

## CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF TIGERS IN TIGER RESERVES

### Highlights

- *There were wide gaps between the financial projections made in the Management Plans and the Annual Plans of Operations and the actual release of funds by the Project Tiger Directorate and the State Government. (Para 4.3)*
- *As per the decision of the Special Task Force in 1972, Tiger Reserves should consist of a sizeable core area and a buffer zone around the core. These requirements were not met in many Tiger Reserves. Most of the Tiger Reserves do not have a designated, functional buffer zone, which is essential for redressing the park-people interface problems and to elicit local public support for conservation. (Para 6.1, 6.1.1)*
- *Out of the six new Tiger Reserves approved for creation by the Government in the IX Plan, only four were created. (Para 6.1.3)*
- *Since tiger population breeds well and grows rapidly in habitats that are without disturbance, 64,951 families including 17,650 families living in the core areas were to be relocated outside the Tiger Reserves. Relocation of 64,951 families needs Rs 11,041 crore against which only Rs 10.50 crore was provided in the X Plan. (Para 6.2.1)*
- *Though directives regarding computation of visitor carrying capacity had been issued, many Tiger Reserves have unregulated tourism. Very little effort has gone in for recycling the tourism receipts to the stakeholder host communities. (Para 6.5.2, 6.5.3)*
- *Though the need for a network of corridors connecting the Tiger Reserves and the adjacent forest areas, to enable tigers to migrate through the corridors was recognized in 1985, there is slow progress in the efforts for creation of the corridors. (Para 7.5)*
- *Irregularities involving Rs 12.06 crore were noticed under the village eco-development component in Pench, Buxa, Gir and Nagarhole. (Para 7.6.2.1, 7.6.2.2)*
- *Funds of Rs 13.90 crore accumulated under Village Development Fund in Buxa, Ranthambore, Nagarhole and Periyar were not utilized for post project sustainability. Besides there was short realization of Village Development Fund of Rs 89 lakh at Nagarhole (Para 7.6.2.4)*

- *Even after more than three decades of Project Tiger, the research activities in various Tiger Reserves were adversely impacted by lack of requisite laboratories or research officers. (Para 7.7)*
- *Protection measures in the Tiger Reserves were weak due to absence of measures to combat poaching, poor communication network, inadequate provision of arms and ammunition, deficiencies in creation of strike force, poor intelligence gathering, inadequate patrolling camps and tardy progress in concluding the cases of wildlife crimes. As a result, poaching of tigers continued and touched an annual level of 22 over a period of six years. (Para 8,8.1.1 to 8.1.5 and 8.3.1)*
- *Most of the reserves suffer from deployment of aged field staff, which has adversely affected the protection efforts. (Para 8.3.3.2)*
- *MoEF had not taken any action to strengthen the organizational structure of the Project Tiger Directorate in as much as against 38 posts identified in the initial project report in 1972, it was functioning with only seven personnel against the sanctioned strength of 13 posts as of May 2006. (Para 8.4)*
- *The watch over majority of exit/ entry points at airports, seaports, land ports and check posts was inadequate to monitor the illegal passage of wildlife and wildlife products through these points. (Para 8.5.3.3)*
- *The Steering Committee, the Apex body which reviews the progress of the Project Tiger met only four times during 1997-2006, as against 18 meetings required to be held at an interval of six months. (Para 9.1.1)*
- *The system of watching the receipt of returns regarding tiger estimation from the reserves and the compilation of figures at the Project Directorate was poor. (Para 9.2.1.2)*
- *The concurrent monitoring mechanism for the assessment of the effectiveness of the management plan and its various components at the various Tiger Reserves by the Project Directorate was completely derailed due to non-receipt of the monthly progress/summary reports and the quarterly, half yearly and annual reports from most of the Tiger Reserves. (Para 9.3)*
- *In the fifteen Tiger Reserves created upto 1984, the total number of tigers increased from 1121 in 1984 to only 1141 in 2001-02, a rate of increase which shows the ineffectiveness of the measures taken by Project Tiger authorities to attain a viable tiger population. During the same period, the overall tiger population in the country declined from 3623 to 2906. The Project Tiger authorities have not even developed any accepted norms for sustaining a viable tiger population. (Para 10)*