

## Chapter 11

### Human Resource Management

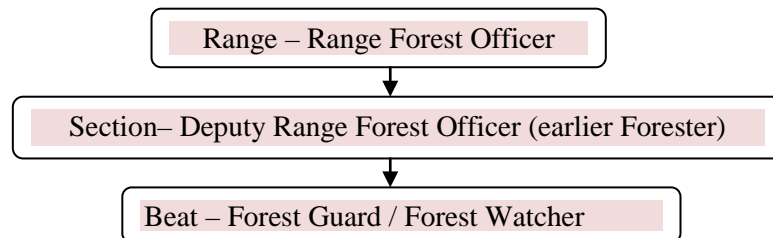
#### 11.1 Human Resources, supply of arms and wireless systems

Karnataka ranks sixth in terms of coverage of forest area in India, having an area of 36,421 sq km under forest cover. Management of such vast areas of forest requires trained, qualified, adequate manpower with necessary supporting equipments. Besides, facilities must be provided for the field staff for effective protection of the area. Incentives and awards inspire the staff for more efficient discharge of duties. Shortcomings noticed in manpower management, training, arms and ammunition of the department are discussed below.

#### Administrative management of Forest area

The forest area is divided into Beats, Sections, Ranges and Divisions for better management. The hierarchy of the field staff of the Forest Department responsible for its management is as shown in the **Chart 11.1** below:

**Chart 11.1 Hierarchy of the field staff**



The officials in charge of the Section and Beat are called as front line staff as they are the ground staff responsible for conservation and protection of forests.

#### 11.2 Forest area per personnel

For effective management of forest areas, adequate front line staff is essential. Scrutiny of records revealed that there were vacancies in these cadres which were not filled up. The sanctioned strength and vacancy position during 2015-16 in respect of the front line staff are as given in the following **Table 11.1**:

**Table 11.1: Vacancy position in Front line Staff**

Cadre	Sanctioned strength	Vacancy	Percentage
DRFO	206	79	38
Forest Guard	580	181	31
Forest Watcher	350	85	24

(Source: Details furnished by the Department)

It was observed that up to 40 *per cent* vacancies in the front line staff were noticed in Malai Mahadeswara and Talacauvery WLS. In addition, it was observed that no norms existed for deploying these front line personnel. As a result the number of sanctioned posts for different Protected Areas was different irrespective of their size as evident from **Table 11.2**:

**Table 11.2: Front line personnel per square kilometre of forests in Protected Areas**

Protected Area	Area in sq km	Total sanctioned strength of front line staff	Forest area per personnel Sanctioned (sq km)	Working strength as of March 2016	Forest area per personnel – working as of March 2016 (sq km)
Bandipura TR	872.240	233	4	158	6
Bhadra TR	500.160	107	5	88	6
BRT Tiger Reserve	539.520	112	5	79	7
Dandeli Anshi TR	1,303.740	138	9	99	13
Nagarahole TR	643.390	221	3	155	4
Brahmagiri WLS	181.290	25	7	14	13
Cauvery WLS	1,027.530	63	16	42	24
Kudremukh NP	600.570	60	10	39	15
MM WLS	906.187	85	11	49	18
Mookambika WLS	370.370	16	23	13	28
Pushpagiri WLS	102.920	9	11	8	13
Sharavathi WLS	431.230	14	31	14	31
Someshwara WLS	314.250	30	10	21	15
Talacauvery WLS	105.590	9	12	5	21
Total	7,898.987	1,122		784	

(Source: Details furnished by the Department)

As may be seen, while each of the sanctioned front line staff had an area of three to nine sq km in the Tiger Reserves for managing and patrolling, the per personnel forest area ranged between seven to 31 sq km in other non Tiger Reserve Protected Areas. In addition, it was observed that in BRT Tiger Reserve with an area of 539.52 sq km had a sanctioned strength of 112 front line staff while Kudremukh National Park with 600.57 sq km area had only 60 front line staff which shows a stark difference in allocating manpower.

Since front line staffs are the foot soldiers of forests and their proper management ensures better protection of the forests, adequate manpower is necessary for all the Protected Areas as these are home to several endangered and endemic species. Therefore it becomes necessary to evolve rational norm for deployment of front line staff in these Protected Areas. However, though a proposal has been submitted to Government for fixing the beat area at 10 sq km and section area at 30 sq km, the same has not been approved so far.

#### **Box No. 6**

##### **Positive Aspects**

##### **Hardship Allowance**

**Government in order dated 04.05.2016 has sanctioned a Hardship Allowance ranging from ₹ 2000 to ₹ 3500 per month to all the officers / staff working in Wildlife Divisions in the cadres of Group D Employees, Forest Guard, Deputy Range Forest Officer and Range Forest Officers with immediate effect. Considering the locations and challenges faced by these staff, the sanction of Hardship Allowance would not only work as compensatory allowance but also act as motivating factor in lower cadres to work in these difficult terrains.**

### 11.3 Utilisation of Special Tiger Protection Force

A “Special Tiger Protection Force” (STPF) has been sanctioned and is in place for Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserves. This elite Force, was to be raised, armed and deployed by the States having Tiger Reserve as a specialized force for tiger protection. STPF has a total strength of 112 members with one Assistant Conservator of Forests, three RFOs, 18 DRFOs, 63 Guards and 27 Forest Watchers. On scrutiny of current position, it was observed that out of 112 posts sanctioned, 108 were filled up. However, six had resigned / were absent and 31 personnel were deputed for office works in Bandipur and Nagarahole TRs. Thus, the personnel currently working on purely STPF related works has effectively come down to 71 against 112 posts sanctioned.

This Force was to be armed with state-of-the-art arms like 5.56 mm Rifles, carbine 9 mm IAIDP, *etc.* It was, however, observed that these were not procured for the STPF. On the other hand, 4 rifles had been issued to STPF from the arms supplied to the Reserve. As such, STPF has not been armed as intended.

The duties of STPF are to collect and analyse past crime data, intelligence details in respect of vulnerable areas / villages and offenders, and data on illegal / legal fire arm details, as well as patrol the high risk areas of the Reserve, participate in anti-snare operations, detect illegal drawing of power for energising the fence around the agricultural fields, map areas vulnerable for straying of wildlife in the human dominated landscape, handle the straying cases of tigers / leopards, monsoon patrolling, *etc.* However though the force is in position since 2011-12, there has been persistent high number of instances of Human Wildlife Conflicts in the two Reserves (7,841 for Bandipur TR and 7,067 for Nagarahole TR), death of elephants due to gunshots (four instances), instances of electrocution (11 elephants) and death of tigers due to poisoning (two cases). In addition to STPF personnel, special monsoon patrolling was taken up at a cost of ₹ 81.03 lakh at Bandipur TR during the period 2011-16. All these facts indicate that STPF is not being utilised effectively. Also, Nagarahole TR recorded the highest number of poaching cases amongst the Tiger Reserves in the State during the period 2011-16 as brought out in **Paragraph 7.1** and has been consistently recording poaching cases in the last five years.

We also observed that the STPF, which was divided into three platoons consisting of 13 teams of four members each, was not provided with vehicles for carrying out their assigned tasks. Further, the periodical reports required to be furnished by the Field Director were also not furnished.

As a result, the STPF though officially in place, is not working as a Tiger Protection Force since over 25 *per cent* of the staff was deputed for other duties and arms as required were not procured and provided. The expected benefits from continued deployment of STPF, which should have by its presence and professional approach identified the problematic areas of the Reserve, as well as proposed and implemented strategies for better co-operation between the Department and locals, do not seem to be happening

as could be seen from the continued instances of Human Wildlife Conflicts, poisoning of tigers / leopards, electrocution of elephants and killing of elephants by gunshots as aforesaid.

#### 11.4 Status of arms

Arms and ammunitions are very vital for management of Protected Areas as they would be handy for countering the armed attacks of poachers and other offenders in addition to safeguarding against sudden attacks of wild animals. Since the protection works are similar to policing, functional and adequate arms would therefore be required for the Protected Areas.

We observed that no need analysis was done in the first place for assessing the requirement of arms, in the absence of which it could not be ensured whether adequate arms were in place. Further, the details of arms and ammunitions supplied to different Wildlife Divisions for management of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries and their status have been abstracted at **Table 11.3** below:

**Table 11.3: Status of arms in Protected Areas**

Protected Area	Double Bored Barrel Gun		Slide action guns		0.315 Rifles		Total	
	No.	In Working condition	No.	In Working condition	No.	In Working condition	No.	In Working condition
Bhadra TR	22	12	30	29	6	6	58	47
BRT TR*	52	17	26	8	24	2	102	27
Cauvery WLS	32	26	12	1	10	7	54	34
Kudremukh NP	15	14	4	4	10	10	29	28
MM Hills WLS	37	27	21	18	25	16	83	61
Mookambika	4	2	1	1	1	1	6	4
Nagarahole TR	40	31	0	0	16	9	56	40
Pushpagiri WLS	2	0	1	1	2	0	5	1
Someshwara WLS	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	2
Talacauvery WLS	2	1	1	0	2	0	5	1
Total (% working)	207	130 (63)	97	63(65)	97	52(54)	401	245(62)

(\*does not include K Gudi Range as the working status of arms was not furnished)

(Source: Details furnished by Karnataka Forest Department)

As could be seen, out of 401 arms supplied to 10 Protected Areas, 216 arms (54 per cent) were with three Tiger Reserves while the balance 185 was with seven non-TR Protected Areas. Amongst Tiger Reserves, BRT had the highest number (74 per cent) of non-functional arms. Amongst other PAs, Malai Mahadeswara and Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuaries were supplied with more arms and also accounted for maximum number of non-functional arms. Since Malai Mahadeswara Sanctuary accounted for maximum number of poaching cases during the last five years, it would be necessary to ensure that at least all the arms supplied present were in working condition for effective protection. However, 27 per cent of the firearms in MM WLS were non-functional.

In addition, two Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Madikeri Division, Pushpagiri and Talacauvery, had only one functional gun against five supplied. In view of the rampant HWCs in Madikeri region, the absence of working arms would always be an impediment in taking effective protection measures in this region. Further, in the absence of any need analysis, it could not even be assured whether the number of guns provided overall was adequate for their purposes or not.

### 11.5 Position of wireless equipments

Wireless is a communication network established in all the Forest Divisions for effective all weather communication amongst the staff. The different wireless equipments are Static sets, Mobile sets, Wallkie Talkies, Repeaters, chargers for Repeaters, *etc.* A wireless network to be effective requires that all the units / equipments are functional and not under repair.

The status of wireless equipments in the sampled PAs has been abstracted in **Table 11.4** below:

**Table 11.4: Details and status of wireless equipments supplied to Protected Areas**

Protected Area	Static sets		Walky Talky		Mobile sets		Total instruments		Repeater	
	No.	In Working condition	No.	In Working condition	No.	In Working condition	No.	In Working condition	No.	In working condition
Bandipur TR	22	22	184	184	24	24	230	230	--	--
Bhadra TR	70	60	115	92	9	9	194	161	4	4
Brahmagiri WLS	2	2	13	10	0	0	15	12	2	1
BRT TR *	13	3	88	8	11	5	101	86	2	1
Cauvery WLS	22	17	82	60	8	6	112	83	2	1
Dandeli Anshi TR	26	26	97	55	8	8	152	94	3	3
Kudremukh NP	8	8	36	32	3	3	47	43	2	1
MM Hills WLS	10	8	94	19	6	6	110	33	2	2
Mookambika WLS	1	1	8	8	1	1	10	10	--	--
Nagarahole TR	37	32	122	68	15	15	119	102	0	0
Pushpagiri WLS	3	2	17	10	1	1	21	13	2	2
Sharavathy WLS	2	2	10	10	2	2	14	14	1	1
Someshwara WLS	1	1	4	4	1	1	6	6	--	--
Talacauvery WLS	1	1	9	5	1	1	11	7	1	1
Total ( % working)	218	185 (85)	879	565 (64)	90	82 (91)	1187	832 (70)	21	17 (81)

(\*does not include K Gudi Range as the working status of equipments was not furnished)

(Source: Details furnished by the Department)

As against the total number of 1187 wireless instruments supplied, 832 (70 per cent) were in working condition. Further, it was also observed that:

- ❖ Only four Protected Areas *viz.*, Bandipur National Park, and Someshwara, Sharavathi and Mookambika Sanctuaries had 100 per cent functional wireless instruments. One of the repeaters in Kudremukh Division which covers three Protected Areas was non-functional during 2015-16.
- ❖ In Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve, the wireless network was not functional during 2012-13 and 2015-16.

We observed that in most of the PAs the batteries of wireless sets were not replaced periodically and handsets were not maintained through periodical servicing. Since wireless is a key communication device, it is necessary to ensure that the network is functional throughout for ensuring round the clock protection of these preserved habitats.

The Government accepted the shortage of staff in PAs and stated that new arms have been provided to staff in the PAs. However, they were silent on non functional wireless system in PAs.

**Recommendation 17:** Government needs to fill up staff vacancies and provide adequate arms and wireless equipments. Practical requirements need to be worked out and norms for deployment of front line staff, arms and wireless equipment need to be fixed.