featured Mughal-and Rajasthani-architecture-inspired pavilions housing German Engineering Works,British agricultural machinery and the revolutionary artworks of A banindranath Tagore.

But amid the gleaming steel of industrial displays and the grandeur of royal pavilions, the Forestry Pavilion told a different story—one of India's living wealth, its ancient forests that had sustained civilizations, and the emerging science of forest management under colonial exploitation.

Inside the Temple of Trees

The Forestry section was a masterpiece of vernacular architecture and scientific display. Massive pillars of Burma teak—each atleast 80 feet in original length before being cut for transport—supported a roof thatched with palm and bamboo, demonstrating traditional construction techniques that had survived millennia. The walls displayed cross-sections of timber from across British India: the dark, aromatic sandalwood from Mysore; the pale, straight-grained deodar from the Himalayas; the red-brownsal from the Terai forests; and the golden teak from Burma's recently annexed territories.

Interactive exhibits demonstrated forest products: lachar vested from trees, various grades of paper made from bamboo and sabai grass, essential oils distilled from forest herbs, and samples of charcoal and fuel wood that powered India's railways and industries. Live demonstrations showed traditional tribal methods of tapping sal resin and extracting fiber from bamboo—skills that colonial foresters were only beginning to document and often

misunderstand.

One corner displayed mounted specimens of forest fauna: the magnificent Bengal tiger, the one-horned rhinoceros, and various deer species, alongside warnings about declining wildlife populations and nascent calls for "game preservation."

The Skies Open: February 18,1911

For three months, visitors from across India and the world had marveled at the exhibition's wonders. Gauhar Jaan's voice had enchanted crowds at the Singer's Pavilion. Walter Windham's aerial demonstrations with two Humber- Sommer biplanes had drawn gasps as machines defied gravity above the sacred rivers.

But on the morning of February18,1911, something unprecedented was about to unfold.

Twenty-three-year-old French aviator Henri Pequet stood on the polo grounds of Allahabad, his Humber-Sommer biplane loaded with a canvas sack containing approximately 6,500 letters and postcards.The plan, conceived by Rev.W.E.S.Holland of Holy Trinity Church and organized by Windham, was audacious: fly mail across the Yamuna River to Naini, adistance of just five miles—but a journey that would mark aviation history forever.

The Flight Path Over Forests

What most histories fail to record is that Pequet's flight path took him not just over the Yamuna's shimmering waters, but directly above the exhibition grounds—specifically over the Forestry Pavilion.

Eye witnesses later recalled the moment: the biplane's engine roared to life, drowning out the morning calls of peacocks and parrots. As Pequetlifted off, the aircraft banked slightly, passing at perhaps 300 feet directly over the timber structure of the Forestry section. For a fleeting moment, the machine of modernity cast its shadow on the ancient trees that had been transformed into pillars and beams, a symbolic passing of one era into another.

Workers at the Forestry Pavilion—many of them forest rangers and timber merchants from Kumaon, Garhwal, and the Central Provinces—looked up in wonder. Some cheered, others stood frozen in disbelief. The older men, whore membered when the fastest communication was by horse-drawn dak (postal cart) through forest paths, now witnessed letters flying through the air at unprecedented speed.

Thirteen minutes later, Pequet landed safely at Naini junction. Each piece of mail bore a special cancellation stamp in bright pink, depicting an airplane, mountains, and the immortal words:"First Aerial Post,1911, U.P.Exhibition Allahabad." Today, these stamps are among the most valuable philatelic items in the world.

The Royals, The Princess, and The Forests

Among the distinguished visitors to the exhibition were German Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhe lm and Kumar Sidkeong Tulku Namgyal, the Oxford-educated heir to Sikkim's throne— both enchanted by Burmese Princess Hteiktin Ma Lat.

Less known is that Kumar Sidkeong, a deeply spiritual Buddhist who was also a modernizer, spent considerable time at the Forestry Pavilion.

His kingdom of Sikkim was then a pristine Himalayan realm of dense rhododendron forests, towering conifers, and sacred groves.

Records from his correspondence suggest he was particularly interested in scientific forestry methods and questioned British logging practices that were devastating forests across India.

In one letter preserved in the British Library archives, Kumar wrote about "the contradiction of an exhibition celebrating forests while the Raj strips bare entire hillsides for railway sleepers and tea plantations." His tragic death in 1914, under suspicious circumstances shortly after ascending Sikkim's throne, silenced a potential voice for forest conservation in the Himalayas.

What the Forests Witnessed

The Forestry Pavilion stood through the exhibition's closing in February 1911. As the crowds dispersed and the grand structures were dismantled, the timber from the pavilion—those massive teak pillars and salbeams—was auctioned off. Some were repurposed for government buildings in Allahabad; others were transported to Lucknow and Kanpur for railway construction.

But in those three months, that structure of wood and bamboo had witnessed the collision of eras: traditional forest wisdom and modern engineering, the romance of exiled royalty and the spectacle of powered flight, the exploitation of natural wealth and the first stirrings of conservation consciousness.

The Legacy: What Was Lost, What Remains

Today as you walk through Prayagraj, (renamed from Allahabad) little remains of that grand exhibition. The polo grounds where Pequet took off are now crowded neighborhoods. The confluence—the sangam—still draws millions during the Kumbh Mela, but the exhibition grounds have vanished beneath urban sprawl.

Yet the legacy endures in unexpected ways:

Forest Management Evolution: The colonial forestry practices showcased at the exhibition—focused on timber extraction and "scientific management"—would later be recognized as ecologically destructive. The very forests celebrated in 1911 suffered massive deforestation over the following decades for railway expansion, agriculture, and war timber during World Wars I and II.

The Sikkim Connection: Kumar Sidkeong's brief reign in 1914 saw him attempt forest protection measures and challenge British interference—policies that contributed to the suspicion around his death. His concerns about forest destruction proved prescient; by the 1970s, Himalayan deforestation had become a crisis, spurring the Chipko Movement.

Aviation and the Environment: The exhibition that celebrated both forestry and flight could not have imagined that a century later, aviation would become a major concern for forest conservation—with carbon e missions from air travel offsetting forest carbon sequestration, and airports expanding into forested lands, and getting made of engineered wood .

The Irony of Progress

The greatest irony of the1911exhibition lies in its juxtaposition: it celebrated India's forests as wealth to be extracted while simultaneously showcasing the technologies—railways, industries, and eventually aviation—that would accelerate their destruction.

When Henri Pequet's biplane shadow passed over the Forestry Pavilion on that historic morning, it symbolized a transition point in human civilization. The speed and connectivity that air mail promised

would eventually enable global commerce, rapid resource extraction, and environmental changes on scales unimaginable in 1911.

The teak pillars that held up that pavilion had grown for perhaps 150 years in Burma's forests before being felled, transported thousands of miles, erected for a three-month exhibition, and then dispersed to become railway sleepers or furniture. Each piece of timber had its own story—a story that the exhibition celebrated even as it facilitated the very systems that would ensure such forests would never grow undisturbed again.

A Meditation on Memory

As we approach the115th anniversary of that first air mail flight, it's worth returning to that forgotten Forestry Pavilion—not as nostalgic remembrance, but as a meditation on how we celebrate progress.

The exhibition promised that India's forests were in exhaustible, that technology would bring prosperity, and that colonial management would ensure sustainability. All three promises proved hollow. By India's independence in 1947, forest cover had dramatically declined, rural communities dependent on forests had been impoverished, and the remaining forests were severely degraded.

The moment—frozen in the pink cancellation stamps and fading photographs—reminds us that history is never simply about progress or decline. It is about the complex entanglements of aspiration and exploitation, wonder and destruction, the soaring ambitions of flight and the grounded realities of forests that take centuries to grow and moments to fell.

The Forestry Pavilion is gone. The first airmail flew its route and enteredhistory books. But the questions raised by their juxtaposition remain urgently relevant: How do we celebrate human achievement without destroying the natural systems that sustain us? How do we honor indigenous forest knowledge while embracing beneficial technology? How do we ensure that the shadows cast by our progress don't permanently darken the forests below?

Perhaps that's the real legacy of the 1911 exhibition: not the celebration of what was achieved, but the reckoning with what was lost—and the ongoing struggle to imagine a different future, where flight and forests, progress and preservation, can some how coexist.

Author's Note: This is an ode to my home town, my profession the Forestry. This narrative reconstructs the 1910-1911 United Provinces Exhibition in Allahabad using contemporary sources, government gazettes, postal history records, and archival correspondence. While specific details about the Forestry Pavilion's design are drawn from comparable colonial-era forestry exhibits and the documented presence of forest products displays at the exhibition, the metaphorical weight of the story—the biplane's shadow over timber pavilions, the convergence of royalty and technology, the transition from forest economies to industrial modernity—reflects the documented historical tensions of that pivotal moment in Indian and global history.

Author is a former PCCF of Jharkhand cadre and a former Professor at the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal. M-90310 00118

HUNDRED YEARS OF FORESTRY AND THERE AFTER ...

Dr. Akula Kishan

Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun published a Souvenir and another volume on Forests on the occasion of "100 Years of Indian Forestry 1861-1961". The Souvenir contained messages from different States and different countries, and reminiscences of Forest Officers, History of Forests in India, Wildlife through Ages, Forestry Education – History and Development, the Forest Services, Special Forest Development since 1947 and Area under Forests is classified by (a) ownership (b) legal status (c) composition (d) functions.

The Second volume has 14 Chapters on History, Forests – Site Factors & Forest types, Forest Policy, Forest Management, Working Plans, Logging, Forest Industries, Wildlife, Education, Forestry Research, Forest Products Research, Forest Development under five year plans, Employment and Finance.

Forest area by legal status

The Classification of Forests by legal status was shown as follows:

Area in Sq.Miles

Category	Reserved Forests	Protected Forests	Unclassed	Total
British India	1,42,664	91,829	68,195	3,02,688
Other states	36,950	23,784	17,663	78,396
Total	1,79,614	1,15,613	85,858	3,81,084

The total area was 3,81,084Sq. Miles = **9.87 lakh sq.km.**

The present legal status is as follows:

Reserved Forests around 4.4 lakh sq km followed by Protected (around 2.1 lakh sq km), and Un-classed (around 1.2 lakh sqkm) totaling about **7.7 lakh sq.km.** Thus there is reduction of Forest area over the years.

Forest Industries

Among the Industries Established included those related to Firewood, Charcoal, Sawmills, Packing Cases, Furniture, Boat Building, Aircraft Industry, Textile related, Sports Goods, Plywood, Building Material, Paper& Pulp etc.

At present the wood supply from Government forests is less than 4% and most of the demand is met from ToF or imports, so productivity has gone down.

Forest Research

The Silvicultural research was guided by Silvicultural Conferences. The first Silvicultural Conference was held in 1918. These conferences are held once in five years; the X conference was held in the year 1961. The 14th National Silvicultural Conference - 2018, was organized in IWST, Bangalore during December 3-5, 2018 (as centenary meeting). The theme of conference was "Forest and Sustainability: Securing a Common Future".

There is no record available to show that the conferences were held since 2018.

The Forest Research in primary species is difficult compared to the Agricultural Research, and the other empirical research is less of Lab to Field.

Some of the ICFRE Institutes and Centers are

1.Forest Research Institute (FRI) Dehradun, Uttarakhand

2. Tropical Forest Research Institute(TFRI) Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh

3. Arid Forest Research Institute (AFRI) Jodhpur, Rajasthan

4. Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI) Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

5. Institute of Forest Productivity (IFP) Ranchi, Jharkhand

6. Institute of Forest Biodiversity (IFB)Hyderabad, Telangana

7.Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) Coimbatore, Tamil

8.Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) Bengaluru, Karnataka

9. Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI)Jorhat, Assam (northeast)

10.Forest Research Centre – Social Forestry & Extension (Centre) Agartala, Tripura (Centre for Forest-based Livelihoods & Extension, CFLE)

11. Forest Research Centre – Eco- Rehabilitation (Centre) Prayagraj (Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh

12.Forest Research Centre – Bamboo & Rattan (Centre) Aizawl, Mizoram (Bamboo & Rattan Centre)

13.Forest Research Centre – Human Resource Development (Centre) Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh

The outputs from these places are not much publicized.

Wildlife

There was concern on diminishing of wildlife in those days also, and some of the factors for depletion of wildlife were large scale issue of “crop protection guns’, which were used indiscriminately in killing the wildlife in the guise of crop protection. There were shooting of games which were to be regulated. It was noted that, “It must be realised that just as proper forest conservation does not impose total ban on the cutting of trees, as also scientific wildlife management need not imply that shooting for bonafide sport should be totally prohibited. On the contrary, under suitable conditions wildlife can also be harvested under proper regulation. Adequate provision must also be made for the destruction of harmful creatures such as vermin and animals which become a menace to human life or property”

The hunting is now prohibited, and number of Protected Areas has increased but the human-animal conflict also increased. Recently Supreme Court of India held that the human-wildlife conflict should be treated as “Natural Disaster” and it ordered Rs.10 lakh ex-gratia. {2025 Live law (SC) 1112}.

The recent amendments to the Wildlife Act have modified the Schedules and the number of species is more compared to earlier Schedules. The simple Schedules before amendment are made complicated with inclusion of thousands of species, which are rarely heard of.

Change in outlook over the years

Then (1861)	Now (2025)
Timber-focused	Climate-focused
Colonial control	Community partnership
Manual mapping	GIS, Satellites, Drones
Revenue forests	Ecosystem service valuation
Exclusion of people	Rights-based conservation

Indian forestry from exploitation to regulation

The following Acts have been promulgated over the years:

1. Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972
2. Forest (Conservation) Act,1980
3. Environment Protection Act,1986
4. Biodiversity Act,2002
5. Forest Rights Act,2006

However, the implementation of the above enactments is debatable. The Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972 has put its mark through some cases involving high ranking personalities, but the reach to expected levels is yet to be achieved. The Forest (Conservation) Act,1980 has regulated the diversion of Forest land, but there is no single prosecution till date for violation, and it is almost regulated encroachment, as the number of rejections are very few. Environment (Protection) Act,1986 and allied Pollution laws lack the enforcement mechanism. The Biodiversity Act,2002 is also not yet reached to Biodiversity Management Committees at Village level. The Forest Rights Act,2006 is out of hands of Foresters though Forest area is being given away in the shape of individual and community rights, and once the DLC approves the names and rights are recognised, it is like any other Revenue DKT patta. It is unfortunate, that though many serving and retired Foresters are agitating for a re-look into the Forest Rights Act,2006, but the voice is yet to reach the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India,where number of cases are pending since the year 2008, and the implementation is not stayed, hence distribution of title to individual and community rights is going on.

CONCLUSION

Though the occurrences during the years of forest centenary were recorded through publication of souvenir, there is no mid-way evaluation at completion of 150 years of Forestry in 2011. The progress of Forestry and wildlife is being pulled down by land depleting laws such as Forest (Conservation)Act,1980 and Forest Rights Act,2006. Added to these, the arable forest area is being encroached, and to contest them in Courts, there are no supporting documents in Forest Offices, as Forest notifications are missing in many offices, and it is herculean task to reconstruct the documents. There is no time and resources with forest officers for maintaining the Forest records, and maintaining the Forest Boundaries. When Forest Officers try to enforce the Forest laws, it is termed as anti-development and still the same impression continues in many instances.

It is time that Forest Departments across India should check the resource base and protect the Forest land to the extent possible by reconciling the land records with Revenue, Panchayat Raj etc. There is a need to modify the preliminary notification of Forest Blocks by including Revenue Survey numbers instead of describing the Forest boundaries by land marks or intelligible boundary.

Unless, the remedial action is initiated by Forest Department, by the time Indian Forestry reaches 200 years, there may not be much forest area left to rejoice on keeping forests alive for 200 years, and the saying

"FORESTS PRECEDE CIVILISATION- AND DESERTS SUCCEED THEM" may come true again, as "THOSE WHO FORGET HISTORY ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT".

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Unlocking India's Minor Forest Produce Potential: A Pathway to Sustainable Forest Development

R K Sapra

Introduction

The introduction of scientific forestry in India during the 1860s marked a decisive shift in forest management priorities, as colonial policies increasingly focused on securing timber for railways, shipbuilding and large public works. Historical analyses (Gadgil and Guha 1992; Rangarajan, 2001) show that non-timber forest products (NTFPs) remained largely peripheral to these objectives. Legislative interventions such as the Indian Forest Acts of 1865,1878 and 1927consolidated state authority over forest resources and significantly curtailed the customary rights of forest-dependent communities.

The emphasis on timber-oriented working circles, systematic felling operations and the proliferation of monoculture plantations—particularly of teak and sal—has been well documented in forest management records of the period. Wherever NTFPs were extracted, they were typically managed through contractor-driven systems that provided little incentive for sustainable harvesting or community benefits. Scholars have noted that such practices not only simplified complex forest ecosystems but also caused profound socio-economic disruptions for indigenous and rural communities dependent on diverse forest produce (Sivaramakrishnan, 1999).

After independence, India inherited this centralised and timber-centric administrative framework. Although the National Forest Policy of 1952 aimed to increase the forest cover to one-third of the country's geographical area, mounting pressures from fuelwood demand, grazing, agriculture and industrialisation led to widespread forest degradation between the 1960s and 1980s, as reflected in the FSI historical assessments. A major policy transformation occurred with the National Forest Policy of 1988, which redefined ecological stability and livelihood security as the central objectives of forest governance. This shift brought NTFPs to the forefront as vital resources for rural and tribal communities and catalysed the rise of Joint Forest Management (JFM) and decentralised governance models. Together, these developments laid a strong foundation for positioning NTFPs as an integral component of sustainable and community-centric forest management in contemporary India.

Status of Forest Resources

India's Recorded Forest Area (RFA) covers approximately 77.53 million hectares (FSI, 2023), accounting for 23.41% of the country's geographical area. The RFA includes both forested and non-forested land legally designated as 'forest'. The growing stock within the forests stand at 4,480 million m^3,while an additional 2,381 million m^3 exists outside forests. This distinction is critical, because many NTFP-yielding species occur both inside the forests and agro-forestry landscapes. By the late 1970s, India extracted approximately 10 million m^3 annually from the natural forests but post-1988, the NFP restrictions and strengthened conservation policies reduced this harvest to 3–4 million m^3 from 1990s onwards (CSE, 2017; MoEFCC, 2020).

Present Status of NTFPs

India has over 3,000 documented NTFP-yielding species (MoEFCC & ICFRE, 2023), reflecting the country's remarkable biological diversity and ecological foundations of its forest-based

livelihoods. An estimated 100 million forest-dependent people derive a substantial part of their income or subsistence from NTFPs while nearly 275 million rural households benefit indirectly through food, fodder, medicinal resources, and seasonal earnings(Kalpavriksh, 2025).

Labour and livelihood studies conducted by Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO)and other agencies indicate that between 45 and 60 percent of rural forest-based employment is linked to NTFPs, underscoring their central role in sustaining household economies across diverse ecological regions. The annual national market for NTFPs is valued at approximately ₹300–₹500 billion, though this figure is likely to under-representthe true scale of the sector. Much of the trade—estimated at 70 to 75 percent—occurs through informal channels which obscures actual transaction volumes and diminishes the visibility in national accounts.

Significant value addition also occurs downstream in urban herbal, pharmaceutical and nutraceutical industries, resulting in minimal price realisation for primary collectors. Furthermore, limited aggregation, processing, and storage capacities at the community level constrain income generation and restrict the development of efficient value chains. Together, these factors highlight both the extensive reach of the NTFP economy and the considerable untapped potential that remains within the sector.

Major Forestry States and Key NTFPs

Table-1: State-wise Major NTFPs, Key Species, and Indicative Livelihood Importance

State	Major NTFPs & Key Species	Notes on Livelihood Importance/Ecological Issues
Madhya Pradesh	Tendu leaves (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), mahua flowers & seeds (*Madhuca indica*), sal seeds, chironjee, bamboo, medicinal herbs such as safed musli	One of India's largest tendu leaf producers; strong community dependence; ecological pressure seen on safed musli and mahua regeneration in some districts
Chhattisgarh	Tenduleaves, lac(*Kerrialacca*), mahua,chironjee,tamarind, harra/bahera/amla, sal resin	State accounts for ~20% of India's lac production; robust forest federation system for some NTFPs; overharvest reported for amla in some regions
Odisha	Kendu leaves, sal seeds, bamboo, wild honey, siali leaves (*Phaneravahlii*), medicinal plants	Strong collectors'cooperatives: community forest management has boosted incomes; siali leaf plates emerging as major green enterprise

Jharkhand	Kendu leaves, mahua, sal seeds, kusum, harra/bahera, tussar cocoons, honey	Tussar and honey have high livelihood potential; value addition remains inconsistent across districts
Maharashtra	Mahua, tendu leaves, kokum, bamboo, gums/resins, wild fruits	Western Ghats medicinal plants face climate-linked stress; kokum value chains emerging
Assam & NE India	Bamboo, cane, rattan, medicinal and aromatic plants, bay leaf, resins, wild edible greens	Richbiodiversity;high commercial potential but sustainability concerns for MAPs (medicinal aromatic plants

Actions Taken by Government

The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), accords ownership and management rights over minor forest produce to Gram Sabhas in the Scheduled Areas. Although this legal framework empowers local communities, its implementation across states has been uneven. Only a limited number of states have formulated comprehensive PESA rules, and in many regions, the actual control of Gram Sabhas over NTFP trade—particularly tendu leaves and certain high-value medicinal species—remains partial. Nonetheless, successful experiences from districts such as Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and parts of South Odisha demonstrate that community-led auctioning and pricing can significantly enhance collectors' incomes and foster greater transparency.

The MoTA has introduced several programmes aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Tribes, including support for NTFP-based livelihoods. MoTA's financial assistance has enabled multiple states to strengthen local procurement systems and expand minor forest produce operations. However, capacity-building efforts remain inconsistent, and while infrastructure and welfare interventions continue to advance, dedicated support for value addition, entrepreneurship and NTFP-based enterprise development is still relatively limited.

Among national interventions, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme for minor forest produce, implemented through Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED), constitutes one of the most significant livelihood-support mechanisms for the tribal communities. The scheme currently covers 87 NTFP items and has led to substantial procurement increases in states such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Gujarat. Despite its successes, several states—particularly Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh—continue to underperform due to gaps in procurement centres, irregular payments and low awareness among primary collectors. Evidence from high-performing states indicates that MSP-based procurement can raise collectors' incomes by 20–50 percent, though equitable access to the scheme remains a challenge.

The National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) plays a critical role in supporting India's medicinal plant

sector which is valued at ₹70–₹90billion annually. A significant proportion of raw materials, however, continues to be sourced from the wild, posing sustainability concerns. While NMPB's cultivation incentives have contributed to an expansion of MAP plantations, bottlenecks persist in market linkage development, quality certification and price standardisation. Survival of species such as guggal, kutki and jatamansi remain at ecological risk due to overharvesting and slow regeneration.

The National Bamboo Mission (NBM) has driven notable policy reforms including the 2017 amendment to the Indian Forest Act, 1927 removed bamboo grown on non-forest land from the definition of "tree," thereby eliminating felling and transit restrictions which has encouraged private sector cultivation and improved farmer participation.Yet, industrial processing capacities are unevenly distributed with strong clusters in Assam, Tripura and segments of Central India, leaving other states without robust value chains. Strengthening the farmer-producer organisations, enhancing technological support and improving logistics remain essential priorities for the mission's long-term impact.

Key Challenges and Problems

Several challenges continue to impede the sustainable development of India's NTFP sector. Only a few states—notably Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra—have adopted comprehensive NTFP policies while many others continue to depend on outdated contractor-driven systems that limit community benefits. Implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, remains incomplete in many areas, with several communities still lacking legally recognised rights over NTFPs. In regions where FRA is effectively implemented, significant increases in household incomes from tendu, honeyand bamboo have been documented.

Value chain inefficiencies also pose substantial challenges. Inadequate infrastructure—such as drying units, storage facilities, and grading centres—results in considerable post-harvest losses and distress sales. The middlemen often capture a disproportionate share of value, leaving collectors with only a fraction of the final retail price. Ecological pressures continue to intensify with species such as guggal, safed musli, chirata, kutki, and jatamansi experiencing declining populations due to unsustainable extraction. Climate change effects further exacerbate vulnerabilities as altered flowering and fruiting cycles in species like mahua and bamboo affect productivity and availability. Benefit-sharing mechanisms remain weak in many regionsand collectors often lack bargaining power, especially where cooperatives and FPOs are inadequately developed.

Suggestions for the Development of NTFPs

Strengthening India's NTFP sector requires a phased and multi-dimensional strategy. In the short term,

- priority should be given to institutionalising NTFP Working Circles in working plans
- expanding MSP procurement in underperforming districts
- preparing district-level resource maps using GIS and community-based assessments
- enhancing training on sustainable harvesting, particularly for mahua, amla, honey, bamboo and key MAP species.
- estimating the reliable value of NTFP produced in RFA by ICFRE, which may be properly reflected in GDP of India.

Medium-term efforts should focus on

- establishing decentralised value-addition hubs equipped for drying, pulverising, grading, resin purificationand oil extraction.
- strengthening FPOs and cooperatives

through improved access to working capital, digital marketing platforms and efficient logistics is critical.

- introducing blockchain-based procurement systems can enhance transparency and reduce exploitation.
- the cultivation of ecologically vulnerable MAP species should be scaled up under NMPB guidance to reduce dependence on wild populations.

Long-term strategies may include

- focusing on 10 key NTFP species by ICFRE for increasing its productivity and improving its quality through management practices and genetic improvement.
- integrating the NTFP sector with emerging green industries such as nutraceuticals, aromatics, eco-textiles and bio-based materials.
- establishing a National NTFP Price Stabilisation Fund can mitigate market volatility and protect collectors' incomes.
- a dedicated National Centre for NTFP Science and Livelihoods under ICFRE could serve as a hub for research, certification, capacity-building and policy support.

Conclusion

India stands at a pivotal juncture in its forest management journey. With timber extraction deliberately controlled to promote ecological stability, the livelihoods of millions of forest-dependent households increasingly rely on NTFPs. Unlocking their full potential requires transformative governance, improved value chains, scientific managementand empowered local institutions. A robust NTFP economy can strengthen tribal livelihoods, incentivise community-led conservation, reduce ecological degradation and catalyse India's green bioeconomy. Far from being secondary forest products, NTFPs represent a vital pathway for sustainable and inclusive forest-based development.

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COP30 in Belém, Brazil: Achievements, and Implications

Dr. D. Nalini Mohan

Introduction

The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30), held in November 2025 in Belém, Brazil, was one of the most symbolically charged climate summits in recent history. Situated at the gateway to the Amazon rainforest, the location itself underscored the urgency of protecting ecosystems that are vital to stabilizing the global climate. Expectations were high: the summit was anticipated to deliver breakthroughs on climate finance, fossil fuel transition, and forest governance, while amplifying indigenous voices and equity concerns. The outcomes, while historic in some respects, revealed both progress and persistent gaps in global climate solidarity.

Expectations before COP30

1. Climate Finance

Developing nations entered COP30 with a clear demand: scale up climate finance beyond the unmet $100 billion annual pledge made in 2009. They sought predictable, accessible, and equitable funding streams for mitigation, adaptation, and loss & damage. The expectation was that COP30 would finally deliver a roadmap for trillions, not billions.

2. Fossil Fuel Transition

Civil society, youth movements, and vulnerable nations pressed for a binding commitment to phase out coal, oil, and gas. The hope was that COP30 would move beyond vague language and set a timeline aligned with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target.

3. Forests and Biodiversity

Hosting COP in the Amazon raised expectations for strong commitments to halt deforestation, restore degraded lands, and invest in nature-based solutions. Indigenous communities anticipated recognition of their stewardship role and direct access to climate finance.

4. Just Transition

Workers and communities worldwide expected frameworks ensuring that the shift to green economies would be socially inclusive, protecting livelihoods while advancing sustainability.

Achievements of COP30

1. Climate Finance Breakthrough

The most celebrated outcome was the agreement to mobilize $1.3 trillion annually by 2035 for climate action. This represents a quantum leap from previous pledges. Importantly:

• Adaptation finance will be tripled, addressing long-standing inequities between mitigation and adaptation.

• A new Global Climate Finance Framework was introduced to streamline access for developing countries, reducing bureaucratic hurdles.

• Loss and Damage funding mechanisms were operationalized, with initial pledges from developed nations and provisions for rapid disbursement during disasters.

2. Fossil Fuel Commitments

COP30 produced a voluntary plan to curb fossil fuels, marking the first time such language was formally adopted. While weaker than many had hoped, it signals a shift in discourse:

• Countries agreed to "transition away" from fossil fuels, though without binding timelines.

• The plan encourages investment in renewables and efficiency, but leaves loopholes for continued

fossil fuel use.

3. Strengthening National Targets

Nations committed to review and strengthen their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) before COP31. This includes aligning trade and industrial policies with climate goals under the "global mutirão" (collective effort) framework promoted by Brazil.

4. Amazon and Biodiversity

The Amazon was elevated as a symbol of global climate resilience:

• Commitments to halt deforestation by 2030 were reaffirmed.

• Indigenous-led conservation initiatives received new pledges of support.

• The summit linked biodiversity and climate agendas more explicitly than ever before.

5. Loss and Damage Fund

Operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund advanced significantly:

• Mechanisms for rapid disbursement during climate disasters were agreed upon.

• Vulnerable nations welcomed this as a step toward climate justice, though funding levels remain modest compared to actual needs.

Shortcomings and Gaps

Despite these achievements, COP30 revealed critical shortcomings:

• No binding fossil fuel phase-out: The voluntary nature of commitments disappointed activists and vulnerable states. Major producers resisted stronger language.

• Finance pledges lack clarity: While $1.3 trillion is ambitious, questions remain about sources, accountability, and equitable distribution.

• Implementation challenges: Translating commitments into national policies will require political will, institutional capacity, and monitoring mechanisms.

• Equity concerns: Indigenous rights and just transition frameworks gained visibility, but practical enforcement remains uncertain.

Implications for Global Climate Action

Finance as a Game-Changer

If delivered, $1.3 trillion annually could transform renewable energy deployment, adaptation measures, and resilience efforts worldwide. It could also bridge the trust gap between developed and developing nations.

Amazon Spotlight

By situating COP30 in Belém, Brazil positioned the Amazon as a global commons. This reinforced forests as critical carbon sinks and biodiversity reservoirs, linking ecological preservation with climate stability.

Equity Lens

COP30 amplified indigenous voices and just transition concerns. While symbolic recognition is important, the challenge lies in ensuring that these principles are embedded in actual policy and finance flows.

Global Solidarity

The "mutirão" (Portuguese word meaning 'collective effort/cooperation') spirit emphasized collective responsibility. Yet divisions over fossil fuels persist, reflecting geopolitical tensions between producers and vulnerable nations.

Looking Ahead

COP31 (2026)

The next summit will test whether nations strengthen NDCs and operationalize finance pledges. It will also reveal whether voluntary fossil fuel commitments evolve into binding agreements.

Monitoring Mechanisms

Civil society and independent watchdogs will play a crucial role in holding governments accountable. Transparency in finance and emissions reporting will be essential.

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CoP30 FAILED TO BRING CONSENSUS ON FOSSIL FUEL PHASE DOWN & DEFORESTATION

B.K.Singh

A week before CoP30 started at Belem, cyclone Montha originated in Bay of Bengal hitting India's states of Telangana, Andhra and Odisha damaging infrastructures and disrupting lives and livelihood, Hurricane Melissa originated in Atlantic Ocean and caused widespread damage in Jamaica and Cuba. Hurricane Melissa was one of the strongest category 5 storms with the wind speed almost touching 300 km per hour disrupting power supply to almost three quarter of the island nation. Later Melisa moved to Cuba causing extensive damage and to Haiti where 20 people died and later it moved across Bahamas and near Bermuda. Also typhoon Kalamegi made a landfall in Vietnam killing 200 people in Philippines and Vietnam and by the time CoP30 reached its concluding stage, a flood in Vietnam claimed 41 lives.

Amid so much of climatic disruptions in different parts of the world, CoP30 was concluded with lot of disappointment. Brazil's proposal backed by nearly 90 countries to lay down the roadmap for transitioning away from fossil fuels and also the proposal of the host nation to end deforestation have not found consensus among the parties.

The conference was marred by the absence of leaders from three top greenhouse gases emitting countries. The climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions have fueled warmer Seas and bigger storms. The most damaging of the greenhouse gases is CO2, a non-reactive compound that stays in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. The poorest countries especially located between the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn are suffering the most and have been pleading for help for years. But rich countries have failed to meet their pledges to fund mitigation and adaptation efforts. Donald Trump in his first term as the US President, and also in the second term, has withdrawn from Paris climate accord and has not provided any fund enabling poorer countries to de-carbonize the economies and repair the damages. How can he aspire for Nobel Peace Prize, when his actions have left two-thirds of global population to face frequent and increasingly destructive climatic catastrophes?

More than the Trump's claims, the Nobel committee should also consider the state of environment in the world. There have been repeated warnings from the scientific communities and United Nations that if the global warming exceeds 1.50 Celsius above the pre-industrial level, lives on the planet would face unprecedenteddisruptions. The warnings have been ignored by Trump, who calls climate as hoax and has dismantled all projects relating to green energy transitions and expanded fossil fuel production. He says, "clean, beautiful coal", and step up production to keep the inflation in check. How can Nobel Committee ignore such blatant actions against the advice of Scientific communities?

The CoP30 conference is held at the mouth of the Amazon at Belem, located in rich environmental sentiment as the forests are considered lung space for the world and its preservation is of paramount importance for the survival of the humankind. Assured access to concessional finance for adaptation and affordable green technology for mitigation, are the basic pain points of the global south. The enormity of Amazon forests can be understood from the fact that while India's forests hold 7.2 Giga tons of CO2 equivalent, Amazon forests hold 56.8 Giga tons of CO2 equivalent.

About 31% of the land in the world is covered by forests, which totals up to 4.14 billion hectares. Brazil holds 12% of these forests, while Russia, China, Canada and Democratic Republic of Congo hold 20%, 12%, 9%, 8% and 8%, respectively. If these forests are preserved and are allowed to regenerate without any anthropogenic pressure, it has potential to absorb nearly 14 Giga tons of CO2 annually, which is one third of annual global greenhouse gas emission.

The host country, having realized the potential of these forests moved for ending deforestation. Of course it was only a beginning and the proposal was to stop deforestation of tropical forests and thus Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) was launched with a view to mobilize $125 billion through public and private funding to reward countries that conserve these forests and also those who regenerate barren areas and expand tropical forest cover. It would be managed by World Bank as a multilateral trust fund. The problem arises when the fossil fuel is buried beneath these forests. The forests are to be destroyed for extraction of fossil fuels.

Out of 74 countries with TFFF qualifying forests, 68 countries have fossil fuel deposits within them. There would be 317 billion tons of potential CO2 from recoverable reserves and more than 4.6 trillion tons if all deposits were exploited. Most of these are concentrated in India, China and Indonesia. TFFF deal would not work unless there is commitment of no fossil fuel extraction underneath. Further a similar scheme must cover non-TFFF countries. Boreal forests too covermajor fossil fuel deposits in Russia and Canada. Thus there should be deal to prioritize forests located above fossil fuel reserves and ensure that they remain completely out of bound for exploitation.

TFFF could have devastating consequences for forest communities; $ 4 per ha would be received by countries and only one-fifth of it trickles down to local communities and they would be fined $ 400 per ha for deforestation. This would give a scope for state to crack down on local people, while giving free hand to oil and coal generating industries. TFFF does not prohibit the exploitation by these companies and hence may not be effective in preventing deforestation.

Indigenous people from Andes in Ecuador and Amazon rainforests in Peru along with activists from Brazilian forests and savannas, young, old women and men in thousands also joined the conference and raised voice against the destruction of their territories through oil drilling and gold mining and also to protect world's most biodiverse forests. Their presence was palpable at the summit. Indigenous people in Amazon forests are known for clearing tree growth and expanding agriculture for growing soya bean, maize and other crops for their livelihood. They will preserve the forests, if they are paid money.

A UN report published on 17th November at CoP30 identifies India as global hot spot for methane emissions from agricultural stubble burning. Stubble burning generates high volumes of toxic particulate pollutants contributing to worsening air pollution across the country. UNEP has found that India is the third largest methane emitter after China and US. Annual global methane emission is 360 million ton and India's share is 3 million tons. Apart from crop residue burning, India is also affected by livestock-linked emission, both enteric fermentation in ruminant animals and management of manure, rice cultivation and also waste management challenges. However, the country's Environment minister BhupenderYadav claimed at CoP30 deliberations that India's emission intensity has declined by over 36% since 2005 and non-fossil fuel based energy capacity is 256 Giga watts, which is half of total electric installed capacity and further NDC targets are achieved five years ahead of schedule.

The other move of the host country that failed to make in the final agreement was to come up with the roadmap to phase out fossil fuels. Approximately 90 countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific joined with EU member states and UK have pressed for phase out. Though EU indicated that the roadmap is the redline, but leading economies like India, China, South Africa and Russia have jointly told the Presidency that they would not accept the plan. Cambodia too joined the coalition and initiative seeks a binding global agreement to halt new fossil fuel expansion, phase out equitably and scale up financial mechanisms to support vulnerable nations. Developing countries do require technology transfer, climate finance and capacity building support to carry out fair energy transition. There was strong signal from global south and global north countries to phase out fossil fuel, but they were disappointed to find it omitted from the agreement. It has become the biggest fault line at CoP30.

CoP30 has tripled $100 billion annual climate finance to $300 billion by 2035. Out of this amount, the developed countries would increase the current grant from $40 billion to $120 billion by that time. The balance amount of $180 billion though would be mobilized by developed countries, but it would be loan on developing countries for mitigation and adaptation. This would mean that the vulnerable countries may get pushed into unsurmountable debt that would ruin their economy.

The other issues where the consensus is achieved and figure in the agreement are health action plan, Santa Marta conference to discuss global phase out of fossil fuel co-hosted with Netherlands on April 28 & 29, 2026, The open planetary Intelligence network, global ethical stock-take, declaration on hunger, poverty and people centered climate action and adaption plan. These have very little significance at international level.

The concern is that flying 50,000 delegates from all parts of the World, their transport, stay and food at Belem would have more carbon footprint than emission cut achieved at CoP30.

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Geopolitical Dynamics

The tension between fossil fuel producers and vulnerable nations will remain central. The credibility of COP as a forum depends on bridging these divides.

Brazil's Role

Brazil emerged as a climate leader by hosting COP30. Its challenge now is to balance domestic development with global stewardship of the Amazon, ensuring that symbolic leadership translates into substantive action.

Conclusion

COP30 in Belém was both a milestone and a missed opportunity. It delivered unprecedented finance commitments and elevated the Amazon's role in climate discourse, but failed to secure a binding fossil fuel phase-out. The summit's achievements—particularly on finance and adaptation—offer hope, yet its shortcomings underscore the fragility of global climate solidarity. The road to COP31 will determine whether COP30's promises translate into transformative action or remain aspirational rhetoric

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To commemorate International Day of Clean Energy (26th January):

Initiatives to sustainable development thro' the 'Green Energy' pathway

"It's not so difficult to discipline those who play with people's lives"

Dr B Raghotham Rao Desai

Preliminaries:

Coal, oil, and gas **(the fossil fuels) being responsible for about 90% of global CO2 emissions, there is a need to cut their emissions by almost half by 2030 & achieve net zero by 2050** to avoid the worst impacts of Climate Change—-fossil fuels though are dominating global energy production, yet 29% of electricity is being powered worldwide by renewable sources of energy (such as wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal).

The International Day of Clean Energywas declared on 26 January (bythe General Assembly resolution A/77/327, which happens to be the founding date of the International Renewable Energy Agency - IRENA) **to raise awareness and mobilise action for a just & inclusive transition toclean Energy** for the benefit of people and the Planet.

Factfile:

The Indian government has taken several initiatives to promote the development of **Green Energy** (which **includes renewable energy sources** like solar, wind hydropower, and biomass) **launching the National Solar Mission in 2010**, to establish as a global leader in solar energy (by creating anenabling policy framework) and supporting development of solar power projects across the country: **also launching the National Wild Energy Mission** (to promote wind energy development), setting ambitious targets for wind capacity installations. In addition to domestic initiatives,**India is actively participating in international efforts** to promote green energy and combat climate change—-**being the founding member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA):** an initiative launched in partnership with France (to promote the use of solar energy globally) **also being a signatory to the Paris Agreement (Adopted in 2015 & entered into force in 2016)**, under which it has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and increasing theshare of renewable energy in its energy mix. **International Collaboration** (including technology transfer and financial support from developed countries) **will be essential for India** to achieve its greenenergy targets—-the country having **already received** significant **support from** international organisations (like the **World Bank** and the **Asian Development Bank**) which are providing funding for renewable energy projects and capacity-building initiatives.

The Need, the Potential, and the challenges:

Our energy sector has traditionally been **dominated (Around 70% ofthe country's electricity generation) by fossil fuels (particularly coal),** leading to severe environmental & health problems (including air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and water scarcity)----additionally **the overall economic stability had started affecting agriculture & water** resources due to the adverse impacts of climate change (which include erratic weather patterns, extreme heatwaves, and changing rainfall patterns), causing the need to transition (to a sustainable energy model) become increasingly urgent. **The country**

(having recognized this urgency) **has therefore set ambitious targets for renewable energy development—-aiming to have 50% of its electricity come from non-fossil fuel sources** (reducing the carbon intensity of its economy) by 45% by 2030 from 2005 levels).

We are blessed with abundant renewable energy resources—-**our geographic location providing the country with vast potential for solar & wind energies**—-being considered among the highestin the world, and hence having already made substantial progress in tapping them into these resources (in states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, and TamilNadu, as well as coastal areas & hilly regions),also investing in **hydropower and biomass energy** (both having potential to provide sustainable & reliable energy): while also creating jobs & supporting rural economics.

The **government has** further **launched the National Wind Energy Mission** (to promote wind energy development), **setting** ambitious **targets for wind capacity installations.** Despite the significant potential and benefits of green energy, there are **several challenges that India must address to fully realize its sustainability goals** (such as Infrastructure and Grid Integration, Financing, and Investment, Regulatory and Policy Framework, Technological Innovation, Public Awareness, and Acceptance).

Summary:

One of the main challenges is the **integration of renewable energy into the existing power grid**—-renewable energy sources (like solar and wind) being variable, their output fluctuating as on weather conditions, causing issues for 'grid stability' & reliability.

The **transition** to green energy **requiring significant upfront investment**, implementation of various policies and incentives (to attract investment) are needed such as innovative financing mechanisms (like Green Bonds & Public-Private Partnerships) to mobilize the necessary capital.

A clear stable **regulatory environment is essential for the growth of the renewable energy sector**, by addressing regulatory challenges (which include land acquisition, permitting processes, & tariff structures). Streamlining these processes (and providing long-term policy)for certainty, is crucial for attracting investment and encouraging the development of green energy projects.

There being the need for **technological innovation** (to improve the efficiency) and cost-effectiveness of renewable energy systems (including advancements in energy storage technologies—-critical to managing the variability of renewable energy sources), **supporting research and development** in these areas becomes the key to overcoming the technical challenges associated with the transition (to green energy).

The successful **deployment of green energy depends on public awareness and acceptance**—-though there being growing support (for renewable energy) in India, there are still misconceptions and resistance: particularly in rural areas (Where large-scale projects may require land acquisition). Engaging with local communities, providing education on the benefits (of renewable energy), and ensuring that projects are developed in a socially and environmentally responsible manner will be important for building public support.

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Development versus Devotion — the Forest Officer's Ethical Tightrope

R. Hemanth Kumar

The present-day Forest officers are facing a serious challenge: Development versus Devotion — the Forest Officer's Ethical Tightrope. I believe it is wise to discuss this issue, focusing on the ethical dilemma each of us encounters.

Prologue:

The Forest Service is one of India's leading civil services responsible for managing the country's forests, wildlife, and related natural resources. Beyond technical tasks, the forest officers serve as custodians of complex socio-ecological systems — with duties toward biodiversity, local communities, climate resilience, and intergenerational equity.

India's forests are living archives of natural evolution and cultural coexistence. They sustain over 275 million people directly dependent on them, regulate climate, conserve biodiversity, and secure soil and water. The forest officer must thus act as scientist, administrator, negotiator, and moral guardian — ensuring that the delicate balance between human need and ecological integrity is never lost.

This essay explores the professional and ethical principles guiding forest service's work, its responsibilities toward the environment and stewardship practices, its notable contributions to conservation and sustainable resource management, the significant challenges and criticism it faces, and suggestions for strengthening the service in the future.

1. Introduction

The Forest Service in India, formed to manage the country's forest resources, plays a significant role in shaping India's environmental future. Forests in India are not just sources of timber; they are cultural landscapes, biodiversity hotspots, providers of ecosystem services, and the foundation for the livelihoods of millions, particularly tribal and forest-dependent communities. Forest officers operate at the crossroads of ecology, law, public administration, and community engagement. Their decisions affect ecological health, social justice, economic activities, and national commitments (such as climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation).

Forest officers are, therefore, not only technical managers but also ethical agents whose choices reflect values: concern for non-human life, equitable distribution of benefits, respect for traditional rights, caution in the face of uncertainty, and a stewardship ethic that prioritizes long-term sustainability over short-term gains.

2. Historical context and institutional role

The roots of forest administration in India date back to colonial forest policies and the establishment of professional forestry education. Key institutional roles of the Forest Officers include:

- Formulating and implementing forest policy and management plans at multiple scales.

- Conserving biodiversity and overseeing protected areas (national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves).
- Managing forest resources sustainably for timber, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), fuelwood, fodder, and ecosystem services.
- Enforcing forest and wildlife laws, and preventing illegal logging, poaching, and encroachment.
- Engaging with local communities and implementing participatory forest management regimes (Joint Forest Management, community conserved areas).
- Advising on land-use planning, environmental impact assessment, and ecosystem restoration.
- Representing India in national and international fora on forestry, biodiversity, and climate change.

This institutional mandate places Forest officers at the centre of environmental governance, with responsibilities that go beyond narrow departmental priorities to include ethical stewardship.

3. Ethics in the Indian Forest Service

Ethics for Forest officers operate at multiple levels: personal integrity, professional codes, statutory obligations, and ecological ethics. Ethical practice in Forest Officers is the glue that holds together conservation goals, community rights, and administrative accountability.

3.1 Professional and legal ethics

Forest officers are bound by laws (Forest Acts,Wildlife Protection Act, environmental regulations) and administrative codes (conduct rules for civil servants). Key ethical tenets include:

- Rule of law and impartial enforcement: Enforcing laws fairly, resisting corruption, and ensuring transparency in decision-making.
- Accountability: Public officials are accountable to citizens — including transparent allocation of forest permits, revenue accounting, and public consultation during planning.
- Conflict of interest avoidance: Ensuring decisions are free from personal gain or pressure by vested interests.
- Due process: Upholding principles of natural justice in disputes over land, extraction rights, and criminal prosecutions.

3.2 Ecological ethics

Beyond legal obligations, there is an ecological ethic — a moral responsibility toward non-human life and ecological processes:

- Intrinsic value of nature: Recognizing that forests and species have value beyond direct human use.
- Precautionary principle: Where scientific uncertainty exists (e.g., in reintroductions or resource-use impacts), adopting cautious approaches to avoid irreversible harm.
- Intergenerational equity: Managing resources so future generations inherit functioning ecosystems and services.
- Biodiversity stewardship: Prioritizing actions that maintain genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.

3.3 Social and distributive ethics

Forests are social landscapes. Ethical

obligations include:

• Recognition of customary rights: Respecting traditional and tribal rights over forest resources and sacred groves.

• Equity in benefit-sharing: Ensuring Forest revenue, NTFP incomes, and ecotourism benefits reach local communities fairly.

• Informed consent and participation: Meaningful consultation, not tokenism, when planning programs that affect communities.

3.4 Professional virtues

An ethical Forest officer embodies specific virtues: humility in the face of ecological complexity, courage to oppose short-term political or commercial pressures, empathy for local people, scientific curiosity, and a dedication to lifelong learning.

4. Responsibilities toward the environment and stewardship principles

Stewardship means proactive guardian-ship guided by long-term views. For the Forest Officer, stewardship respons -ibilities include conservation, restoration, sustainable use, and supporting community resilience.

4.1 Conservation of biodiversity and habitats

• Protected area management: Design -ing zoning, anti-poaching, species recovery, habitat restoration, and visitor management to conserve species and ecosystems.

• Landscape connectivity: Beyond isolated reserves, stewardship involves maintaining corridors and matrix quality to allow species movement and genetic exchange.

• Species recovery programs: Formulating and implementing science-driven plans for threatened species, including captive-breeding where appropriate, translocations, and long-term monitoring.

4.2 Sustainable resource use

• Sustainable forest management (SFM): Balancing extraction (timber, NTFPs) with regeneration by applying silvicultural systems suited to ecology and local needs.

• Multiple-use forestry: Recognizing forests' multiple roles — livelihood, carbon sequestration, watershed protection — and planning accordingly.

• Adaptive management: Using monitoring data to inform and modify practices over time in response to ecological feedback.

4.3 Restoration and resilience building

• Afforestation and reforestation: Prioritizing native species, landscape context, and ecological function over monocultures or ornamental plantings.

• Ecosystem - based adaptation: Manag -ing forests to reduce climate risks (soil protection, flood attenuation) and building community resilience.

• Invasive species control and fire management: Proactive measures to prevent and respond to threats that alter ecosystem trajectories.

4.4 Water, soil, and watershed services

• Catchment protection: Recognising forests' role in maintaining hydrological regimes and prioritising upstream conservation to secure water downstream.

• Soil conservation: Preventing erosion through appropriate land-use planning,

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FELICITATIONS TO THE STAFF FOR WINNING, 102 Acr SAHEBNAGAR FOREST LAND CASE IN SC








PICTURES FROM 110th GENERAL BODY MEETING AT MAHAVEER HARINA VANASTHALI







RELEASE OF COFFEE TABLE BOOK ON KVS.BABU, IFS MEMORIAL GOLD MEDAL AWARD

CONVOCATION OF 11th BATCH
FOREST RANGE OFFICER TRAINEES
AT TGSFA, HYDERABAD

Late Sri. KVS Babu's family presented
Rs. 1.0 lakh cheque to Vanapremi

RELEASE OF "PRAMADAMLO PARYAVARANAM" BOOK BY M.RAM MOHAN AT 38th BOOK EXHIBITION, HYD

Continuation from page No. 28

plantation design, and community engagement in vulnerable areas.

4.5 Climate mitigation and carbon stewardship

• Carbon sequestration policies: Implementing afforestation/reforestation and REDD+/carbon accounting with attention to permanence, additionality, and social safeguards.

• Low-impact operations: Reducing emissions from forest operations and promoting carbon-friendly forest management.

4.6 Governance and institutions

• Policy integration: Coordinating with agriculture, mining, infrastructure, and urban planning to ensure sectoral decisions do not sacrifice forests.

• Capacity building: Training staff in modern conservation science, GIS, community facilitation, and conflict resolution.

• Research and monitoring: Strengthen -ing science-policy links through syste-matic data collection, long-term ecological research, and transparent reporting.

5. Major contributions of the Indian Forest Service

Over the decades, Forest Officers have made significant contributions to conservation, resource management, policy innovation, and community engagement. Although contributions differ across states and periods, several key achievements stand out.

5.1 Establishing and managing the protected area network

Forest officers played key roles in establishing, staffing, and managing a network of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, tiger reserves, and protected corridors. These areas have been essential to the recovery and preservation of important species and habitats, providing legal protection, anti-poaching efforts, habitat restoration, and management planning.

5.2 Species conservation successes

• Flagship species recovery: The coordinated management of habitats and anti-poaching efforts has contributed to recoveries or stabilisation of species such as the Indian rhinoceros, Asiatic lion (in its stronghold), various crocodilian populations, and, in some regions, tigers. (Outcomes vary regionally; success is often due to long-term reserve management and enforcement.)

• Captive breeding and reintroduction programs: Forest officers have facilitated captive breeding for critically endangered species and supported scientifically planned reintroductions and translocations where appropriate.

5.3 Community-based Forest manage-ment

• Joint Forest Management (JFM) and similar models: Forest officers played a leadership role in implementing participatory models where local communities manage and benefit from forest resources under agreed plans, leading to better protection and livelihoods in many areas.

• Recognition of traditional steward -ship: Efforts to integrate sacred groves, community-conserved areas, and tribal institutions into formal conservation

frameworks have preserved culturally important biodiversity.

5.4 Watershed management and soil conservation

• Implementing watershed projects and soil conservation measures that stabilize catchments, enhance water security for agriculture, and decrease downstream flooding and siltation.

5.5 Restoration and afforestation initiatives

• Large-scale tree-planting campaigns, roadside and urban forestry, and degraded-land rehabilitation have helped expand tree cover, although the ecological quality of plantings varies. When guided by ecological principles, restoration has produced measurable benefits in biodiversity and ecosystem services.

5.6 Policy, legislation, and institutional development

• Forest officers have contributed expertise in shaping national and state forest policies, wildlife protection laws, and forest working plans — embedding technical knowledge into policy frameworks.

• They also contributed to the development of programs for joint management, eco-development, and forest certification initiatives.

5.7 Anti-poaching and enforcement efforts

• Professionalization of enforcement, intelligence networks, and collaboration with the judiciary and police have helped curb organized illegal activities in many regions.

• Confiscation operations, prosecution support, and community surveillance have reduced pressures in some landscapes.

5.8 Research, knowledge generation, and extension

• Foresters have contributed to silviculture, forest mensuration, wildlife biology, remote sensing applications, and extension services that transfer knowledge to communities and forest-dependent enterprises.

5.9 International engagement and commitments

• Forest professionals represent India in global conservation debates, climate negotiations, and international technical collaborations — translating global standards into local practices.

6. Challenges, tensions, and criticisms

The Forest officers and forest governance in India face multiple, often interlinked challenges. Addressing these demands requires ethical clarity, institutional reform, and cross-sector collaboration.

6.1 Conflicting mandates and short-term pressures

Forest officers frequently face pressures to supply timber, support infrastructure projects, or promote development that conflicts with conservation goals. Political and economic pressures can undermine long-term stewardship priorities.

6.2 Insufficient resources and capacity constraints

Many forest divisions are understaffed and underfunded relative to their responsibilities, compromising protection, monitoring, and restoration. Capacity gaps exist in modern skills — GIS, wildlife

forensics, participatory facilitation — requiring sustained training investments.

6.3 Legal and policy ambiguities

Conflicting laws, overlapping jurisdictions (such as mining, tribal rights, and revenue forest lands), and shifting policy priorities create confusion. Issues related to forest rights and land tenure (for example, the implementation of forest rights legislation) have caused tensions between conservation goals and social justice responsibilities.

6.4 Community distrust and historical grievances

Historical exclusionary policies and forced evictions have fostered deep mistrust. Without meaningful redress and inclusive planning, communities might resist conservation efforts or open forests for subsistence uses.

6.5 Ecological challenges

Climate change, invasive species, fragmented habitats, and unsustainable resource extraction create evolving threats that demand adaptive management. Restoration failures happen when ecological processes and local needs are overlooked.

6.6 Corruption and misuse of authority

Instances of collusion with illegal loggers, misallocation of permits, and misuse of power undermine the service's ethical credibility and erode public trust.

6.7 Balancing livelihoods and conserva- tion

Balancing immediate livelihood needs with long-term conservation is challenging — demanding innovative economic solutions and equitable access arrangements.

7. Ethical dilemmas and decision-making frameworks

Forest officers routinely face ethical dilemmas — e.g., whether to permit limited community grazing that slightly reduces regeneration or to allow infrastructure that opens remote areas but promises local development.

Approaches to navigating such dilemmas:

- Structured decision-making: Weighing objectives, options, outcomes, uncertainties, and trade-offs explicitly.
- Precaution with adaptive management: When outcomes are uncertain but potentially damaging, adopt cautious approaches while monitoring effects to learn and adapt.
- Deliberative stakeholder engagement: Bringing affected parties into decision processes early, ensuring transparency, and seeking negotiated compromises.
- Ethical impact assessments: Evaluating not only economic benefits but also social equity and ecological integrity.
- Checks and balances: Institutional mechanisms (independent audits, ombuds) to prevent misuse and ensure accountability.

8. Strengthening the ForestService for 21st-century stewardship — suggestions

To address increasing environmental challenges and social expectations, the Forest officers need to evolve. Suggested pathways:

8.1 Invest in capacity building and multi-disciplinary skills

Training should go beyond traditional silviculture to include wildlife ecology, social facilitation, GIS and remote sensing, environmental law, climate science, and ethics. Exchange programs with universities, NGOs, and international institutions can help.

8.2 Institutional reforms for transparency and accountability

Adopt open data practices for forest inventories, wildlife monitoring, revenue flows, and project outcomes. Independent evaluation units, citizen oversight committees, and strong grievance redressal mechanisms will enhance legitimacy.

8.3 Integrate community rights and co-management

Institutionalize authentic co-management models that transfer meaningful decision-making and benefits to local communities while maintaining ecological safeguards. Safeguards must be designed to prevent vulnerable groups from being sidelined.

8.4 Adopt landscape-level planning

Move beyond isolated protected areas to landscape approaches that integrate agriculture, forestry, and developmental planning — enabling connectivity, shared benefits, and harmonized policies across departments.

8.5 Science-driven monitoring and adaptive management

Establish long-term ecological monitoring networks linked to decision triggers. Use data to refine management plans and publish results to promote learning.

8.6 Strengthen enforcement with technology and community partner-ships

Combine patrols with technology, such as satellite monitoring, camera traps, and e-tools, and empower community scouts to monitor and deter illegal activities.

8.7 Ethical leadership and culture change

Promote ethical leadership with formal ethics training, incentive systems that reward stewardship outcomes (such as biodiversity improvements and watershed restoration), and protections for whistleblowers.

8.8 Climate-smart forestry and restoration

Implement restoration using native species, prioritize ecological functions, and align afforestation with carbon integrity principles (permanence, additionality, social safeguards).

8.9 Enhance cross-sectoral coordination

Establish institutional mechanisms for the forest department to collaborate with mining, infrastructure, urban planning, and agriculture departments to reduce adverse impacts on forests.

9. The human dimension — officers as ethical actors

The Forest officers are integrated into the socio-political environments they serve. Ethical leadership relies on supporting officers who demonstrate integrity, empathy, and scientific accuracy.

Key supports:

- Mentoring and peer networks: To share best practices and moral support when facing pressures.
- Protection for ethical decisions: Administrative backing when officers resist corrupt or environmentally harmful

directives.

• Recognition systems: Rewarding officers for conservation outcomes and community engagement, not just revenue targets.

10. Conclusion — stewardship as vocation and practice

Over time, the Forest Service evolved from a service that managed timber to one that manages ecosystem integrity and human well-being. In many of the urban areas, we created green lungs that reconnect citizens with nature,

Forest officers often operate amid conflicting pressures:

• Development projects vs. ecological integrity

• Local livelihood demands vs. wildlife protection

• Political expediency vs. professional ethics

• Short-term revenue vs. long-term sustainability

Such dilemmas test the moral fiber of the service. Officers must balance law, empathy, and scientific prudence — knowing that inaction or compromise can have irreversible consequences.

They must have ethical courage — to say 'no' when ecological limits are crossed — remains the defining trait of true stewardship.

Every Forest officer carries with them a personal moral universe — forged by wilderness, solitude, and the weight of responsibility. Long nights in tiger reserves, negotiations with angry villagers, or facing political pressure to clear forests test not just competence, but conscience. Stories abound of officers who risked careers and lives to protect forests — who refused illegal clearances, rescued wildlife, or stood up to corruption.

Their courage reaffirms that ethics is not an abstract concept but a lived experience.

People like Dr H.R. Bustard in crocodile conservation, Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh in wildlife legislation, or Dr S.P. Yadav in global tiger initiatives exemplify how one person's integrity can influence an entire nation's ecological destiny.

Ethical forestry today means:

• Listening to forests as living entities.

• Respecting the rights and wisdom of those who dwell in them.

• Applying science without arrogance.

• Acting for posterity rather than profit.

We need to develop A future-ready Forest Service that incorporates ethical reflection into daily practice, combines scientific and social knowledge, and works with citizens to manage forests as shared, living systems, and should learn that stewardship is not a single action but an ongoing commitment to balance competing interests, foster regenerative relationships between people and nature, and safeguard the rights of future generations.

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Wildlife Wonders: Explore the Beauty of Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary as ecotourism destination

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Introduction

The D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the eye catching wildlife sanctuaries in the North East India with magnificent views and biodiversity treasures.It is situated in Arunachal Pradesh, India, and was established on August 23, 1978, with the primary objective of conserving the region's diverse biodiversity and safeguarding its natural habitats. The sanctuary is named in honor of Late Daying Ering, a respected leader and former Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, whose significant contributions to wildlife and environmental conservation are commemorated through its name. It is situated just 13 kilometers from Pasighat, the sanctuary is home to a wide range of flora and fauna. Covering an area of approximately 190 square kilometers, the sanctuary includes a variety of ecosystems, including wetland areas, grassland and forest ecosystem, which makes it a vital conservation area in the region. Its landscape features streams, water channels, river islands, and small to medium water bodies that provide an ideal environment for numerous bird species. The area is predominantly made up of tropical grasslands, with about 80% of the land covered in grass. The remaining portion consists of riverine forests, patches of bamboo, and secondary forest.

Sunset view of Dering Wildlife Sanctuary(Photos by KonsengChowpoo, Forest Ranger Dering Wildlife Sanctuary)

D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Flora and fauna

D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for its rich biodiversity and its role in the conservation of various wildlife species, including several endangered and rare animals. Some of the notable flora found in D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary are Saccharum spontaneum(Wild sugarcane), Saccharum arundinaceum (Hardy sugarcane), Neyraudia reynaudiana (Cane grass), Cyperus species, Terminalia myriocarpa (East Indian almond), Dillenia indica (Elephant apple), Bombax ceiba (Cotton tree), Lagerstroemia speciosa (Pride of India), Albizia species (Albizia sp.).

A magnificent view of Dering Wildlife Sanctuary(Photos by KonsengChowpoo, Forest Ranger Dering Wildlife Sanctuary)

It provides shelter to two of the major big cats - the tiger and the leopard. Other notable wildlife includes endangered species such as the Takin, Hoolock Gibbon, Red Panda, Slow Loris, and Capped Langur. These species are of significant conservation concern, and the sanctuary provides a protected habitat for their survival. Some of the notable wildlife species found in the sanctuary are Elephas maximus (Asian Elephant), Panthera tigris (Tiger), Sus scrofa(Wild Boar), Axis porcinus (Hog Deer), Rusa unicolor (Sambar Deer), Muntiacus muntjak (Barking Deer), Bubalus arnee(Wild Buffalo).

The sanctuary is a haven for birdwatchers. It hosts a variety of resident and migratory bird species, making it a popular destination for ornithologists, bird enthusiasts and wildlife conservation. The presence of waterbodies and riverine habitats attracts numerous bird species. Some of the notable wildlife species found in the sanctuary includeGyps tenuirostris (Slender-billed Vulture), Gyps bengalensis (White-rumped Vulture), Houbaropsis bengalensis (Bengal Florican), Asarcorniss cutulata (White-winged Duck), Sterna acuticauda (Black-bellied Tern), Ortygornis gularis(Swamp Francolin), Leptoptilos javanicus (Lesser Adjutant), Haliaeetus leucoryphus (Pallas's Fish Eagle), Clanga clanga(Greater Spotted Eagle), Rynchops albicollis (Indian Skimmer), Chrysomma altirostre (Jerdon's Babbler), Paradoxornis flavirostris (Black-breasted Parrotbill),Pelecanus philippensis (Spot-billed Pelican), Gyps himalayensis (Himalayan Griffon), Aegypius monachus (Cinereous Vulture). The sanctuary's riverine ecosystem leads to the presence of reptiles like Python molurus (Indian Python), Malayopython reticulatus(Reticulated Python) etc.

Conservation and Management Challenges in D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary

The D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, despite its ecological importance, faces several conservation and management challenges that threaten its biodiversity and natural habitats. The sanctuary's grasslands, which are critical for many species, are under increasing pressure due to habitat conversion, livestock grazing, and flooding, often exacerbated by upstream dam construction. Additionally, the spread of invasive plant species poses a serious threat to the native grassland ecosystem, requiring regular and resource-intensive management.

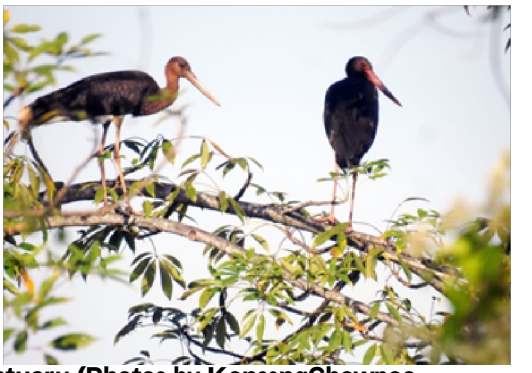
A significant limitation in addressing these challenges is the lack of comprehensive research. As noted by Dr. Asad Rahmani in his Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) report, studies in the sanctuary have largely been limited to avian surveys, with little understanding of broader ecological and social dynamics. There is an urgent need for interdisciplinary research to inform conservation efforts, and fortunately, the forest department has been supportive of such initiatives.

However, the sanctuary's management is hindered by financial constraints. Despite these limitations, the fieldwork on grassland birds was

met with generous cooperation and dedication from local forest officers.With better funding, research support, and infrastructure, D'Ering Wildlife Sanctuary holds great potential to become a leading model for science-based conservation in northeast India.

Future Prospects of Ecotourism in Wildlife Sanctuaries

More travelers today are choosing to explore nature in ways that protect the environment and support local communities. Wildlife sanctuaries offer a unique chance to experience animals in their natural habitats while directly contributing to conservation efforts.When managed well, ecotourism can generate vital funding for habitat protection, anti-poaching, and wildlife research. It also creates jobs for local people from guides to homestay owners making them active partners in conservation. This connection between communities and nature strengthens long-term protection efforts.

Rich Flora and Fauna of the Dering Wildlife Sanctuary (Photos by KonsengChowpoo, Forest Ranger Dering Wildlife Sanctuary)

With growing government support and eco-friendly innovations like solar-powered lodges and wildlife tracking tools, ecotourism is becoming more sustainable and accessible. However, as visitor numbers increase, it's crucial to manage tourism responsibly to avoid disturbing fragile ecosystems. Ifbalanced carefully, ecotourism can benefit both people and nature, building a future where wildlife is preserved, communities thrive, and travelers leave with a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

Conclusion

The visit to D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary was both insightful and inspiring. Observing the region's rich biodiversity and learning about the sanctuary's ongoing conservation efforts highlighted the importance of protecting such critical habitats. Despite facing resource and management challenges, the dedication of the forest department and local staff is commendable. This experience has deepened our appreciation for wildlife and reinforced the need for continued support, research, and awareness to ensure the long-term preservation of this vital ecosystem.

Acknowledgement: Both authors gratefully acknowledge the State Forest Department for granting permission to visit the wildlife sanctuary. Special thanks are extended to Mr.Konseng Chowpoo, Forest Ranger of D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, for generously providing the photographs showcasing the sanctuary's landscapes, as well as its rich flora and fauna.

Do You Know?

The National Park Service, USA compiles presidential quotes related to parks. Dwight Eisenhower is quoted as supporting the fundamental idea that "Our National Parks belong to each of us" and that setting aside ample portions of natural resources ensures "future generations may know the majesty of the earth as we know it today". His administration and personal views supported the principles of conservation and historical preservation that underpin the park system. (Source: Internet)

The Migrating Herds: A Tale of Cattle and Cleverness

Dr. Padam Parkash Bhojvaid

The global debate on environmental degradation often underscores how affluent Western nations impose externalities on developing countries. For example, deforestation in South America is linked to the expansion of cattle ranches supplying beef to burger chains in Europe and North America. Similarly, the overexploitation of tropical medicinal herbs caters to the demand for "green" lifestyles in wealthier regions.

However, these externalities are not limited to international dynamics. Within developing nations, environmental burdens are frequently shifted from affluent classes to marginalized communities, perpetuating degradation by design. This narrative from India illustrates how internal inequalities contribute to environmental strain.

It was the summer of 2011 when I, as Chief Conservator of Forests, found myself in Matanhail, a small village in Haryana's Jhajjar district. My duties revolved around safeguarding the region's natural resources, and on this particular day, I encountered an unusual sight: a massive herd of over 700 cattle grazing near a young Acacia plantation spread across 25 hectares. This plantation, raised by the forest department in 2009, was a labor of love—a testament to ecological commitment.

The herd stood out distinctly from the native breeds of cattle I was accustomed to. Their sheer number and their demeanor piqued my curiosity. The herd was managed by a group of eight: two men, two women, and four boys aged between 8 and 15. Leading them was Mahendra, a herdsman whose rugged attire and commanding presence told of a life deeply connected to the land, though his origins seemed distant from Haryana.

Alarmed by the potential damage the cattle could inflict on the fragile plantation, I instructed my staff to relocate them. What followed was far from ordinary. At Mahendra's whistle, the cattle charged defensively at the forest guards, forcing them to retreat. This unexpected resistance prompted me to change tactics.

Instead of force, I opted for dialogue. I asked the Range Forest Officer to engage Mahendra in conversation while I observed from a distance. Intrigued by the herdsman's story, I later invited him to pose for a photograph with his cattle. What began as a casual interaction evolved into a long conversation under the shade of a tree, revealing an ingenious yet unsettling business model rooted in the arid landscapes of Gujarat's Rann of Kutch.

The Rann of Kutch, a vast salt marsh in Gujarat, is home to the Maldhari tribe, pastoralists who have thrived for centuries in harmony with the harsh desert ecosystem. Central to their livelihood is the Kankrej breed of cattle, prized for its resilience, docile nature, and milk yield. However, the arid environment and recurring droughts compel Maldhari herders to migrate seasonally in search of greener pastures.

Mahendra, a Maldhari tribesman, was not the owner of the cattle. Instead, he was a caretaker working for two businessmen: Sukhlal Patel from Gujarat's Rann of Kutch and Chotte Lal, a Marwari entrepreneur from Rajasthan. Mahendra, along with his brother Pratap, managed the herd for a modest daily wage and rations.

Every year, when Gujarat's dried grasslands became

barren, Mahendra and his team drove the cattle northward to Haryana and Punjab, following a well-rehearsed route. The cattle grazed on fallow fields for 10-15 days, enriching the soil with cow dung—a natural fertilizer that local landowners willingly purchased.

About 40% of the cattle were lactating, and the milk was sold to local vendors, creating a steady income stream. Clerks dispatched by the businessmen arrived fortnightly to collect earnings and settle accounts.

This system was not unique. Mahendra revealed that over 50 similar entrepreneurs operated in Rajasthan and Gujarat, each owning large herds dispatched to greener districts during the dry season. During drought years and time of scarcity, the practice intensified, with more herds migrating to fertile states like Haryana and Punjab.

As I listened, I marveled at the brilliance of this business model. By outsourcing grazing costs to distant lands, the businessmen achieved remarkable profitability. Yet, my admiration was tinged with unease. This system, while ingenious, imposed a heavy ecological burden on Haryana and Punjab.

I muttered under my breath, "Su Cho Mota Bhai! Heeng Lage Na Phatkari Aur Raang Bhi Chokha Hau"—a Gujarati expression that loosely translates to "What a marvel! No expense, yet the results are brilliant."

Watching the herd disappear into the horizon, I reflected on the delicate balance between human enterprise and ecological responsibility. Mahendra's story was not merely one of survival but a testament to the ingenuity—and ethical dilemmas—of a connected world.

This system persists to this day. Thousands of cattle, accompanied by Maldhari herdsmen in their traditional attire, traverse the northern states of India. There are no restrictions; no permissions are required for passage. The voters remain indifferent, and the rulers stay silent. It is, indeed, a free-for-all, leaving the burden of sustainability to the ever-patient Mother Earth.

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TIGER
(Is the tiger changing its habit of preying?)

B. M. T. Rajeev

Tiger (Panthera tigris) is one of the big cats in the genus-'Panthera' in the family of **'Felidae'**and it is native to Asia. There are 9 sub-species of tigers namely Indo-chinese, Royal Bengal, Malayan, Sumatran, Siberian and China tigers; other 3 sub species of Balinese, Caspian &Javan tigers are extinct.

The Royal Bengal tiger (Panthera tigris tigris)- Indian tiger lives all over India from upper Himalayas to cape Kanyakumari except in the desert &Punjab regions. India had a bounty of tiger population said to be estimated at 1,40,000 in 1925, 40,000 in 1930, 30,000 in 1939 and 4,000 in 1964 as per E.P.Gee–which were decimated due to unabated game hunting by the British officers & the erstwhile Kings & Maharajas and reduced to 1,872 as per the first ever tiger census in India in 1972; this figure of tigers population at its nadir forced the government of India to enactthe Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972 to make efforts to conserve wildlife.The population of tigers is 3,682 as per tiger census 2022,and it will be more now.

Significance of tiger:

Tiger is a carnivore and a dominant predator that occupies the apex of the ecosystem-habitats and its survival is the survival of all the species of flora and fauna in its habitat. If flora-forests degrade, its prey-herbivores will decline, if its prey base declines-tiger is the first to be affected and die. Based on this principle, tiger was declared as our 'National animal' in 1972 and the government of India launched 'Project Tiger' to conserve it by setting aside some 'Protected Areas' (PAs) as 'Tiger Reserves' (TRs) since 1973, to conserve our forests, biodiversity as national heritage for the scientific study, recreation and enjoyment of the future generation.

*Tiger is not a social animal, it lives in solitary except during mating and nursing cubs in the forests within its determined territory called 'home range' where its biological requirements like water, food-prey animals, space and shelter, protection, facility for procreation- chances for mating are met. Tigers live up to 10-15-20 years in the wild and up to 25 years in captivity.

*Tigers have better eye sight including enlarged night vision, high sense of hearing, normal sense of smell, good sense of touch but weak sense of taste…the reason for cannibalism.

Breeding:

A mature tigress in heat… invites a male for mating which lasts for 2-3 weeks till it gets impregnated i.e. satisfied….if not, she invites another male for mating. Once mating is over, the male tiger disappears. The gestation period is 100 to 105 days. The tigress gives birth to 1-6 cubs depending on its age. The cubs born blind will remain with utmost care of the mother for a week till they open eyes. The fathered tiger will return at this stage to help his partner in protecting its cubs. The mother starts shifting the cubs to safer places to avoid cannibalism and cubs start walking by 6-8 months and start to follow the mother and start to learn hunting around 8-18 months.

Mother starts to prepare her cubs to hunt independently and force them to move out to independent home ranges by 18-24 months to live separately. Then the mother disappears with her new found love for procreation. Female cubs mature early and come to heat for mating by 2.5 years and male by 3 years of age. The home ranges vary from 10 sq km to 100 sq km. The male's home range can overlap the home range of tigresses but not the tigers of same sex. Pic: Mother tigress with two cubs

Habits:

Tigers are primarily solitary ambushing predators that typically target and kill one large prey animal at a time to minimize risk and energy expenditure. Their success rate per stalk is only 5-10%, so they conserve energy by focusing on a single target, often dragging the carcass away to eat for several days.

Tiger does not indulge in harming animals unless it is hungry and hunt to satisfy its hunger and do not hunt further till it consumes its kill full for days; hence, tiger is called as royal and gentle man animal in the wild. It is even termed as the 'spirit of the jungle'.

The tiger among all big cats in the wild is a bold, strong and formidable predator without fear which can take on any prey among herbivores like a variety of deer, wild boar, gaur and calf of elephant/ rhino; and some times, tries on bear, crocodile, porcupine, big bird and python and even on leopard etc in wild and commonly on domestic cattle and human. It avoids pack of dholes, elephants' herd, rhinoceros and humans.

Tiger is a clean eater; after hunting, it takes rest, drags the kill to a safer cover, cleverly breaks open the abdomen of the kill, pulls out the stomach, removes it without breaking and throws away and starts eating its heart and internal organs before starting to eat from the rump. An adult tiger in hunger can eat up to 45 kg of flesh in a go, drags its kill to a safe place and hides from other carnivores/ carrions to feed on till it consumes in full. It frequents to water holes or to its den to feed its cubs; but stays near to its kill till it finishes. It eats only flesh. It is a carrion and continues to feed on its kill or even a dead body of a big animal like elephant or rhinoceros or bison even if the carcass started perishing with maggots as it has weak sense of smell(I have seen a tiger feeding on a dead elephant carcass for a fortnight in the Bandipur TR in 1992.)

Habit affected its survival:

Tigers do not indulge in habitually or routinely engage in killing multiple animals like two or more prey simultaneously as part of their natural hunting strategy. This habit of tigers has caused very dear to their population from time immemorial…i.e. the humans after learning its habits after hunting / preying went on killing tigers and decimating their population by using tiger's kill as bait by poisoningit to cause death or for shooting by taking position

on tree top or by snaring across its approaching path to its kill/ carcass...even recently a mother tigress with 4 cubs was killed by poisoning its kill-carcass of a cow in the Malai Mahadeshwara Hills Wildlife Sanctuary in the Chamarajanagar Dist in June, 2025. This habit of consumption of its kill full with revisits has been a bane for its survival and affected a lot against it.

Are tigers changing their hunting habits?

The incidents of tigers changing hunting habits to quote are…

*In August 2015, a tiger entered a cattle shed with 14 animals in the vicinity of Tamil Nadu's Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, killing a cow and an ox in a predawn attack before villagers scared it off with fire balls. It happened to be the first incident of tiger killing more than one kill at a time-on record.

* More recently, in November 2025, a tiger killed two cows grazing together in the forests of Telangana's Asifabad district, sparking local panic and causing halting farming activities.

*In November, 2025, a tiger killed two cows tied down to graze with ropes in a farm land close to Bandipur TR and ran away when the farmer raised hue & cry against it. The Bandipur TR management verified the truth of it with its pug marks and its revisit to the spot on the next day where two cattle were buried by the owner of the cows … by verifying its pug marks on the dug up soil ... .and paid the compensation to the farmer.

From the above incidents of the tigers, it shows that the tigers are changing their habits in preying on more than one prey at a time contrary to their known habit of gentle manly and royal nature in the midst of the herbivores-not harming any animals when not hungry.

Based on the above incidents it cannot be confirmedly assumed that tigers are changing their habits. The above 3 incidents have happened in 3 different states and cannot be disputed too. One can visualize that the tigers in the above incidents have embarked on killing more than one cattle because of the intervention of the human in its predation before it could take time to prepare and have its kill after the formalities before feeding on it… with rush of fear in it about losing its kill with the interference of humans…the said tigers might have indulged in preying on 2nd animal among the cattle penned or tied…. but, not intentionally to kill like a sadist killer-leopard more than what it can consume.

The tiger killing more than one prey happened when cattle were grazing in herds or confined in enclosures, allowing the tiger to strike multiple animals before fleeing from human intervention. Such incidents are rare and not representative of its wild behavior but highlight the conflict hotspots in India, where tigers are in conflicts of hunting thousands of livestock annually and prey on humans whoever obstructs its attack on cattle and get branded as man-eaters.

For e.g: The tigers attack on 4 humans causing 3 deaths in a month in the Saragurtq of Mysore Dist in the Oct-November 2025 were all happened while the farmers tried to shout out the tiger from preying on their domestic cattle, and were not the incidents of preying on or hunting of humans by tigers in the border of Bandipur TR in farm lands. The tigers trans-located in the above 4 incidents are not man-eaters but they have mauled the man who has tried to prevent them from earning their food-preying. Tigers will never have intention or stalk humans since they have fear of man because of his ability in shooting them or killing them with spears etc. In these incidents, tigers have mauled

the men who shouted/ threatened them in self -defense but not to hunt.

They should not be branded as 'man-eaters' and kept in captivity but should be relocated somewhere in the wild.

Man-eaters: Tigers become man eater when they are incapacitated to hunt in old age with disease, injured while hunting porcupine getting stuck by its spines to paws, tongue, eye etc or by mistaking a working men in forest or field as an animal to earn its food- but a healthy tiger in nature will not indulges in hunting humans. Tiger in reality is afraid of men-as a dangerous predator on it empowered by guns and other weapons.

Tigers have not changed their habits but they are indulging in conflicts with humans due to depletion of their habitats in quality and extent and also due to spurt in their population in the states like -Karnataka, Maharashtra &Uttarakhand where they are forced to misbehave. The governments are required to address the problems of shrinking wildlife habitats in quality and extent; create corridors; and also translocate the excess tigers to the PAs or TRs where there are no tigers or less tigers; and totake measure to check the tiger population to resolve 'humans-tigers conflicts'.

**The Author is a Retired Indian Forest Service officer, a Wildlifer, a Writer and a Columnist stationed in Bengaluru. Mobile: 96327 81811*

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	
1.	R.D. Reddy	14-01-1938
2.	R.G. Kalaghatgi	20-01-1953
3.	P. Bhaskar Reddy	21-01-1953
4.	Dr Manoranjan Bhanja	22-01-1958
5.	Dr K. Tirupataiah	23-01-1959
6.	P. Gracious	24-01-1949
7.	Dr P.S. Raghavaiah	25-01-1961
8.	Dr C.N. Rao	26-01-1938
9.	V.P. Audinarayana	28-01-1940
10.	P. Upender Reddy	05-02-1942

Any Omissions and Commissions in the Names / Dates may kindly be informed to the Editor over WhatsApp or Email.

S.No.	Name of the Serving Officers	D.O.B.
	Sarva Sri	
1.	Pradeep Kumar Setty S.V.	08-01-1986
2.	I. Prakash	09-01-1977
3.	C. Vajra Reddy	10-01-1967
4.	V. Srihari Gopal	14-01-1966
5.	Yalavala VK Shanmukh Kumar	14-01-1993
6.	R. Kondal Rao	15-01-1970
7.	B. Sundar	20-01-1970
8.	S. Shantaram	20-01-1980
9.	Ms. D. Samhita	21-01-1988
10.	Sachin Gupta	22-01-1988
11.	M. Nagarjuna Reddy	30-01-1965
12.	B. Venkateswara Rao	31-01-1968
13.	Ramesh Kumar Suman	03-02-1966

- SECRETARY

Tanagers of Costa Rica

(Butterflies of the Bird World)

K. Praveen Rao

Tanagers are the species of song birds with beautifully coloured plumagesfound in neo-tropical bio-realm of the world. Neo-tropical bio-realm includes: South and central America, Caribbean and southern parts of North America. These are also called 'Butterflies of the bird world' due to their bright and mosaic of colourful plumages.

Tanagers belong to the family Thraupidae and order Passeriformes. Thraupidae is the second largest family of birds whereas Passeriformes is the largest order of birds in the scientific classification of flying bipeds. Tanagers represent around 12 percent of Neo-tropical birds and 4 percent of world's avian species. Most of the species of tanagers are restricted to South America and of which 50 percent are endemic to Andes.

In this article we are dealing with the traditional classification and not going in to the details of modern molecular studies which later have classified Thraupidae into many sub families. The tanagers live in small groups of three to five individuals. These birds may be seen singly or in mixed flocks. These are the birds of forests, forest edges and scrublands.

Mostly Tanagers are brightly colored, but some species are black and white. Typically, Males are more brightly colored compared to females and juveniles. Tanagers have short, rounded wings. The shape of the bill is thick and is linked to its foraging habits.

Tanagers are omnivorous in their diet and have a mixed diet of fruits, insects and some nectar. They have a thick beak specialized for large insects. Though their beak and tongues are not specialized for nectar feeding, they consume succulent fruits from trees, shrubs and vines. They search for the insects from the branches of trees, nest holes and crevices; they also turn the leaves from the ground for insects. Some tangers species capture flying insects. All these different habits help in reducing the competition for food amongst different species.

Tanagers build cup-like nest and lay three to five eggs. Parental care is by both sexes. In some species previous year juveniles help in feeding the new born chicks.

Tanagers contribute significantly to ecological balance through their diverse roles as insect predators, seed dispersers, and pollinators, which help regulate plant and insect populations and maintain forest diversity.

Many tanager species are insectivores, especially during breeding season, consuming large numbers of insects, including wasps that other birds may avoid. This predation helps control insect populations, preventing potential pest outbreaks.

Tanager species feed on fruits and are crucial for seed dispersal in the Neo-tropics. By consuming fruits in one location and depositing the seeds elsewhere in their droppings, they aid in plant colonization and forest regeneration, maintaining genetic diversity in plant communities. Some species of tanagers also feed on nectar, contributing to the pollination of various plant species as they move between flowers.

Tanagers themselves serve as a vital food source for a variety of predators, including other birds and mammals, transferring energy up the food web and supporting local predator populations. Through their foraging and waste products, tanagers contribute to nutrient cycling within forest ecosystems, enriching soil quality in different areas.

bay headed tanager

crimson collared tanager

flame coloured tanager_

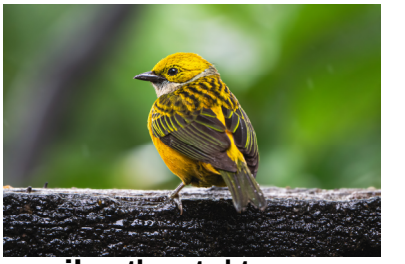
golgen browed chlorophonia_

green honeycreeper

olive backed euphonia

scarlet rumped tanager female

scarlet rumped tanager



silver throated tanager

spangle cheeked tanager_

white shouldered tanager_

yellow winged tanager

The Author is a former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Uttar Pradesh and presently Chairman, Committee on Materials, NBA,Chennai, M-94110 52235

Regardless, Blood will be shed

Anirud Dharni

Prologue:

(A famous Hindi poem of Rashtrakavi Maithili Sharan Gupta) 'Yashodahara' explained to her son through a story how Gautam – before he became Buddha – once saved an injured bird shot by a hunter, his royal cousin. At the end of the poem the son, Rahul, replies in the above lines to her query about the appropriateness of Gautam's act in the story.

I had a memorable field experience when I had just joined the Indian Forest Service and taken charge of my first independent posting as Wildlife Warden of Parambikulam Sanctuary in Kerala. The area had an undulating and interesting landscape with elevation ranging from 600 m to the highest peak at 1400 m above the mean sea level. Out of the total 300 sq. km of the sanctuary, nearly 80 sq. km. had teak plantations that were raised painstakingly first by British officers prior to independence and later by Indian forest officers till the late sixties with the intention of increasing timber production for meeting the industrial demand.

The whole Parambikulam valley was then teeming with wild animals and establishing successful plantations was a Herculean task considering the frequent trampling by wild animals and the risk of elephant herds and carnivores visiting the un-electrified labour camps at night. One has to salute the dedication and hard work of those officers, long dead now, after seeing the teak plantations of varying ages meticulously planned and interspersed in the natural forests comprising of moist deciduous and evergreen canopies in the lower reaches and grasslands on the mountain peaks. One British officer who had worked for years in that area had his grave there as he wished to be buried in the forests where he worked for so long.

The sanctuary was surrounded by private estates growing cash crops like coffee and cardamom which thrived under thick tree growth on leased forestland. Immediately after taking over charge, I went through the management plan of the sanctuary for 3-4 days to study the past history of the sanctuary management. It was probably my first week when I, along with my Range Officer and other field staff, went trekking in the forests to get an idea about the lay of the land under my jurisdiction.

We trekked and sweated for two hours in the forests. At one point while our party of 7-8 people was walking silently we heard few dogs barking agitatedly. I had absolutely no clue about what was to happen in the next couple of minutes. Just after a few moments, we witnessed a scene that I have not forgotten till date. We saw a wild sambar being chased by four domestic dogs. One dog in the pack had dug its teeth on sambar's lower neck while another one was hanging tenaciously with its jaw clamped on the stag's rump and its hind legs in the air. The sambar was obviously running for its life and unsuccessfully trying to evade the remaining two dogs but it was being slowed down by the weight of the two dogs hanging from its front and rear. The forest staff accompanying me picked up - almost on a reflex - the stones lying on the forest floor and pelted them on the dogs who were

incessantly snapping at the sambar.

On seeing this divine intervention, the sambar suddenly changed its course of flight, turned around, came running towards us and stood behind a shrub very near to our group. Few stones that were hurled could land successfully on the dogs. The dogs' party had been definitely spoiled by now and all of them temporarily left their prey free and maintained a safe distance from us looking longingly at the much relieved sambar. After few more accurate stone hits and a volley of chaste Malayalam abuses from the local staff, the dogs had to beat a retreat and all of them left the scene reluctantly together in a military precision as if somebody had given them a cue. I wondered then what prompted them more to leave- being hit physically or the un-parliamentary language used for them!

Everything described here had happened very fast. After the initial excitement subsided, I could then see the sambar clearly and it was bleeding from its neck and rump where the dogs had bitten it. Normally, a wild herbivore never stands so close to human beings. Subsequently, during my two years stay in the sanctuary, I learnt that sambar, when alarmed, generally stamps its fore foot a couple of times before scurrying away whenever it is approached beyond a safe distance by human beings or predators. But that day, this particular animal probably sensed that we were trying to protect it and overcame its instinct to flee away from us. Surprisingly, the animal was so close that I could see its whole body shivering with fear because of its near death experience. We watched the animal for a couple of minutes and realized that it was not critically injured and would surely survive.

The forest staff then informed me that few estate owners and their labourers kept domestic dogs that were trained to hunt wild animals and they ventured sometimes into the sanctuary for meat. We left the sambar rooted at the spot to overcome its trauma in due time. Next we boarded our Maruti Gypsy that was parked nearby and followed generally the direction taken by those dogs after they had been driven away. We entered a coffee estate on the sanctuary border and made enquiries but we could not see the dogs again. We returned empty handed but not before issuing a warning to the estate workers that the next time if such an incident occurred we would shoot the dogs and arrest the owners first and then ask questions later (atypical Bollywood dialogue- more for effect than for intent!).

Epilogue: On the return journey, for a few moments, I basked in the warm glow of a personal satisfaction of saving an innocent animal from the jaws of death. However, the feeling did not last long as another contradictory thought welled up. Though one animal was saved because of the staff's intervention, we also deprived those four dogs of their fruit of labour. Who was I to take sides and judge which animal had a superior claim? Had the sambar been chased by wild dogs or by a tiger, would we be still justified in doing what we did? That is, if at all we could!

Author is a former PCCF of Kerala cadre. M-82239 94111

Far and away, the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Theodore Roosevelt

Farewells: A Comedy of Erosion

Dr. Padam Parkash Bhojvaid

Last week, an unexpected call disrupted my evening calm. A senior officer, in a rare gesture of personal outreach, invited my family to a farewell for retiring colleagues. Such invitations had become relics of the past, so curiosity led me to attend. The event was well-organized, yet it left me with a lingering nostalgia, stirring memories of farewells I had witnessed since 1985. That night, as I sat before my laptop, I found myself tracing the slow erosion of this once-revered tradition.

In the mid-1980s, farewells were nothing short of Bollywood climaxes—an emotional rollercoaster of tears, laughter, and exaggerated praise. Even those who secretly wished the retiree's stapler would jam every morning clapped with enthusiasm. These were grand operas, choreographed with the precision of a Swiss watch. Retired legends, serving officers, and wide-eyed juniors gathered to witness the grandeur.

The retiree, seated like an emperor abdicating his throne, wore a peculiar mix of nostalgia and mild terror—contemplating a future without subordinates lining up outside his office with sanction files. The speeches were master classes in revisionist history. A terror of an officer, infamous for reducing subordinates to nervous wrecks over missing paperclips, was now eulogized as "a man of unyielding principles." His legendary knack for dodging assignments was rebranded as "an exceptional talent for delegation." His own speech was an endearing train wreck—a concoction of exaggerated humility, half-truths, and jokes so old they deserved archaeological preservation.

Then come the stalwarts—the retired veterans, arriving in chauffeured staff cars, revered like visiting royalty. A nervous young officer ensured their glasses remained full and their anecdotes uninterrupted. Their wisdom carried weight—at least until their third whiskey, when it gave way to scandalous office gossip.

By the early 2000s, the spectacle began to unravel. Farewells shrank into hastily arranged office lunches, drained of warmth. Cliques huddled in corners, gossip thrived, and quiet power plays replaced camaraderie. The stalwarts, once the life of the party, now arrived out of obligation, their invitations mere formalities. Their beaming smiles faded into polite grimaces as they fielded disinterested questions like, "You still come to these?"

Speeches turned into passive-aggressive performances. Departing officers used the podium to air veiled grievances. Juniors, eager to impress, masked their barbs in hollow tributes. What was once a heartfelt farewell now resembled a poorly scripted reality show reunion?

By the 2020s, many officers began rejecting farewells altogether, unwilling to endure the irony of being praised by those who had spent years undermining them. Those who reluctantly agreed found themselves in soulless gatherings, colder than a Siberian winter.

The stalwarts, now a dwindling handful, no longer arrived in state-sponsored splendor. Their once-assigned cars were now at the mercy of a reluctant steno who mumbled vague details about "arranging something." At the event, they were parked in forgotten corners, staring into their plates

Contd.. on page No.57

Green Quiz – January 2026

Quiz Master: Dr. K. Tirupataiah

1. Its scientific name is Mikania micrantha, a fast-growing vine. For what purpose was it used during WW II in India in its airbases?

2. By what scientific name is the rare and fascinating geological boundary at Tirumala Hills that represents the Precambrian rocks and the younger overlying geological formation known?

3. The Yerramatti Dibbalu (Red Earth Heaps) on Bheemili beach road near Vizagare estimated to be about 2.5 million years old. What geological age do they represent?

4. Aaj Bhi Khare HainTalab (The ponds are still relevant) is a book that has no author name, no copy right and encourages readers to use it in any form. Name the author?

5. From which insect-eating birds with shorter beak did the Hummingbirds split some 42 million years ago?

6. This capital city of a North-East state is called "The Silent City of India". It has no traffic signals, no horns, no overtaking. Name the city.

7. Which is the largest Glacier in Eastern Himalayas that is located at the base of Kanchenjunga?

8. In which Tiger Reserve is the Sabarimala Temple located?

9. The World's first vaccine for Koalas is developed by Prof. Peter Timms at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Against what disease is the vaccine developed?

10. The first batch of Cheetahs was brought to India from Namibia and the second batch from South Africa. Which country would be supplying the third batch of Cheetahs?

For School Students

1. Which is the first state legislative assembly in India to completely run on solar power?

2. Who sang Vandemataram in public for the first time in the Calcutta congress meet in 1896?

3. What is the home-grown alternative to Google Maps developed by Map My India?

4. In Nov 2025, a soccer icon and UNICEF goodwill ambassador visited a school near Vizag to observe 'Project based learning'. Name him.

5. Which music band explores songs based on 'space themes'? They were in India this year.

Answers on page no :57

Nurture Life: Creativity occurs primarily through the power of intention.

Intention is like sowing a seed in existence. Allow it to germinate.

Allow the forces of nature to nurture the life! And see what happens

-Swami Sukhabhodananda

LEGAL NOTES

Sri. K. Buchiram Reddy

VanashakthiVs. Union of India

(A case of Environmental Clearance)

Vanashakthiis a Mumbai based non-profit environmental organization founded in 2006 by forest and nature lovers. Its aim is to conserve forests, wet lands, wildlife through community involvement.Vanashakthi conducts a wide spectrum of projects including field visits to different habitats and teaching projects in schools in the Mumbai Metropolitan area.

Vanashakthi was involved in a landmark case where the Supreme Court in May 2025 ruled against the practice of granting 'retrospective environmental clearance' declaring them illegal. The court struck down a 2017 Notification and 2021 Office Memorandum. The court held in 2025 that environmental clearance is necessary for all large scale building and construction projects including educational institutions under the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification of 2006.

The 2025 Notification also made the General Conditions inapplicable to all Buildings and Construction Projects and Area Development Projects or activities located within 5 Kms of Eco-Sensitive areas or Protected Areas under Wildlife Protection Act 1972or interstate or international boundaries or critically polluted areas should be examined only by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and not by the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority.

The case was heard by a Bench comprising The Hon'ble Justice Abhay S. Oka and The Hon'ble Justice Ujjal Bhuyan and passed the verdictof 41 pages on May16,2025.

Confederation of Real Estate Developers of India Vs. Vanashakthi and Anr

(Vanashakthi judgment is reversed)

Confederation of Real Estate Developers of India (CREDAI) is an apex body of private real estate developers associations of India. CREDAI filed a petition to review the Vanashakthi judgment. It was argued that the earlier judgment has overlooked binding precedentsthat an outright ban on retrospective clearances could lead to the demolition of completed projects, causing massive financial losses impacting public interest.

The Chief Justice held that the Vanashakthi ruling was per incuriam (through lack of care) because it has overlooked earlier judgments which allowed post facto clearances.

In exceptional cases and where the Supreme Court discouraged such environmental clearances itstill regularized themwith monetary penalties. The court made it clear that they are exceptional, not routine.

The Review petition was heard by a Full Bench comprising The Hon'ble Chief Justice, The Hon'ble Justice VinodChandran and The Hon'ble Justice UjjalBhuyan.

Hon'ble Justice Bhuyan gave a 'dissenting judgment' stating that retrospective clearances are a gross illegality and an'anathema'to environmental jurisprudence as they violate the precautionary principle that demands environmental harm which necessarily has to be prevented.

In a 2:1 ruling the Supreme Court struck down the 2025 Vanashakthi judgment banning 'ex-post facto'or retrospective Environmental clearancesstating that its continuation would cause "devastating" consequences and put thousands of crores of public investment at risk.

Taking into consideration all the aspects of the matter, Review Petition is allowed and the judgment and the order dated 16.05. 2025 is recalled.

Source: Internet K.B.R , 27.01.2025

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Book Review

The book "WHERE ROOTS RUN DEEP" by Sri S .Parameshwarappa, IFS, PCCF &HoFF, Retd; Karnataka is an autobiography written covering his journey from his birth in 1937 (in a village-Salavarammanahally in Chitradurga District in a big joint family of rural old Mysore state) detailing his life, education up to matriculation in rural schools and intermediate in Chitradurga and BSc (Agri) in GKVK in 1958. He was selected to the Forest Service & trained in IFC during 1958-61 and joined as ACF in Karwar in 1961, promoted as DCF in 1964 & continued in Canara Circle in different divisions till his transfer to Koppa Division in 1972. He recalls his glorious service in high forest facing challenges (who defied permission to build colony along coast line in Karwar& earned of the ire of the young MLA Sri Ramakrishna Hegdeand later befriended Him. This acquaintance continued till Sri Hegdeji remitted his office as CM, Karnataka and Sri.Parameshwarappaproudly quotes the problems of the department hegot solved and also got new projects approved from the Sr.R.K.Hegde.

He faced real challenges in service in Koppa Division between 1972-75 like wildfire in a coupe at Bhagwati valley, then a situation forcing him to shoot down a working elephant-tusker in musthto prevent its rampage on workers' camp in 1974 and KudureMukh iron ore lease case etc. Then transfer to KSFIC in 1975; his option for a deputation to GoI for "Forest Resources Survey" in 1976 where, he had the privilege of conducting reconnaissance survey by using helicopter in the NE India wherein, he was once abducted by dreaded militant-Nagas while on road & released after a night, on hearing his mission of FRS in forests to benefit the people & state in creation of industries and jobs to locals.

After completion of FRS, he went on deputation to Nigeria as an 'Afforestations Expert' in 1978. From Nigeria he embarked on higher studies –M.Sc forestry in economics & planning-at the University of California, Berkeley US on his own in 1980; after completing of which in merit, he was offered a job in the World Bank which he refused and returned to Karnataka in 1982.

He was promoted as CF &posted to KSFIC. Then he was promoted as CCF in 1984 & transferred as Secretary to the Govt, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Forests Departments, where he had opportunities to render a very good service to KFD in declaration of many wildlife ecosystems as WLS & NPs and piloted to bring WB aided Social Forestry Program to Karnataka by using his goodwill and diplomacy with the then CM Sri Ramakrishna Hegde& old friendship with experts in the World Bank in 1985 and writes that he solved many issues concerned to forests like Devarakadu, Deemed forests andKaans etc.

He was promoted & transferred as CCF (GI) 1986, when he showed his wit, dynamism and intelligence to streamline the protection & conservation measures of forests & wildlife in the state with more emphasis for conservation of existing high forests and afforestation to green the state..

He was promoted as the PCCF and Head of the Forest Department in 1990. He writes that he used all his experience gained in higher studies, service /travels abroad in piloting the department progressively and his efforts with the colleagues to bring a project for the development of forests

in Western Ghats & Coastal Karnataka from the ODI Bank in 1991. And another new scheme for development of 'dry forests in Eastern Plains' aided by the Japan JBIC project in 1995.

He feels proud to have given much importance for strengthening the field officers with better pay scales in the pay commissions and in attending into the recruitments and trainings facilities, promotions and refresher courses and forest sports to keep the men on duty fit and comfortable to serve forestry.

He quotes an incident where the Lokayukta moved a paper to permit prosecution of a RFO of Challakere Range for some mistakes in the MRs. He took time to see the investigation report...and found it was not consistent and clear, he refused the permission as he had seen the alleged plantation done well on his tour.The Lokayukta summoned him to defend his action in the presence of the Chief Secretary. He attended with the CS and convinced the Lokayukta that the RFO's performance needs to be appreciated in the dry zones in raising successful plantation and not to look into murky issues done in the field while preparing the MR for which the Lokayukta agreed and let the RFO free. His justification was "No one should be punished unjustly, but anyone guilty of wrongdoing must be held accountable"Likewise many anecdotes to be read, learnt and appreciated in this book.

Sri S Parameshwarappa was an erudite, dynamic, bold, dashing officer, quick in decisions and a humaneforester whowrites with pride about his friendships, his meetings with literary laureates, environmentalists, political elites, heavy weight-ministers, senior officersetc…and his approach in talks, listening to learn, arguments for better causes and his caliber inwinning over them and solving the problems of his colleagues, staff and forestry; in full detail and even a setback for himself…which takes on the reader like a novel forgetting it as an autobiography since the anecdotes enlighten the knowledge of the readers and especially young serving Foresters to learn the art of talk with proverbs, quotes of literary and religious luminaries to convince the attacks by any concerned with issues to win the arguments and get the work done.

He has dealt in detail about therural backgrounds of his family with the history of the state in those early days eliciting the social, cultural, religious and economic conditions of the society. He digs his roots with reference to his ancestors right from 1780. A tiny village by name Thimmappanahalliwhere a pregnant womanwho could not run and escape from the attack of the Pindaris-army of Marataas-who plundered, ransacked, killed many and drove away all the residents of it-took shelter in a shed of cow dung-cakes meant as fuel….She was given refuge in the house of a kind hearted priest Jogappaof Voddikere. She gave birth to a male child named Chikkanna, who grew up & returned to their village Thimmappanahalli and his son acquired all abandoned lands up to 300 acres during the British rule and his family established a well in the village which was renamed as Salavammanahalli.

Sri S Parmeshwarappawas the 6th generation of the said family born to Sri SannaSiddeGowdru and SmtSiddananjamma as the eldest son. He lost his mother at the age of 6 years. He, his brother & sister were nursed by aunties. He had been a big brother for 3 younger brothers and 4 younger sisters (His fatherhad 3 from his 2nd wife (died) & 2 from 3rd wife). He loved his father a lot for his intelligence, habit of reading and his advice which he quotes in his memoirs "Never give alms or respect to someone who does not deserve it. Alms should be given only to the disabled, deaf, blind or lame… those truly unable to earn their living. Likewise, respect should be reserved for those who have earned it " He has lived a happy childhood in the

midst of a big joint family of uncles, aunties and his father's affection and resilience which blended them all to live with loving each other in the family.

Sri.Parameshwarappa was married to Smt. Ratna from his village in 1968 and was blessed with a daughter Kathyayini and a son AvinashNadig who have stayed with him during his deputations abroad. Now, both have married and happily settled and are blessed with 3 children.

His sermons with wisdom about the forests, energy, wind, water & soil etc gives an impression that he is writing as if he is going to live no longer. Last ending of his epilogue is....."With love and leaves, a Forester Forever"...

"Where Roots Run deep" is a very good book rather a 'magnum opus' with a lot of colour pictures with dates of events for reference for the young forest officers who aspire to serve forestry/state well to the level of their initial zeal -while joining the forest service- with hope for fulfillment and to others for their reference.

"Where Roots Run deep" A Forester's Journey across borders, by S.Parameshwarappa IFS, Pages xxiv+322, Price Rs 1,000/- and its Kannada version "D¼À ¨ÉÃgÀÄ, ªÀÄgÀCªÀÄgÀ, ¤¸ÀUÀðzÀ ªÀgÀ" Pages xxiv+244 ¨É¯É gÀÆ.1,000/-Both books are published by: M/s SLV Print Loka, Mob: 9901501938, / 9071191599 Email: slvprintloka@gmail.com

Review By

BMT Rajeev, IFS (Retd);

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Answers: 1.To cover airfields as a camouflage, 2.Eparchaean Unconfirmity, 3.Quaternary Age, 4.Anupam Mishra,5. Swifts, 6.Aizwal, capital of Mizoram, 7.Zemu Glacier, 8.Periyar Tiger Reserve; 9. Chlamydia, 10. Botswana

For School Students: 1.Delhi, 2. Rabindranath Tagore, 3. Mappls, 4. Sir David Beckham, 5. Cold Play (Music of the Spheres)

Continuation from page No. 52

with an unspoken lament: This isn't how it used to be. The younger crowd, oblivious to their past glory, regarded them with the same indifference reserved for outdated office memos.

Once a symphony of honour and camaraderie, farewells have morphed into hollow obligations. What was once a celebration of legacy has become a reluctant nod to formality? The evolution of farewells mirrors the broader shift in workplace culture—from collective spirit to fragmented individualism.

And so, one wonders: Who will write the farewell for farewells themselves?

Yet, a part of me clings to hope. Perhaps, one day, warmth will return to these gatherings, where colleagues genuinely celebrate each other rather than merely endure another corporate ritual. Until then, the ghosts of grand farewells past will continue to haunt the sterile conference rooms of today.

The author is a former PCCF (HoFF), Haryana. M-70879 56657

India, that is "Bharat"

V.V.Hariprasad

INDIA, that is **"BHARAT"**
Thus,depicts me the constitution of India
I "Republic of India", am a septuagenarian
Having completed seventy years as a **"Republic"**
But still I am inhabited by those suffering with penury
And also,by those innumerable faceless multitude left with
The imperative choice of leading a hand to mouth life
Who are found in every nook and corner of **BHARAT**
Where as my heart bleeds for their indigence.

I still find out those illiterates yearning for work of all hues
Whose children are likely to end up as Child labour
Stripped off basic education
And I also find religious fanaticism that is ubiquitous
The straw that broke the camel's back
By making the democratic values eroded In India Lock stock and barrel
Unmindful of the fact
That **"VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM"** the great concept
Symbolizing universal brotherhood
Found its origin in our **"MAHAUPANISHAD"**
Number of centuries ago.

Who should I blame for this?
Those avaricious politicians
who have been suckingthe country of its blood
Those electorate who exercise their franchise
Having become purchasable commodities
Those dogmatic nitwits with religious and caste biases
Or those ideologues who want to ape others
At the cost of ignoring and undermining
The traditional wisdom of India.

"BHARAT"wails and aspiresthus,
"How to break this vicious cycle?
Is the question that has been bad geringme
I look forward that India shall not be a **Banana Republic**
And our rulers shall be without a political axe to grind
Endowed with candourbeing empathetic
Towards the impecunious and the deprived lot so that
They are endowed with a life worth living here in India."

(Author is a retired Dy.CF and a practicing advocate. The poem is Dedicated for the well-being of the exploited lot of BHARAT on the eve of Republic day celebrations by the author who can be accessed at vvhp53@gmil.comand 7893673767)

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If Undelivered, Please return to: Editor, VANAPREMI, Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Aranya Bhavan, 5th Floor, Room No.514, Saifabad, Hyd - 500 004, T.G.

Date of Publication-26/12/2025; Total Pages: 60; Date of Posting: 4th or 5th of Every Month.

Printed & Published by **Qamar Mohd. Khan** on behalf of **Association of Retired Forest Officers**,
Printed at **Venu Graphics**, D.No.2-1-392/1/6, Fever Hospital Signal, Nallakunta, Hyderabad-500044 and
Published from Room No. 514, 5th Floor, Aranya Bhavan, Hyderabad-500004.
RNI Regd. No. Teleng/2000/2185 | **Editor: Dr. Kota Tirupataiah, IFS(R)** | Email: tirupataiah.tsfa@gmail.com | Ph: 88855 32021