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World Turtle Day May 23
Turtle nesting at Rangat
Island Andamans

Photo credit: <httpswww.andamanisland.incontentturtles-nesting-visit-adventure-activity>

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FOREST OFFICERS, TELANGANA & ANDHRA PRADESH
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- ❖ A wholly-owned, financially robust State Government enterprise, engaged in the large-scale establishment of plantations to meet the demands of the wood-based industries.
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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)

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.....

Summer 2026 is upon us. It is projected to be exceptionally hot, with temperatures ranging from 1.6–3°C above normal in many parts of India. The heat wave is driven by El Niño conditions, as per meteorologists. Northern India could face severe heatwaves with temperatures hovering around 42–45°C in April itself. People working outdoors like those under the Rural Employment scheme, beedi leaf collection etc, are advised to go early and finish their work before mid-day. Elders, like us, need to be extra-careful in venturing out in the open-have an umbrella, plenty of water etc.

In spite of the heat, many global environment related events fall in May. Important among them are: World Tuna Day (May 2), Migratory Birds Day (May 13), World Bee Day (May 20), World Biodiversity Day (May 22), Endangered Species Day (third Friday in May), and World Turtle Day (May 23),

The May issue of Vanapremi covers articles related to some of the above mentioned global events like Biodiversity (acting locally for global impact), ancient wisdom that shaped modern forest research, the history, challenges and achievements under Project Tiger, the Kamlang Tiger Reserve from Aunachal Pradesh, the problem of free-ranging Dogs in forests, Turtle nesting in Andamanas, Accelerated warming of the Planet and its long term effect, Pelicans of India, etc.

Shakespearean twists in the tales, adds a new dimension to the articles. An important article related to Senior citizen, who are neglected or abandoned by their children after getting their properties gifted, would be of great help to the senior citizen.

On legal front, articles on HC orders removal of Vilayat babul from forest areas, potential for tree planting in a drinking water project area, case related to a Jagir, would be extremely useful for field foresters.

Regular columns like Legal Note, Green Quiz continue to inform and educate the readers. Pictures from the passing out parades of FBOs and FSOs from the Telangana State Forest Academy and Golden Jubilee Re-Union of the SFRC trainees of 1975-77 batch adorn the central pages.

Please take care from the heat, and Happy reading.....

Dr.K.Tirupataiah,IFS (Retd)
Editor



Conservation of Biological Diversity Requires Vision: Acting Locally For Global Impact

Dr. D. Nalini Mohan

Introduction

The International Day for Biological Diversity in 2026 arrives at a moment when the world is confronting the accelerating collapse of ecosystems, the intensifying climate crisis, and the widening gap between global commitments and local realities. The theme for this year, “Acting locally for global impact,” is not a ceremonial slogan but a strategic imperative shaped by the failures of past global targets and the urgent need to translate international frameworks into grounded, community-led action. For India—a megadiverse nation with a civilizational legacy of ecological wisdom and a contemporary trajectory of rapid economic expansion—the theme carries a deeper resonance. It forces a confrontation with the uncomfortable truth that biodiversity governance in India is at a crossroads: the country possesses one of the world’s most progressive legal frameworks on paper, yet its ecological indicators continue to decline. The year 2026 is therefore not simply another milestone in the global biodiversity calendar; it is a turning point that demands clarity, courage, and systemic reform.

India’s biodiversity is both extraordinary and fragile. With four global biodiversity hotspots, over 104,561 animal species and over 55,726 plant species identified India has a unique mosaic of ecosystems ranging from the Himalayas to the Western Ghats, from the Thar Desert to the Sundarbans, the country holds a significant portion of the world’s biological wealth. Yet this wealth is unevenly distributed and acutely vulnerable. Micro-endemism in the Western Ghats means that the loss of even a few hectares of forest can lead to global extinctions. The Himalayas, destabilized by glacial melt and extreme weather, are experiencing ecological shifts at a pace faster than

scientific monitoring can capture. Grasslands—home to the Great Indian Bustard, wolves, and blackbuck—remain misclassified as “wastelands,” leading to misguided afforestation and habitat destruction. These are not isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a deeper governance malaise.

The theme “Acting locally for global impact” compels us to examine the scale at which biodiversity loss actually occurs. While global frameworks such as the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) set ambitious targets, the drivers of biodiversity loss are hyper-local. A panchayat’s decision to permit a stone quarry, a municipality’s approval of lake encroachment, a district authority’s clearance for a road through a wildlife corridor—these micro-decisions, repeated across thousands of localities, cumulatively determine national and global biodiversity outcomes. The failure of global biodiversity targets is not due to a lack of international agreements but due to the absence of empowered, ecologically literate local institutions capable of implementing them. India’s commitments under the KMGBF will remain aspirational unless biodiversity governance is decentralized, democratized, and adequately funded.

Local knowledge systems are central to this transformation. Indigenous and community knowledge—whether in the form of sacred groves in Kodagu, shifting cultivation cycles in Nagaland, or mangrove stewardship in the Sundarbans, or documentation of People’s Biodiversity Registers in an electronic form and making them available to all Grama Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh and many other initiatives across the country — represents ecological intelligence and cultural legacies embedded in the communities. These

systems are adaptive frameworks that offer cost-effective and socially legitimate conservation pathways. Yet modern governance often sidelines them, treating communities as beneficiaries rather than rights-holders. The 2026 theme implicitly challenges this mindset. There is need to integrate the traditional knowledge with modern outlook and technological advancements.

India's Biodiversity Landscape: Richness, Fragility, and Uneven Governance

India's ecological richness is matched only by its fragility. The country's ecosystems support globally significant species assemblages and ecological processes, from monsoon regulation to pollination networks. Yet this richness is not evenly distributed; micro-endemism in the Western Ghats and Northeast means that even small habitat losses can cause global extinctions. The fragility is compounded by climate extremes—heatwaves, glacial lake outburst floods, and cyclones—which disproportionately affect biodiversity-rich regions.

Governance gaps remain one of India's most persistent challenges. Multiple ministries operate with overlapping mandates, creating institutional paralysis. Forest departments focus on timber and protection, environment ministries on clearances, tribal departments on welfare, and rural development departments on infrastructure. Biodiversity becomes everyone's responsibility—and therefore no one's priority. In the Central Indian tiger corridor, highways and railways fragment habitats despite scientific warnings. In Rajasthan, grasslands are planted with exotic species under afforestation schemes, destroying habitats of the Great Indian Bustard. In Kerala, wetlands are filled for real estate despite Ramsar designations. These failures are not due to a lack of laws but due to the absence of ecological literacy and accountability at the local level.

India's Legal Framework: Strengths, Gaps, and the 2023 Amendments

The **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, was a

landmark legislation that aligned India with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It established a three-tier governance structure comprising the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs), and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs). It introduced the principle of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), recognized community rights over biological resources, and mandated the creation of People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs). The Act was progressive in intent, embedding conservation, sustainable use, and equitable benefit sharing into a single legal framework.

There is duplicity of administrative set up. The implementation of the 2002 Act was uneven. While the NBA and SBBs were established, BMCs often remained underfunded and undertrained. The State Biodiversity Boards are existing at nominal level without manpower and funding for biodiversity conservation and development projects. The vast Panchayati raj and Rural Development Department administering the rural areas is vested to manage the biodiversity also, leading to neglect of biodiversity. PBRs are reduced to mere documents and ABS mechanisms were poorly understood, leading to conflicts between industries, researchers, and communities. Enforcement was weak. The Act's progressive spirit was undermined by the absence of ecological capacity at the local level. In effect, the law was strong, but the institutions responsible for implementing it were fragile. In Andhra Pradesh incidentally these two departments are under the same Minister and it offers a great opportunity to integrate the functioning of these departments and mainstreaming the biodiversity concerns into their long term and short term plans and action Plans.

The Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023 introduced sweeping changes to this framework. The amendments were justified on the grounds of promoting "ease of doing business," encouraging AYUSH industries, reducing compliance burdens, and facilitating foreign investment. While these objectives may appear reasonable, the implications

of the amendments are far more complex and, in some cases, deeply concerning.

One of the most significant changes is the exemption granted to AYUSH practitioners, local communities, and users of codified traditional knowledge from prior approval and benefit-sharing obligations. While this may reduce the burden on small traditional healers, it also creates a loophole that large AYUSH corporations can exploit. By routing commercial activities through AYUSH channels, companies may bypass ABS obligations entirely, depriving local communities of their rightful share of benefits. This amendment conflates small practitioners with billion dollar industries, weakening the principle of equity that lies at the heart of the CBD. Coordination between the AYUSH and the State Biodiversity Boards is essential to achieve the fundamental goals of the Biological Diversity Act and conservation and sustainable utilization of bioresources along with fair and equitable profit sharing are essential to be implemented in letter and spirit.

Another major change is the decriminalization of violations. Criminal penalties have been replaced with monetary fines that to after authorities created on ad hoc basis extraneous to the State Biodiversity Boards. In a country where regulatory enforcement is already weak, decriminalization risks emboldening commercial actors to exploit biological resources with minimal accountability. Monetary penalties can easily become a “cost of doing business,” especially for large corporations.

The amendments also centralize more powers in the NBA, reducing the authority of SBBs.

This shift undermines federalism and ignores the ecological diversity of India's states. Biodiversity is inherently local; decisions made in Delhi cannot adequately account for the ecological nuances of Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, or Rajasthan. Centralization risks creating one-size-fits-all decisions that are ecologically inappropriate and socially insensitive.

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the

amendments is the ambiguity introduced around community rights. The language around community consent and benefit sharing has been softened, weakening the moral and legal foundation of ABS. It also thrashes any future hope of financial sustainability of BMCs, which rely on ABS revenues to function effectively. Without ABS revenue, BMCs risk becoming symbolic entities rather than functional institutions.

Most of the conscientious biodiversity experts and civil society leaders assess the 2023 amendments as mixed. While they indent to simplify research approvals and reduce bureaucratic delays, they also dilute ABS, weaken community rights, and shift India's biodiversity governance from a rights-based to a market-driven model. Corrective action is urgently needed. This includes reinstating strong ABS provisions for commercial entities, strengthening community consent mechanisms, providing statutory funding to BMCs, restoring the authority of SBBs, and integrating the Forest Rights Act (FRA) with biodiversity governance.

India's Forest Biodiversity Governance: Successes, Failures, and Lessons

India's forest biodiversity governance landscape is marked by both successes and failures. Tiger conservation is often celebrated as a global success story, with populations in India increasing from 1,411 in 2006 to over 3,500 as of 2024. This achievement reflects political will, scientific monitoring, and community engagement. Yet it also masks the decline of lesser-known species and ecosystems that lack similar visibility. Grasslands, for instance, continue to be mismanaged due to outdated classifications. Afforestation in grasslands has devastated habitats of the Great Indian Bustard, pushing the species to the brink of extinction. This reflects a deeper epistemic bias—forests are valued, but grasslands are not understood as biodiversity-rich ecosystems.

Wetland conservation has seen progress, with India designating 75 Ramsar sites. However, Ramsar status alone does not guarantee protection.

Many wetlands continue to face encroachment, pollution, and hydrological alteration. Urban biodiversity innovations, such as Hyderabad's biodiversity parks and lake restoration efforts, demonstrate that cities can become biodiversity refuges. Yet urban planning in most Indian cities remains ecologically blind, prioritizing real estate over ecological resilience.

Human-wildlife conflict is rising due to habitat fragmentation. Compensation schemes are reactive and often delayed, creating resentment among communities. Conflict mitigation must shift from compensation to proactive landscape planning. Climate vulnerability adds another layer of complexity. Ecosystems are collapsing under climate stress, yet climate adaptation plans often treat biodiversity as an afterthought rather than a foundational element.

The Way Forward: A Transformative Agenda for India

The way forward requires a transformative agenda. Strengthening local institutions is paramount. BMCs, gram sabhas, and urban local bodies must be empowered with authority, training, and financial resources. Without fiscal devolution, institutional empowerment remains rhetorical. Restoration efforts must move beyond plantations to ecosystem restoration that is science-led, culturally rooted, and climate-informed. Development planning must integrate biodiversity at every stage. Environmental clearance processes must shift from project-level assessments to cumulative impact assessments that consider landscape-level effects.

Legal and policy frameworks must be strengthened. The 2023 amendments of Biological diversity Act and the Forest Conservation Act which made some drastic changes also need further refinement to restore balance between conservation and commercial use. India may

benefit from establishing a Biodiversity Governance Commission to harmonize sectoral policies. Science and data transparency must be enhanced through the use of AI, drones, and eDNA, but data transparency must be accompanied by data literacy at local levels. Inclusion and responsible participation of the local communities by taking the real responsibility hold the key for success of biodiversity conservation. Climate resilience must be built through nature-based solutions that are mainstreamed into national climate budgets.

Different sections of society have distinct roles to play. Government must integrate biodiversity into all sectors and institutionalize inter-ministerial coordination. The scientific community must engage with communities and provide rigorous ecological data. Indigenous peoples and local communities must be recognized as rights-holders and leaders in conservation. The private sector must adopt nature-positive practices and be held accountable through mandatory biodiversity disclosures. Youth must be treated as co-creators of solutions, not passive recipients of awareness campaigns. Media must move beyond sensational wildlife stories to structural biodiversity issues.

Conclusion: The International Day for Biological Diversity 2026 challenges India to move beyond symbolism. The theme "Acting locally for global impact" demands not incremental adjustments but a paradigm shift in how India understands and governs biodiversity. The future of India's biodiversity will be determined not by global negotiations but by the everyday decisions of local institutions, communities, and policymakers who choose courage over convenience. If India can align its legal frameworks, governance systems, and societal energies with the KMGBF, it can become a global leader in biodiversity stewardship. If it fails, the consequences will be irreversible—not only for India but for the planet.

(The author is a retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, AP, and can be reached at 94408 10003 and email: dnmohanifs87@gmail.com)



Roots of Resilience: How Ancient science Anticipated the modern “Scientific Forestry”

Dr.H.S.Gupta,

Ancient agrarian texts do not just hint at tree care; they demonstrate a remarkably systematic understanding of site, species, climate and soil that aligns closely with what is now called scientific forestry and arboriculture.

Many of these principles—diversity, microclimate management, organic nutrition and long-term stand stability—are being independently “rediscovered” in contemporary climate, soil and agroforestry science.

Ancient India: Proto-silviculture and agroforestry

- Krishi-Parashara (c. 400 BC) is explicitly written “for the benefit offarmers” and proceeds in a logically ordered sequence: rainfall and weather diagnostics, soil and water management, crop and plantprotection, seed handling, tools, and harvest. This structure mirrorsmodern agronomy/forestry manuals that move from climate and site to operations and post-harvest management.
- The text devotes substantial attention to rainfall forecasting using cloud forms, wind behaviour and astronomical cues, treating climate as a measurable driver of cropping decisions rather than mere religious fate.

Contemporary agrometeorology still uses local wind and cloud observation as a practical complement to instruments, especially for smallholders in data-poor regions.

- Vedic and post-Vedic traditions around Pipal and Banyan embed a de facto conservation policy: sacred groves (śrīvāna) required these keystone species, maintained by village councils, providing

shade, fodder, leaf litter and microclimatic buffering—an early communitybased silvicultural system. Modern landscape ecology now recognises such clumps as biodiversity nuclei and climate refugia within agrarian mosaics.

Vṛkṣāyurveda:Experimental “plant physiology” and soil science

- Vṛkṣāyurveda prescribes bioformulations like Kunapajala and Panchagavya, combining animal wastes, oilcakes, pulses, jaggery and botanicals (often including Neem) to stimulate growth and protect plants. These are essentially controlled microbial fermentations that supply nutrients, enzymes and biocontrol agents—conceptually identical to today’s microbial inoculants and liquid organic fertilizers.
- Modern trials show Kunapajala and Panchagavya treatments can equal or surpass mineral fertilisers in improving soil organic matter, microbial activity and crop physiological parameters (leaf area, growth rates, secondary metabolite production). This validates the ancient “recipescience” as evidence-based, even though it was framed in non-Latin terminology.
- Vṛkṣāyurveda’s emphasis on plant health as a function of soil condition, water regime and “balanced nourishment” closely parallels modern forest health diagnostics, where decline is traced to interacting stressors rather than a single pathogen.

Greco–Roman texts: Operational silviculture and arboriculture

- Cato’s De Agri Cultura (2nd century BC) offers

a strikingly modern doctrine of site selection: a buyer should visit repeatedly, examine exposure to storms, quality of water and soil, and neighbourhood, anticipating today's climate-risk and landscape-level assessment for perennial plantations.

- His directions for tree work—digging trenches around trees, timing planting of olives on dry sites, trimming lower shoots and careful transplantation with original soil—read like a contemporary silvicultural operation manual for high-value estate forestry.
- Cato's grafting instructions specify scion length, sharpening angle, bark alignment and binding techniques; subsequent analyses of pre-modern olive culture confirm that such grafting and vegetative propagation were central to stabilising fruit quality and yield over time. These are the core of modern clonal forestry and orchard arboriculture.

Arabic agronomy: Quantified arboriculture and tree-centric farming

- The Nabataean Agriculture (10th century) allocates about 25% of its content to arboriculture and fruit trees, 3% to olives and 16% to vineyards, alongside sections on soils, irrigation and calendars. This subject-wise quantification is comparable to a structured silviculture/agriculture textbook, not a loose collection of lore.
- The work describes 106 plant species with taxonomic notes, medicinal uses and detailed management of date palm, olive and vines, including soil salinity, planting schedules and microclimate considerations in specific Iraqi lowland conditions. Such eco-regional specificity is a hallmark of modern site-class based forestry and tree-crop zoning.
- Broader Arabic *filāḥa* literature systematically documents tree crops—olives, almonds,

carobs, walnuts, citrus, etc.—and embeds them in calendar-based operations and irrigation regimes, essentially describing integrated tree-crop systems now recognised as agroforestry prototypes.

Ancient agroforestry and today's climate science

- Traditional Indian agroforestry mixed multipurpose trees (e.g., Neem, Pipal, Banyan, Acacia) with crops and homesteads, generating shade, litter, nitrogen input, fuelwood, fodder and spiritual value, while buffering wind and heat. This configuration strongly resembles today's classified systems such as agri-silviculture and agri-horticulture.
- Contemporary assessments show agroforestry in India can significantly enhance above-ground and soil carbon stocks, and is recognised as a key mitigation and adaptation strategy in national climate and forest policy discourse. The climate services now quantified—carbon sequestration, moisture conservation, microclimate regulation—are the same functions for which traditional farmers historically retained trees on fields.
- Meta-analyses indicate that shifting from conventional monocrop systems to agroforestry can increase carbon sequestration by around one-quarter, with agri-horticulture among the most efficient systems. This empirically endorses the older “tree-on-farm” logic that evolved for livelihood security and ecological buffering, not for abstract carbon targets.

Continuities: From sacred groves to scientific forestry

- What later came to be branded as “scientific forestry” in 18th–19th century Europe—standardised prescriptions, yield orientation, rotation planning—was preceded by millennia

of regionally grounded “science inpractice” that integrated trees, crops, animals and people. Ancient texts anchored prescriptions in observation, repetition and codification, even if they lacked the statistical formalism of modern silviculture.

• Modern research on Vrksāyurveda formulations, agroforestry carbon dynamics and perennial crop physiology is, in effect, generating laboratory and field evidence for principles that agrarian communities in India, the Mediterranean and West

Asia had tested empirically over centuries.

• The intellectually honest conclusion is that scientific forestry and tree culture did not begin with European academies; they emerged as a long continuum in which ancient manuals—from Krishi-Parāśara to De Agri Cultura and the Nabataean Agriculture—represent early, coherent expressions of silvicultural science that remain operationally valid for 21st-century resilience, restoration and climate policy.



Genesis of “Scientific Forestry”- in ancient works

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

I am very much down to Earth. Just not this Earth

- Karl Lagerfeld

All the greatest things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honour, duty, mercy, hope...

-Winston Churchill

Notice for General Body Meeting

The 112th General Body Meeting of the Association of Retired Forest Officers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will be held on 28th June 2026 (Sunday) at 10:30 AM in the Conference Hall (6th floor), Aranya Bhavan, Hyderabad. Elections will be conducted to all the posts/positions in our Association. All the members of the Association are requested to make it convenient to attend the meeting with their spouses.

- SECRETARY

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't; and the other half have nothing to say and keep saying it.

Robert Frost.

(Interpretation) There are people who are full of knowledge and depth but they don't express it. It could be lack of opportunities or they are not courageous enough to express. There is this other half, who have no knowledge or depth but hold positions of power and keep saying things that don't matter or relevant.



Project Tiger in India: 53 Years of Conservation, Challenges, and Triumphs

R. Hemanth Kumar

Plundered Pride: How Taxidermy Factories Fueled the Massacre of India's Tigers:

While I am trying to post some information on tigers in India, their decline in numbers and their significant revival under Project Tiger, I won't be doing justice to the history if I don't mention the taxidermy of tigers killed by nobles, handled by a company named M/s Van Ingen and Van Ingen of Mysore. Hunting and taxidermy have been linked in India since at least the 19th century, when hunters sought to preserve their shikars beyond photographs, leading to a rush into taxidermy.

The firm Van Ingen & Van Ingen was started by Eugene Melville Van Ingen in 1912 at Mysore and was managed by his sons, John de Wet (1902-1993), Henry Botha (1904-1996) and Edwin Joubert (1912-2013), until it was shut in 1999. Eugene Melville Van Ingen fought World War II, was captured by the Japanese in Burma, and found himself among the internees who built the bridge on the River Kwai in Thailand. After the war, he returned to Mysore and started the taxidermy factory.



Photo Credit: veteazy.com

According to P.A. Morris, a zoologist at Royal Holloway College, University of London, and an

expert on taxidermy worldwide, as written in his 2006 book (titled Van Ingen & Van Ingen Artists in Taxidermy), he mentioned that the Van Ingen factory processed 400-500 tigers annually from the 1920s to the late 1950s. Most tigers were prepared in three main ways: as rugs, whole mounts, or head or shoulder trophies. He also noted that the Van Ingen 'factory' produced more than 43,000 tiger and leopard mounts in their 90 years of operation. A book by Van Ingen titled "The Preservation of Sikhar Trophies" is considered a monumental work in the field of Taxidermy.

Thus, the plunder of wildlife in India continued unabated, and taxidermists like Van Ingen promoted the so-called Sport, leading to the massacre of helpless tigers and other animals in India.

From Exporter of Skins to Protected Species: India's Turning Point in Tiger Conservation:

In 1970, the Indian Parliament was informed that 480 tigers had been shot in the previous four years. Between 1965 and 1969, a total of 698 tanned and dressed tiger and leopard skins, along with 18,179 kg of non-dressed skins, had been exported, mainly to the USA and Europe (a Press Trust of India report, dated 26 February 1970). Assuming an average skin weight of 5 kg, the non-dressed skins alone could have resulted in the death of 3,635 tigers and leopards.

E.P. Gee had speculated that there might have been 40,000 tigers in the Indian subcontinent at the turn of the century and that there were only about 4,000 in 1964. At the General Assembly, Kailash Sankhala, a Forest Officer, estimated that by 1969, there remained only 2,500 tigers in the wild.

The General Assembly called for a worldwide moratorium on tiger hunting. Despite opposition from Indian tiger hunters, shikar companies, and some State Governments, a 5-year moratorium on tiger hunting was imposed throughout India in 1971 and later made permanent. Sri Kailash Sankhla was commissioned to carry out an all-India Tiger census in 1971. His estimate was 1,827 tigers.

Guy Mountfort, the WWF International Trustee who had proposed Operation Tiger, flew to India to discuss conservation measures with the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She needed no persuasion, and India's Project Tiger was launched on 1 April 1973 in Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Institutionalizing Project Tiger: The Role of Visionaries and Political Will:

The Legislative Backdrop

The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 was India's first comprehensive law to safeguard wildlife. Yet, in its initial form, the tiger was conspicuously absent from the list of protected animals. This omission reflected the lingering influence of princely hunting traditions and the reluctance of certain state governments, particularly Madhya Pradesh, with its vast tiger habitats, to surrender autonomy over hunting rights.

Kailash Sankhla IFS: The Field Visionary

Kailash Sankhla, a forest officer deeply concerned about the decline of tigers, became the first Director of Project Tiger in 1973. His philosophy was clear: protect the tiger by protecting its habitat. Sankhla's census in 1971 estimated only 1,827 tigers remained, a shocking figure that galvanized national and international action. His advocacy for inviolate core areas and scientific monitoring gave Project Tiger its ecological backbone.

Dr. Karan Singh: The Political Architect

As Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Dr. Karan Singh played a pivotal role in designating the tiger as India's national animal in 1972, replacing the

Asiatic lion. He chaired the steering committee that formally launched Project Tiger on April 1, 1973, ensuring the program had institutional legitimacy. Singh's ability to bridge political leadership with ecological vision was crucial in transforming conservation into a national mission.

Hari Singh IFS, RC Soni IFS and Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh IAS: The Administrative Force

Hari Singh, the then IGF in the Ministry of Agriculture (which oversaw forests and wildlife before the creation of a separate ministry), and after him RC Soni, IGF, were instrumental in drafting and pushing through the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. They worked closely with Indira Gandhi and conservationists to overcome bureaucratic inertia and political opposition. Hari Singh's administrative acumen ensured that the Act had teeth, creating schedules of protected species, establishing sanctuaries, and empowering enforcement. His role is often overlooked, but without his bureaucratic drive, the Act might have remained a weak framework.

Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh IAS played a pivotal role in the formulation of Project Tiger in 1973, serving as one of its chief architects and policy framers. He was instrumental in drafting the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and, as Director of Wildlife Preservation, he laid the administrative and legal foundation for Project Tiger. His work not only saved the tiger but also transformed India's conservation landscape.

IUCN and International Pressure

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provided scientific legitimacy and global urgency. Its reports on declining tiger numbers influenced policymakers, while its collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) led to Operation Tiger in 1972, which raised \$1.8 million for conservation equipment and training in India. This international support gave India both resources and credibility.

Indira Gandhi: The Political Will

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was the decisive force behind tiger conservation. Despite resistance from royals who saw tiger hunting as a cultural right, and opposition from states like Madhya Pradesh, Gandhi insisted on including the tiger in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, granting it the highest level of protection. Her personal commitment, meeting WWF leaders like Guy Mountfort and supporting Sankhla's vision, ensured that Project Tiger was not just policy but a national priority.

Overcoming Resistance

- **Royals:** Many princely families opposed restrictions, as tiger hunting was a symbol of prestige.
- **States:** Madhya Pradesh resisted federal intervention, fearing loss of autonomy.
- **Political Opposition:** Some argued conservation would hinder development.

Yet Gandhi, supported by Hari Singh's administrative push and Sankhla's ecological evidence, prevailed. The moratorium on tiger hunting, imposed in 1971, became permanent, and Project Tiger was launched in 1973.

Legacy

The combined efforts of Sankhla (science), Karan Singh (politics), Hari Singh (administration), IUCN/WWF (international support), and Indira Gandhi (political will) institutionalised Project Tiger. What began as a response to a crisis became a global model of conservation.

Project Tiger:

The tiger has long been a symbol of power, courage, and wilderness in India. Yet by the early 1970s, this magnificent predator was on the brink of extinction. From an estimated 40,000 individuals at independence in 1947, the population had plummeted to barely 2,000 due to hunting, poaching, and habitat destruction. Alarmed by this crisis, India launched Project Tiger on April 1, 1973, a pioneering conservation initiative that

sought not only to save the tiger but also to protect the ecosystems it inhabits.

Now, in 2026, Project Tiger has completed 53 years. India hosts nearly 3,682 wild tigers, about 75% of the global population, making it the undisputed leader in tiger conservation. This essay explores the unknown and fascinating aspects of this journey, highlighting successes, struggles, and the cultural significance of the tiger in India's national identity.

1. Origins of Project Tiger: A Crisis Moment:

The origins of Project Tiger lie in a moment of ecological and cultural reckoning. Few know that India's national animal was originally the Asiatic lion. In 1972, the government replaced it with the Bengal tiger, symbolizing both urgency and pride in saving the species. This decision was not merely symbolic; it was a declaration of intent.

The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 provided the legal foundation for Project Tiger. It banned hunting, created sanctuaries, and empowered authorities to protect wildlife. The following year, Project Tiger was launched with nine reserves: Corbett, Kanha, Manas, Melghat, Palamau, Simlipal, Bandhavgarh, Ranthambore, and Sundarbans. Together, they covered 18,278 km², marking the beginning of a nationwide conservation movement.

2. Expansion Over Five Decades:

From its modest beginnings, Project Tiger expanded dramatically. Today, it encompasses 58 reserves across 84,500 km², about 2.3% of India's land area. These reserves span diverse landscapes, from the Himalayan foothills to the mangrove swamps of Sundarbans, from the dry deciduous forests of Madhya Pradesh to the tropical rainforests of Kerala.

An unknown fact is that some reserves are vast enough to rival small nations. For instance, Nagarjunsagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh covers over 3,500 km², larger than

Luxembourg. This scale demonstrates India's commitment to giving tigers space to thrive.

3. Conservation Success Stories:

The most celebrated achievement of Project Tiger is the recovery of the population. From ~2,000 individuals in 1970, India now has 3,682 wild tigers (2026). This remarkable turnaround is one of the greatest conservation success stories globally.

Among the icons of this success is Machli, the Tigress of Ranthambore. Known as the "Queen of Ranthambore," Machli lived for 19 years and became the world's most photographed tiger. Her presence attracted millions of tourists, generating revenue that indirectly funded conservation. She became a symbol of how individual animals can inspire global awareness.

Another lesser-known success is Kaziranga National Park in Assam. While famous for its one-horned rhinoceroses, Kaziranga also hosts one of the highest tiger densities in the world. This dual conservation role highlights the interconnectedness of species within ecosystems. Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand holds a unique place in India's conservation history. Established in 1936 as Hailey National Park, it was the country's first national park and later became the launch site of Project Tiger in 1973. Over the decades, Corbett has emerged as the reserve with the highest tiger density in India, hosting around 260 individuals according to the latest census. Several factors explain this success. The park's diverse habitats, sal forests, grasslands, riverine belts, and hills support a rich prey base, from deer to wild boar. Its long history of protection gave tigers a safe refuge earlier than most reserves. Tourism also played a role, generating revenue and awareness that strengthened conservation infrastructure. Yet, this success brings challenges. With such high density, Corbett is approaching ecological saturation, raising concerns about territorial conflicts among tigers and the need

for corridors to nearby reserves, such as Rajaji. Human pressures from villages and tourism around the park also require careful management. In essence, Corbett is both a symbol of India's conservation triumphs and a reminder that protecting tigers is an ongoing responsibility. Its roar is loudest in India's forests, but sustaining it will depend on balancing ecological needs with human realities.

4. Beyond the Roar: The Little-Known Policies That Secured India's Tigers:

Project Tiger introduced several innovative policies that remain little known outside conservation circles.

- **Core-Buffer Strategy:** Reserves were divided into strictly protected "core zones" and surrounding "buffer zones" where sustainable human activity was permitted. This balanced ecological protection with community needs.
- **Relocation Programs:** Entire villages were relocated from reserves to reduce human-tiger conflict. Though controversial, these relocations restored habitats and reduced pressure on forests.
- **Tiger Corridors:** India mapped and protected corridors connecting reserves, allowing tigers to move freely and maintain genetic diversity. This little-known initiative is vital for long-term survival.

5. Global Impact:

India's success reverberated globally. In 1994, the Global Tiger Forum was established in New Delhi, making India the hub of international tiger diplomacy. The country's census methods, camera traps, pugmark tracking, and DNA analysis, set global standards.

Unknown to many, India's tiger conservation efforts influenced strategies for other species, including snow leopards and elephants. The idea of protecting flagship species to conserve entire ecosystems became a model replicated worldwide.

6. Cultural Dimensions:

The tiger is deeply embedded in Indian culture. In Hindu mythology, Goddess Durga rides a tiger, symbolizing power and protection. Tribal folklore often portrays the tiger as both feared and revered. In some traditions, killing a tiger was believed to incur curses, thereby indirectly discouraging hunting.

Bollywood and the media also played a role. Films and Documentaries brought global attention to reserves, blending entertainment with awareness. The tiger became not just a biological entity but a cultural icon.

7. Challenges Across 53 Years:

Despite successes, challenges persist.

- **Poaching:** Tiger skins and bones remain lucrative in illegal markets, driven by demand in traditional medicine.
 - **Habitat Fragmentation:** Highways, railways, and mining projects cut through tiger corridors, isolating populations.
 - **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Rising tiger numbers increase encounters with villagers, sometimes leading to retaliatory killings.
 - **Climate Change:** Sundarbans tigers face rising sea levels, threatening their mangrove habitats.
- These challenges remind us that conservation is an ongoing struggle, not a finished achievement.

8. Unknown Success Factors

Several lesser-known factors contributed to Project Tiger's success.

- **Tourism Revenue:** Reserves like Ranthambore generate millions annually, proving conservation can be economically viable.
- **Community Involvement:** Programs like Eco-Development Committees gave locals alternative livelihoods, reducing dependence on forest resources.

- **Technology:** Recent innovations include drones, GPS collars, and AI-based monitoring, enhancing surveillance and research.

9. Case Studies of Lesser-Known Reserves

While famous reserves like Corbett and Ranthambore dominate headlines, lesser-known reserves have played surprising roles.

- **Buxa Tiger Reserve (West Bengal):** Once nearly devoid of tigers, now slowly recovering due to corridor protection.
- **Satpura (Madhya Pradesh):** Known more for leopards, but quietly becoming a tiger stronghold.
- **Sathyamangalam (Tamil Nadu):** A newer reserve that connects Western and Eastern Ghats, crucial for genetic diversity.

These reserves highlight the breadth of India's conservation network.

10. Future Directions

Looking ahead, Project Tiger faces new frontiers.

- **Rewilding Projects:** Tigers have been successfully reintroduced in Sariska and Panna, setting precedents for future rewilding.
- **International Cooperation:** India collaborates with Nepal and Bhutan to protect transboundary populations.
- **Balancing Development:** The next challenge is integrating conservation with India's rapid infrastructure growth.

Conclusion

Project Tiger's 53-year journey is a saga of resilience, innovation, and cultural pride. From near extinction to global leadership, India has shown that conservation is possible when science, policy, and community converge. Yet the story is unfinished. The tiger's survival in the next century depends on how India balances development with ecological stewardship.

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Kamlang Tiger Reserve: Where Wilderness Roars and Rivers Whisper

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Introduction:

Kamlang Tiger Reserve is one of the most important protected wildlife areas located in the eastern Himalayan region of India. It lies in the southeastern part of Lohit district and spread over a part of Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh and forms part of the rich Eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspot. The reserve was originally established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1989 and was later declared as the 50th Tiger Reserve of India in 2017 under Project Tiger and in 2024 it was declared as eco-sensitive zone. The total area of Kamlang Tiger Reserve is 783 sq km including a core area of 696 sq km and a buffer area of 87 sq km. The reserve is named after the Kamlang river which flows through the forest and ultimately joins the Brahmaputra river. The tribal people living around the area consist of Mishmi, Digaro Mishmi and Miju Mishmi. The tribal people claim descent from the King Rumo of the epic Mahabharata. They believe in the myth god known as Suto Phenkhenynon jamalu. An important body of water in the Tiger Reserve is the Glaw lake , Located at an elevation of 1,168 meters.

Geographical Features: The Sanctuary is lies between Lang River on the North side and Namphada National Park on its south. It stretches over an area of 783 sq km. Kamlang tiger reserve is divided into 6 blocks. Each blocks are accessible through foot access only. Tiger reserve is the most diverse protected area in Northeast India situated at the trijunction intersection if the borders with India, Myanmar & China. It is one of the 12

protected areas in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Floral diversity of Kamlang Tiger Reserve:

The vegetation varies from tropical wet evergreen forests to Alpine forests in the upper regions of DaphaBum peak which borders Namdapha Tiger Reserve. There are about 150 tree species common in this area. The main tree species of this region are Canarium resiniferum (Dhuna), Terminalia chebula (Hilika), Gmelina arborea (Gamari), Amora wallichii (Amari), Entada phaseoloides (Ghilla). A great variety of herbs (Wild Banana), bamboo, grasses and perennial vines (Ipomoea tiliacea), shrubs are also present and 49 species of orchids have also been reported.

Faunal Diversity: There are 61 species of mammals, 105 bird species, and 150+ unique butterflies. The cat species includes the Royal Bengal tiger, Common leopard, Clouded leopard, marbled leopard, leopard cat and snow leopard. Other notable animal species included reported in the park are Asiatic elephant, Wild boar, Sambar, Barking deer, Black Giant Squirrel and 15 species of primates in which 6 species are found in the park are capped langur, rhesus macaque, stump tailed macaque, Assamese macaque, eastern hoolock gibbon and Bengal slow loris.

1. Mammals : There are 61 species of mammals in Kamlang Tiger Reserve, notable species include the Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), a top predator of the ecosystem, the Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) and the Clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*). Other important mammals

include the Capped Langur (*Trachypithecus pileatus*), Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*), and Slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*), representing primate diversity in the reserve. Herbivores such as Sambar Deer (*Rusa unicolor*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), and Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) are also common, supporting the food chain. The presence of rare and exclusive species like the Marbled Cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*) and Asiatic Black Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*).

2. Birds: There are 105 species of birds recorded in Kamlang Tiger Reserve. Commonly observed birds include the Great Hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*), Wreathed Hornbill (*Rhyticeros undulatus*), and Oriental Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*), all of which are important seed dispersers in the ecosystem. Other notable species are the Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa*), Green Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula aenea*), Crested Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis cheela*), and Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*), along with a variety of laughingthrushes, babblers, and woodpeckers that thrive in the forest understory. Several endemic and near-endemic species of the Eastern Himalayan region, such as the Beautiful Nuthatch (*Sitta formosa*), Ward's Trogon (*Harpactes wardi*), and the Rufous-necked Hornbill (*Aceros nipalensis*), as well as the rare White-winged Wood Duck (*Asarcornis scutulata*).

3. Butterflies: There are 150+ unique species of butterflies are recorded. Some butterflies species of Kamlang Tiger Reserve are Indian Jezebel (*Delias eucharis*), Tabby (*Pseudergolis wedah*), Stately Nawab (*Charaxes dolon*), Dark Palm Dart (*Telicota ancilla*), Large Yeoman (*Cirrochroa aoris*), Tiger hopper (*Ampittia subvittatus*), Black spotted pierrot (*Tarucus balcanicus*), northern Spotted Ace (*Thoressa cerata*), Five-bar swordtail (*Graphium antiphates*), Paris peacock (*Papilio paris*), Chocolate Albatross (*Appias lyndica*) and Common Bluebottle (*Graphium sarpedon*).

Glaw lake: A hidden paradise in Arunachal Pradesh

Glaw lake is located in the Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary under Wakro Circle in the Lohit district. It is situated at a high altitude of approximately 1168 meters above the sea level (5,000 ft) and covers a sizeable area approximately 8 kms. It is a remote, mostly trekking accessible lake (18-19 km), not a developed tourist hotspot. The sanctuary's terrain spans a broad altitudinal range and supports different types of forest-from tropical wet evergreen in lower reaches to temperate and subalpine in higher zone. Its beauty comes from natural scenery the hills, forest and mountains making it popular among adventure tourists and other kinds of tourist. It is the most important natural attractions within the Kamlang tiger reserve. A scoping survey of Glaw lake was conducted in December 18-19 2024, by a team from Wetlands International South Asia, which was accompanied by the members of the Forest Department of the Kamlang Tiger reserve and wildlife sanctuary. As discussed with forest officials this lake has been nominated for the Ramsar site from Arunachal Pradesh (under progress).

According to folklore by the Mishmi tribe, the lake was formed by divine forces, and it is believed to be protected by forest spirits. Elders say that in ancient times, villagers who disrespected nature or hunted excessively in the surrounding forests would face misfortune, as the spirits of the lake guarded the balance of the land. The unusually calm and mirror-like surface of Glow Lake is often described as a sign of its spiritual purity, and locals traditionally avoid polluting or disturbing its waters. Some stories even mention that the lake glows under moonlight, giving it an almost magical appearance and reinforcing its sacred status.

Management Practices:

- Protection and Anti-poaching: With limited

existing camps, there is a focus on increasing anti-poaching initiatives and establishing more patrolling paths and check posts.

- Core Area conservation: Efforts aim to keep the core areas untouched to protect high endemism, covering areas from tropical wet evergreen forests to Alpine vegetation.
- Infrastructure Development: The management is addressing the need for better residential building, roads, and bridges for field staff to facilitate better surveillance in difficult terrain.
- Staff and scientific support: There is a focus on strengthening the capacity of the staff, including posting a veterinarian to manage wildlife health in the remote area.
- Eco sensitive zone: The sanctuary has been designated an eco-sensitive zone to enhance environmental sustainability.
- Supports tiger populations, leopards, clouded leopards, and hoolock gibbons managed in coordination with the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department.
- Community Management: Management strategies include a co-existing agenda in buffer and fringe areas to mitigate human-animal conflicts.

Kamlang management challenges:

- i. Difficult Terrain: The reserve has extremely rugged mountainous terrain with dense forests and numerous rivers. This makes wildlife monitoring, patrolling, and scientific research very difficult.
- ii. Limited scientific studies: Due to its remoteness, lack of researchers and challenging landscape, many parts of the reserve remain unexplored and lack detailed biodiversity survey.

iii. Infrastructure Constraints: The area has limited infrastructure such as roads, research facilities and tourism management systems, which restricts conservation and eco-tourism activities.

iv. Wildlife monitoring: Tracking large carnivores like tigers and clouded leopards in dense forests is difficult, and maintaining accurate population data requires advanced technology and man power.

v. Climate and weather: Heavy rainfall and landslides during the monsoon season often affect accessibility and field operations within the reserve. Activities can be only carried out during the dry season Or during winter season.

vi. Poaching: Illegal poaching remains one of the most serious threats to the reserve. The reserve shares international boundary with Myanmar, making it highly vulnerable to cross border by armed poachers. Poachers use traps, firearms and snares to hunt down endangered species (Mishmi takin).

vii. Forest Fire incidences near to KTR: Recently a forest fire incidence has been reported on February, 2026 near to Kamlang Tiger Reserve due to human settlements and anthropogenic activities.

Future Perspective:

- i. Strengthening wildlife protection: The government plans to deploy a special tiger protection to protect wildlife and prevent poaching in reserves including kamlang. The force will include trained personal dedicated to protecting tiger habitats and stopping illegal wildlife trade.
- ii. Use of modern technology in conservation: Future management will include AI, IoT, Remote sensing and GIS mapping, camera traps, and drones to monitor wildlife populations and forest conditions. These technologies will help track

animals and detect illegal activities in remote forest areas.

iii. Development of Eco-tourism: The government plans to create nature trails and angling spots to promote eco-tourism in the Kamlang Reserve area. Eco-tourism can generate income for local communities while encouraging conservation awareness.

iv. Eco-sensitive zone protection: The Reserve has been declared an eco-sensitive zone, which restricts harmful activities and supports long-term conservation of biodiversity.

v. Community participation: Local communities will be involved in forest protection, eco-tourism activities, and biodiversity conservation programs. This approach helps to reduce dependence on forest resources and improves livelihoods.

vi. Research and biodiversity conservation: Future efforts will promote scientific research, biodiversity surveys, and environmental education.

vii. Future development plans (2026): The Arunachal Pradesh government has proposed the recruitment of a special tiger protection force for 2026-2027 to address patrolling issues.

Conclusion:

Kamlang Tiger Reserve is a hidden gem of Arunachal Pradesh and an important center for biodiversity conservation in India. With its rich flora and fauna, scenic landscape, and cultural heritage and significance, the Reserve plays a crucial role in preserving wildlife and maintaining ecological balance. However, addressing challenges such as difficult terrain, limited research and infrastructure constraints is essential for its long-term sustainability. With proper conservation efforts and community participation, Kamlang Tiger Reserve has great potential to become the major center for wildlife conservation and eco-tourism in Northeast India.

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Images: © Krishna Kumari, © Sangeeta Marbom and © Sangtsoi khaimniungan, Google earth

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You can be gorgeous at thirty, charming at forty and irresistible for the rest of your life

- Coco Chanel (Gabrielle Bouheur Chanel)

A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives

-Jackie Robinson

From Roots to Research: FCRI's First Ph.D. Batch Marks a Milestone in Forestry

A New Beginning in Forestry Research, Conservation and Field Applications

Dr Reeja Sundaram

The Forest College and Research Institute (FCRI), Hyderabad, established in 2016 by the Government of Telangana and affiliated to Sri Konda Laxman Telangana State Horticultural University, has gradually developed as a centre for forestry education and field-oriented research. Located in the forested landscape of Mulugu, Siddipet district, the institute focuses on building human resources and generating knowledge relevant to sustainable forest management.

The Ph.D. programme was initiated in 2022 in accordance with ICAR norms, covering four specialized disciplines viz., Silviculture and Agroforestry, Forest Biology and Tree Improvement, Forest Products and Utilization and Forest Resource Management. In 2026, the first batch of scholars from these disciplines successfully completed their doctoral studies.

The studies carried out by this batch address a range of field-level issues in Telangana's forest landscapes, including biodiversity assessment, ecosystem services, species conservation, soil health, and utilization of forest resources.

Research Highlights



Bheemreddy Venkateshwar Reddy

a. Valuation of ecosystem services from

Amrabad Tiger Reserve, Telangana.

Amrabad Tiger Reserve is one of the largest tiger reserves in India, spread across the Nallamala hills and forming an important part of the Krishna River catchment. It supports diverse dry deciduous forests, wildlife including tigers, and forest-dependent tribal communities. The reserve plays a vital role in biodiversity conservation, water security, climate regulation, and sustaining traditional livelihoods.

Relevance: The study assessed ecological and economic contributions such as water provisioning and carbon storage, helping to incorporate ecosystem service valuation into forest planning and management.



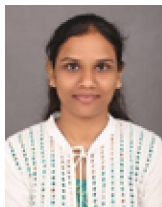
Ravula Rohith

b. Valuation of ecosystem services from Kawal Tiger Reserve, Telangana, India

Kawal Tiger Reserve is a major forest landscape in northern Telangana and an important habitat for wildlife within the Godavari basin. It also supports livelihoods of forest-dependent communities.

Relevance: By estimating the economic value of services like timber, water, carbon, and livelihoods, the study provides useful inputs for policy decisions

and sustainable management.



Akkenapally Snehanjali

c. Advancing conservation efforts through macropropagation and micropropagation of *Hildegardiapopulifolia* (DC.) Schott & Endl. -a critically endangered medicinally important tree species

Hildegardiapopulifolia is a critically endangered tree species with ecological and medicinal importance. Its declining populations due to overexploitation and poor regeneration make it a priority species for conservation, restoration, and sustainable utilization.

Relevance: The study developed propagation methods through seed and tissue culture techniques, which can support restoration and conservation of this species.



Mogilicharla Manasa

d. Germplasm characterization in neem to select accessions with variable azadirachtin content and identification of its candidate genes through transcriptomics

Azadirachta indica (neem) is widely known for its medicinal value and azadirachtin, a natural biopesticide. However, its content varies across

trees and locations.

Relevance: The study identified superior neem accessions and explored candidate genes responsible for azadirachtin production using advanced molecular tools supporting tree improvement programs and benefiting the biopesticide industry and sustainable pest management systems.



Niha Nousheen

e. Development and characterization of mycelium based hybrid bio-composites from lignocellulosic materials

Mycelium-based bio-composites are emerging as sustainable alternatives to plastics and thermocol, using natural fungal networks to bind plant-based materials.

Relevance: This study utilized forestry residues such as wood and bamboo, combined with fungal mycelium, to develop biodegradable and eco-friendly composite materials contributing to waste utilization and environmentally sustainable products.



Thallapally Saideep

f. Preparation and Characterization of

Biochar from *Conocarpus erectus* woody biomass and evaluation of its efficacy for inhibiting soil acidification induced by nitrification.

Conocarpus erectus is a fast-growing species widely planted in urban and peri-urban areas due to its hardiness and tolerance to harsh conditions. However, in many regions it is increasingly regarded as a potential invasive or weedy species, owing to its aggressive growth, pollen allergy and tendency to dominate local vegetation.

Despite this concern, the large biomass it generates can be effectively utilized for biochar production and other value-added applications, turning a management challenge into an opportunity for sustainable resource use.

Relevance: The study converted this biomass into biochar and demonstrated its usefulness in improving soil properties and reducing soil acidification.



Bochu Jeevan

g. Studies on Phytosociology, Carbon Stocks and Major Soil Nutrients in Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, Telangana, India

Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the oldest protected areas in Telangana, representing a typical tropical dry deciduous forest ecosystem with rich biodiversity. It supports a wide range

of flora and fauna and plays an important role in maintaining ecological balance in the Godavari landscape. However, detailed baseline information on biodiversity, carbon stocks, and soil health was limited.

Relevance: The study documented vegetation, carbon storage, and soil characteristics, providing useful baseline data for forest management and conservation planning of priority areas.

Why These Studies Matter?

Together, these studies highlight how forestry research can support:

- Biodiversity conservation and monitoring
- Climate change mitigation through carbon assessment
- Sustainable livelihoods in forest areas
- Soil health and restoration
- Conservation of threatened species
- Efficient utilization of forest resources

Looking Ahead

The completion of this first batch of doctoral studies reflects the growing scope of forestry research in the state. Such field-based studies provide useful inputs for forest managers and contribute to better understanding and management of forest ecosystems.

Acknowledgement

The Ph.D. scholars sincerely acknowledge the Dean, FCRI and Telangana Forest Department for their continuous support, coordination, and facilitation of field work.

The author is an Associate Professor FCRI, Mulugu, Telangana

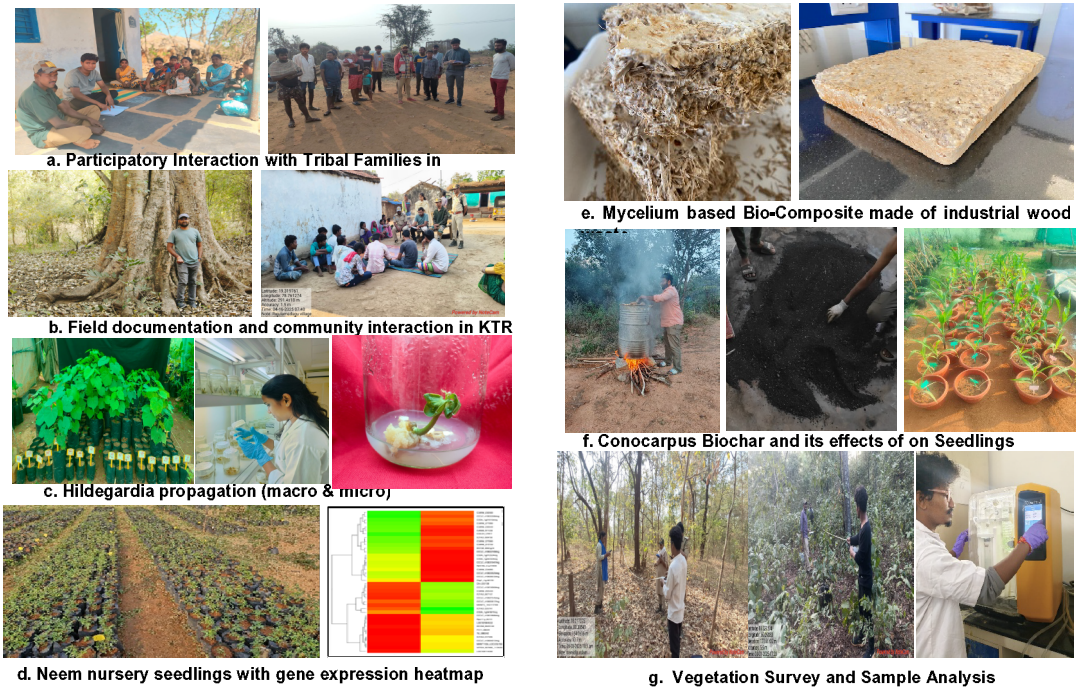


Plate.1 First Ph.D. scholars of FCRI, Telangana, whose studies address key aspects of conservation, ecosystem services, soil health, and sustainable use of forest resources.



Plate 2. Student research presentations and thesis defence with external experts



Shakespearean twists in the tales:

Bard-of-Avon's Plays with their many complexities, unheard voices and stories!

" A few fascinating incidents (from Hamlet, The Tempest, A Midsummer Night's Dream) that do not merely adapt the Bard's plays, but engage with their many complexities - thoughtful investigations of the links between art and politics: of political awakening and a reminder of the power of art "

Dr B Raghotham Rao Desai

Exordium:

A couple (William & Anne/Agnes) grieveth the loss of their eleven-year-old son Hamnet at Stratford-upon Avon in a devastating outbreak of the plague in 1600s' England. Struck by grief, Anne and her husband find themselves torn apart, unable to even communicate with each other ---- until one beautiful moment, when Anne witnesseth what the grief hath led her husband to do: immortalise their late son forever, in his new play, ' Hamlet ' (a bold interpretation of history, to an unknown cause of death), spinning a story that not only reimagining the Bard's personal life but also interpreting his work!

With the context of Shakespeare's and Anne Hathaway's loss, Hamlet's ' To be or Not to be ' speech takes on a new significance ---- an astonishingly powerful moment, reminding us of the power of the work to speak across time and space to reach readers so far from its context, for Anne the power to speak across the veil of death itself! While William Shakespeare's plays have been adapted and reinterpreted, I am reminded of stories that do not just adapt the plot of his work, but engage with the thorniness (difficulty) of his works as plays ---- who encounter the power of plays ---- in their engagement with them.

As we come across the couple other plays:

In '*The Tempest*' we are introduced to a theatre

director, disgraced from his position: betrayed by a former colleague, and hell bent on revenge (by taking up a job at a correctional Institute or teaches the inmates imprisoned for non-violent offences). And at the end of an year, puts on his most personal play, *The Tempest* ---- where real life and stage life will collide in wholly surprising ways! while there is a fast-paced revenge plot in it, but an equally compelling stage is introduced where the inmates offer their own delightful interpretations of Shakespeare.

And in a wildly different context, a young woman revels in the feeling "of a state of suspension that came over after a performance in '*A Midsummer Night's dream*' ---- a sense of ' having flown very high and landed incompletely, her soul pulling upward out of her chest! Shakespeare's words ---- written during the time of devastating plague ---- stay significant in a time recovering from its own plague: I tried to offer just a glimpse, but if it is about anything, it is about the power of art of all kinds and what lengths we will go to save & savour at the end of the world.

Summary:

William Shakespeare (C.23 April 1564-23 April 1616) was an English playwright, poet and actor ---- widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist (also often called England's 'National poet' and the 'Bard of Avon' or simply 'the Bard');

his extant works, including collaborations, consist of some 37 plays, 1545 on Sonnets, 3 long narrative poems, and a few other Verses (some of uncertain authorship) ---- his plays having been translated into every major living language (and performed more often than those of any playwright): Shakespeare remaining arguably the most influential writer in the English language and his works continue to be studied and reinterpreted, having invented, adopted (or first popularised) over 1700 words in the English language, by converting nouns into verbs, verbs into adjective, and creating compounds (common verbs he created include "bedroom, eyeball, lonely, swagger, gossip, fashionable, laughable, addiction, aerial, bandit, bump, champion, critic, dauntless, dislocate, dwindle, elbow, exposure, frugal, gloomy, hurry, impartial, lacklustre, marketable, nervy, obscene, puking, radiance, rant, self-abuse, traditional, tranquil, unreal, worthless, zany"). Phrases and idioms as "Break the ice, Brave new world, In a pickle, Wild-goose chase, Heart of gold, Set clothed in purple, Star-crossed lovers" ---- these words & phrases were introduced through his plays and poems, often altering the flow of the English language (by combining existing words to create new meanings).

He was born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon (Warwickshire), was married to Anne Hathaway at the age of 18 and had 3 children (Sasanna, and twins Hamnet & Judith) ---- **beginning a successful career in London as an actor, writer and part-owner of a playing company** (called the 'Lord Chamberlain's Men', later known as the 'Kings Men' (after the accession of King James VI of Scotland, to the English throne) **sometime between 1585 and 1592**. At the of age 49 (around 1613) he appears to have retired to Stratford, where he died three years later.

Trivia:


Insofar as the dramas of '*Hamlet*' and '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*', as also '*The Tempest*' are concerned, I have an interesting account to recount (pertaining to the Academic Year of 1949-50 when I was in **10th class** at the Osmania Collegiate Highschool, Warangal): we had Sri Ranga Rao as our class-teacher who taught us English, **as per the syllabus of our textbook** (of which the **said dramas' concise-stories were included**). Around the commencement of the said year I had

received a volume "Shakespeare: The Complete Works" published by Odham Press (through the courtesy of 'The Illustrated weekly of India' which we used to receive at home), and showed it to my teacher who appreciated and desired it to be kept in the class's small almirah (called 'Class Library') for some time, to be made use of (when the said lessons came to be taught) ---- **with his rare gusto and passion and a love for literature** (every time the stories in the book took their turns to come), without exhibiting any hurry : with just a steady voice and complete attention to what he was **reading to us, as if he knew Shakespeare and dramatic personae personally**, their regret and unease coming through every line he read from the dramatist's 'Complete Works' (now & then **wandering into small anecdotes and then return to the lessons**, smiling to himself for a moment) as if in a reverie & as if nothing has interrupted us! He would **describe simply the stories' settings and messages, but that had stayed with me** ---- my first **real introduction to the Bard thus coming in his classes**, unfolding through his voice and gestures : his narrations of grave diggers' scene, the soliloquies, Ophelia's distress having all indelibly etched in my memory (as **he knew we needed more than just classroom conversations to spark a lifelong love for the subject**).

The great teacher **sowed seeds of my love for English writings** ---- though I belonged to science-wing (of an era of Urdu Medium) in Osmania University ---- with his simplicity and love for words : looking back, **what stands out now being how simply his approach to literature** had been (


as he never tried to be impressive ---- just caring about the subject and his students' understanding it : **there being no easy way to measure what a teacher passes on his students**), having **given me literature to hold in my heart**, something I could fondly relate to, and keep the same forever.

The author is a retired IFS officer of Karnataka cadre and the Chief Editor of 'VanaVikas', a quarterly magazine of the retired forest officers of Karnataka. M-9886157158.



Birthday Greetings

We wish the following born on the dates mentioned
"A VERY HAPPY BIRTH DAY"



S.No.	Name of the Member/ Retired officer	D.O.B.	S.No.	Name of the Member/ Retired officer	D.O.B.
Sarva Sri					
1.	B. Soma Sekara Reddy	10-05-1954	4.	M. Bhabji Rao	08-05-1968
2.	S. Kishan Das	10-05-1955	5.	B. Saidulu	09-05-1974
3.	Qamar Mohd Khan	11-05-1947	6.	N.Nageshwara Rao	10-05-1971
4.	M.A. Waheed	12-05-1953	7.	U. Koteshwara Rao	10-05-1982
5.	M. Purushotham Reddy	14-05-1952	8.	Smt. R. Yesoda Bai	14-05-1986
6.	G. Ravi	15-05-1962	9.	Shaik Adam Nagini Banu	14-05-1976
7.	K. Shekar Reddy	16-05-1956	10.	Dr. Sekher Babu Geddani	15-05-1986
8.	K.C. Augustin	21-05-1930	11.	Smt. G.B. Rekha Banu	15-05-1984
9.	S. Rama Rao	25-05-1950	12.	Ch. Ganga Reddy	19-05-1966
10.	K. Pradeep	28-05-1954	13.	G.N. Pavan Kumar Rao	20-05-1967
11.	T. Samboji Rao	01-06-1948	14.	D. Asha Kiran	20-05-1980
12.	K. Ramkishan	01-06-1963	15.	B.M. Diwan Mydeen	21-05-1978
13.	Y. Ram Mohan Rao	02-06-1941	16.	K. Mahaboob Basha	21-05-1986
14.	M. Darshanam	04-06-1951	17.	N. Jogender	24-05-1965
15.	Gunturu Satyanarayana	04-06-1954	18.	N. Siva Kumar	31-05-1975
16.	Shaik Salaam	04-06-1963	20.	Smt. N. Kshitija	01-06-1976
17.	A.V.S.R.K.Appanna	04-06-1963	21.	T. Chakrapani	01-06-1966
S.No. Name of the Serving Officers D.O.B.					
Sarva Sri					
1.	C. Sarvanan	01-06-1978	22.	D. Ravindranath Reddy	02-06-1982
2.	S.S. Sreedhar	04-06-1966	23.	P. Ramakrishna	02-06-1972
3.	Smt. S.J. Asha	07-05-1975	24.	K. Srinivas	04-06-1977
			26.	Y.V. Narsimha Rao	05-06-1980

- Secretary

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

Pictures from 38th batch FBOs and 8th batch FSOs Convocation at TGFA



Sri. Ahmed Nadeem, IAS Prl. Secy EFS&T : Dr C. Suvarna, IFS PCCF (HoFF), Sri Vinay Kumar, IFS CWLW, Smt. Abhilasha Bisht, IPS DG TGPA, Dr Priyanka Varghese, IFS (Director TGFA)

Pelicans



great white pelican, Kenya, Africa_



brown pelican, Costa Rica, central America_



Dalmatian Pelican breeding plumage_



great white pelican_



great white pelican__



pink backed pelican, kenya, africa_



spot billed pelican_

Photo Credit: Sri K. Praveen Rao, IFS (Retd.)

Golden Jubilee Re-Union of SFRC 1975-77 batch at Bengaluru on 14th and 15th April 2026



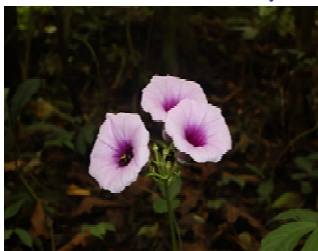
Kamlang Tiger Reserve: Where Wilderness Roars and Rivers Whisper



Entrance gate of Kamlang Tiger Reserve from wakro side (© Krishna Kumari)



Location of Glaw Lake: 27°41'50.72"N 96°27'06.88"E, Elevation: 1,184.59 m (Source: Google earth)



Ipomoea tiliacea Source

: ©Sangeeta Marbom



Kamlang river and forest overview (© Krishna Kumari)

Images: Glaw Lake and forest Rest House (©Sangtsoi khiamniungan and © Krishna Kumari)

పర్యావరణహితం
సింగరేణి అభిమతం



డోర్లీ ఓసీ దంపుపై పెరిగిన ఫ్లాంటేషన్



బ్లాక్ ఫ్లాంటేషన్



సింగరేణి ఆధ్వర్యంలో నిర్మించిన చెరువులు



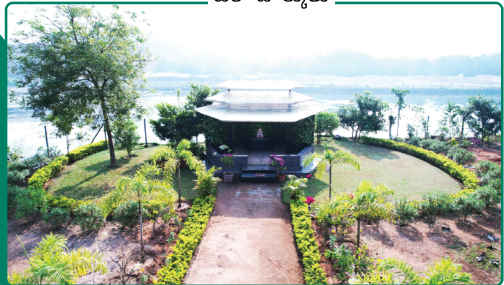
అవెన్యూ ఫ్లాంటేషన్



ఎకో పార్కులు



సింగరేణి
 కాలరీస్ కంపెనీ లిమిటెడ్
 (ప్రభుత్వ రంగ సంస్థ)





The Problem of Free-Ranging Dogs in Conservation : A growing ecological crisis unfolding across NSTR

B. Vijaya Kumar

As human presence expands, so do dog populations, quietly reshaping entire ecosystems in ways we are only beginning to understand. In Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve and across India's Protected Areas, free-ranging dogs have shifted from a human-management issue to a direct conservation threat. They are no longer just strays at the forest fringe. They are now ecological agents inside the core.

1. Genetic Pollution: Crossing with Wild Canids : Free-ranging dogs hybridize with

Indian wolves and dholes. This genetic introgression dilutes wild canid gene pools, erodes local adaptations, and threatens the evolutionary integrity of already vulnerable species. In fragmented landscapes like NSTR, where wolf packs are small, even a few hybridization events can have population-level impacts. Severe alopecia reported in dholes within NSTR in the past strongly suggests direct interaction and possible disease spillover from domestic counterparts.

2. Disease Transmission: Rabies, Canine Distemper, and Parvovirus: Dogs are reservoirs for lethal pathogens. Rabies, Canine Distemper Virus, and Parvovirus spread from dogs to dholes, wolves, jackals, leopards, and even tigers. CDV outbreaks have caused mass mortality in lion populations in Gir and dholes in several reserves.

In NSTR, leopard deaths near Srisaillam and Pathalaganga habitations have been linked to dog-mediated disease and conflict. One rabid dog can wipe out a dhole pack.

3. Direct Conflict and Predation: Dogs are efficient predators. They kill ground-nesting birds, reptiles, small mammals, and fawns. In

scrub-grasslands and riverine tracts of NSTR, they compete directly with foxes, jackals, and jungle cats for food. Packs harass larger prey like chital and sambar, causing repeated energy-intensive flight responses. Even when prey is not killed, chronic chasing elevates stress hormones, reduces feeding time, and lowers reproductive success. This is critical in a landscape where habitat is already shrinking — dog intervention aggravates it further.

4. Impact on Breeding and Infant Survival: Persistent harassment by dogs leads to infant mortality and mother-offspring separation in deer, antelope, and ground-nesting birds. Dens and nesting sites are raided. For species already under pressure, this loss of recruitment can drive local extinctions.

5. Penetration into Core Areas: The GBM Paradox: Gundla Brahmeswaram Metta has no permanent human habitations, yet dogs are regularly sighted in the core. They accompany Chenchu tribals living in and around the reserve and are even seen with Chenchu protection watchers in anti-poaching camps of NSTR. While the intent is companionship and camp security, the ecological cost is high. Dogs from camps range widely at night, hunting and spreading disease deep inside tiger habitat.

6. Conflict with Apex Predators: Near Srisaillam and Pathalaganga, leopard deaths have been reported due to stray dogs — either through direct conflict, retaliatory killing after dog predation on livestock, or disease. When leopards prey on dogs, they also get exposed to CDV and rabies, bringing the threat closer to tigers.

Pragmatic Solutions for NSTR and Similar Landscapes:

- 1) **Zero-Tolerance Core Zone Policy:** No domestic animals, including dogs, in core/critical tiger habitat. Enforce existing PA rules. Relocate anti-poaching camps with dogs to buffer areas where feasible.
- 2) **Sterilization & Vaccination of Buffer Villages:** Intensive ABC-ARV drives in all villages within 5 km of NSTR boundary. Cover 80%+ of the dog population annually to break disease cycles. Partner with Animal Husbandry Dept and NGOs.
- 3) **Chenchu Community Engagement:** Work with Chenchu protection watchers. Provide alternatives for camp security like solar fencing, alarms. If dogs are essential, enforce leashing, vaccination, and sterilization. Make it part of service conditions.
- 4) **Rapid Removal Protocol:** Establish a SOP with local panchayats and FD staff for immediate removal of dogs sighted in core areas. Use humane capture and transport to shelters outside the landscape.

5) **Disease Surveillance Grid:** Integrate CDV and rabies monitoring in annual wildlife health checks. Sample dead wild canids and co-predators. Use early detection to trigger targeted dog control.

6) **Awareness & Policy Convergence:** Sensitize temple boards at Srisailam, tourism operators, and line departments. Stray feeding near forest edges must stop. Amend NTCA advisories to specifically address free-ranging dogs as a tiger conservation threat.

7) **Research on Carrying Capacity:** Map dog density, movement, and diet in NSTR using camera traps and Drones. Data will drive evidence-based capping of populations in the buffer.

The tiger cannot speak for the grassland, the dhole cannot vote against rabies, and the fawn cannot file a complaint about stress. As custodians of NSTR, the responsibility falls on us. Free-ranging dogs are not a peripheral issue anymore. They are in the core, and they are changing it. Managing them is not anti-dog — it is pro-ecosystem.



Camera trap images of stray dogs chasing sambar

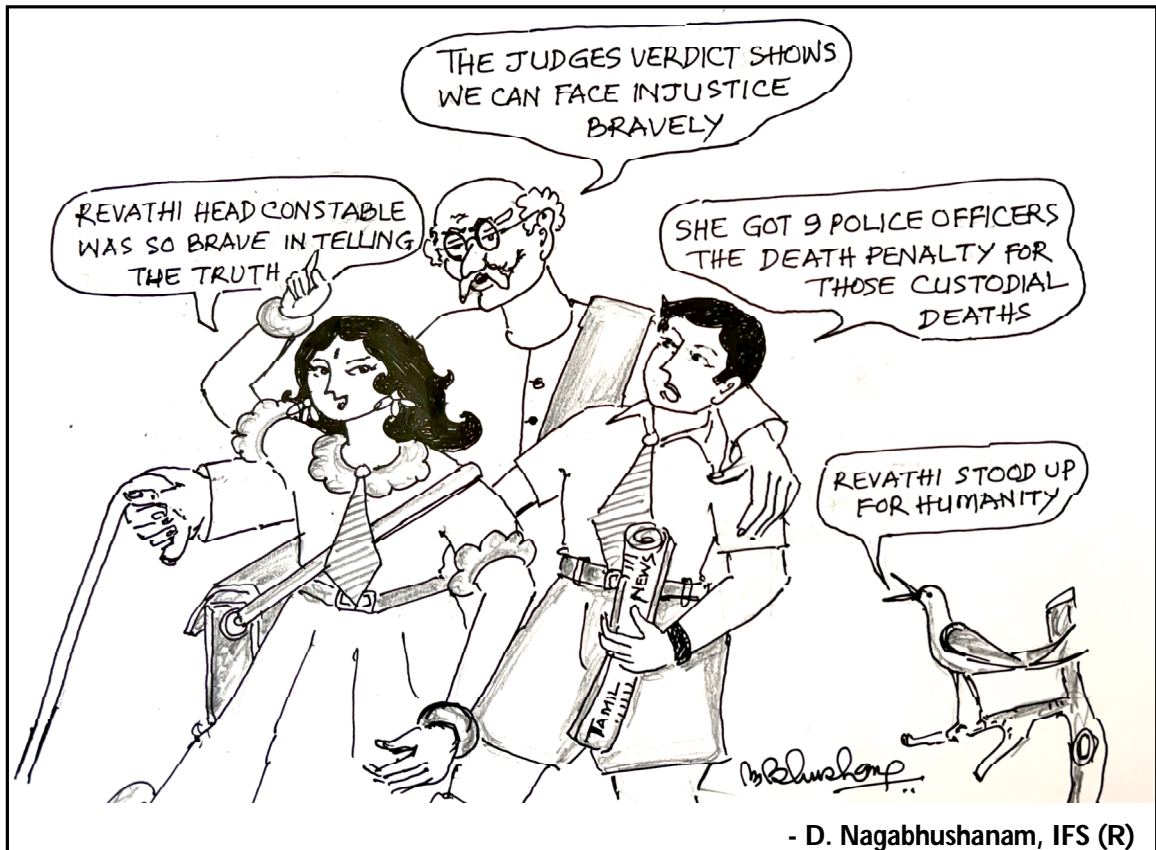
inside tiger reserve



Sarcoptic mange effected wild dog

Photo from NTCA SOP on HOW TO DEAL WITH FERREL / STRAY DOGS IN TIGER RESERVE

The author is a CCF and member of IFS, working in AP



- D. Nagabhusanam, IFS (R)



Moonlit Tide: A Night of the Olive Ridley Turtles

Dr. Padam Parkash Bhojvaid

The sea, under a full moon, has a way of turning memory into something almost mythical. And yet, what we witnessed that December night in 1999 on a remote shore of the Andaman Islands was no myth. It was nature at its most ancient, deliberate, and humbling.

The Olive Ridley Sea Turtle, among the smallest of sea turtles, carries within it one of the ocean's most enduring instincts, the compulsion to return to sandy shores to start the next generation. With its olive green, heart shaped carapace and modest size, rarely exceeding two feet, it is an unassuming creature. Yet its journey across oceans and back to land speaks of resilience etched over millennia. Classified as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, it stands today as both a symbol of continuity and a quiet reminder of ecological fragility.

The Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department has long worked to protect these turtles and their nesting habitats, but on that particular night, conservation was not a concept we analyzed. It was an experience we lived. Our journey began at the edge of the motorable road, where vehicles gave way to a waiting truck that carried us deeper into the darkening wilderness. The air grew cooler, the sounds fewer, until we arrived at a narrow creek. Beyond it lay the nesting ground. A modest camp had been set up, two gas lanterns flickering against the night, a small tent, and a table laid out with surprising warmth. Dinner, mutton curry, rice, and prawns cooked in coconut milk, felt almost ceremonial, a quiet prelude to what we hoped to witness.

As the tide began to rise, we boarded small dinghies to cross the creek. The sea, restless under the full moon, seemed to test both vessel and resolve. At one moment, a sudden swell lifted the dinghy carrying us. For a fleeting instant, the night tightened around us. But the oarsmen, guided by instinct and experience, steadied the craft and brought it safely ashore. Relief, when it came, was wordless and deep.

On the far side, the world seemed transformed. The sand shimmered silver under the moonlight, and a sudden chill settled into the air. Anticipating this, the Forest staff had replaced chairs with thick rubber mats inside the tents and provided blankets that soon became welcome companions. Waiting, as it turned out, was as much a part of the experience as the sight itself.

To keep sleep at bay, our guide for the evening held us in gentle engagement, speaking of constellations, the Andaman Sea, its hidden life, and the quiet cycles that govern creatures like the turtles we had come to see. Cups of hot coffee circulated, warding off both cold and fatigue, while time seemed to stretch in quiet anticipation.

It was close to midnight when the whispers began. Soft, almost reverential murmurs from the Forest staff signalled their arrival. We stepped out in silence, careful not to disturb the fragile theatre unfolding before us. And then we saw them. From the dark edge of the sea emerged a living tide, scores of turtles, their movement slow yet purposeful, their shells glistening under the moonlight. It was not the chaotic abundance

one associates with mass nesting elsewhere, but something more intimate and elemental. Each turtle seemed to carry its own ancient memory, its own unerring sense of purpose.

What followed was a ritual both precise and profound. With swift, practiced movements, the females dug into the sand, laid their eggs, and then, with equal care, concealed each nest, entrusting it to the earth. There was no hesitation, no spectacle, only instinct, steady and unbroken. We watched, silent and spellbound, as life prepared to renew itself in the most unassuming way.

Beneath that smooth stretch of sand, the next chapter had already begun. After an incubation period of about forty five to sixty days, the hatchlings would emerge, guided by the faint glow of moonlight reflecting off the sea. Their journey, fraught with peril, would test their fragile beginnings. Many would not survive, yet enough

would endure to keep the cycle alive, a quiet testament to nature's balance.

The Andaman Islands, with their unspoiled beaches and rich biodiversity, remain a vital refuge for these turtles. Efforts to protect nesting grounds and minimise disturbance are not merely administrative measures. They are acts of custodianship, preserving a rhythm that predates human memory.

That night, however, what stayed with us was not just the ecological significance of the event, but its quiet poetry. The rhythm of the waves, the silvered sand, and the steady crawl of life towards continuity all came together in a moment that felt both deeply personal and universally profound. Some experiences fade with time. Others remain like that moonlit encounter with the Olive Ridley, etched not just in memory, but in one's understanding of the fragile, enduring beauty of the natural world.

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

**When things begin accelerating wildly out of control, sometimes
patience is the only answer- PRESS PAUSE,
Douglas Rushkoff**

**Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can
never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them
- David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature.**



A landmark Judgment by Madras High court "Senior Citizens can cancel gift or settlement deeds"

V.V.Hariprasad

Senior Citizen Act, 2007 – Section 23

Protection of Property Rights of Senior Citizens--

(S.MALA v. DISTRICT ARBITRATOR WA.3582/2024 (Mar 6, 2025))

India enacted the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 to safeguard elderly citizens from neglect, abandonment, and exploitation. One of the most powerful and frequently used provisions under this law is Section 23, which specifically deals with property transfers made by senior citizens.

This section acts as a legal shield for senior citizens who transfer their property to children or relatives based on trust, love, or assurance of care — and later face neglect or ill-treatment.

What is Section 23 of the Senior Citizen Act, 2007?

Section 23 provides that:

If a senior citizen transfers his or her property (by gift, settlement, or otherwise) subject to the condition that the transferee will provide basic amenities and physical needs, and such transferee fails to do so, the transfer can be declared void by law.

Who is considered a Senior Citizen?

As per the Act:

- ✓ Any person aged 60 years or above is a senior citizen.
- ✓ The protection applies irrespective of gender.

- ✓ Applies even if the senior citizen has already transferred ownership.

What Types of Property Are Covered?

Section 23 applies to both movable and immovable property, including:

- ✓ Residential houses
- ✓ Sites / plots
- ✓ Apartments
- ✓ Agricultural land
- ✓ Any property transferred via:
 - ✓ Gift deed
 - ✓ Settlement deed
 - ✓ Release deed
 - ✓ Family arrangement
 - ✓ Will (in certain interpretations)

Essential Conditions under Section 23

For Section 23 to apply, three key conditions must exist:

1. Property Transfer by Senior Citizen

The senior citizen must have transferred property during their lifetime.

2. Transfer Was Based on Care & Maintenance

The transfer should be:

❖ Expressly conditional (mentioned in the document), OR

❖ Implied (understood expectation of care, even if not written)

Courts and tribunals often recognize implied conditions based on family relationships.

3. Failure to Maintain or Provide Basic Needs

If the transferee:

- ❖ Neglects the senior citizen
- ❖ Denies food, shelter, medical care
- ❖ Harasses or mentally tortures
- ❖ Forces the senior citizen to vacate the property

What Happens If Conditions Are Violated?

If the above conditions are met, the law states:

- ❖ The property transfer is deemed to be made by fraud, coercion, or undue influence
- ❖ The Maintenance Tribunal can:
 - ❖ Cancel the transfer
 - ❖ Restore ownership to the senior citizen
 - ❖ Evict the transferee from the property
 - ❖ This can be done without approaching a civil court, making the remedy fast and senior-friendly.

Who Can File a Case Under Section 23?

A petition can be filed by:

- ❖ The senior citizen himself / herself
- ❖ Any authorized person on their behalf
- ❖ Maintenance Officer (in certain cases)

Cases are filed before the Maintenance Tribunal (usually the Assistant Commissioner / Sub-Divisional Magistrate).

Is a Written Condition Mandatory in the Deed?

No, courts across India have repeatedly held that:

- ❖ Even if the gift deed or settlement deed does not explicitly mention maintenance,

- ❖ The moral and legal obligation of children to maintain parents is sufficient.

- ❖ This interpretation strongly favours senior citizens.

Important Judicial Interpretations

Indian courts have clarified that:

- ❖ Section 23 must be interpreted liberally to protect senior citizens
- ❖ Emotional neglect also qualifies as failure of maintenance
- ❖ Senior citizens need not prove extreme cruelty — denial of dignity is enough
- ❖ Many High Courts (including Karnataka, Madras, and Delhi HC) have upheld cancellations of property transfers under this section.

Common Real-Life Situations Covered

Section 23 is commonly invoked when:

- ❖ Parents gift property to children and are later abandoned
- ❖ Senior citizens are forced out of their own homes
- ❖ Children refuse medical or daily care after property transfer
- ❖ Property is misused or sold without the senior citizen's consent

Time Limit to File a Case

There is no strict limitation period mentioned in the Act. However, filing at the earliest strengthens the case.

This makes Section 23 one of the most powerful tools for elderly protection.

Key Takeaway for Senior Citizens & Families

- ❖ Property should never be transferred blindly

- ❖ Maintenance obligations cannot be ignored after transfer
- ❖ Senior citizens have the legal right to reclaim property
- ❖ Emotional, physical, and financial well-being are legally protected

CASE LAW:

Factual and Procedural Background

The case concerns an order dated 13.06.2024 passed in W.P.No.6163 of 2021 under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 ("Senior Citizens Act"). The third respondent, Smt. S. Nagalakshmi (deceased during the pendency of the writ petition), a senior citizen aged about 87 years, filed an application under the Senior Citizens Act seeking cancellation of a Settlement Deed executed by her in favour of her only son, Mr. S. Kesavan (also deceased). She alleged neglect by her son and daughter-in-law, which led to her filing the complaint. The Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO), Nagapattinam, conducted an inquiry, recorded statements, and took into consideration documents filed by the daughter-in-law, who did not appear personally. The RDO found that the senior citizen was neglected, especially after the death of her son, and annulled the Settlement Deed on 25.01.2021. The appellant challenged this order in a writ petition, which was dismissed by the learned Single Judge, leading to this writ appeal.

Legal Issues Presented

1. Whether the cancellation of the Settlement Deed by the Revenue Divisional Officer was valid in the absence of an explicit condition in the deed requiring the transferee to maintain the senior citizen, as mandated under Section 23(1) of the Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

2. Whether an implied condition of maintenance based on love and affection is sufficient to invoke Section 23(1) of the Senior Citizens Act to annul a property transfer made by a senior citizen.

3. The scope and interpretation of Section 23(1) of the Senior Citizens Act, particularly whether the condition to provide basic amenities and physical needs must be expressly stated in the transfer deed or can be implied from the circumstances.

Arguments of the Parties

Appellant's Arguments

- ❖ The learned Single Judge failed to consider the merits properly.
- ❖ The Settlement Deed did not incorporate any specific condition to maintain the senior citizen as required by Section 23(1) of the Senior Citizens Act.
- ❖ The cancellation of the Settlement Deed by the Revenue Divisional Officer violated the statutory mandate since no such condition was explicitly mentioned.
- ❖ Relied on multiple precedents to support the contention that the condition to maintain must be expressly stated in the deed.

Respondents 1 and 2's Arguments

- ❖ The evidence and depositions before the Revenue Divisional Officer established neglect of the senior citizen by her son and daughter-in-law.
- ❖ The Settlement Deed expressed that it was executed out of love and affection and for the future interest of the son, which satisfies the condition under Section 23(1).
- ❖ The order cancelling the Settlement Deed is justified and should be sustained.

Table of Precedents Cited

Precedent	Rule or Principle Cited For	Application by the Court
<i>Thottiyammal Vs. The Revenue Divisional Officer and Ors. (W.P.(MD) No.19903 of 2019)</i>	<i>Interpretation of conditions under Section 23(1) of the Senior Citizens Act.</i>	<i>Supported appellant's contention on the necessity of conditions for maintenance.</i>
<i>Subhashini Vs. District Collector and Ors. (2020 SCC Online Ker 4080)</i>	<i>Interpretation of Section 23(1) and conditions for cancellation of property transfer.</i>	<i>Referred in support of the appellant's argument.</i>
<i>ShrishtDhawan Vs. Shaw Brothers ((1992) 1 SCC 534)</i>	<i>General principles related to property and maintenance obligations.</i>	<i>Relied upon by appellant's counsel.</i>

Court's Reasoning and Analysis

The court analysed the provisions of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, focusing on Section 23(1), which allows a senior citizen to seek annulment of a property transfer if the transferee fails to provide basic amenities and physical needs. The court emphasized the legislative intent to uphold the dignity and well-being of senior citizens, recognizing that transfers of property are often motivated by love and affection rather than explicit contractual terms.

The court explained that the phrase "subject to the condition that the transferee shall provide the basic amenities" in Section 23(1) does not require the condition to be explicitly stated in the gift or settlement deed. Instead, such a condition is implied from the nature of the relationship and the circumstances of the transfer. The court referred to authoritative Supreme Court precedents, particularly *Urmila Dixit vs. Sunil Sharan Dixit*, which clarified that an express condition in the

deed is not necessary and that non-maintenance can invoke the implied condition under Section 23(1).

The court further considered the evidence before the Revenue Divisional Officer, which established neglect of the senior citizen by her son and daughter-in-law, supporting the cancellation of the Settlement Deed. The court noted that the senior citizen executed the Settlement Deed out of love and affection for her son, with an expectation of care, which constitutes an implied condition under the Act.

Balancing the legislative purpose and the facts, the court held that the absence of an express maintenance clause in the Settlement Deed does not invalidate the senior citizen's right to relief under Section 23(1). The court underscored the need for a liberal and purposive interpretation of the Act to protect senior citizens from neglect and exploitation.

Contd.. on page No.49



WARMING PLANET MAY GO INTO HOT LOOP

B.K.Singh

Though the climate on earth has regularly been influenced by forces generated from meteor impacts, volcanic eruptions and changing earth's orientation and spin, the change in global average temperature has not been so sudden. The temperature change has been gradual over thousands / millions of years, pushing the planet to hot high/ frigid low. Holocene climate, at present has been lasting for nearly 11,700 years when moderate warming forces offset earth's natural tendency to move towards another severe ice-age. Use of fossil fuel since industrialization begun in 1870 has overwhelmed the interglacial cycle and greenhouse gases emitted in the process have been trapping heat that has caused 1.4-degree Celsius rise in average global temperature in 150 years.

The sudden rise in average global temperature is human induced, be it not transitioning towards renewable energy at speed and scale, be it burning 10 to 12 thousand tons of explosive in first one month of West Asia conflict, be it hitting each other's nuclear sites exposing the population with the risk of radiations etc. A new trend is observed in the current war between Israel and US on one side and Iran on the other. They are hitting at each other's gas fields, oil refineries and depots. Besides greenhouse gas emissions, the burning fields release toxic plumes of smoke, cause acidic rain, destroy critical infrastructure and trigger economic crisis.

Burning oil fields release toxic cocktail of pollutants including the oxides of Sulphur and Nitrogen and black carbon soot hazardous for human health in the region as well as globally. Taking the cue from this war, Ukraine has also intensified hitting Russia oil refineries. The latest in the series of attack has been Yaroslavl refinery, about 282 km from Moscow. The annual production of the refinery is 3 lakh barrel per day. One can imagine the extent of damage to the earth's climate.

The quantum of greenhouse gases emitted on account of war has been phenomenal. To bring a relative comparison here, the total emission in four years of Russia Ukraine war is of the order of 350 million tons of CO2 equivalent, which is equal to greenhouse gas emission by France in one year. World leaders are not paying any attention to such environmental catastrophes and have ignored all safeguards prescribed by world bodies/ Scientists to slow down the warming of the planet. Annual Conference of Parties under the auspices of United Nations' Convention for Climate Change have been failing to cut down the emission and also failing to transition away towards renewable energy at speed and scale. US President Donald Trump finds climate as hoax and has withdrawn from all such accords, where World leaders have to take action to cut the emissions. He has not exhibited any semblance of rule based international order.

His attack on Iran is without the approval from US Congress, UN and NATO, and the economic and environmental consequences is for everyone to see.

After the planet crossed from Pleistocene to Holocene age about 11,700 years ago, the temperature has been distinctly stable. In the last 150 years, the temperatures though, are rising more quickly than at any time in the known history. This could trigger a series of events that would put earth on hothouse earth trajectory. In a study conducted by William J Ripple, Oregon State University Corvallis, OR, USA; Christopher Wolf, TERA Corvallis, OR, USA; Johan Rockstrom Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research, Germany; and their 5 other associates across Europe, it has been concluded that climate is now departing from stable conditions that supported human civilization from millennia. Crossing critical temperature threshold may amplify warming and destabilize distant earth systems components. Crossing tipping thresholds could commit the planet to hothouse trajectory with long lasting and potentially irreversible consequences.

Scientists have identified dozens of loops where warming increases without human's current role. Of course, warming has been triggered by excessive use of fossil fuel, changing land use patterns, industrialization, mining and deforestation etc., but even if we start cutting greenhouse gas emissions, the planet's warming would not stop. For instance, when Arctic ice melts, the white surface area covered by snow recedes, thereby reducing the reflectivity of the Sun rays. If the Sun rays are not reflected, it is going to be absorbed in the earth as well

as water bodies. The planet is bound to be heated up, which causes melting of more ice. Thus, the warming accelerates without any human intervention. Scientists have identified more than a dozen such loops and call it as 'amplifying feedback loops'. The thawing of permafrost and release of stored Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is another such loop. As the emission is accelerated, the planet continues to warm up.

The deforestation and dying forests no longer absorb Carbon dioxide. Large scale wildfires that causes burning of forests make the system net emitter of carbon, as degraded forests continuously lose its carbon sequestration potential. Scientists have identified important forest systems like Amazon as another 'amplifying feedback loop'. The changes in cloud cover that permits more solar radiation to reach earth is another loop. The study paper indicates how individual loops are connected to a broader theory of catastrophic change and sixteen elements are identified as a sure indicator for warming of the planet 'earth', which pushes it to pass a threshold temperature bringing a new state abruptly and permanently. Scientists have named elements as 'tipping elements'.

Among the sixteen elements identified are Greenland and West Antarctic Ice Sheets, Permafrost regions where abrupt thawing begins, Amazon rain forests, Boreal forest die-back, Tropical Coral-reef die off etc. Atlantic Ocean's great overturning currents, which are the conveyer belts of Ocean's water that keeps northern Europe relatively mild is another tipping element identified. The collapse of Atlantic Meridional Circulation

(AMOC) can impact global heat distribution. The tipping elements are inter connected, the collapse of one could trigger the other. "Greenland" is in the eye of storm, which the current US administration is inclined to grab for oil, gas and rare-earth extraction. The disappearance of thick ice sheets from this autonomous island could trigger the disruption of AMOC.

The tipping cascades have potential to drive self-sustaining climate change. If tipping points come at lower temperature, a modest future warming could send earth to 'hothouse'. Global average temperature has already crossed 1.5 degree Celsius in 2024. The planet was warming at the rate of .05 degrees Celsius per decade in mid of twentieth century, which has currently surged to .31 degrees per decade. Though the study has not specified the temperature at which each of the tipping elements flip, but the study says that it is not the reason to delay the precautionary measures.

UN Environment Program, based on the

national pledges of the countries, has assessed that planet is on a trajectory to reach 2.8 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial era by the turn of the century. Atmospheric carbon dioxide has reached 422.5 ppm, 50% higher since the industrialization begun. World leaders are advised to design policies considering the risk factors explained and bring down the anthropogenic pressure on the climate. The warming must be slowed down early and countries emitting greenhouse gases should achieve net zero far too earlier than what they have pledged.

While the countries may have their own compulsions to fight war against each other, can they avoid committing the war crimes such as hitting each other's energy, nuclear and economic infrastructures? Burning explosives, oil & gas, and causing nuclear radiations sends enormous amount of poison in the atmosphere. If any of the tipping element crosses the threshold temperature the humanity would reach 'hothouse' state and that would be a beginning of our end.

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There is only one reality whatever you think it is, it looks like that.

**If you call it time, it is time. If you call it existence, it is existence,
and so on.. Time is immaterial for the path of knowledge**

-Ramana Maharshi



Potential for Tree Planting is Crux along Yettinahole Comprehensive Drinking Water Project, Karnataka

B M T Rajeev

The **Yettinahole Integrated Drinking Water Supply Project** is a major project of Karnataka government's initiative to divert surplus monsoon water (targeting ~24 TMC) from west-flowing streams like Yettinahole, Kadumanehole, Kerihole, and Hongadahalla of the River Netravati in the Western Ghats (WGs) near Sakleshpur (Hassan district) to drought-prone eastern districts such as Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Tumakuru, Ramanagara, Bengaluru Rural, and parts of Chikmagalur and Hassan. It has a target to supply drinking water to ~75 lakh people across thousands of villages/towns and to recharge groundwater by filling hundreds of minor irrigation (MI) tanks.

It is a marvelous civil engineering pride of bring

purest water of the mountainous forest ecosystem of WGs, lifting west flowing water to eastern plains of arid zone where underground water depleted and polluted with arsenic, fluoride and nitrates etc in the middle of Deccan Plateau of Karnataka for drinking...an effort of modern Bhagiratha of the Karnataka.

Cost: Originally ~₹12,912 crore; now revised to over ₹23,251 crore (multiple revisions). The Project execution is by VisvesvarayaJala Nigam Ltd (VJNL).

Timeline: proposed in 2012, approved in 2014; taken up in 2 stages, 1st stage partially inaugurated in 2024, and it is fast track mode.



Pic: Yettinahole integrated drinking water project-with 4 dams across 4 west flowing rivulets with multiple lifts from western aspect to eastern aspect of the WGs- to plains for gravitational flow to the targeted areas.

Key Areas of Operation of the Project:

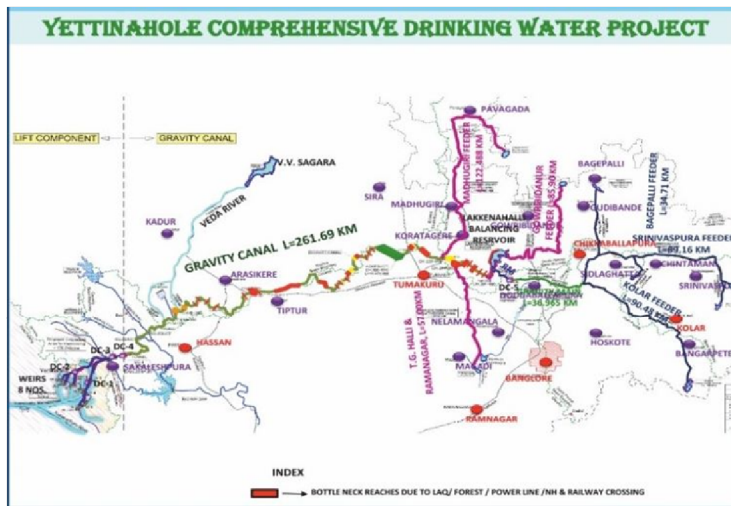
- **Catchment area around the source/weirs** in Sakleshpurtaluk (Hassan district), Western

Ghats- is about 180 Sqkm in the highly precipitous rainfall zone. The region features evergreen forests, coffee/areca plantations, and grasslands.

The enrichment of the existing forest here could help maintain ecological balance, protect water yield, and compensate for any diversion impacts, as the catchment is biodiversity-rich but faces concerns over reduced flows or land changes.

- **Along the conveyance route-** the project includes a long gravity canal (~274 km total alignment from near Sakleshpur eastward through districts like Hassan, Tumakuru, Chikkaballapur, Kolar and Bengaluru) with pipelines/raised aqueducts wherever required.

- **Enroute beneficiary areas and tank surroundings-** the project fills 527+ MI tanks and augments reservoirs (e.g. Vani Vilas Sagar, Hesaraghatta & T.G. Halli). Planting around these tanks, feeder canals, and recharge zones in drought-prone taluks (e.g., Arsikere, Tiptur, Madhugiri, Koratagere, Kolar/Chikkaballapur areas) could enhance local ecology, prevent soil erosion, improve microclimates, and support sustained groundwater benefits from the filled tanks.



Pic: Map showing the comprehensive area of operation of the Yettinahole drinking water project- in the western aspect of WGs and lift of water to eastern side of the WGs and its gravitational run to quench the thirsty of dry zone with further lifts & run on aquaduct, channel & pipes.

The key potential areas for tree planting:

- This project has huge potential areas for tree planting (tree plantation/ afforestation), the project has environmental implications, including forest land diversion (reports cite 266.79 acres of forest land used in Western Ghats/on the way charged to be illegal), leading to compensatory afforestation with penal payment of 5 times net productive value (NPV) of the forest area with 12% interest to get forest clearance and it is under process in MoEFCC. It finally got clearance from the MoEFCC for 111.02 ha of forest lands for diversion

with several conditions on April 1st, 2026.

Leaving the obligation of compensatory afforestation in the new area to be converted as forest.... the implication of the project on the ecosystem in the catchment of project, and along its route of conveyance of water & distribution is enormous which affects its flora & fauna with exposing the earth for erosion; and it needs to be addressed with tree planting and other SMC measures by the project/ state as follows.

- Afforestation-enrichment of the existing forest in the catchment of the project over 180 Sqkm in the evergreen forest areas in the western aspect of the WGs is compulsory to maintain the health of the biodiversity with tree plantings in gaps with local trees species and to guard it against invasive exotic weeds like Lantana, Eupatorium and Senna species etc- which is not covered under compensatory afforestation; it should be treated as the 'Sanctum Sanctorum' of the project-as a lifeline and declared as a 'Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ)' to restrict civil developmental & quarry etc and also to plan for supplementing its source by tapping the water from any of the adjoining small watersheds at same elevation through gravitational pipe line Like Chakra dam to the Sharavati H.E dam...These are a must for this project to ensure continued source of water in the long run.

- Entire length of the canal and its distribution system of the project causes ecological disturbance and it needs to be afforested with Soil & Moisture Conservation (SMC) measures as an environmental safeguard. This is a practical area for planting, on canal bunds, adjacent lands, and rights-of-way often support tree planting for stabilization, erosion control, shade, and groundwater recharge.

The canal length of ~274 km and equal length of distributaries will make about 500 km equal to 500 ha of tree planting on either side or more with additional big area of the excavated earth of the canal for sowing of seeds of Pongamia, Gliricidia, Agave to green/ stabilize it against soil erosion as it is the subsoil from the canals without nutrients.

- About 527 + MI tanks offer foreshore areas for planting to a width of 2-5m with 2- 3 rows of planting depending on the site specific feasibility, it will be a big project of greening the dry zone, and it will be in thousands of hectares.

- NB: Official documents and presentations of the project mention afforestation along the entire length of the canal and its distribution system as an environmental safeguard measure. But work of afforestation taken by the project or entrusting the job to the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) is not visible and no information available with the KFD. This is the crux in many projects of linear area in implementation of the environmental safeguard measures.

Financial Implication for tree planting: The Net Production Value (NPV) of the forest area lost to the project goes to the 'Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management & Planning Authority (CAMPA)' for compensatory afforestation elsewhere exclusively in lieu of the forest land lost for this project. The KFD has no tree planting program along the canal network and no funds are available with it for this job...The projects like this are outside the environment assessment for effective tree planting/greening to enrich the ecology and environment of the region except a concept to do it in the interest of the environment protection.

The responsibility of raising trees, greening the ecosystem disturbed by the project for canals, canal banks, maintenance roads and foreshores around MI tanks to develop greenery, stop soil erosion and increase rain water harvest into underground water table (UGWT) etc rests with the Project/State government. It has a mention in its objective but not implementing it as learnt from the KFD. The catastrophe lies here, where neither the implementing authority-Project nor KFD or the Environment Department & Climate Change take initiative to repair the damage done to the ecosystem in the interest of the flora, fauna and climate of the region.

To address this catastrophe, the VJNL should set aside a budget of more than Rs 1,000 Crore

for implementation environmental safeguarding measures in its project area over 10 years and further maintenance for 5 years to see the trees are planted, developed with SMC and handed over to the PRIs for protection and utility in the above 5 districts or retained with it, for restoration and maintenance of the ecological and climate balance in nature.

The water canal/ tunnel route starts in hilly Western Ghats and crosses semi-arid plains, so planting of suitable native species adapted to each zone (e.g., evergreen/shade trees in the west, drought-resistant in the plains). The planting in the Reserved Forest limits should be left to the jurisdiction territorial forest division for restoration of the disturbed forests along the route of the project and rest of the work entrusted to the Social Forestry wing of the PRI wing.

The art of Silviculture-scientifically recommends native tree species for planting with priority for ecological suitability, biodiversity support, soil stabilization (especially along canal bunds), erosion control, shade provision, and groundwater recharge enhancement. The project spans over two main ecological zones:

- Western Ghats catchment/source area (near Sakleshpur, Hassan district): High-rainfall evergreen/semi-evergreen forests. Focus on moisture-loving, endemic or native evergreen species to maintain water yield, support biodiversity, and fulfill afforestation needs of the area..
- Conveyance route and beneficiary areas (eastern districts like Tumkur, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Bengaluru etc.): Semi-arid/dry deciduous to drought-prone zones. Emphasize drought-tolerant, deep-rooted natives that aid recharge, stabilize tank bunds/canals, and suit lower rainfall.

NB: In arid zones the linear planting should be in pits of 1.00 M3. It should be dug up by scraping and putting aside top soil to a 15cms and putting sub soil towards downstream side as bund to intercept runoff, and planting with tall saplings by lowering the 3 edges of the pit and by using top soil of the pit to the plant without refilling the pit after rains; so that it will continue to collect the runoff and recharge UGWT in every rains for years and boost the tree to grow well with moisture & silt conserved.

Recommended Native Species for Western Ghats Catchment (Sakleshpur/Hassan Area)

These suit high-rainfall, evergreen/semi-evergreen habitats and help preserve the biodiversity-rich source region: *Artocarpusheterophyllus* (Jackfruit), *Mangifera indica* (Mango), *Syzygiumcumini* (Jamun), *Terminaliaspp* (Ajunetc), *Micheliachampaca* (Chempak), and other endemic/high-value options like *Saracaasoca* (Ashoka), various *Hopea*, *Dipterocarpus*, *Vetariaindica*etc. Planting here often involves diverse mixes (50–100 species in some restoration efforts) to mimic natural forests, avoiding monocultures.

Recommended Native Species for Canal Bunds, Tanks foreshores, and Eastern Drought-Prone Areas

The tree species to be resilient to semi-arid conditions, promote groundwater recharge (deep roots allow infiltration), prevent erosion on bunds/canals, and provide multipurpose benefits (fodder, fuel, fruits): *Azadirachta indica* (Neem), *Pongamiapinnata* (Indian Beech tree), *Syzygiumcumini* (Jamun), *Tamarindusindica* (Tamarind), *Dalbergiasissoo* (Sheesham), *Ficus religiosa* (Peepal) or *Ficus benghalensis*/ *Ficus mysorensis*, *Madhucalatifolia* (Muhva), *Meliadubia* (Malabar neem), *Micheliachampaca* (C hempak),

For tank bunds and recharge zones in Kolar/Chikkaballapur/Tumakuru species like Neem, Honge, Jamun, Babhul, Mahogani, Champakaetc are frequently used in community/government drives to boost water tables and prevent siltation. Bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) planted along foreshore areas. These native species outperform exotics; multi-species planting enhances resilience.

Implementation: The Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) which is starved of area for tree planting /afforestation in the- Social Forestry Wing

under PRI (Panchayath Raj Institution) should be entrusted with the responsibility of raising trees along margins of canals/underground pipe line and on the excavated stuff e.g in all the districts/ taluks with suitable support by the VJNL which is implementing the project to furnish the details of length of canal with open cutting/ underground pipe line, and the dumps of the excavated stuff and also the road formed for conveyance and maintenance for tree planting along the line of this project as a community afforestation program to address the ecological implication of the project and the climate change.

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Holding and Implications

The court **dismissed the writ appeal**, confirming the order dated 13.06.2024 passed in W.P.No.6163 of 2021. The Settlement Deed executed by the senior citizen in favour of her son was validly annulled by the competent authority under Section 23(1) of the Senior Citizens Act on the ground of neglect.

The decision affirms that an express condition for maintenance in a property transfer deed is not mandatory under Section 23(1); an implied condition based on love and affection and the factual circumstances suffices to invoke the provision. This interpretation ensures robust

protection for senior citizens against neglect and exploitation in property transfers. No new precedent was set beyond applying established Supreme Court principles to the facts of this case.

Conclusion

Section 23 of the Senior Citizen Act, 2007 is a landmark provision that restores dignity, security, and justice to elderly citizens. It recognizes that property transfers within families are often rooted in trust — and when that trust is broken, the law steps in firmly.

For senior citizens facing neglect after property transfer, **Section 23 is not just a legal provision — it is a lifeline.**

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Pelicans of India

K.Praveen Rao

Pelicans are large water birds belonging to the family Pelecanidae. The word pelican has come from a Greek word pelekan, means axe. These have large beaks and an elastic throat pouch hanging like a hammock from the lower mandible. It is also known as gular pouch. Gular pouch helps in catching the prey which is mostly fish along with some water. The water is drained and the prey engulfed. The upper mandible has a down curved hook at the end. Curved hook stops the fish from escaping. Pelicans are good swimmers and have webbed feet. All their four toes are connected by web. This is called totipalmate. Pelican feet are short and stubby hence not very good for walking on the ground. But the totipalmate feet are excellent for swimming. Though they look bulkier but they can fly because of the air pockets / air sacs present in the skeleton and underneath skin. They have long and broad wings enabling the bird for soaring and gliding flight. The air sacs help the animal in buoyancy in water.

There are 8 different species of pelicans worldwide at present. Though there are just eight species worldwide they are widely found from tropics to temperate zone except in Antarctica. They primarily inhabit warmer parts of the globe. Pelicans are placed in order pelicaniformes in classification to which ibises, spoonbills, herons, bitterns belong. The eight species found worldwide are 1- American white pelican, It is a monotypic species found and breeds in Canada and North America and wintering in Mexico and Central America. 2- Brown Pelican, there are five sub-species of it found in North America, Northern part of South America, Galapagos, Caribbean. 3- Peruvian Pelican, found in South America from Ecuador to Peru. 4- Australian Pelican, It is a monotypic species found in Australia and New

Guinea, Vagrant in New Zealand. 5- Pink backed Pelican, Monotypic found in Africa and Seychelles. Regarding other three species Great-white pelican, Spot-billed Pelican and Dalmatian Pelican a detailed description was given in the following paragraphs. I had the opportunity of watching and photographing five species of pelicans.

These are gregarious birds moving in flocks, hunting in groups and breeding in colonies. Adult pelicans use their bills and wings for display and communication. The breeding colonies are set up where ample supply of fish is available. Pelicans have the ability to soar high and move 100s of kilometers on the thermals to fetch food. Both parents feed their young ones. They thrust and snap the bills to show threatening behaviour and lift and wave their wings to threaten. The young birds are gathered in to groups up to 100 individuals and the parents feed them. Though they are in large flocks, the parents can specifically feed their own chicks.

The eight species of pelicans on their plumage colouration can be divided as white plumaged and brown plumaged. White ones are known to nest on the ground and brown ones on the trees. In India three species of Pelicans are found.

1. Great white pelican
2. Spot-billed pelican
3. Dalmatian pelican

Great-white pelican – Great white pelican is also called Eastern pelican or Rosy pelican or simply White Pelican. It has both breeding and non-breeding range. Great white pelican breeds in South Eastern Europe to Asia and some parts of Africa. Males are larger than females. The colour of the bird is mainly white except on the remiges

or feathers. The primary feathers are black with white shaft at the base and the secondary feathers too are black with white fringe. They have a huge pink and yellow bill. Has a white shaggy crest on the nape. Both males and females look similar but females are smaller than the males. Males have pink face where as females orangish face. Juveniles are brownish in colour. The pelicans of palarctic region are known to migrate during winter. The white pelicans visit northern parts of India during winters. Great white pelicans prefer shallow warm water lakes, ponds etc. They are also known to inhabit brackish waters. These are sociable and form larger flocks. They mainly feed on fish. They are opportunistic foragers and poach the chicks of other birds. They breed in colonies. They congregate in large numbers for nesting. The nests are scrapes on the ground lined by grass, sticks, feathers etc. They lay around 4 eggs, eggs hatch in about a month and the chicks are ready to fledge when they are two to two and half months old.

I had the opportunity to photograph the Great-white pelican in Sur sarovar bird sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh India as well in Lake Naivasha in Kenya.

Spot-billed pelican –The spot-billed pelican or grey pelican is distributed in Southern Asia found in Southern Iran, India and Indonesia. It is a near threatened bird. Their populations are dwindling due to its restricted range and loss of habitat. They lack bright colours unlike other pelicans. They have spots on the upper mandible which is the distinguishing feature. It is a white bird with a grey crest and brownish tail. The gular pouch is pink to purplish in colour with pale spots. Tip of the bill is yellow to orange in colour. Spot-billed pelicans breed only in peninsular India, Sri Lanka and Cambodia. These are colonial breeders and breed along with other water birds like painted storks etc. The nests are placed low on the trees

on the shoreline and near habitations. These birds hunt fish in small flocks. Push fish to shallow areas to catch them. The nests are built with loosely laid sticks on the platform. Lay 3 to 4 eggs. The eggs hatch in about a month.

I photographed Spot-billed pelicans from Ameenpur Lake, in Hyderabad, Telangana and Ranganthittu bird sanctuary in Karnataka.

Dalmatian Pelican – Dalmatian pelican also known as curly headed pelican. It is near threatened bird according to the IUCN classification of red data book. It is monotypic means it has no other subspecies and in their entire distribution range their appearance look same. It is the largest member of the pelican family. It is a medium distance migrant. Found between Eastern Mediterranean to Taiwan strait and Persian Gulf to Siberia. It migrates between northern breeding and southern wintering grounds. The European populations are short distance migrants whereas the Asian Populations migrate longer distances. The Asian populations migrate from Southern Russia where they breed in summers to Iran, Indian sub- continent, Sri Lanka, Nepal for wintering. The Mongolian population follow different route to China and Taiwan strait. Similar to other pelicans it is mainly a fish-eating bird. Males are larger than females. Its pale iris, clean bill with no spots, Curly nape, gray legs are the distinguishing features from Great white pelican and Spot billed pelican. In breeding plumage, the gular pouch becomes orange in colour. They nest in small groups on the reed beds or on small islands. The nest is a pile of grasses, reeds, sticks and feathers. Lay 2 to 4 eggs which hatch in about a month's time. They fledge in about 3 months. The young ones sexually mature in 3 to 4 years.

I could capture the beauty of Dalmatian Pelicans from Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, in Agra Uttar Pradesh, India.

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High Court orders removal of *Prosopis juliflora* from Forest areas

Dr.Akula Kishan

Introduction

Prosopis juliflora was introduced into the Indian sub-continent in Sind province (Pakistan) in 1877 from South America, and later on it was introduced into many dry regions of India. This species has since become naturalized in the arid and semi-arid parts of the country. With its wide adaptability to arid environments and its drought and disease tolerance, it has virtually exceeded all indigenous species in covering the arid and semi-arid tract. It forms thickets on marginal lands, sandy, rocky and gravelly wastelands and alongside roads and railways, and is now one of the major sources of fuelwood to the landless and poor populations. In Tamilnadu, Haryana, Gujarat and Karnataka, farmers raise *P. juliflora* hedges along field boundaries. Its presence all over the area has reduced the threat to important indigenous tree species like *P. cineraria*, *Acacia nilotica* and *A. senegal*, and today it is one of the most important species for desert reclamation.

Aggressive invasion of *P.juliflora* results in suppression of native bio-diversity and species richness of habitats such as pastures, woodlands and arable lands. In water catchment reservoirs the weed causes increased evapo-transpiration loss of water and increased siltation leading to human encroachment. By forming impenetrable thickets, they not only smother native vegetation but also hinder some primary production sectors. Control or eradication is a very difficult process.

Orders of Hon'ble High Court of Madras

The High Court of Madras has taken up the matter of invasion of *Prosopis* in forest areas in Tamil Nadu since the year 2013. In their orders dated

18.03.2026 in the case of Vaiko and others vs The Chief Secretary (W.P.(MD) Nos.16485 of 2015 & 1499 of 2015 & W.P.no.3075 of 2017) , has summarized the previous orders of the Court and issued orders as follows:

1. In India, it is stated that even the Forest Department and other departments had spread its seeds through aerial seeding, using helicopters and aircraft, etc. Though initially it served the purpose of providing firewood to people including for industrial fuel, brick kilns, charcoal industry etc., it has proven to be a disaster for our environment and ecology. First, the landscapes- whether fertile lands, grasslands, or the mossy and spongy earth of forests- are completely destroyed, and the land beneath these trees is transformed into barren ground, entirely devoid of any flora or fauna. Second, it completely displaces the native flora. In most Indian landscapes, the variety of Indian trees and plants has given way to this fittest survivor, and it now enjoys a monopoly. Third, it results in the depletion of the groundwater table and significantly reduced moisture levels in areas infested, thereby directly impacting biodiversity, leading to man-animal conflict, adding to climate change and posing other indirect risks to the environment. It is an invasive species to be eradicated in India. More specifically, within the State of Tamil Nadu, which has declared its policy on this invasive species vide G.O.(Ms)No.123 dated 13.07.2022 (Tamil Nadu Policy on Invasive Plants and Ecological Restoration - TNPIPER).

2. On 10.01.2017, a Division Bench of the Court issued further directions to the Principal District Judges of 13 Districts to inspect the limits of the District headquarters and submit a report on the

removal of *Prosopis juliflora* trees. They were also empowered to issue strict directions to all the Tahsildars, Revenue Inspectors and Village Administrative Officers in their Districts to remove these trees on or before 31.01.2017.

3. On 31.01.2017, the same Hon'ble Division Bench issued directions to the Commissioners of various Corporations, Municipalities, etc., to further direct the owners of the private lands to remove the trees within the stipulated period. If the owners of the private lands refused to remove them, the authorities were directed to remove the trees at the cost of the Government and recover the cost from private owners.

4. On 11.05.2017, the Hon'ble Full Bench of the Court in *V.Meganathan Vs Chief Secretary and Ors* (W.P.no.10614 of 2017) took up the issue and held that the seemaikaruvelam (*Prosopis juliflora*) trees had to be removed in a scientific manner, even while taking alternative steps to ensure ecological balance. The Full Bench directed the formation of a committee to make a scientific study of the ill effects of the seemaikaruvelam trees, as well as their utility, and to make recommendations with regard to their removal.

5. The Full Bench directed the reports on action taken be placed before the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur, for expert opinion, and the Government of Tamil Nadu was directed to coordinate the process. On 02.02.2022, after receipt of the final expert report stating that the species is invasive and harmful to the environment and that it has to be eradicated, the Hon'ble Full Bench directed the State Government to formulate a scheme for the removal of *Prosopis juliflora* from the State of Tamil Nadu, to be executed under the supervision of the District Collectors.

6. The Hon'ble Court issued about (34) directions to various implementing agencies numbering (136) respondents, for implementation of directions, few

important directions are as follows:

a) As per TNPIPER, *Prosopis juliflora*, in all its forms—whether trees, plants, or roots—shall be mechanically uprooted, removed, and disposed of from its location. Wherever possible, native species shall be planted, cared for, and grown, and the project shall be titled "sezhumaikaruvoolum"

b) In this regard, the District Collectors will be empowered to issue necessary directions to all officials of the line Departments, including,

(i) the Forest Department;

(ii) the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department;

(iii) the Public Works Department;

(iv) the Water Resources Department;

(v) the Municipal Administration and Local Administration Department;

(vi) the Central Government, the Railways or any other authority or

(vii) public sector undertaking sponsored and controlled by the Central Government

(viii) National and State Highways and H.R. & C.E. Departments; and

(ix) To such other person or authority.

c) The Secretary to Government, Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of Tamil Nadu, shall create a webpage on their website or an exclusive webpage for the project, and maintain a dashboard with all details that the Collectors may provide from time to time. It shall periodically upload information on removal, the auction, the quantity removed, the number of saplings replanted, and the areas declared *Prosopis juliflora*-free.

d) A mobile phone number shall be maintained by the Secretary to Government, Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, for the project and linked to all popular social media apps such as WhatsApp, Arattai, X, Instagram,

Facebook, etc. Any person may post a picture of SeemaiKaruvalem trees or plants with geotagging or by providing additional details of the location, and it shall be duly brought to the notice of the appropriate Collector. The social media accounts may also be managed by officials, who will be free to additionally utilize or engage the services of student volunteers or interns for this purpose. After removal, pictures of planting native species and their growth shall also be uploaded periodically.

e) Since the task of supervising, ensuring, and issuing localized guidelines while safeguarding other species and the environment is significant, and to ensure the eradication of *Proposis juliflora* occurs seamlessly within a specified timeframe and the project is effectively executed, we appoint the Special Committee consisting of two Hon'ble Retired Judges of this Court: Hon'ble Justice A.Selvam to supervise the action in the Southern Districts under the jurisdiction of the Madurai Bench of the High Court, and Hon'ble Justice V.Bharathidasan to supervise the action in the Northern Districts under the jurisdiction of the Principal Bench. Arrangements for their travel shall be made by the Government of Tamil Nadu/ District Administration. They shall also be paid an initial remuneration of Rs.3,00,000/-, with further remuneration to be fixed by this Court.

f) The Secretaries of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) shall assist the respective special committee within their jurisdiction. The Secretary of DLSA will coordinate with the District Collector and oversee the planning of actions in each District. They shall also report to the Hon'ble Special Committee members in charge of their respective districts where work is ongoing. The Special Committee shall supervise, inspect, and have the authority to issue guidelines specific to any local

area. They shall also initially examine and resolve complaints regarding the removal of any trees other than *Prosopis juliflora*, field abandonment, or other issues; and may also suggest further directions for this Court to consider.

g) As part of Corporate Social Responsibility, Companies and private entities shall also participate, and any volunteering entity may offer to sponsor the removal, maintenance, and replanting of native saplings in any specific area, village, block, district, etc., and accordingly, their services shall be utilised by the District Collectors.

h) Regarding the removal of *Prosopis juliflora* within the forests, this shall be carried out solely by the forest department through auctioning, with priority given to the District Forest Officers in the respective areas. Any third party entry into the forest will be restricted and regulated by them. The Forest Department, the Public Works Department, and the Irrigation Department will continue to remove invasive species from the forests and water bodies; however, they must also follow any further directions issued by the District Collectors to expedite the process.

Conclusion

The initiative taken by the High Court of Madras is laudable, and the Court has planned to minute level of implementation, with involvement of judicial officers for supervision. The Court has taken upon itself the task of periodical monitoring of the progress of removal of *Prosopis juliflora* from the forest areas as well as non-forest areas in the State of Tamil Nadu. The efforts being made can be clubbed with physical uprooting *Lantana* also, to eradicate another major invasive species. The efforts being made in Tamil Nadu can be emulated in other States also.

The author is a retired IFS officer/CF, Telangana cadre. He authored many books on Forest Act and Allied Acts, the Forest Code and drafted various amendments. He is a practicing advocate in APTG High Courts. M-70930 06261.



The Legacy of **POTTIAL JAGIR**

K. Buchiram Reddy

Pottial village in Adilabad district (now in Mancherial district) was granted as a Khairatilnam (Jagir as a charity) in 1888 A.D retaining ¼ th income as Government's share. The original grantee was one Jangam Bhat, succeeded by Gopaiah and then by Srirambhotla Ramanna. Jagir is understood as "assignment of all Government revenue on any tract of land to a family or individual for meritorious service"; but this jagir was granted as a charity.

Pottial jagir had forest area over an extent of about Acs. 1109. It was never subjected to any systematic management. An attempt was made in the past to divide the area into five blocks and give the area on five year lease; the contractor was required to work and extract timber in one block every year against the five blocks. This would have facilitated sharing the revenue at 3/4th by the Jagirdar and 1/4th by the Government. It did not happen. Then it was proposed to sell the whole area and share the sale proceeds between the Jagirdar and the Government. In fact, it was sold for a sum of Rs. 35,500/- But that gave rise to litigation due to the sale held by the Jagirdar first and then by the Forest Department.

In the meantime all the jagirs in the State of Hyderabad were abolished by The Hyderabad Abolition of Jagirs Regulation in 1949. The Ex-Jagirdar Rambhatla Ramanna wanted to pay in cash 1/4th Share of the Government and avail of the timber in the whole area. His petition to this effect to the CCF was rejected. He was told that he would be entitled to receive compensation under The Jagirs Abolition Regulation. Aggrieved by this reply of the CCF, the Ex-Jagirdar filed appeal to the Government. The appeal was rejected by the Minister for Forests Sri V.B. Raju. An application

was then made to the Minister for Revenue. Sri K.V. Ranga Reddy, who passed an order on 17.07.1952 directing the department to 3/4th share of the valuation of the forest to the Ex-Jagirdar amounting to Rs. 24,254/- There was arival claim and therefore the amount could not be disbursed to any of the claimants.

Following the abolition of the jagir, the forest of an extent of Acs. 1,051 was notified in 1951 as Protected Forest.

The Government rejected the claim of the Ex-Jagirdar and issued order in 1962. Sri `Rambhotla Ramanna, the Ex-Jagirdar continued to make representations to the Government. On his representation, the Government allowed the Ex-Jagirdar, vide G.O.Ms. No. 131 dated 24.01.1067 to fell and avail of the timber to the extent of 3/4thshare in area of Acs. 966. This order was passed when Sri N. Chenchurama Naidu was the Forest Minister. Under the orders of the Government, the Ex-Jagirdar had cut and carried away timber worth Rs. 58,900/-

On serious allegation of 'corruption' and 'abuse of authority', against the Forest Minister Sri N. Chenchurama Naidu, the Government revoked its order issued in G.O.No 131 dated 24.01.1967 after issuing notice to the ex-jagirdar. Against this order, Srirambhotla Ramanna filed writ petition which was dismissed on 20.02.1970. The matter was then carried in appeal before the Supreme Court. The Honorable Supreme Court, while hearing the appeal, passed an interim order on 19.08.1980 directing the appellant to the Jagir Administrator for determination of Commutation amount. The Jagir administrator held that the

commutation sum amounting to I.G Rs. 5,075 was determined and paid to the Jagirdar and no particulars of forest revenue were available to revise the commutation. Against the order of the Jagir Administrator an appeal was filed before the Commissioner, Survey, Settlement and Land Records.

The commissioner, S.S & L.R fixed a date of hearing on the appeal. The appellant through the G.P.A. T.V. Ramanjaneya Rao was represented by an Advocate. Government Pleader appeared for the Jagir Administrator, and I represented the Chief Conservator of Forests. By a detailed petition I questioned the maintainability of the appeal. The Commissioner SS & LR decided otherwise. While participating in the enquiry, I advanced arguments on behalf of the Forest Department. An order was passed on 03.07.1981 by the Commissioner Sri B.R.K Sastry, IAS. Impressed with my arguments and presentation of the case, the commissioner appreciated my analytical approach in the order itself and he followed it up by a D.O. letter to the CCF Sri Munawar Hussain. The contents of the letter, in toto, are reproduced here:

"I have great pleasure in enclosing a copy of judgment of the Court of Commissioner, Survey Settlement and Land Records in case No. NA1/117/81 dated 03.07.1981 and in inviting your attention to the last paragraph therein. I am writing this letter bringing this to your notice lest the communication of the judgment in the ordinary course may not be brought to your notice.

Your officer Sri Buchiram Reddy did a masterly study of this tangled case with litigation spread over nearly a decade and half in various forums and helped me in understanding the complexities and niceties of the case. He was able to bring out the points where the Jagirdar was himself

responsible for any loss sustained by him and here he was put to loss due to circumstances beyond his control in the non-realization of receipts of choubina. Your officer while bringing out the true aspects of justice also literally fought every inch to protect the Government interest while the opposite side naturally gave stiff fight in order to grab as much as possible. It is refreshing and pleasant for me to note that a Government officer took so much pains to protect the Government interest and keep the party at bay. I am sure you will convey my appreciation in a suitable form to him and help him in securing a rapid advancement in his career promotion."

The appeal was disposed off by the Commissioner by remanding the case to the Jagir Administrator and the appellant was directed to submit data regarding the forest revenue. The Jagir Administrator reiterated that since there is no data on the forest revenue separately, the commutation was determined on the available figures of jagir revenue and commutation so determined was final.

The matter fell for consideration again before a Division Bench of the Supreme Court consisting of D.A. Desai, Amarendra Nath Sen and R.B. Misra, JJ. Their Lordships felt annoyed with the 'obduracy and obstinacy' of Jagir Administrator. Commenting on his attitude their Lordships said, 'his action is bordering on contempt'. As the matter had been pending for a long time, the court proceeded to dispose of the appeal after hearing arguments of both parties. The appeal was allowed and it was ordered to pay a sum of Rs. 1,35,000/- to the appellant as the full and final settlement of the claim. The jagir forest was saved from further exploitation.

Source: Autobiography of the Author.

Author is a former Dy.C.Fand retired as Joint Director,ACB AP , M-9666097788



Green Quiz – MAY 2026

Quiz Master: Dr. K. Tirupataiah

1. What is the name of the Eagle deployed by the Indian Army to detect and destroy 'drones' that normal radars cannot detect?
2. It is a multi-national mechanism to govern trade of 'conflict diamonds'. What is its name?
3. This Jesuit father is probably the 'father of tissue culture' in India. Name him.
4. Which is Asia's largest integrated water transport system?
5. The name of this Himalayan Mountain in Tibetan means 'five treasures'. What is its popular name?
6. Originally from South America, this creature's two words mean something used as a subject of experiment. Name it.
7. Which popular tourist destination in East Asia celebrates 'Nyepi' a day of contemplative silence when people including tourists stay indoors, no lights lit at night?
8. By what name is the month-long spring festival in Uttarakhand called?
9. At which place in India was the Great Indian Bustard produced successfully for the first time using Artificial Insemination?
10. What does Hazard x Exposure x Vulnerability yield?

For School Students

1. Which is the only country whose currency is directly pegged to the Indian rupee at parity (1:1)?
2. This product of Red sanders, a pair of dolls, is very popular. What are their names?
3. What is the name of the Cat that was employed at 10 Downing Street to deal with a rodent problem?
4. On which day of a month is it "no bag day" in Telangana schools?
5. What is a four-dimensional hypercube called?

Answers on page no :58

All the greatest things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honour, duty, mercy, hope...

-Winston Churchill

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a Tree a long time ago

-Warren buffett



LEGAL NOTES

Sri. K. Buchiram Reddy

Kolichelimi Sai Rohit & Five Ors Vs. The State of Telangana & Four Ors

(Forest Officers are not competent to investigate offences punishable under the Indian Penal Code)

The petitioners in W.P. No. 29910 of 2022 challenged the action taken against them for trespass into Mannanur Tiger Reserve on 27.03.2022 and manhandling Turupinti Raheem at the Base Camp Check Post and were said to be under the influence of alcohol. They were taken to Durvasula Check Post. A car bearing No AP 09 CC 9708 used by the petitioners was found there.

The Range Officer, Mannanur, after ascertaining the facts, conducted panchanama and issued Preliminary Offence Report for offences under Sections 27 and 56 of the Wildlife Protection Act and Section 351 read with sections 332 and 333 of the Indian Penal Code.

It is submitted by the Counsel for the petitioners that the panchanama dated 27.03.2022, the ingredients of the alleged offences are not applicable to the petitioners. The forest officers are not competent to investigate offences punishable under the IPC. He quoted rulings of the Supreme Court, Madhya Pradesh High Court and Karnataka High Court.

The Learned Government Pleader submitted

that in so far as offences under the Wildlife Protection Act are concerned, forest officers can take appropriate action and also deal with other offences revealed in the course of investigation under the Wildlife Protection Act.

The matter was heard by The Hon'ble Justice J. Sreenivasa Rao. His Lordship made a good analysis of the matter in the light of the several rulings and concluded that proceedings for the offences under IPC are liable to be quashed. It is ordered that proceedings in POR No.04 of 2022 dated 28.03.2022 are quashed to the extent of offences under sections 351 read with 332 and 333 of the IPC. In respect of the offences under sections 27 and 56 of the Wildlife Protection Act, the court was not inclined to quash the proceedings. It is made clear that the order of the court will not preclude the forest officials to work out their remedies in accordance with law in so far as the penal offences under the IPC, if so they are aggrieved. In the result the writ petition is allowed in part.

Source: Judgment dated 06.01.2026
K.B.R. Reddy

The author is Dy.C.F (Rtd). He is on Phone 966 609 7788; and E-mail ID ; keesrabuchiram@gmail.com

Answers to Green Quiz: 1.Arjun,2.Kimberly Process, 3.Father Leo D'Souza, 4.The Cochi Water Metro,5. Kanchenjunga, 6.Guinea Pig, 7.Bali, Indonesia, 8.Phool Dei, 9. Ram Devara Breeding center, Pokhran, Rajasthan, 10. Disaster Risk Index.

For School Students: 1.Bhutan, 2. Raja and Rani, 3. Larry (designation of Chief Mouser to the cabinet), 4. Third Saturday, 5. Tesseract



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Scarlet finch (*Carpodacus sipahi*)

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