ISSUES IN WILDLIFE TOURISM IN KARNATAKA

by

KEYA ACHARYA

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Introduction

National: India's varied range of geological conditions has given rise to an enormous diversity of ecosystems which in its turn supports an equal diversity of wildlife species. There are a recorded 81,000 animal species, 45,000 plant species, 30,000 insect species and 25,000 butterfly species. Insects and butterflies, as well as plants, are still being added to this list.

Indians have, and continue to do so to a large degree, more or less taken all this wealth for granted, resulting in a lack of knowledge in the country's biological species and the conditions needed for their survival. Since the fifty years of independence, which is used more as a touchstone here, since wildlife came under great pressure in British India, there has been a rapid depletion of this wealth of biological diversity.

By the nineteen seventies, awareness had begun to grow about the need for ensuring the survival of the country's wildlife. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, set up a flurry of conserving this biodiversity: parks and sanctuaries increased from 131 in 1975 to 495 in 1995.

In 1972, the Act defined wildlife as all wild animals and birds, but in 1991, the Act was amended to include all species of wild plants too in the definition of wildlife. A National Park gets notified as one by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests. The state government under whose territory the national park is in existence does not have the authority to denotify its designated area. The park is prohibited by this law from encroachment, agriculture, settlements, grazing, collection of forest produce or any other human activity. It is designated as an inviolate zone. A sanctuary, on the other hand, can be denotified, as well as designated as one by the state government. Grazing and collection of forest produce is allowed within stipulated limits, though human settlements are prohibited.

Protection however, has not been as simple as marking an area 'protected' by law. Each protected area (PA) has diverse problems of human settlements, whether within or on its peripheries sustaining themselves on the resources available from the PA. In most cases, these settlements have been there long before the area got its protected status, which has led to increasing hostility between wildlife authorities and local communities. Development projects like hydel power stations and commercial ventures such as mining around, and in many cases within, the PAs have compounded the problems facing wildlife conservation. And now, the most recent entrant into India's wildlife areas is wildlife tourism, being marketed as rare holiday choice. Its emerging popularity with the urban sector and foreign tourists is making commercial holiday groups realise the potential profits from this type of tourism.
Karnataka: Karnataka assumes special significance in the national context, both in parks and sanctuaries as well as in the pressures surrounding each. The state has a rich history of flora and fauna, including the magnificent biodiversity of the Western Ghats, one among the world's twelve hotspots, identified by the Rio Summit of 1992.

The state has 3.87 million ha. of its geographical area of 19.2 million ha., under forests. 45% of this area is under various stages of degradation due to severe pressure from humans and cattle, and due to forest fires, smuggling, poaching etc. Its forest vegetation varies widely from evergreen and semi evergreen to dry deciduous and thorny scrub. In this forest area, 17.5 % is under the purview of protected areas, covering 6,700 square kilometres.

Till 1972, there was only 3.2% of forest area covering national parks and sanctuaries. As with the rest of the country, awareness on conservation came late ; in 1972, after the Wildlife Protection Act, protected areas have been increasing steadily. In 1995, there was 17.5% of forest area under parks and sanctuaries. Today, there are 5 national parks and 22 wildlife sanctuaries in Karnataka. The 1993 census recorded 5980 elephants, 305 tigers and 455 leopards in them. Floral species has not been exhaustively, or even systematically, listed from within these protected areas.

Background:
# National Parks and Sanctuaries of Karnataka

## National Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location / District</th>
<th>Area ( sq.Km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anshi National Park</td>
<td>Uttar Kannada</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bannerghatta NP</td>
<td>Bangalore Urban</td>
<td>104.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandipur NP</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>874.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudremukh NP</td>
<td>Chikmagalur</td>
<td>600.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajiv Gandhi NP</td>
<td>Mysore/Kodagu</td>
<td>643.39</td>
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</table>

## Wildlife Sanctuaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location/District</th>
<th>Area ( sq.km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cauvery WLS</td>
<td>Mandya/Bangalore</td>
<td>526.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghataprabha Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>Belgaum</td>
<td>29.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daroji Bear Sanctuary</td>
<td>Bellary</td>
<td>55.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhadra WLS</td>
<td>Chikmagalur</td>
<td>492.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Someshwara WLS</td>
<td>Dakshin Kannada</td>
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<td>Mookambika WLS</td>
<td>Dakshin Kannada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pannebennur WLS</td>
<td>Dharwad</td>
<td>119</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pushpagiri WLS</td>
<td>Kodagu</td>
<td>102.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talacauvery WLS</td>
<td>Kodagu</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brahmagiri WLS</td>
<td>Kodagu</td>
<td>181.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adi Chunchanagiri WLS</td>
<td>Mandya</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melkote WLS</td>
<td>Mandya</td>
<td>49.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Area (Ha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nugu WLS</td>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>30.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ranganthittu Bird Sanct.</td>
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<td>Arbitittu WLS</td>
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<td>BRT WLS</td>
<td>Chamarajanagara</td>
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<td>Shettihalli WLS</td>
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<td>Gudavi Bird Sanct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharavathi WLS</td>
<td>Shimoga</td>
<td>431.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dandeli WLS</td>
<td>Uttar Kannada</td>
<td>475.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attivari WLS</td>
<td>Uttar kannada</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Taken from Forestry in Karnataka, 1995. Karnataka Forest Department.*
Pressures on Protected Areas in Karnataka

All of Karnataka’s 21 wildlife sanctuaries and 5 national parks face pressures in varying degrees from a host of complex factors.

Of the physical and biological pressures, the most common are forest fires and drought, sometimes reaching serious proportions.

~ Forest fires have been reported from all 5 of the national parks and from 11 of the sanctuaries.

~ Drought has been reported from three national parks and one sanctuary.

~ Disease among animals has been reported from two national parks, Nagarhole and Bandipur, both of which had rinderpest epidemic in 1968 and some unknown disease afflicting elephants in 1995 in Bandipur. Bhadra has also had rinderpest affliction in 1989.

~ No plant disease has been reported or studied so far.

~ Human settlements: all five national parks and 12 sanctuaries have permanent or semi permanent human habitation inside. Conflicts with local communities and forest staff are widespread.

~ Grazing: All five national parks and 15 sanctuaries have reported grazing inside their premises, either from inside or outside communities.

~ Apart from these, there are pressures from

~ granite mining (BRT Hills)
~ iron ore mining (Kudremukh)
~ stone quarrying (Bannerghatta)
~ thermal power stations (Daroji)
~ saw mill pressure and resulting illegal timber supply (Nagarhole)
~ encroachments from coffee estates (Bhadra)
~ possible pressures from agricultural estates (Bandipur)
~ criminal activities by Veerappan (BRT and Bandipur)
~ poaching (Bandipur/Nagarhole/Bhadra etc)
~ busloads of pilgrims (Cauvery/BRT/Bandipur etc)
~ extensive elephant crop damage (Bannerghatta/Nagarhole/Bandipur)
The list of pressures is not exhaustive yet. Over and above those listed, the administration of these protected areas by the State Forest department is significantly hampered by consistent vacancies in staff positions and by bureaucracy that impedes effective supervision and maintenance.

A further impediment, indeed a pressure on the PA, is the use by government officials of the forest rest houses on holidays at government expense. These government bureaucrats and officials use their status to commandeer both forest vehicle and officer for their private use, demanding preferential treatment and attention, including free meals. In Nagarhole in 1996, the DC of Bangalore, brought his, and a friend’s family along for a private break in the forest guest house. He was entertained at the forest department’s expense. Also in Nagarhole in 1996, the then DCF of the park had to travel over 50 kms from Hunsur to Nagarhole to ‘greet’ a retired PCCF (Principal Chief Conservator of Forests), thereby not being able to attend to his work.

This situation seems to be prevalent throughout forest areas in India. A report by a Committee for Management of National Parks and Sanctuaries in 1990, constituted by the Environment Ministry in New Delhi, reports with serious concern, a major source of tourism pressure as coming from "conspicuously the presence of VIP visitors with numerous supporting staff. Virtually all VIPS demand special attention from the Field Director and staff, commandeer vehicles and elephants intended for tourists, and record theirs visits as if on duty, thereby avoiding payment of normal tourist park fees."

In this situation, and amidst this complex and enmeshed web of issues, wildlife tourism is fast emerging as a profitable business venture. The new Tourism Policy of 1997’s added incentives and subsidies opens up wildlife areas to further pressure from possible unregulated operations.

Background:

Personal observations from site visits to various PAs in Karnataka
The Tourism Policy of 1997.
Types of Wildlife Tourism in Karnataka

Karnataka, has, for the purposes of enumeration, three broad based areas under which wildlife tourism is currently operating. These are:

Domestic Tourism: handled generally by the KSTDC (state tourism development corporation). Tourists in this category visit the parks and sanctuaries through conducted tours undertaken by the tourism department, paying park entrance fees either individually or sometimes included in the package deal.

Though there are no statistics available for this specific category of tourists, this is Karnataka’s largest segment of wildlife tourism. This segment of India tends to view sanctuaries and parks with the ‘zoo concept’. The DCF (deputy conservator of forests) in independent charge of the Bannerghatta NP outside Bangalore city, says that he has a large number of his visitors complaining that they are tired of sighting the same animals and would like to see a newer variety. Bannerghatta has a 14 sq. km. Lion and Tiger enclosure, where 13 lions and tigers have been brought in from other areas specifically for sighting by tourists, and are fed by park authorities every evening. There is also a separate zoo, which in one way perhaps, enforces wildlife tourism as a ‘zoo concept’, wherein animals have to necessarily be sighted.

The park does very financially from these visitors; in 1995-96, there were 508,000 visitors of which 3000 were foreign tourists. Widely responsible for noise, littering and teasing of animals, this segment of the state, and of India at large, has an uninformed attitude to wildlife and the environment.

However, in Bandipur NP, which does not have an enclosed safari area, and where tourists are taken by a bus to the tourist zone in the park, another aspect of domestic wildlife tourism emerges. Visitors to this park tend to view wildlife tourism as a ‘picnic’ concept. A group from the Hoteliers’ Association of Mysore in September 1997 viewed the park as a picnic resort and a place for recreational games. Environmental sensitivity, education or awareness in both these forms of domestic tourism is inadequate. An example can again be given from the little riverine island of Nisargadhama in Kodagu. The Range Officer in charge here laments that they have not been able to grow a single sandalwood tree, once plentiful on this island. Inspite of boards prohibiting them to do so, visitors tear off the barks from young trees, wanting to inhale the fragrance of sandalwood, which in any case is absent from a young tree.
Forest Tourism: conducted by the Wildlife Wing of the state's Forest department. They run resthouses inside protected areas, which need to be booked either through the district forest wildlife office, or through the main office in Aranya Bhavan in Bangalore. Since they offer no transport facilities, tourists to these resthouses are generally individual ones, coming in their own or in hired cars.

The department's rest houses, however, are generally booked by bureaucrats, government guests and politicians and by the forest department's own bureaucratic hierarchy. Not subscribing to general tourist facilities and safaris available in the concerned par, this category uses official vehicles and officers for 'jungle drives'. Some part of this category could be called 'official tourists'.

There are numerous instances however, when official status and political connections are used for private 'breaks'. There have been incidents in Bandipur and Nagarhole where tourists coming under 'official' connections have been flagrant violators of park rules, using their official status to have a private holiday at the forest department's, and eventually the taxpayers', expense. Forest officials and vehicles have been commandeered for their use, they expect preferential treatment, an in cases with political connections, victimise forest officials who do not pander to them. Given this state of affairs, park officials often have little time to expend on tourism activities, treating it as a side issue.

Quality Tourism: This third category is perhaps the most sensitive, given its growing dimensions and emerging as a business venture in Karnataka. Catering to a moneymed urban clientele and to foreign tourists, this segment of tourism sees itself as 'ecotourism' combined with commercial profit. Foreign visitors in this category are fairly aware of the need for reserved behaviour in parks and sanctuaries.

The Indian elite on the other hand, need strict reinforcing of environmental awareness, information and discipline, falling into what could best be termed as 'informed apathy and insensitivity'. In the camp of the Jungle Lodges & Resorts at BRT Hills, a 2.34 crore turnover quasi governmental organisation running resorts at four locations, a group of ten people from the Oracle software company's branch in Bangalore, made more noise than three hundred tribal students at the Vivekananda Girijana tribal school about 15 km away from the camp. Bringing their own alcohol into the camp, situated inside the forest, one member of the group explained the choice of wildlife tourism as 'somewhere new to go' for a break from office work. Another member was not aware of having to be sensitive to the area being a wildlife zone, admitting it made sense once it was pointed out. He likened the need to be reminded about local awareness and sensitivity to an alarm clock: "we all know we have to get up in the morning. But we need an alarm just the same."
Perhaps the most telling state of the knowledge of ecotourism, or the lack of it, comes from yet another member of this software group, the son of a serving forest officer in Corbett National Park in UP. Modishly sporting a Project Tiger T-shirt, the young man had not thought anything at all about their group's loud 'alcohol laughter', or their supreme indifference to the quiet forests around them.

Timeshare: There is yet another segment in this urban moneyed class, fledgling right now, but emerging nevertheless: timeshare ecotourism. As far as wildlife tourism goes, there is one such large resort near Bandipur under construction, due to start by early 1998. The concept of timeshare, whereby a member owns the resort for a period of time, giving him more rights than in other cases, would need more careful regulating and planning, given the complete lack of environmental awareness in India's moneyed class.

Background:

*Personal observations from site visits*
Statistics on Wildlife Travel, Related Trade and Tourists in Karnataka

Though there are no definite statistics available with the state tourism department on the exact inflow and revenue from wildlife tourism, and ecotourism in general, the state department reported ------------ of tourists in 1996 - 97. Revenue earned from tourism in the state came to Rs. --------.

The forest department has however been able to provide some statistics on tourism in their sphere of activity. Statistics for each PA are enumerated below:

**Bannerghatta NP.**
Of these, 4,25,398 were adults and 1,13,453 were children.
Revenue collected: Rs. 46,37,957.
Tourism expenditure: Rs. 40,00,000. (pl check this with notes)
No. of Visitors in 1996 - 97: 4,25,975

**Bandipur NP.**
No. of Visitors: 54,409 in 1995 - 96.
Of which foreign visitors: 2475
Revenue collected: Rs. 15,35,963
Tourism expenditure: ~ Rs. 22,00,000.
Budget: State: Rs. 27 lakhs
Central: Rs. 43.93 lakhs
Total: Rs. 70.97 lakhs (1996 -97) excluding Project Tiger/ Project Elephant funding.

**Rajiv Gandhi NP.**
Of these foreign visitors were: 76
Revenue collected: Rs. 11,09,101.
Tourism expenditure:
No. of Visitors in 1996 - 97: Indians: 16,702
Foreign: 91
Budget (1995 -96): State: Rs. 32 lakhs
Central: Rs. 15.50 lakhs
Total: Rs. 47.50 lakhs excluding Project Tiger funding.
Ranganathitoo Bird Sanctuary
No. of visitors in 1996-97: 24,7662
Revenue: Rs. 13,72,480.
Budgets for:
Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary:
State: Rs. 10 lakhs
Central: Rs. 5.98 lakhs
Total: Rs. 5.98 lakhs

Kudremukh NP. (1996-97)
State: Rs. 6 lakhs
Central: Rs. 4.3 lakhs
Total: Rs. 10.3 lakhs

Private Wildlife Tourist Resorts

Karnataka's share in this sector of wildlife tourism is relatively less when compared with Kerala and Tamilnadu. However, it is a sector that is opening up, given the incentives and impetus that the state government is offering anyone entering this field. Presently, the better known of these agencies are:

The Jungle Lodges & Resorts Limited.
Shrungar Shopping Centre, 2nd Floor,
Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bangalore 560 001.
Tel: 080 - 5586 163 / 559 7021/25.
Fax: 091 - 080 - 5586163

A quasi governmental organisation, this is presently the largest operator in the state. Operating from four places in 1997, Nagarhole NP, BRT Hills, Bhimeshwari Fishing Camp at Cauvery WLS (wildlife sanctuary) and at Karwar on the Dakshin Kannada coastline.

Originally set up on an equity basis between the state government and a private firm, Tiger Tops, the venture ran into deep losses in the early '80s, was taken over fully by the state government in 1988. The fully government-owned Jungle Lodges & Resorts then took till 1994 to clear loans and debts of Rs. 80 lakhs, solely through a sales turnover which rose from Rs. 19.36 lakhs in 1987 to Rs. 172.12 in 1995. The company's turnover in 1997 is Rs. 2.34 crores.
Raj Safaris
Hospital Cottage
Bangalore Palace
Bangalore 560 052.
Phone: 91 -80 - 3342 862

This travel agency run by the sister of the erstwhile Maharaja of Mysore and her husband, has a unit on the outskirts of Bandipur called Tusker Trails. Beginning operations in January 1996, set up with a capital investment of Rs. 50 lakhs, Tusker Trails has already shown an average return of Rs.12.5 lakhs turnover in the first year of operation. Sales is expected to increase in the near future.

Tiger Ranch : Ranch Colorado Resorts, India Pvt. Ltd.,
1135, Ramshiv Complex,
1st Main Road,
Yeshwanthpur,
Bangalore 560 022. Ph: 080- 33 74558/ Fax: 80- 3471558

Its owner, Mr. Mahendranath is unwilling to give details on revenue, expenditure and general budget. The resort is running on the outskirt of Bandipur NP; has 30 beds, with a further increase expected sometime in the future; has 100% occupancy in the weekends and 50 % occupancy during weekdays. Tariff as per 1st October 1997, is Rs. 650/ per head per day incl. of meals, + sales taxes etc.

Bush Betta Wildlife Adventure Resort, situated outside Bandipur NP. Originally run on 10 cottages, this resort is now undergoing extensive increase in constructions (a total of 42 apartments), having affiliated itself to Resort Condominiums International, a Timeshare Holiday company. The resort is due to commence shortly with its new capacity. Visitors to this resort will not be paying per day tariffs, but own the apartments, one week being called one unit, for a leased period of time, usually not less than 30 years. They will however be paying for meals, electricity etc.

Previous rates, before timeshare affiliation were US$ 155 per head all inclusive. The original ten cottages will continue to be used as a commercial resort.
Contact No in Bangalore : 080- 2243 274. Fax: 80- 2210 504.

There are a few other smaller ventures around Rajiv Gandhi NP.
Travel Trade & Related Services

The market in this sector in the state has not been documented or regulated in any manner.

However, though there might not be any specific documentation, or no agent involved dealing in trade related services specifically with wildlife tourism, an idea can be gleaned from the various aspects of work that goes into a tourist resort.

Wildlife Tourism and Resorts involve:
The Construction Sector. Industries related to
~ cement
~ iron and hardware
~ other building materials
~ timber
~ wood & furniture
~ plastics of various types, including pipes
~ sanitation and fittings

Besides these industries, this sector involves building contractors, carpenters, electricians, masons, plumbers, unskilled labour. Apart from this semi skilled and unskilled section, this entire industry involves civil engineers, electrical engineers, architects and landscape specialists. This constitutes the skilled section in this class related trade.

Then there is also the 'soft furnishing' sector that is involved. This will include interior designers, the textile business, upholsterers, carpet business, dealers in plastic utility items such as bathroom buckets, mugs etc. The Paint Industry is also involved.

Yet another section deals with machinery -related trade, such as those for diesel gen sets, water pumps, sewage treatment units, transportation, refrigerators, cookers etc.

Then:
~ ticketing agencies
~ airlines
~ stationery dealers
~ media communication network for pamphlets etc.
~ souvenir dealers , including dealers for T-shirts, a popular form of memento
~ automobile rental agencies
~ photography and related services
~ diesel and petroleum sector
~ LPG sector
transport maintenance sector
- grocers
- greengrocers
- dealers in adventure sports and trekking equipment
- Hotel personnel
- daily waged labour

and numerous other indirectly related services. It is significant to note that in this entire gamut of services profiting from wildlife tourism, the benefit to local communities is practically negligible. Equally neglected in its maintenance and regulation are the natural resources involved, such as water, land and, of primary concern, the national park itself. At a conference on Ecotourism in Bangalore in November 1997, Jose Dominic of the Casino group of hotels from Kerala stated that a study conducted showed only 4%, out of 100% of the entire trade benefit in wildlife tourism and ecotourism trickled down for local benefit. The economy was heavily based on an 'outflow' from the locality it was based in.

Tour operators and travel agencies are significant players in this field. Listed below are some of the larger operators in Karnataka. This list is by no way exhaustive, there are numerous smaller agencies involved in tour packages and visitor bookings.

- Cox & Kings
- SITA World Travels, St. Marks' Road, Bangalore 560 001. Ph: 080- 525 9182.
- TCII 9, Residency Road, Richmond Circle. 560 025. Ph : 080- 221 2866.
- Clipper Holidaysl 406 Regency Enclave, 4 Magrath Road, Bangalore 560 025. Fax: 80- 5599 833
- Thomas Cook Travels. MG Road, Bangalore 560 001. Ph: 080- 558 7066.
- Cathay Pacific Airlines.

On a smaller scale :
- Jeevan Tours&Travels.l 13,Krishna Towers, 3rd Main Road, Ganganagar.560 009. Ph: 080- 2202815. Fax : 80- 2268735
- Tee Gee Tours&Travels.
- Cosmopol Travels
- KTC Tours&Travels l #5, Malleshwaram Sampige Road, 560 090. Ph: 080-344 7890.
There are numerous others, working on a smaller scale. Besides these, KN's tourist resorts are booked through out-station agents:

~ Mysore: Seagul Travels / Skyway Travels
~ Delhi: Exotic Travels / A&K Travels
~ Chennai: Surya Travels / Srikand Travels.
~ Pune: Pleasure Travels /
~ Mumbai: Cougar Resorts.
~ There are many more.

General comments on wildlife tourism from these operators:

* Infrastructure could be bettered
* Ready to cater to new places
* Currently usually catering to the better known national parks
* Have no role to play once tourists are booked into respective resorts
* Jungle Lodges&Resorts is still a favourite booking place
* If resort booking not available, put up in hotels in Mysore
* Not connected in any way with forest or tourism department. No meeting between the departments.
* Not availing of tourism policy benefits.

~ The media communication group MASS appears to be a popular choice for commissioning of sales literature.

Background:

**Personal Research**

Reading: *Informal Sector Services in Tourism. Course Studies on Tourism for the Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi. By Dr. Errol D'Souza, Dept. of Economics, Goa University.*

*Inputs on Travel Agencies by Madhusudhan Shukla*
Case Study of Bandipur National Park

Tourism in and around a protected cannot be seen in isolation. There are, as I have already mentioned, various sorts of pressures surrounding a protected area, and the effect or impact of tourism on a protected area can only be seen in perspective. A case study of Bandipur national park is thus seen in its entirety.

Situated at the foothills of the Western Ghats in Karnataka (KN), in Mysore district. Was originally the Vengugopala Wildlife Sanctuary in 1931, extending to 90 sq. km. It then became the Venugopala Wildlife Park in 1941, extending itself to 774.20 sq.km, named so after the ancient Venugopala (Lord Krishna) deity temple, atop the Gopalaswamy range of hills, locally known as Gopalaswamy betta. The temple priest says his records show that the temple was renovated in 1120 AD, during the Chola reign, which could be a possible reason for the temple priests being Tamil, since the Chola headquarters were in Tamilnadu. It was again renovated in the 1600s, and then again in 1996, by Srinivasa Murthy, who I'm told, is the local 'liquor baron'.

Temple and Tourism: Legend has it, according to Gajendra Singh, of the erstwhile Mysore royal family, that Agasthya Mahamuni, ancient guru of the Vindhya mountains, left the Vindhyas with the Gopalaswamy shrine to seek a place for its extension down south. The Vindhyas were very upset and wanted him to return, so he told them to bow their heads (which is geophysically true!) and await his return. Agasthya Mahamuni never did return. Instead, he followed the deity’s wishes and set Lord Krishna up at the top of this highest hill range in Bandipur, which now carries the deity’s name. If it got renovated in 1120 AD, then a vague inkling can be derived of its age...

Has been the family temple and deity of the Mysore Maharajas, with the present Wodeyar’s grandfather having built the hunting lodge there (1941) which is now a Forest Rest House. The area got created as a game preserve by the then Mysore Maharaja in 1931. The 60 sq. km of the Bandipur range was then the core area of the park.

Today, the temple remains a pilgrim spot, right in the core area of the park, with the forest authorities not being able to exercise any control over the temple area, though they have installed wireless communication inside the sanctum. Considering its age, the pilgrims are relatively fewer than elsewhere, this being a deity more known in Gundlupet than elsewhere. Busloads of pilgrims whine and groan up the hill every Saturday; the noise is definitely ‘there’. A temple trust has been set up by Srinivasa Murthy to oversee cleanliness etc; the area is relatively clean, (meaning I've seen worse..)
But what is not seen to, is the awareness and lack of sensitivity of the pilgrims to the temple being situated inside a protected area. There are whistling crowds of rowdy youth, one group of whom yelled and shouted at two grazing tuskers on the hill slope below the temple, driving them into hiding. That the elephants have first rights to this place is a concept not understood by the public here. Mr. Srinivasa Murthy together with the temple authorities and the forest officials need to work out some method of instilling a measure of awareness in these pilgrims. As things stand right now, this pilgrim shrine cum tourist spot has all the potentials of threat to flora and fauna in the region.

**Geographical features** : BNP now constitutes 880 sq.km, and is contiguous with Kerala's Wyanad WLS (wildlife sanctuary) at its southwest and Tamilnadu's Mudumalai WLS at its south east and Kn's Nagarhole National Park at its northwest. Together, these 4 areas now constitute the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. It's highest peak is the Gopalaswamy betta, (1454.5 m/ 4769 ft.) atop which the Gopalaswamy temple is situtated. The rivers Kabini, Nugu and Moyar flow through this park, with the Moyar dividing BNP from Mudumalai and the Kabini dividing Wyanad, at one point from BNP. The terrain is undulating, with hills stretching out, deep, dark and breathtakingly beautiful, with a panoramic view of the entire Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve from the temple point. Elephants can be spotted from the top with binoculars, if you’re lucky.

The forests are varied and rich, ranging from scrub forests in the eastern portion to dry deciduous in the central areas to moist mixed deciduous in the western part. The ecosystem is again due to this, equally varied.

**Management and Tourism** : BNP has 9 ranges, with a total of 101 guards. 40% of these guards posts are vacant, a very serious management problem. The entire procedure of recruitment through the KN Public Service Commission system whereby even a guard must have a minimum of an SSLC certificate, needs to be revamped, allowing local recruitment, if necessary. As things stand right now, there is an entire relocated tribal village with 36 households, at Melkamanahalli, the border of BNP, that is unemployed, depending on the Forest department for work.

Under the relocation plan, the 36 households were given land beyond Melkamanahalli in 1992-93, but the tribals say they don't know how to cultivate for agriculture. One man told me he doesn't have any implements necessary for cultivation, so how can he cultivate? The DCF of BNP however, disagrees. "These tribals want to be spoonfed". They were cultivating paddy and ragi inside the park, now why can't they cultivate, he asks. He cites a further example. All 36 households have been provided with free lighting from the forest dept. When one man's bulb fused, he came back to the DCF and told him, "your light does not work". 
I asked these tribals if they would like to work in these tourist complexes (there are about 7 people who have presently bought land bordering the park, excluding the three private units that are already functioning. but they all seem to prefer to work with the forest. One man, Deebomma, a watcher at BNP knows of the vacancies for guards "why can't we be given those posts ?", he asks. Both RFO and DCF agree that the tribals could fill these posts up to the benefit of both sides, but are powerless to do anything because of the state government regulations. This matter needs to be dealt with at policy level.

As things stand right now, the simmering undercurrent of resentment at Melkamanahalli is a problem waiting to happen to the Bandipur National Park. I'm also told, that the previously relocated village of Channekatte, (40 households) relocated in 1978, has a far better relationship with the forest department, though I wasn't able to visit the place. Another village, Karemallai (60 households), relocated in 1994, seems to have a cordial relationship with Vishlakshmi Devi, their immediate neighbours. The tribals previously owed allegiance to her father, the Mysore Maharaja and the relationship has continued. Vishlakshmi Devi says she employs 75% of her working staff from local villages and Gundlupet, including 4 tribals and has 'no problem' from her surrounding community, who use the complex's well for their water needs. Her husband is planning to co-ordinate the opening of a homeopathic clinic for Karemallai, with the help of a doctor friend from Bangalore. Ganjendra Singh does feel that the tribals need definite intervention for a sustainable lifestyle.

The outcome of all this, with relationship to tourism, is that the RFO, meant to be in charge of the park's tourism activities, has to now divide his time between overseeing the beats that don't have guards, resulting in very little time for tourism. How is it possible for one man to manage forest matters, political guest, who commandeers the one vehicle that is there, then oversee catering, accommodation, tourist information etc? The result is that tourism gets treated as a side issue, especially since there have been political fallouts trying to implement rules.

Poaching: The DCF says there is the problem of poaching, especially at the border of BNP with Wyanad. He has now constituted 16 anti poaching camps. Each camp has 5 watchers and one guard, all armed with .315 rifle and double barrel 12 bore guns. There is one forestry supervisor who oversees 3 camps. Each camp costs the budget one lakh, all the watchers are temporary workers (mainly tribals) who get Rs. 12 per day incentive for jungle duty. The DCF says this has definitely helped, though there are still cases, because it is not possible to man the park's 180 km boundary with watchers at each kilometre. 4 cases since April 1997 to September 1997. (which, I think is still high). One case has seen the arrest of 3 persons, of whom 2 were tribals from Maddur. The problem is our penalties are not heavy enough, says the DCF. An elephant poaching offence is a bailable offence, he says, with only a 3 year jail sentence, if convicted. The law itself has loopholes to get out of conviction, he says.
In the **1995 census**, scientific help was obtained for accurate census with the help of Ajay Desai of the BNHS, who used computer programmes and the line transect method to map out the number of animals in the park.

2200 elephants within a 880 sq. km area
65 - 70 tigers.

Krupakar and Senani, two wildlife film producers and naturalists also helped with the census and study of the gaur.

**High Migration of Animals westwards during the dry season** : During the dry season, most of these elephants migrate westwards to the Kabini backwaters in Nagarhole NP. So, in March- April, you can sight 600 - 700 elephants at a stretch near the Kabini from the Karapur Wildlife lodge of the Jungle Lodges venture.

**Flora and Fauna and tourism:** Documented so far in Fauna are:

Mammals : The four-horned antelope; sloth bear; civet cat; jungle cat; barking deer; mouse deer; spotted deer; wild dog; flying fox; black-naped hare; striped hyena; jackal; gaur or Indian bison; Asian elephant; common langur; common mongoose; stripe-necked mongoose; brown mongoose; bonnet macaque; common otter; pangolin; panther/leopard; wild pig; porcupine; sambar; slender loris; tiger...

Reptiles: common cobra; marsh crocodile; banded karait; monitor lizard; python; green snake; keel back; vine; viper; rat snake; wolf snake. Then there are tree frogs; toads; tortoises and several species each of gecko, skink and agamid lizards. I saw a huge big chameleon on the road, the one that has eyes that roll around without the head moving...

Birds: common babbler; jungle babbler; crimson-breasted barbet; large barbet; small green barbet; small-green bee eater; blue tail bee eater; blue jay; bharminy duck; red-vented bulbul; red-whiskered bulbul; white cheeked bulbul; bush chat; cuckoo; little brown dove; ring dove; spotted dove; coot; lesser coucal; larger coucal; drongo; egret; crested eagle hawk; crested serpent eagle; tawny eagle; peregrine falcon; flycatcher; hoopoe; hornbill; jungle fowl; grey jungle fowl; kingfisher; koel; myna; minivet; munia; night jar; great horned owl; brown orioke; golden oriole; black headed oriole; blue-winged parakeet; blossom-headed parakeet; rose-ringed parakeet; partridge; robin pigeon; shrikes; purple-rumped sunbird; tree pie; warblers; water hen; weaver birds; woodpecker... a total of over 180 species here, according to forest authorities.

**Flora** : tectona grandis ( teak); dalbergia latifolia ( rosewood); grewia arborea; grewia tillaefolia ( tadasal); lagerstroemia lanceolata ( nandi); pterocarpus marsupium ( honne); garuga pinnata; cordia macleodi; bombax malabaricum ( buruga); adina cordifolia ( yethiga); anogeissus latifolia ( dindal); machilus macarantha; kydia calycina ( bende); stephegyne parviflora; michelia champaka ( sampige); terminalia species;
embilica officinalis (gooseberry); eugenia jambolana (neralu); mangifera indica (mango); vitex altissima; artocarpus intergrifolia (halasu); santalum album (srigandha); zizyphus species; hardwickia binata; bambusa arundinacea (biduru). A total of 225 species of trees, shrubs, grasses and climbers identified so far. Many still remain to be identified.

Though these have been identified, as mentioned, there are no pamphlets on these lists distributed to tourists. Information brochures are not readily available at the counter, a tourist would need to press to obtain any written literature. Judging from the attitude of the counter staff, who tend to be parsimonious with passing brochures over, I suspect not many tourists would be successful in obtaining any informative lists etc. from the counter.

**Educational/Awareness facilities and Tourism**: There is a library, conference hall and a small museum at the back, but none of these contain any specific information on BNP's particular floral and faunal species. They deal with wildlife in general. The entire museum and library is in a state of neglect. Chairs and cardboard boxes are stacked up in places, making the place look, and feel, like a store room.

However, the conference/audio visual room was, happily, used by Mr. Chinnappa's group of school children. A previous range officer at Nagarhole National park, Chinnappa is widely recognised as being the man responsible for improving the park and increasing biodiversity, coming down heavily on poachers and encroachers, who ultimately framed him on charges that had political overtones. Chinnappa resigned and has now formed an NGO called Wildlife First! that seeks to bring wildlife awareness and education to youth in KN and elsewhere, if possible. Respected and well known in wildlife circles, Chinnappa says BNP's officials need to be far more strict with tourists who disobey park rules, a suggestion that is easier written of than undertaken. There have been two instances this past year (1996-97) when tourists who were pulled up for noise in the campus have pulled political connections. In one case, I'm told, the Mysore Mayor's sister's son, demanded a room without previous reservation, and would not take a 'no' for an answer, inspite of being informed that all the rooms were booked/occupied. He went back to Mysore, pulled the proverbial string and had Mary, the woman in charge at the counter (a good worker, I'm also told) suspended. The entire staff of BNP then went on strike and Mary had to be reinstated, but she has now been given a job where her strict sincerity is not put to full use, i.e. she has been put in charge of manning the wireless set.

Given this political scenario, forest officials are disgusted and, removed from enforcing strict conduct rules. The sub staff are now almost afraid of telling anybody anything. While I was reading in the Library, there had been a cacophony of laughter and bellows from a group outside, in the park campus, who I was told by the library guard was the Mysore Hotelier's Association. I asked the guard to instruct them on the rules of noise in a national park. Nothing happened, the noise continued unabated for the hour that I was in the reading room. Not sure that I had the authority to stop them,
a feeling reinforced by the fact that my knowledge of Kannada is negligible, I was on my way to the park ranger to apprise him of the situation when Chinnappa thought the English language would work equally well, coming from a journalist! Chinnappa was right. It did work. The excuse the hoteliers gave me was that they 'thought' the national park 'was that way', pointing to beyond the road. I asked the gentleman to read the poster very near his 'playing ground' which had the rules on it. There was golden silence after that! But does that mean that sensitivity can only be reinforced by the threat of the pen? There's plenty of food for thought by all concerned in wildlife tourism in this matter.

**Budget and Tourism:** BNP fell under the Indian government's Project Tiger scheme in 1973. And, more recently in 1994, under Project Elephant. Gets a total annual budget of 1.7 crores, which, says the Range Officer, Rajenna, is still not enough. The park earned 18 lakhs as Tourism Revenue in 1996, even with ridiculously low tariffs, (which is discussed later in this documentation). But that this is a heavily subsidised undertaking is proven by the 5 elephants maintained by the FD who have become 'white elephants', quite literally! It costs Rs. 22 lakhs annually to maintain them, more than the total tourism revenue earned. Compensation for crop loss, which anyway is far lower than actual per acre loss, costs another considerable amount; about Rs. 10 lakhs per year. Compensation takes place mostly in villages on the northeastern boundary of BNP. The next big expense is on vehicle maintenance at Rs. 12 lakhs annually, an unusually high sum, considering it costs even Jungle Lodges and Resorts, a quasi government wildlife tourism undertaking, about Rs. 20,000 annually.

The total annual budget of Project Tiger is, of which 80 lakhs is non recurring, having been spent on buildings, construction of roads, purchase of weapons etc. Rajenna says the bulk of the money goes on recurring expenditure, such as salaries, vehicle maintenance, temporary workforce etc. The Forest Department claims there has been a striking increase in the animal and tiger population after this project came about. Tigers rose from 11 in 1974 to 66 in 1993-94. The ecological habitat of all the animals has improved accordingly.

This statement could be held to be reasonably credible. I visited during the rainy season in mid September 1997, and saw, without much effort, a profusion of herbivores. At least 50 or more bison, over 200 at least spotted deer or chital, 75 or so sambar, 8 peacocks, 2 hares in the evening jeep's headlights, besides one jungle fowl. A variety of birds, eagles, bee eaters, drongos, kites .. Then 2 herds of elephants, one with 3 calves in tow, who charged threateningly at our jeep, trumpeting loudly and trying to frighten its inmates, succeeding to do so to one passenger at least ( me! ). Each time the driver started forward, the leader ( a huge female ) would trumpet and charge again. After about three attempts, the jeep managed to push forward and on looking back, I saw the herd then quietly crossing the road. All they were wanting was to cross over!
On returning at about 7.30 in the evening, there were, literally in their hundreds, chital inside the forest tourist compound, standing quietly in the headlight's focus. The Range Officer tells me this is a characteristic phenomenon of Bandipur. The deer seek human habitation to escape predation in the night. A queer case of behavioural ecology due to tourism! This must be one of the rare instances when animals benefit from noisy wildlife tourists in India!

Tourism: But the tourism here is beset by problems, working much the way it would if you were to crank an old machine to work...Before an assessment can be made, basic details need to be set out.

Bandipur has 6 entry points into the forest, with 2 points in use. The others had been locked with chain posts. The park received 54,200 Indian visitors in 1996 and 2350 foreign visitors. Its tourist tariffs are ridiculously low, even for middle-class incomes. Its accommodation charges are:
- Rs. 150 per suite (with two beds, separate sitting room cum verandah, dining hall, kitchen and cook) for the two Gajendra VIP suites.
- Rs. 75 per suite for the other cottage suites (each with two beds, separate sitting room cum verandah, dining hall, kitchen and cook). The rooms are basically clean, though the blankets are torn. The furniture is old, unfortunately unvarnished or maintained, the bathroom is archaic, inspire of tiled floors and an intriguing old vat that you have fill up and plug in for heating water. Considering the price of the room, I don't think you can ask for more. It has, very interestingly, an aura of homely comfort in it, in fact the whole campus has that feeling...
- Meals are simple, (non veg made to order, ) costing an average Rs. 20 per person per lunch/dinner. Breakfast costs around Rs. 8. The cottage boy is attentive, but untrained...He gives you your meal and then disappears, not knowing he might need to await you. Consequently, if you want the salt, or some salad, you have to get rid of the thought.

Park charges are equally ridiculous:
- Charges for a one-hour safari : Rs. 15 per adult. Rs. 8 per child. Safari taken in forest vehicle, accompanied by forest guide.
- An entry fee for private car into the park (but not into the jungle) : Rs. 100 for car. Rs. 200 for heavy vehicle.
- Elephant ride : Rs. 10 per hour per person.
- Foreigners' entry fee into park: Rs. 150 per person (for safari and stay).

There is only one mini bus for safaris, with the range officer saying they need at least two more, not being able to cope with the safari requests. The vehicle itself is hardly suited to animal sighting, a noisy bus without open top for standing and viewing. Interestingly the wildlife tourism report made by a committee set up the MNES in 1990, had suggested open top low sound vehicles to the central forest authorities. Nothing has been done about it. A foreign guest, David Randall from South Africa was very upset about the safari. He told me he's seen wildlife parks from South Africa upwards into East Africa and now had come to south India. the
arrangements here are the worst he's seen so far, with the vehicle making so much noise that the animals push into cover by the time the vehicle halts.

There is also another big problem about bookings. One visitor had checked out at noon, but had changed his mind and wanted to stay on till 4.30 for the next safari. He was unable to rebook the room, being told he had to telephone Mysore or Bangalore for the booking. There is no telephone at Bandipur, the forest auth. communicate through the wireless, which was not allowed for guests. The visitor, a non resident Indian from the Middle East, was disgusted: 'Is there anything that our government can arrange without messing up?' he asked me.

Similarly, the South African, David Randall and his companion wanted a guide to accompany them to sit on a watchtower inside the jungle and watch the animals, since the bus experience was a disaster. Thr Range Officer had the same bureaucratic problem: he had no authority to allow a guest to sit on a watchtower, without permission from Bangalore headquarters. Then again there was that same problem about no telephone for trying for that permission. Admittedly, in the interests of safety, it may be a good idea to be conservative. But a paying request for a guide for an hour to sit with them on a watchtower during entry times? It's done in all the wildlife zones in Africa and SE Asia. The Forest department's tourism is a far cry from professional wildlife tourism management.

The officials give a sound answer in their defence. RFO Rajenna nearly lost his life in September 1996, tourist nuisance being the basic cause for it. He had noticed at 11 pm, a group of visitors at Vanashri lodge blinking their headlights on and off, whistling and shouting. Wanting to stop them (there are rules on the posters which forbid visitors from walking around the campus at night, or making a noise), he was crossing over to them from his house, which is across the road, when he noticed that the group had picked out some animal with its headlight focus. Halfway across to Vanashri, near the Canteen, he heard an elephant trumpet and before he knew what had happened, he had been kicked down. The yells of the visitors brought other forest guards there who made a din. The tusker walked away, but seemed to have resisted stamping Rajenna on a mere whim, who anyway was bleeding profusely from the elephant's nail scratches. The RFO says the animal must have been irritated by the lights and teasing from the visitors. Sensitivity to wildlife is alien in the Indian psyche. Given this scenario, forest rules on tourism cannot be helped, officials say. Even then, these rules are not meted out strictly. For instance, there are no written rules handed over to guests at registration. There however seem to be written rules: Tusker Trails, a private venture outside the park run by Vishalakshmi Devi, the sister of the Mysore Maharaja, tells me she has had no problem on obtaining rules and information brochures from the forest department.

Whatever the reasons, the forest department's brand of wildlife tourism is a bad experience for the serious nature lover. The following points could help spruce up the arrangement to a slightly better quality:
Vehicles with open top, less noise. The RFO says minibuses of this nature are better to reduce the number of vehicles inside the jungle. He claims they can take about 75,000 tourists on safari inside the jungle per year, provided the transport is the right type.

booking procedures need to be simplified.

Rules must be written in pamphlets and handed out at registration time, with a personal request from the counter to read and abide by then. Disobeying rules would invite penalty is also needed to be orally communicated.

Guides to be given strict instructions before each tour on behavioural necessities from the visitors. Boards are not enough.

Fees for entry, stay and tours to be hiked. Accommodation hikes would necessitate better service.

Tourism and Private Ventures:
At present, there are three main ones: Tusker Trails, Tiger Ranch, Bush Betta, all situated near each other outside the park and near Mangla village.

Tusker Trails: at Mangla village. 9 acres, about 5 of which has constructions of various sorts on them. a total of 15 rooms: 6 cottages x2 rooms each. Plus 3 more new huts coming up @ 2 beds each. Total 18 beds. Tariff: Rs. 1200 per head of two rooms, inclusive of meals, safaris, park entry fees, films for one day. Rs. 1500 for single occupant. foreigners; $72 per head per double sharing basis. US$ 88 for single occupant. 80% occupancy at season time (October-December; April-May); 40% occupancy off season.

Gajendra Singh says they are choosy about their guests, so they book only through the big travel agents such as TCI and Sita Travel etc. And in spite of being reserved about admitting bookings, have managed fairly well in one year's operation (started in January 1996). Make an average of one lakh per month in a full year, with 1 1/2 lakhs per month during season time. spent 50 lakhs for setting up the place, capital cost. Expect to break even with three years, because they expect their visitors to increase this year.

Vishalakshmi Devi says they manage inspite of refusing guests who want to use the place for conferences that conflict with the idea of staying at wild places. She says she refused the Rotary club of Coimbatore who wanted to have their meeting there and then have a 'disco dance' later.

The place is very well maintained, I think even better than Jungle Lodges, the best known wildlife tourism people in KN. There is an atmosphere of calm and quiet, the visitors fall in with the feeling. I found Gajendra Singh to be quite knowledgeable on floral and faunal species etc. Both husband and wife emphasise (I met both separately at different places) that they have a
commitment to BNP and its wildlife because of the wife's family background wherein her family owned and looked after these hills and its peoples.

Singh however, has reservations about the types of tourism ventures coming up near BNP. One unit, Bush Betta is now turning into timeshare holidaying and Singh puts forth a cogent argument: how does one control a member who owns one week in the resort? "It then becomes like a club. That commitment will be missing". Wildlife regulations cannot be imposed strictly because the guests will say they 'own' their place, so they can do what they want. Given the Indian consumer psyche, where wildlife areas are viewed as picnic resorts, complete with telephone, television and noise in tow, the argument seems fairly credible.

Singh feels that, given the new tourism policy with its wildlife incentives, the forest department is the 'best checkdam' that can be imposed on the resorts. If they are necessitated to pay a substantial sum to the forest department's local area for maintenance of the road and the park, then they will be wont to keep its wildlife up, because they are paying for the forest. Tusker Trails pays Rs. 2 lakhs per year to the Bandipur park office directly, and another Rs. 2 lakhs to the state's Forest department towards entry fees for the year for its transport and guests. They have also paid Rs. 2 lakhs as a security deposit to the central forest authorities for opening up a resort. They are allowed their vehicles inside the park during the forest department's safari timings, but with the inclusion of a forest guard. They can also take their guests for treks, again with a forest authority. But the others don't pay similarly, (of which more later) which prompts Vishalakhmi to feel that "the wrong people are getting away".

As far as ecological / environmental measures are concerned: the place is adapted to its local ecology. I found big trees had not been disturbed, the cottages had been built into small areas. Indigenous trees like teh rusty shield bearer (get its botanical name...) had been planted, and within a year has grown to about five feet in height. The area, I'm told was quite degraded, with a green cover coming up under current protection. The land was owned by Gajendra Singh's family, given to them on lease by his family.

Diesel consumption pretty high. Electricity depends on a diesel gen set which supplies elec for 4 hours a day. Is wanting to look into renewable energy technologies. 350 litres per month consumption, including for vehicles. Is also looking into the idea of gobar gas. They say there's plenty gobar available there.

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recycling unit who will collect from all the tourist units there and transport it back to Mysore or Bangalore for recycling.

**Bushbetta Lodges**: was previously a fairly responsible wildlife lodge, but has now gone in for a big expansion under timeshare scheme with an affiliation to an American Timeshare company called Resorts Condominium International. Now called **Holiday Owners Wildlife Adventure Resorts**. This will have a total of 42 apartments under Phase I, with one small hotel of 10 rooms for commercial hotel tariff use, where they expect to bring in the profits.

A huge set up like this in the middle of the jungle has an equally large set of 'activities' laid out for its guests. There are to be 30 activities ranging from archery to tennis to a mini putting course (golf), treks and safaris. One 2400 sq. feet swimming pool.

And to complete this consumer culture is the type of clientele that own the place. Royston Saw, the manager, says the owners who come, stay at the place to see their apartments coming up (the place is under construction right now and is not operational). The owners are invited to stay at the old rooms to have a look. Saw says the customers are 'totally insentive', 'alien to a jungle culture'; expect their own TV, piped music etc. They don't want to mix, he complains. They bring their own friends and keep to themselves, and Saw says he has a difficult time trying to get them to mix. "The Indian culture doesn't believe in mixing", says Saw.

While agreeing with what Saw has to say, a further note has to be made on the question of commitment of those in wildlife tourism ventures. Judging by the tenor of Saw's complaints, a British national, I also got the feel that the country is not his own, neither is the place, so that lack of commitment is even further increased. If the place's manager feels negatively towards his guests, not being able to identify with them, is it possible he will be able to identify with the place and thereby feel a commitment to preserve it? He is, as he himself says, a marketing man.

**Resource Usage**:  
3 borewells  
Grid electricity  
5 hp diesel engine  
solar hot water systems  
sewage recycling plant  
22 acres (check up)  
diesel consumption?

The DCF tells me that Bushbetta's payments to the FD are, now in draft, Rs. 40,000 only. What system is being used to arrive at these amounts is a question that now needs to be addressed to the Forest Ministry.
**Tiger Ranch**: also near Mangla village. On 56 acres of land, bought in two names.

The land itself in dispute, some being part of tribal 'darkhasth' lands being given by the revenue department to tribals for cultivation. The land cannot be sold by the tribals to outsiders before 15 years and must be cultivated within 3 years. Failure to comply by these stipulations will result in forfeiture of the land. Most tribals recolated outside BNP have been given these darkash lands @ 5 acres per household. A total of 1400 acres here, of which 800 have not been allotted to anyone. There are 168 acres under this tribal scheme here, says the RFO. Tiger Ranch is included within the 1400 acres.

The venture's owner, Mr. Mahendranath, says he has legal documents to show that these lands do not fall under the darkhasth scheme and have been 'okayed' by the district collector's office in Mysore. But the DC changed in 1995 and the new incumbent did not find the papers in order and has subsequently rescinded the permit, and gone to court with the case. Mahendranath obtained a Stay Order and is, as he himself admits, operating illegally under the Stay Order. He says two and a half years have passed and the government authorities have not replied to the interim order in court. The forest department has meanwhile filed for these lands in court, saying this is a continuation of BNP and is being used by wildlife, especially at the Mangla dam, which is an elephant waterhole. I had a look at the land, it is indeed strategically placed, a wide valley with a water source used by the elephants.

The Mangla dam itself, the water source in question, is an amazingly beautiful water body, the site for plenty of birds. I saw, at about 8.30 in the morning, a crested eagle, a whole lot of ducks, which I couldn't identify from my site, darters, kingfishers, bee eaters... This is a natural spot. I asked Mr. Mahendranath what he intended to do with the dam site. He says he has no plans of changing anything in the landscape, though he did have a video of Tiger Ranch's future plans, but I unfortunately couldn't view the film due to video problem.

Mahendranath's visitors are mainly from Bangalore's travel agents, who get a 20% commission on weekday bookings, and according to Mahendranath, 50% commission over the weekends. He has a total of 30 beds (five 4-bed cottages; five 2-bed cottages). His occupancy is 100% over the weekends, regardless of season, and 50% over the week. His rates are cheaper than Tusker Trail, @ Rs. 650 per head inclusive of 4 meals and treks (to the dam mainly). His food variety is fairly large and is, I suspect, an attraction for the city visitors, who go there not for the wildlife but 'to get away'.

Mahendranath does not think it is commercially viable to be able to regulate the type of visitors he has, and he had many stories to tell of drunken youth and noisy urbanites. He says he solved the problem of excessive drinking by putting off lights at 11 pm, but the forest officials tell me that he had been...
warned about the noise and music at late hours and told to shut lights by 11 pm.

He also says his visitors don't know much about being in a wildlife area, and from my conversation with him, I gleaned that this wasn't his main objective too. When I told him about the array of birds at his waterpoint and why not get a scientist or amateur fieldwatcher to document and inventory the birds there for the benefit of his customers, he told me he was more interested in what to cook for the day etc. He also added that "no one can touch me [meaning no authority]. Let them try". He also alleges corruption on the part of previous senior forest officials, which the RFO dismissed, saying he was witness at the incident Mahendranath mentions.

What ever the arguments, it is plain that Tiger Ranch symbolises the wildlife tourist venture that is primarily commercially orientated. While these ventures are definitely there for the purpose of profit, it is possible to keep environmental and wildlife concerns within its profit purview. He doesn't pay any money to BNP, doesn't see the need to.

The forest officials say they have no jurisdiction over him, because he sends his guests over by car to their safari ventures, and his land is outside their purview. But they are definitely in authority to check him if they find him in contravention of any forest or wildlife law. His vehicle was once caught on the roads at night by the forest guards. Rajenna says since then the entry points into BNP have been chained and locked.

The question is: how do you control the ventures that are coming up only for commercial benefit? One way is to restrict the number of wildlife resorts, says Rajenna. The other is, in my opinion, to make all resorts using the BNP for their guests to pay a security deposit and entry /maintenance fees to BNP, regardless of whether they are on non forest lands, or are not wanting to send their private vehicles into the park. The very fact that they are wildlife resorts should be enough to warrant a payment, which could perhaps be worked out on the number of rooms etc. of the resort.

There are more than seven private land owners around BNP. Ambuja Plantations has 10 acres of coconut plantations, exactly adjoining Tiger Ranch.
Khodays - 180 acres
Krishna Prasad, a friend of scientist Ulhas Karanth has 10 acres. Umadevi, originally the owner of Krishna Prasad's land, has 2 more acres here.
Biju Ramesh, has 350 acres of solar-electric fenced land, after Mangla village. Is rumoured that he might start coffee plantations out there.
Srivara Resorts, adjacent to Bush Betta Lodge. Has connections with film actor Amrish.
40 -50 acres is owned by a doctor. Before Mangla village on the left.
At the southern end of BNP, there is already a KSTDC lodge, Mayura, that also send their guests by their own cars or by public bus to BNP's safaris. Another plot of land, fenced and owned by a local contractor called Nagaraj.

Given this scenario and keeping in mind the incentives for opening up wildlife resorts in KN, it is urgent that permission is granted on strict stipulations and controls.

**Possible Controls:**

- at least 10 acres of land, a minimum of half to be left wild for the free access and sustainability of wildlife

- A further incentive for those using renewable energy and resource systems

- A limit to the number of beds available at each accommodation. A 30-bed resort, sounds within the limits of control

- At least 50% of staff to be recruited and trained from local communities, with vacancies for tribals as guides

- Some measure of annual turnover to be put into local development, like a school, or a water-supply system etc

- Brochures and leaflets on environmental and wildlife regulations compulsory. A qualified zoologist on each resort compulsory.

- Payment of maintenance and entry fee to BNP. Each venture to be informed of how their money has been used annually by BNP officials.

- Security deposit to be paid to state govt.

- clear understanding of forest and wildlife laws.

- The Gol has brought out a revised guideline for wildlife tourism. Could be given to each entrant with penalty warning for defaulters and violators.

**Background:**

*Personal Research*

*Personal visit to the park*

*Personal visit to the resorts mentioned herein*
Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary (540 sq. km)

Declared a sanctuary in June 1974. Prior to 1974, this sanctuary was divided into two Reserve Forests, Chamarajanagara and Kollegal, of which Kollegal fell under the Territorial division of the Forest department. In 1992, the entire area came under the purview of the Wildlife Wing, according to the DCF of this sanctuary, Mr. Gogi.

Geographical Area and Tourism: A 110 km away from Mysore and 254 km away from Bangalore, the BRT wildlife sanctuary has a varied forest vegetation of moist deciduous and dry deciduous cover. The landscape is relatively unusual for KN, in that it is a combination of protected area and hill station. In other words, it is a protected hill, with some exceptions in land ownership. This uniqueness of hill station and wildlife sanctuary combined make this an attractive tourist option. The Rangaswamy temple, set up by the Mysore Maharajas some 400 years ago, is also an added attraction.

Other than villages surrounding the WLS in the foothills at Nallur, there are no villages or cultivation once the ghat section starts. About 30 km away and 45 minutes' drive up the hill is Kyatha deva raya Gudi, or KGudi, where the Jungle Lodges Tented Camp is situated. In this section of the sanctuary, other than a settlement of 80 families at Kennare Colony, there is no human habitation. The tribals here too are not very visible. So this is a lonely mountain range, relatively undisturbed, quite a tourist attraction.

Fauna and Tourism: So, with an altitude varying from 3300 ft to 5000 ft above sea level and a mean annual rainfall of 1500 mm, BRT offers a variegated flora and fauna. Though I saw fauna on a much smaller scale than in Bandipur, forest guards and Jungle Lodges manager (of which more later on) tell me the animals and forests here are much denser than Bandipur. One drive produced 20-30 gaur, much slimmer than the Bandipur ones (possibly due to climbing altitudes?), a few barking deer and two herds of spotted deer (about 40). The Grey Jungle Fowl seems quite well settled here, I saw about two each day... there must be eggs around in the undergrowth!

The animals here are generally more shy than the Bandipur ones, but that does not seem to deter the type of tourists who come to view them. The Jungle Lodges manager, Mr. Gungaswami, says he and his group saw a leopard sleeping on a tree the day before I arrived, a very rare sight. He also added that his guests made so much noise at seeing the panther that the creature ran away, depriving the tourists themselves of a privileged sight. I had gone, with the same group, the next day and on requesting low voice tones from my jeep companions, they readily complied. Most visitors, Indians, educated, middle class or any category, have the most amazing ignorance and insensitivity
towards wildlife. Amazing, considering our cultural background and Vedic traditions, residues of which are still there in our traditional middle class, which binds our values to our natural surroundings. Yet most Indians know nothing at all of wildlife or, even if they do know, are insensitive to its current fragility.

Under these circumstances, it is necessary for all wildlife tour operators to enforce strict discipline while viewing wildlife. Guests need to be told politely, before each drive, the rules to be followed in the jeep and on sighting of animals. I also see the need for a strict manager, who exudes the administrative authority necessary for enforcing these reminders to a group who start with the 'advantage', from the tourist manager's viewpoint, of paying money for the experience.

Tourism: The only people in this sector around here, so far, are the Jungle Lodges & Resorts, a semi governmental organisation running wildlife tourism ventures in Karnataka. Situated right in the midst of the sanctuary at KGudi, they have their tents pitched in the compound of the Forest Rest House, originally part of the Maharaja of Mysore's hunting lodge.

Because of their proximity to the Forest Rest House, and apparent good relations with the Forest Department, JLR use the Rest House fairly freely, and on one occasion, the use of the forest supervisor, (forest guards' houses are situated just outside the JLR and Forest compound at KGudi). Given the sole say and sway, in tourism in this WLS and the free access to forest amenities and staff. it seems necessary that their operations in this WLS remain watched for their commitment and responsibility to the forests and its tribal community nearby at Kenchana.

The issue of their responsibility and regulated activities takes on more relevance given the fact that they are expanding their operations here. Currently they have 8 huts (2 beds each), but are in the midst of expanding into one more log hut and further beds in the old hunting lodge. A kitchen, dining hall and 4 - 6 bed dormitories are coming up here very shortly. Mr. Nagaraj, in charge of constructions at JLR (and a forest officer) tells me they will also be using the forest rest house beds if necessary, (another example of free access to forest amenities) bringing their total beds to a large forty in number. Whether their operations will manage to conduct forty tourists and the overheads that go with this, without threatening the environment, more so given their current standards of operation, remains in doubt.

Things right now are fairly messy in the campus, with debris thrown onto side gullies and plastics and packaging materials seen around the place. Even more important, the waterhole situated at the backyard of this campus, used by Forest guards and JLR staff alike (JLR pump their water from this pond) is in a mess. There is diesel spilt around near the JLR generator, which definitely finds its way
into the waterhole which is also used by elephants. The paths near the waterhole have become a toilet zone for the construction workers, it is not possible to walk in these areas right now. I have been told by Nagaraj that 'everything will be cleaned up' after constructions are over, but again, this remains to be seen.

Physical management apart, there are further questions to be raised at JLR here. While on visit here, a group of computer software professionals from the Oracle Co. (part of the Oracle multinational giant) came here for a night's stay. With a total of 10 people, this group made more noise than the entire campus together. Loud male laughter and accompanying female shrieks, this group then 'took over' the dining hall area with their noise, liquor and talk. Eight more guests in the same enclosure could hardly conduct a low conversation. The group had brought their liquor along from Bangalore, they sat in a rectangular by themselves, insensitive and unheeding of other guests using the same enclosure for dinner. There was loud laughter and Hindi jokes for the rest of us hapless residents, including the surrounding wildlife that night. Gunga swami, the manager of the campus, says if this segment of educated India do not heed wildlife rules, who will?

The question however, goes deeper than that. I asked one person from the group the next day if they had been informed of wildlife regulations to be followed while at the campus, or if they had been handed any leaflets by JLR. They hadn't. One youth, (most of them were youngsters with a senior group manager) said other than reading two lines on the web, he didn't know. One youngsters, fashionably 'chic' in a Project Tiger T shirt, the son of a serving forest officer at Corbett National Park in UP, agreed with me that their behaviour was insensitive, when I pointed it out to him. Their leader was nowhere in sight. And, even more depressing, one forest guard told me that this noise was nothing compared to the din in December...

Nagaraj, a forest officer himself, felt that if one group of people took the concept of wildlife tourism as a getaway holiday for relaxation, there was nothing that could be done. Which serves to highlight another dismal point: that of India's forest department itself being prone to insensitivity. If the son of a forest officer could be part of a noisy party with no concept of a wildlife holiday, and yet another forest officer feel the noise was 'not too much', two generations of forest officials, current and forthcoming, have not yet understood the fragility of India's wildlife. Environmental education needs to be imparted in the Forest Department first.
Veerappan seems to have full sway over the forest as well as the police. All police check posts on the main road at the SE of the WLS, where it comes in from Tamilnadu and the Satyamangalam range, are closed. The man therefore has free access to the forests and the main roads, an incredible state of affairs.

What needs to be pointed out is the forest department's total inadequacy in dealing with Veerappan's armed activities. A 550 sq. km territory with a 100 infrastructural staff (16% vacancies), have a total of 63 weapons to deal with him! Of these, 20 are .315 rifles, there is one pistol, one revolver and the remaining are guns, to deal with an armed group of terrorist poachers who have controlled these forests for the last forty years. In this level of forest bureaucracy, which doesn't have the mechanisms in force to support dynamism, (Veerappan shot the BRT DCF, Srinivas in 1992, widely acknowledged as being strong and individualistic), the forest department remains a toothless decaying body against Veerappan.

Other than the 'Veerappan problem', of which I'll come to later, the department, according to Gogi, not the best source of knowledge on its current state, seems to be doing well managing its tribal co-operative, LAMPS (Large Areas Multi-purpose Society), an outlet for tribals' sale of MFPs (minor forest produce). The Society, run in collaboration with the forest department, has Rs. 20 lakhs as its corpus, and has, this year, collected 12,000 kgs of lichens, paying the tribals Rs. 30/kg, as one example. Gogi says this is doing well, and has been one big reason for reasonable relations with the tribals inside BRT.

**Budget:** Runs typical of all forest departments, i.e. very heavy in infrastructure costs. Gogi says his annual budget ranges from Rs. 60 lakhs to one crore per year. Of this, 50% goes on infrastructure and salaries; road maintenance takes 6-7 lakhs, and crop compensation for elephant damage takes about Rs. 3 lakhs. That leaves him with 20 lakhs for management of BRT, a tiny fraction of what amount comes in.

Gogi also says that the income from JLR operations here is very small. Considering that this tourist venture has sole sway over the forests, it needs to be looked into why the income (for entry fees etc) from it is insignificant.

And, as recommended and practised in Bandipur, entry fees and maintenance fees from JLR to the forest department need to be paid directly into BRT itself, to enable the sanctuary to sustain its wildlife and its local communities, to the best interests of all.

**Poaching and Tourism:** According to Gogi, has more trouble with the Kollegal side, but in 1997, there had been only two incidents of elephant poaching, a number I think serious enough. A point to note is that Kollegal town has been featuring in poaching stories from Bandipur and Nagarhole too. The Tibetan
And the other foremost issue is that of the urgent necessity of disseminating information on rules and guidelines to be followed in jungle camps by JLR authorities. Again, as mentioned before, I state it necessary to have a strict manager on the campus. This category of moneyed, urban 'educated' India need to be educated and sensitised to wildlife issues in India.

There are even further questions on this tourist complex here. How has the Forest department given permission to extend constructions deep in jungle territory? How is liquor allowed to be consumed inside a forest complex? Even if JLR do not serve liquor, why are they allowing it in?

**Budget:** Difficult to get this information out of JLR. But the total venture has had a turnover of Rs. 2.30 crores for 1996 - 1997, of which expenditure has been 2.10 crores, leaving a net profit of 10 lakhs. In 1997, they are anticipating a turnover of Rs. 2.7 crores of which 2.4 will be expenses. Their MD says that will post a profit of Rs 15 lakhs. Having taken over with heavy debts, they have cleared all debts in 1996, and started posting profits after that. So the 10 or 15 lakhs profit is not really the whole picture; without debts to clear (the govt. ran into debt and difficulty with a private tour company, Tiger Tops, and then formed the JLR to take over in around 1989), JLR would have posted fairly high profits.

But KGudi camp costs an average of Rs. 50,000 per month for running expenses and over one lakh in season time. 50% occupancy off season, full occupancy in season. The manager can't say now how much of diesel he'll consume; will be able to do so only after extensions are made. But JLR spend Rs. 4 lakhs per month on diesel costs, as high as the other ventures around Bandipur. Water consumption no one says or thinks too much of, because of the pond at the back.

**The Forest Department:** With a new DCF, Mr. Gogi, having taken over in July 1996, and been preoccupied since then with Veerappan, I have not seen the department do anything about management of the place. No officers, according to their HO decree are allowed into the forest; this lot take this notice to the letter, they aren't even willing to travel on the main road into BRT! The entire district (JLR, VGKK and individuals) are amused at the department's extraordinary precautions, much to the irritation of Gogi! I'm told he has police protection around his residence. "Who will kidnap him from town ", asks Mallesh, co ordinator of VGKK, located in the BRT Hills, who hasn't seen the new DCF since he took over the post.
refugee camps’ connection to this is not totally above suspicion, though no official was directly able to point at them. But in 1995, according to a booklet on poaching brought out by Sukumar and Menon, the main accused in a huge poaching haul in Delhi was a Tibetan refugee. The Dalai Lama had consequently given the Indian government full liberty to act according to the law in dealing with Tibetan poachers.

According to tourism ventures, all whom I’ve spoken with so far say they can help in this by keeping an eye on what goes on inside a protected area. Though, as Gajendra Singh of Tusker Trails says, there is no inspection of their premises by forest officials, so a tourist resort could equally well be involved in poaching, having lax supervision. But the Jungle Lodges, according to its MD, is “like a check dam” against poaching and forest irregularities. "They are the eyes and ears inside the forest ", he says. This sentiment is corroborated by Mahendranath of Tiger Ranch outside Bandipur. He narrates an incident, which I haven’t corroborated, where his wife sat on a bullock cart carrying felled timber and refused to move till the forest authorities had been notified.

**Veerappan** : The most famous, or infamous, of all Indian poachers has his KN camp in BRT, in the ranges of the Satymangalam forests bordering Tamilnadu, though he has been recorded to have camped up north too in the Dodda Sampige Reserve Forests.

Other than holding the entire forest department and state governemnt to ransom all these years, and especially since July 1997, what seems intriguing is how Veerappan does not seem to bother either the JLR camp, or the tribal colony at Kinnare or the VGKK tribal settlement inside the BR hills. No one was able to give me one instance of having been bothered independently by Veerappan in his forty year reign in these hills. Though Mallesh, co ordinator of VGKK does admit that one of his tribal workers at the hospital was given Rs. 300 by Veerappan, when he accidentally came upon him recently, and told to keep quiet. Veerappan reportedly took down the names of his entire family and threatened the boy his family would suffer if he told the police or forest officials. The boy kept quiet, telling Mallesh and others about it, only when Veerappan had released the 7 forest guards he had taken as hostage.

Considering he has a notoriety for kidnapping, I asked the JLR manager if he was not worried about his foreign guests becoming kidnap targets by Veerappan. That would, after all, be the best way of getting national and international attention to his demands of general amnesty, and India already has an unfortunate history of this in Jammu and Kashmir. Gungaswami was dismissive, though another official, Nagaraj, said the guests are informed there may be a slight risk in BRT. Gungaswami didn't know of any information given tot he tourists, he himself says nothing to them. Anyway, there is a sense of
joking about Veerappan here, with the man having been glamourised through the press and taking on a larger than life gloss.

He certainly seems to have become part of the tourist itinerary... The driver of my vehicle showed me, much as he would any other tourist, where Veerappan had camped with his hostages in July 1997, stopping the vehicle to point out the clearing at the top of the hill. He pointed out the trail inside the jungle which his people used to go buy rations... the man has taken on curiously thrilling proportions, considering he is a diehard criminal.

Since he seems to have become the 'star attraction' of the BRT sanctuary, it seems appropriate to mention a few details of his background. Born in Gopinatham village in the Satyamangalam forests, he started poaching from the age of 13, somewhere in 1955 - 1956, being introduced to it by Sevian Gowda, a known poacher. Beginning with small money-earning activities, he became hardened enough not to attend his mentor's funeral when he died some years ago.

By the late 1970s, he had gotten commercially oriented. When big money started coming in, he began exortion payments from all those who he came against, government officials, individual businessmen and contractors etc. He later claimed he was given no option other than this paying practice; that he was not given a chance to amend and hence he was not able to come out of the forests. He then says in his confession to the Tamil publication Nakeeran's editor Gopal, that because of being persecuted by forest officials he was coerced into keeping them under him by threatening them. Rival poaching groups also targeted him through the government and hence he was forced to keep up his exortion and threat activities.

DCF Gogi disagrees with this view Veerappan puts out, saying the man was a deliberate criminal. There have been instances of his killing off an entire family in Bedgudi village, one of whose members had informed on him. He has managed to live all these years inside these forests by terrorising the villagers into silence, says Gogi. In 1994, as a further example of village animosity, Gogi says Veerappan's wife was kidnapped and raped. Veerappan's retribution was in killing the entire village off, though I don't have the name of the village here. Officially he has been responsible for 130 killings, but no one knows what the real figure is, says Gogi.

He has also been attributed to killing and poaching 2000 elephants, but this also is hard to corroborate, though there is no doubt that the male adult tusker population of the Nilgiri biosphere region is gone. Since he was the kingpin of poachers in this region, he could be attributed to a massive amount of ivory poaching. He later turned to sandalwood smuggling. An idea of the magnitude
involved can be worked out from the one instance, in 1991, when a store of 60 tonnes of sandalwood was found in Silvekal beat.

An equal idea can be had of the intricacy of involvement in Veerappan's smuggling and poaching procedures, since such huge hauls cannot be transported without official cognisance. He has reportedly, ministerial connections in Tamilnadu. I'm not too familiar with Veerappan right now to be able to point to the KN state government's relationship with Veerappan.

*Tribal Colonies inside BRT and Tourism*: About 2 km further up from the JLR camp, this settlement of houses built by the FD and BDO (Block Development Office), have around 500 people inside 120 families. A striking difference to Nagarhole's Kuruba tribals, these Soligas have only 4 to 5 children per family, whereas the Kurubas have 12 to 13 on an average (personal census taken in Kakanakote range in Nagarhole).

Much better off than Melkamanahalli, a relocated village outside Bandipur. This lot are fairly well looking, say they don't have much problems with the Forest department, except on the issue of land. The leader of the place, Konnera Gowda was away in Delhi and his brother Raju spoke with me on behalf of the colony.

Says when they were relocated from different areas of the sanctuary to this place, (inside the WLS), only 80 families were given land @ 1.5 acres each.

*Background:*

*Personal Research*
*Personal visit to BRT*
*Personal visit to all places mentioned herein*
*Personal conversation with DCF Gogi, BRT wildlife sanctuary*
*Personal conversations with Mr. Gungaswami, Manager of the Jungle Lodges camp at KGudi.*
*Personal conversation with forest guards, tribal people, head of Kenneri Colony, Raju, officiating in the absence of his brother, Kenchana, who is the head of this colony.*

*Reading: Jungle Lodges literature*

Bannerghatta National Park.
Case Study. March 1996.

Notified as a National Park in 1974.
104.27 square km.
DCF: Mr. Venkatesh. (March 1997)

Just 25 km away from Bangalore city, this park is a very popular tourist spot for visitors from the city, especially on Sundays.

Geographical Area and Tourism; The park is elongated and because of this has no core zone or sanctum area. The whole park is however, not open to tourists, visitors being allowed only in the zoo area and safari enclosure. A wall is being built all along the park's boundaries, mainly because of elephant straying.

A 14 square kilometre area is fenced in, housing a total 13 lions and tigers, brought in from different areas of India. They are fed by the forest department every evening in their cages, and let out every morning. I'm told they come back on their own every evening, because of their being fed. Tourists are taken to this enclosed area for a 40 minute safari.

There is also a zoo enclosure in this tourist-habited area, where a variety of animals are housed and caged for viewing. While the world over, the concept of zoos are changing to wildlife breeding and studying zones, zoos in India, this one included are still propagating the concept of viewing and sighting wildlife.

That this concept is fostering an attitude in the Indian mindset that an animal is for 'viewing' is borne out by what the DCF noted. Venkatesh said that he has a large number of his visitors complaining that they are tired of viewing the same animals each year, and would like a 'newer variety'.

The park does very well financially from these visitors. In 1995-96, there were 508,000 visitors of whom 3000 were foreigners. The revenue earned from this was Rs. 45 lakhs in 1995-96, and Rs. 50 lakhs, and 4 thousand in 1996-97, but this has to go back to the state's forest treasury. From this Rs. 80 lakhs is given by the state for the entire management of the park. A 40-minute safari costs a nominal Rs. 12.

That this system has a negative effect on the status and maintenance of the park is shown by both Bannerghatta and Bandipur examples. In Bandipur, fees are so low, that in spite of 55,000 visitors in 1996, only 18 lakhs was generated as tourist revenue. Yet 5 elephants kept for tourism activities costs the park Rs. 22 lakhs to maintain, excluding all other tourism costs.
And in Bannerghatta, the DCF laments that had he been able to keep the Rs. 45 lakhs that was generated, the money could have gone to generate captive breeding schemes and other zoo programmes.

The viewing public however, are reasonably orderly. There is hardly any littering around, the forest officials say no one chucks food into the animals' cages. The place does look very clean and well-maintained. There is also not much teasing of animals (there is a cage with the sign "animal teasers will be kept here").

Bannerghatta however, seems to fall foul of the Central Zoo Authority regulations, in November 1997. A newspaper report says the central zoo authorities have threatened the zoo with closure for failing to comply with its regulations. Elephants are kept chained (I didn't see that in 1996), and animals are kept in cages far smaller than the stipulated size.

According to this report, the park is under severe financial pressure and cannot undertake the CZA reforms, which would need at least Rs. 1.2 crores.

The park also faces other pressures, such as stone quarrying and mining activities going on inside its area, with the forest officials having to take this matter up to court. An example of this is the illegal quarrying going on for 2/3 years before 1996 near Ragihalli forest range. The quarries are getting permission from mandal Panchayats, who don't have the authorisation to give them. The wildlife law says there should be no quarrying within 1 km radius of a national park, but survey no. 69 is private and under quarrying, immediately bordering the park. The impacts of this are definitely felt in the flora and fauna of the park.

There are also legal tangles involving land in pockets inside the park. In 1980, the park had acquired 156 acres, but has so far only taken possession of 98.29 acres. The remaining lands in question are still in private possession, with their owners filing cases in court.

There is also the problem of man-elephant conflict, with 782 cases of crop compensation @ 70,000/- an acre being given out in 1995 - 96, costing a total 8.25 lakhs. This problem is in spite of there being enough habitat for the elephants of Bannerghatta, where according to its DCF, every 2 km can support one elephant. But it's a classic example of behavioural change in elephants, where they still resort to crop fields inspite of sufficient habitat and food.

There is also the 'VIP problem'. Bannerghatta gets numerous political guests and visitors, more so because of its proximity to the city, that does not allow the DCF to adequately pay attention to park maintenance and administration.
One significant factor in this park's tourism is that it is mainly non-residential or 'day tourism'. There is a lodge run by the tourism department that is outside the park. This fact, together with most of the park area being out of bounds for tourism has allowed for lesser impact of these huge numbers of people inside a protected area.

**Background:**

*Personal research*

*personal visit to Bannerghatta*

*Personal conversation with DCF Venkatesh.*

*News report: Deccan Herald of 11.11.1997*

More Case Studies in Brief
Rajiv Gandhi National Park/ Hunsur P.O., Mysore district.

The issues of confrontation between the tribal communities of Rajiv Gandhi NP and the forest authorities, between them and the World Bank and finally between them and the Taj group of hotels for their tourism complex inside the park is well publicised and documented already.

Other than these, there are other issues of pressure on this park, which affect, in an indirect though interrelated manner, further tourism here. The first of these is a curious phenomenon: there are 25 sawmills in Hunsur alone. Is it possible for 25 sawmills to run profitably on 'deadwood' from the park nearby? That there is a possible illegal-timber link to these sawmills is suggested by the tribal villages in the region who allege forest guards are bribed by local businessmen.

One outcome of the tribals' current struggle is that they seem to have more confidence in taking on a policing role regarding illegalities in the forest. In Kollige village near Murkal, they have confronted local tobacco farmers and forest guards linked with timber smuggling, issuing an ultimatum to stop.

Tobacco farms are definitely another source of pressure on the national park. This highly wood-intensive tobacco-curing method needs 2 to 3 lorry loads of timber for curing produce from a 8-acre plot. 1 acre needs 5 to 6000 plants.

Yet the tobacco farm hand gets a meagre Rs. 25 per day from this massively powerful industry. Two workers on a tobacco plot here tell me this is the amount they receive. A cow herd standing nearby is wry about their earnings: whatever they earn goes right back to the tobacco itself, he tells me.

The tribals have now told the tobacco agriculturists here, who they say are bribing guards to smuggle illegal timber, that if they want forest produce then they must give up their lands for community forestry use and share the timber. Where previously the tribals would have been powerless or unable to do anything about this, they are now openly confronting the landowners. This agitation and the victorious court order have given them an assurance and confidence that can be viewed both positively and negatively, the negative side being that they have now taken matters into their own hands, the positive being they are more articulate about their rights and have become more organised. Certainly the NGO leaders are militant: "this is our forest ", says Srikant of DEED.

Meanwhile, the forests remain calm and beautiful, offering mute but stolid comfort. But how long that comfort can be derived from these pristine areas is a question that cannot be wished away.
The Nagarhole Tribals: On Fire

The atmosphere in the wood-panelled conference room of the Karnataka Forest Department's Aranya Bhavan was both highly-charged and bifurcated. On one side sat World Bank and forest Department representatives, while NGOs and tribal representatives faced them in a hostile round table. The issue concerns the World Bank's $67 million Ecodevelopment Project for seven National Parks (NP) in India: the Gir and Rajiv Gandhi/Nagarhole NPs and the Pench (MP), Ranthambore (Rajasthan), Periyar (Kerala), Palamau (Bihar), and Buxa (West Bengal) tiger reserves.

In Karnataka, the tribal groups want to know why they were not consulted by the forest authorities in a plan that involves their relocation from the park and concerns them very deeply because they have lived in Nagarhole since centuries. They say their lifestyle of living off forest produce (tubers, greens, honey etc) is an ancient one that allows for regeneration of both forest and wildlife, they are not the ones responsible for damaging the park and that relocating them would uproot both their roots and culture. And anyway, who has assumed, on their behalf, that they need money for their sustenance? The World Bank, on the other hand, says the money was asked as a loan ($28million comes under a 35-year IDA credit) by the Indian government, that their relocation will be voluntary, if they don't want the money for their village development, that's fine, because the project will continue without them.

These arguments however seem to be the bubbling surface of an issue that runs heated and deep on whether tribals should stay in the park or go out and sharply divides anyone who is otherwise sensible. Though the World Bank's Ecodevelopment Plan, which seeks to reduce pressure on the park from inside and peripheral communities through a series of alternatives (like basket-weaving and bee keeping said a forest official) and says it involves participation in the decision-making by local people (who are saying they weren't even consulted in the first place), tribal representatives say their plan will only benefit a few land-owning communities who will grow richer while the majority landless will be deprived of their main source of food, the forest.

Part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, the 643.32 sq.km Nagarhole NP has mainly Adivasi Kurubas besides Yeravas and Paniyars living in roughly 96 'haadis' or hamlets mostly in the SW and NE regions of the park, and in a 10-km periphery, while more live in the next 10-km border (which has not been taken into account by the WB plan). Though there are no written records of their origins in this place, they say they have been living in what is now the park since aeons, according to information handed down through the generations, a theory that could possibly be credible if one were to go by well-known ecologist Madhav Gadgil's Peopling of India theory that shows genetically that tribal groups were

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1 This article appeared in Statesman, Sunday, January 19, 1997 by Keya Acharya
the original inhabitants of India. A gentle and simple people, they are deeply dependent on community living, with a reluctance to strike it out on their own or in nuclear families and insecure without their appointed headman to speak for them. They have, above all, a deep fear of being moved out: an old woman I spoke with in the Kakanakote area (SW Nagarhole) refused to give me her name; she was afraid she might then go up for rehabilitation. Her argument for staying on, however, was passionately simple: "we have planted these tall trees that you see around you in British times", she told me, "why should we cut them now? We don't need the wood for tables and houses. You do.". The Forest department has however earmarked the Kakanakote area as an elephant corridor into the Periyar NP in Kerala which is contiguous, a plan they want to implement with WB money and which they say is urgently needed for the elephants, hence they want to rehabilitate the haadis in this region. The old woman's answer to this was stoic. We have lived all these years with the elephants, we will continue to live with them, she said.

What seems curious is how the forest authorities have managed to antagonise a culture so attuned to living in the forests. Sreekant, convenor of Tribal Joint Action, based near Nagarhole claims frequent harassment of tribals by forest guards who do now allow them to gather deadwood or fruits etc, unless bribed and of insensitive and highhanded forest officials who have not taken note of tribal voices through the years, resulting in the present impasse. He does not see how a problem that has festered for years can be solved in a 5-year term with foreign money solicited in their name, in an expenditure breakdown that uses 742.5 lakhs as annual running costs (in the WB project) and a mere 66.47 lakhs for village ecodevelopment under the 'baffling' heading of Participatory Microplanning and Implementation Support. Nagarhole's ACF, Mr. Dhananjaya, while not being able to comment on the WB project, says there are no jobs that the department can give these people (the tribals set fire to this part of the park themselves and then get hired by the department as firebeaters, a job they are skilled in), that their numbers are swelling because of large families that the tribals see as security and thinks the forest will not be able to sustain them indefinitely, so it's better they go to areas where there are better facilities for health, agriculture and schooling. Besides, the younger generation are wanting the benefits of urbanisation and turning to illegal money sources (like poaching and smuggling) for buying consumer goods. There are, however, only rare cases of sandalwood smuggling and poaching by tribals. Srikant, in answer to Dhananjaya's apprehension of a consumer lifestyle inside the forest, says those tribals becoming professionals like doctors, teachers etc will only be allowed in if they can adapt to their ancestral lifestyle and contribute their services to the community. Ideologically, it sounds great.
What seems less arguable though, within this deeply complex problem, is the forest department's 'top-down' approach (of policy being defined from the top levels without adequate representation from the grassroots), an attitude that has fitted in with the World Bank's reputation for controversy in third world countries. (the Narmada dam controversy is an easy example). While Dhananjaya who is the officer responsible for interaction with the tribals in this region, and is the one directly impeded due to lack of vehicles and communication equipment, especially in emergencies like a fire, knew little of the WB project, the park's DCF, Shekhar was new both to the park and its project details, being handed a folder on it when he took over in October 1996, well into the antagonisms between the two sides. He however, thought relocation would be a good idea once the tribals got to see the lands in question (outside the NE periphery of the park). 6500 individuals from 84 settlements had, after all, been relocated successfully in Parea earlier on when the park got demarcated as one. The tribals of Kakanakote however, want lands like the Odiga community in the region have, on lease by the forest department. The descendants of runaways from the Vijaynagar army (Odiga in Kannada translates to 'running away'), this community pays the ridiculous sum of Rs.4 per acre annually to the department for the 'akkasali' or yearly, land they cultivate. The tribals say it is ironic that this community should have so much land while they, the original holders of the forests are barred out. There is however, no more land to lease out as Akkasali.

The forest department's self-assumed protocol also hasn't helped overmuch; DCF Shekhar had to travel over 50 kms from the Hunsur office to the rest house inside Nagarhole to 'greet' a retired boss, to cite a typical example. Why a retired PCCF (principal chief conservator), who in principle is an ordinary tourist in the park, needs strenuous official greeting is a telling question on inside bureaucracy in the department. Small wonder, then, with its energies thus diverted that relationships between tribals and forest officials have degenerated into fisticuffs and handcuffs.

Bhimeshwari Fishing Camp / Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

Run by the Jungle Lodges&Resorts, a semi governmental organisation, the fishing camp on the banks of the Cauvery is a popular choice for foreign anglers. This section of tourists, most of whom are regular visitors every year, are not concerned about commodities and comforts: 'sometimes they even forget to eat, says the camp's manager, Kumar.

The following article, published in The Sunday Statesman of December 01, 1996 by Keya Acharya, gives an idea of the issues involved in tourism and local communities in the area:
The only missing item was a copy of Izaak Walton's Compleat Angler, that uplifting paen (for anglers, that is) on the wonderful art of fishing. Otherwise the Visitors' Book for Anglers was a story in itself, a competition of words and sport amongst fishing lovers. The time Teri Disdale, an angler from the UK 'did well', he was fairly pithy: "Oh yeah.....", he wrote. The next year's fishing apparently wasn't all that good; he spake thus in the book: "Yawn....", was his drawled scrawl. Disdale has said he will be back again to India with his girlfriend. (If the girlfriend isn't an angler, she might just reinforce Teri's last comment, or worse, turn out to be, instead of the fish, 'the one that got away.')

And all this happens in a beautifully quiet bend in the river Cauvery at Bhimeshwari, 100 kms out of Bangalore. The Cauvery Fishing Camp is run by Jungle Lodges, a semi-governmental organisation, on a 12km river stretch that has many little rapids and deep pools below them, ideal habitat for the endangered popular sport fish called Mahseer (named for its big head, 'maha
seer'). The fish wait quietly in the pools (six of them in this camp with names like Tiger Pool and Leopard Pool, below the rapids for smaller fish which they feed on. A favourite sporting fish since British days, Teri Disdale caught a 104-pounder, at the Camp Pool, just 3 lbs less than the world record of 107lbs, also caught in this stretch of the river way back in the '40's. In accordance with its endangered status, the fish are released back into the river after their proud masters have held sway over them for the time span of a photograph. Once caught, a rope is pulled around the fish's gills and he is released into a shallow stretch to regain his strength. Then he is perched onto a scale along with his rope, weighed, photographed and sent packing.

Nevertheless the fish are caught. Poaching is a gravely serious problem here, with dynamite being used, 10 to fifty sticks at a time in one group of poachers, with as many as 30 to 40 groups in a day during July to October, peak breeding season. Kumar, the camp's manager, says both police and forest officials take no action, resulting in increasing poaching. An old temple at Muthathi, a few kilometres downstream sees a steady stream of visitors on holidays and Sundays, who buy the mahseer on their way out from villagers, who say this is their only means of livelihood. Kumar however, says village co-operatives set up to buy produce from the community (such as honey, woven baskets etc) do not yield quick money as in the sale of poached fish and hence are ignored. Another reason for the high poaching is the close proximity of these villages to surrounding granite-mining areas, which in Karnataka is controlled by a powerful lobby with political clout which extends into the villages. Dynamite from the mining is hence easily available as is help for commercial large-scale poaching. Since the area falls within the recently structured Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, it comes under the jurisdiction of the forest department's wildlife wing, who unfortunately have no infrastructural facilities for protecting water stretches in its purview.
Given this scenario, how successful will the Jungle Lodges' eco tourism be is a question. Though their fees are far lower than elsewhere in the world ($125/day for foreign anglers; Rs. 1500/day for Indians), this contributes mainly to in-house revenue without much benefit to wildlife conservation in the area. Village antagonism towards being barred out of a livelihood that is reserved for the rich foreigner or Indian seeking sport could degenerate into a problem that cannot be controlled by an increase in patrol guards, as Mr. Ray, the director of Jungle Lodges has worked out as a measure. The current unrest from the Kuruba tribe of the Nagarhole National Park in Karnataka or the Van Gujjars of Rajaji National Park in UP at the forest department's ecodevelopment plan with World Bank aid for 7 national parks in India, is proving that no ecoplan works without local participation.

There seems to be some hope for the mahseer, though. The Wildlife Association of South India (WASI), an award-winning NGO have set up alternative mahseer fishing cultures in a few riverine islets of the Cauvery, one in the village of Muthathy itself. Their project co-ordinator, an ex-army colonel, tells me their aim is three-fold: of providing food, status (fishermen are looked down upon here) and livelihood as well as an employment generation scheme. Experiments conducted by Telco have shown that even though the Mahseer is a fresh-water fish feeding off carp near rapids and fast-flowing currents, the fish can survive even in polluted waters through a process of aclimatisation. Colonel Naidu says a census in the Cauvery river, conducted by WASI from December '95 to May '96 (peak season) yielded 143 fish of which 27 were a fat 80 - 106 lbs (all were released), so he is optimistic at this point in time of the status of the fish. WASI has taken another 12km stretch of the river on lease from the forest authorities and allow their members to camp in limited numbers, in strict accordance with their rules and in a bid to spread environmental awareness.

Meanwhile the Jungle Lodges' fishing camp continues to attract both anglers and fulsome comments. A group sitting by, watching this dark river and wondering the cause of its mysterious spreading into dry side-beds overnight was informed by Kumar that the KrishnarajaSagar dam upstream must have released some of its waters. Since the river flows into Tamilnadu, Kumar's information elicited one comment that spoke cubic volumes on the interstate river rivalry between Karnataka and Tamilnadu: how come 'they' (Tamilnadu) don't take into account all this 'extra' water, grumbled someone.

Teri Disdale however, has no cause to grumble. He showed the photograph of himself with his fat mahseer to the fishing rod company that he uses and was promptly awarded a sponsorship for travelling to the fishing camp every year. In view of the 'economic liberalisation' that is taking over India, I wonder if Indian companies will follow suit. My Woodland walking shoes have come out none the worse for wear from this river trek. Will the Woodland shoe company please take the hint?

In this existing scenario that you have read of in the previous pages, the Karnataka government is now introducing an increase in tourism in the state, with special emphasis being given to wildlife tourism and 'eco tourism'.

~ developing wildlife tourism with the intention of enabling tourists to appreciate the state's flora and fauna,
~ providing socio economic benefits to the state's people.

There is no specific category that wildlife tourism has been slotted under, though the other areas have been classified. Generally speaking, wildlife tourism falls under categories C and E, which are identified as Special Tourism areas. The Master Plan for Tourism Development has however a special Wildlife Circuit identified.

The Policy offers investment subsidies varying from 10% to 30% of value of the asset in lakhs, up to a maximum of 30 lakhs.

Sales tax exemptions varying from 3 to 7 years from date of commencement, not exceeding 50% of actual investment assessed at the time of commissioning of the unit.

An additional subsidy of 5% of fixed asset value for Minority Communities / Women / Physically handicapped / Ex-servicemen. 3/4/5-star hotels are not eligible for this subsidy.

Luxury Tax exemption for 7 years.

Stamp duty exemption and concessional registration charge of Rs. 1 per Rs.1000 on financial loans availed from recognised financial institutions.

Part expenses of Tourism and Hotel Management courses to be borne by the Tourism department if such courses are conducted through ITI, government polytechnics and aided institutions.

50% of expenses for training of Hotel Staff/ Guides, if training is conducted in association with the Tourism Department.

Incentives to new travel agencies: Rs. 10,000 off on various infrastructural costs, such as telephone installation, stationery and printing charges etc.

An additional 15% subsidy benefit for those installing non conventional energy systems, subject to a maximum of 10 lakhs.

No fee for conversion of agricultural land to industrial use. Full access to the help of the KIADB (Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board) in land acquisition matters.

Single Window Agency Clearance to be undertaken by the Tourism department.

In accordance with this Policy, the department has prepared a Master Plan that envisages a massive investment of Rs. 4500 crores in the entire Tourism sector. Three-fourths of this investment is expected to come from the private sector.

In the Wildlife Circuit of the Plan, the department has proposed a large increase in bed capacity in a number of parks and sanctuaries:
~ In Bandipur, a total of Rs. 450 lakhs to be used for constructing 50 cottages and a 200-bed capacity dormitory.
~ Nagarhole is to have a similar increase in cottages, with one hundred more beds in their dormitories.
~ BRT Sanctuary has Rs. 300 lakhs set out for 60 cottages, while the Karapur Lodge of the Jungle Lodges at Nagarhole and the Bhimeshwari fishing camp at the Cauvery wildlife sanctuary will get an additional 10 tents with a bed strength of 40.
~ Dandeli to have 50 new cottages for Rs.250 lakhs.
~ Similar increases will be undertaken in Muthodi, Nisargadhama, Bannerghatta and Sharavathi.

* The department will also take all steps to facilitate land acquisition for private ventures at these places.

* A total investment of Rs. 95 lakhs for transport vehicles for safaris will be made at Bandipur, Nagarhole and BRT Hills.

Private resorts are to be encouraged to link up their transportation methods with the department, meaning a sort of joint venture whereby the hotels can operate their own vehicles for jungle safaris.

* Rs. 50 lakhs will be used for wayside facilities such as toilets and drinking water at these places.

* Rs. 75 lakhs will be spent on constructing trekking routes at Kudremudh and Dandeli. No specification is made on how these routes are to be made out.

* Rs. 290 lakhs has been earmarked for ecological conservation in habitat management and afforestation measures at these areas.

* There is no money set aside for any information dissemination method. The Plan says the existing system at each locale will take care of dissemination.
* A 33 KV sub station is proposed in Bhimeshwari and Ranganthittu at a cost of Rs.75 lakhs each. Power facilities to be upgraded at all tourist places.
* Finally, there will be Rs. 500 lakhs invested for mega projects in the Bhadra wildlife sanctuary area in Chikmagalur. Another sensitive zone at Madikeri, identified under Hill Resort Circuit, will see Rs. 5.7 crore for development.

The summary of investment for the period of 1997-2002 (Rs. In Lakhs)

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The New Tourism Policy: Areas of Vulnerability

Now, given this new policy and these large increases in constructions and bed capacities at various places, there are significant areas of vulnerability in wildlife and/or ecotourism.

1. The largest area of vulnerability is that there are no specific environmental guidelines for wildlife tourism. Had there been one, then quite a few areas could have been integrated and some sort of structure for such projects could have emerged. In 1992, the MEF had brought out a draft set of guidelines for wildlife tourism, but nothing came of them.

Though mandatory EIA (environmental impact assessment) needs to be done for clearance of such tourism projects by the state department of Environment and Ecology, standard assessment measures cannot apply to lands bordering protected areas, or those in independent pockets inside some of these areas. This is because such lands are intricately connected with wildlife ecology inside the park and local communities bordering it, and need a special form of assessment for commercial ventures.

An example of this is found in one of the tourism ventures bordering the Bandipur NP. Set up on 54 acres, under two names in Mangla village, the Tiger Ranch resort’s lands are in dispute, with a case pending in court against the proprietor’s legality in acquiring the land in question.

Apart from the dispute and legality of the lands in question, which I will come to later, there is a water hole here with an old, now disused dam called the Mangla dam. Forest authorities say the water hole is very strategic for wildlife in Bandipur, as are some of the neighbouring lands in the area, and have filed for inclusion of this water hole into forest lands. Had some sort of assessment of the area in relation to Bandipur been done prior to the resort opening, the location and necessity of that waterhole, especially in the dry months, would have been known.

2. Another sensitive point is in the area of land acquisitions. The help offered by the department and the KIADB, the waiver of conversion fees and the general promise for a speedy acquisition are areas that leave much scope for misuse, land disputes and other related issues.

The Tiger Ranch at Bandipur is again another illustration of this point. The land itself is in dispute, with a case in court filed by the DC’s office, claiming it to be part of tribal darkhasth lands, whilst the owner says he has records to show that the lands were private and have been bought legally. He has filed a Stay Order in Court, and is operating under thatStay Order, claiming that a senior ex-Chief
Wildlife Warden reversed the official permission he had obtained, because of non payment of a bribe to the person in question.

The venture pays no park entry fees or maintenance fees to the Forest department either at Bandipur or in Bangalore. He sends his guests privately to the park where they use the department's safari arrangements. I'm told that his private vehicles have been apprehended late in the night, driving his guests on the main road, and that forest officials have locked entry gates into the park at various places due to him. He has also been warned against log fires, electricity on late in the night and loud noise.

There is a question that arises from this type of 'eco tourism', wherein a venture exists at a particular place because of the park or sanctuary near it, but does not pay for that benefit. The Forest authorities have no jurisdiction over it because it is not on its lands, while the venture itself is not concerned with either wildlife or local communities: "I'm here to make money, and no one can touch me ", the owner of this resort told me. What is to be done with this form of ecotourism? I suggest bringing such ventures into the main fold by paying to the park by way of maintenance, a certain amount annually, to be fixed according to bed strength, regardless of its hotel-star category. Sizeable payments by an owner should, as it generally always has, elicit a certain measure of maintenance of the commodity being paid for, in this case, the use of the park. If a resort is operating as a wildlife venture and is paying the park in question for the benefit, it will pay more attention to keeping that park in order and abiding by its regulations.

3. The issue of incentives and subsidies is again suspect. Without some form of coordinated control, these incentives will largely be used by businessmen seeking to avail of depreciation benefits for their own existing businesses. It has proved to be a rule, instead of the exception in India. A newspaper clipping of Oct 24th, 1997, tells me the IT department has busted bogus depreciation claims running into crores of rupees in Chennai, whereby non existing machinery is 'bought' on paper, and then leased back to the seller after benefits have been claimed.

Separate incentives for women could also be misused. Land will just be bought in the wife's or daughter's or mother's name, making it possible to avail further benefits.

4. Ecotourism and Wildlife Tourism, as I have mentioned in the beginning are tourism forms that are in essence nature-oriented and educational. The recreational aspects that come along with 5-star leisure holidays are secondary, and ill advised in these sensitive zones.
This being the case, there is no specific attention being paid to environmental education in ecotourism. The Policy stipulates shared expenses for tourism diplomas through government polytechnics etc. but there are no wildlife tourism courses or ecotourism courses worked out for this.

Similarly, there are no environmental guidelines and awareness education programmes for the training of staff and guides for wildlife tourism as per policy guidelines.

An example of the critical need to impart and train staff in environmental education in ecotourism is demonstrated by an incident. Earlier in 1997, a crocodile was washed ashore by floodwaters onto the banks of a timeshare resort near Srirangapatna. By the time the Forest department authorities had been notified and had reached the resort, the hapless animal had been beaten practically to death by the resort's staff. Why was the reptile beaten up? Was the resort's manager aware of the incident? The resort's comprehensive response to this was simple: 'it was not a wildlife resort'.

5. In continuation of the information and education angle in ecotourism, there is no area earmarked specially for information dissemination which will include environmental education. The Master Plan notes that no money has been set aside for this because the system already exists.

But it doesn't. There are no leaflets on either rules or park details available at the park. Bandipur had none distributed when I went there. In cases where there is supposedly such literature distributed, the guests have not been aware of it. The Oracle group at the Jungle Lodges BRT camp is a symptomatic example of the ignorance and insensitivity of our ecotourists inside national parks.
**Recommendations for Wildlife Tourism**

1. A carrying capacity study to be done for each protected area, to determine the number of resorts the park and the local communities can sustain without damaging any of them.

2. A systematic planning thereafter to be taken up. This could include, among other things,
   a. a control on bed capacity
   b. a control on building size and structures/ huge structures, hotels, golf courses etc to be prohibited
   c. spatial distribution of each resort

3. 2/3 acreage of each resort to be compulsorily left in its natural state for the benefit of wildlife. A minimum stipulated acreage of at least 10 acres necessary for each venture. Study land use patterns in force here to see how land could be used for the benefit of wildlife, either by itself in isolation, or in connection to the park.

   In some cases, there is scope for a contiguity in land corridors, such as land near the Moyar gorge in Bandipur, which is both strategic and privately owned now.

4. Study the natural topography of the land to allow water catchment basins and soil conservation systems to exist. Such natural measures are not to be disturbed. If there are none, then the architect and landscape planner should create water catchment and soil conservation methods.

5. Compulsory renewable energy methods, such as solar/ biogas/ biomass systems to be used. The department could study the systems in existence now and help in the dissemination of information on them through leaflets etc. Renewable energy has, in any case, subsidies and incentives for their use from the centre, including low interest rates on loans from IREDA. We have local scientists who have proved and demonstrated the efficacy of such systems in Tumkur. The department could co ordinate with them.

6. Rules and regulations regarding operating in a sensitive zone; also rules for guests during safaris and during their stay there to be made strictly mandatory, with a stipulation of penalisation if any of these rules are flouted or ignored.

7. Paying of park entry fees and maintenance fees directly to the park in question. A detailed record of the use of such funds to be kept by the park and shown to the payer. Security deposit fees could be paid to the government directly.
Fees to be fixed according to bed strength, regardless of hotel category.

- This should apply to all resorts opening up on the peripheries of a protected area, regardless of whether they operate their vehicles into the park for safaris. Their identification as a wildlife tourism venture, means they are dependent, in a significant though intangible measure, on the wellbeing of the park in question. It is practical therefore, that they pay, since payment will ensure a certain level of maintenance of wildlife rules, regulations and maintenance from these operators. They, in turn, can demand good safari vehicles etc from the forest department.

8. Compulsory local community development, including training for various categories of work in the resort.
Renewable Energy Technology Use in Wildlife Tourism

One significant factor that emerged from a general study on resource consumption patterns in wildlife tourism resorts was the heavy dependence on diesel for generating electricity independent of the main grid supply. One reason for this is the erratic nature of the state power grid as also the location of the resort in a remote area which did not make it viable to set up cables for transmission from the substation. An indirect effect of this use of a nationally subsidised fuel is its direct relation to the country's, and the state's oil pool deficit and to our petroleum policy.

Conventional energy wisdom, especially in rural areas where resorts are situated, gives rise to controversies. It is resource-intensive (of coal or water or oil) which does not allow for equitable distribution of either these resources or their end-product for the local community at large. Besides this, it has a natural scope for environmental degradation.

This being the case, renewable resource energy technologies not only help the resort in their low costs, they consume less of a natural resource such as water, or oil, are non-polluting, and use 'waste' products as their main resource (dung or biomass etc). Over and above all these benefits, there is enough energy, (or water) which can be shared with the resort's immediate community. Apart from the economic sense, this could provide a source of local public relations.

Costs are so low that demonstration projects of various technologies in Tumkur district of KN have worked out to Rs. 10 each per light point and water tap per month. (1997) Villagers are willing to pay this amount for the benefit of drinking water in their taps and one fluorescent light in the evening.

Given below are some of the options available in Karnataka, with contact addresses for further information.

**Biomass Gasification**: Biomass gasification is the process of converting dry, solid biomass such as leaves, twigs, wood chips etc., into gaseous fuel. This biomass is put into a machine called a Woody Biomass gasifier, which has a cyclindrical compartment that holds the biomass used. This is then ignited and the resultant combustion which releases water vapour and carbon dioxide is then reduced into combustible gases of carbon monoxide, hydrogen, methane, hydrocarbons and inert gases of carbon dioxide and nitrogen. This product then undergoes a further cleaning process which needs to leave this 'producer gas' with less than 100 particles per minute of tar and dust, for its use in electric power generation. So a gasifier system basically has a reactor for generating gas, followed by a cooling and cleaning system.
This producer gas is then fed into a conventional diesel-generated engine (a 3.5 or 5 HP engine is sufficient for a 30/40-bed resort), which is used in a 'dual-fuel' mode of 80% producer gas and 20% diesel, which then in its turn can either power a water pump or be channelled into electric cables, whatever the need.

The renewable resource base, which is biomass, can be supplied on a planned basis by the resort. An 'energy forest' which can come from indigenously planted species on the resort's acres itself will be able to supply the reactor. All that is needed from these trees are dry fallen leaves, or small branches and twigs.

The resource base can also be either cattle dung, or saw dust or rice husk, the possibilities are numerous, according to the location of the resort and the 'waste' found there. For more details, contact:
Professor HN Mukunda,
Department of Aerospace Engineering,
Combustion, Gasification and Propulsion Laboratory,
Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore 560 012.
PH: 080-334 8536, 3092338, 3092645.
Fax: 91-80-334 1685.
mukunda@aero.iisc.ernet.in

Or
The Executive Director,
Karnataka State Council of Science & Technology,
Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore 560 012.
PH: 080-309 2212/334 1652

Or
Professor NH Ravindranath, CES, IISC, Bangalore 560 012.
PH: 080-331 5455.

Another Bio Energy possibility is Biogas from cattle dung, which can be used for either cooking gas or for KW power for use in pumping water or generating electricity. The contact addresses for information on these possibilities is the same as for Gasification.

**Solar Energy**: There are two forms of this energy mode right now: solar photovoltaic and solar thermal energy.

Solar thermal energy, used only for heating water for baths etc. has been proved successful by the market itself, though its initial installation costs tend to deter the common man from its usage, even though he may know that his long-term costs of electricity will decrease dramatically. For small scale industries such as wildlife resorts, they are ideal.
The solar water heater is based on the simple principle of heat absorption by a black surface. Its three main components are an insulated hot water storage tank, pipes to carry water to and from the tank and a collector. This consists of the Absorber collector, a black metal plate with water pipes for circulation fixed underneath, a Housing collector which protects this plate from the environment, an Insulation Collector packed inside to minimise heat loss, and the Glazing Collector which is a glass cover over the plate that allows radiation inside while preventing this heat escaping.

The black surface of this collector then absorbs heat from the sun's rays and transfers it to the water passing through the pipes. Hot air being lighter, rises to the storage tank while the same amount of cold water replaces it in a cycle for as long as the sun shines, till the entire water in the tank is heated. Installation costs vary from Rs. 8000 to Rs. 10000, excluding pipes.

Contact: Mr. Manjunath, Director, Karnataka Association of Solar Manufacturers, Bangalore. Ph: 080 - 333 7033. Mobile No: 98450 13380.

Solar Photovoltaic systems are currently very expensive to install. Worked on a different theory to thermal heat absorption, photovoltaic cells are made up of thin sheets of silicon with microns crossing over them. The silicon traps the sun's rays and the microns convert them to energy, an expensive process that is presently undergoing R&D abroad for a cheaper form in glass. This energy is then again stored in a separate battery.

A private entrepreneur, Mr. Harish Hande has set up a demonstration unit of a photovoltaic system in Puttur, Dakshin Kannada, which has proved so successful that he has banks and international trade-aid agencies like SIDA (Swedish small industries development corporation) offering to come in and help. Hande is offering 3 11 W fluorescent light bulbs and one black&white TV plug connection on a photovoltaic system for Rs. 16,000 for the entire package. This includes the costs of installation and bulbs etc. The life of the system is 20 years.

Contact:

Harish Hande: Mangalore. Ph: Mangalore 458193.

**Wind Energy**: Wind machines are expensive to install, especially for wildlife resorts. There are however, 2 / 3 wind farms working in various areas of Karnataka. The advantage in using power from this source, for wildlife resorts is that it comes cheaper than grid power.

Since Karnataka allows third party sale of wind power generated by an entrepreneur, a wildlife resort can 'buy' power directly from the entrepreneur @ Rs. 3 per unit approximately (this price goes down further in the long run). The resort however, draws this power from the state grid, but doesn't have to pay the DEB (electricity board) for this power. The meter is read and a notebook kept. The wind entrepreneur deals with the KEB, while the resort deals only with the wind entrepreneur.

The stipulation for this method is that a grid connection is necessary. Since the Tourism department has already taken cognizance of the need for grip supply for wildlife tourism, this should not pose a detriment.

**Contact**:

Dr. SK Tiwari,
Wind Engineering Consultant,
L 127, 9A Main Road,
Jeevan Bima Nagar,
560 075.
PH:
080 - 529 7309.

Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Ltd;
1, Coffee Board Building,
BR Ambedkar Veedhi,
Bangalore 560 001.
Ph: 080 - 228 2221.
Fax : 080- 225 7399.

There are a number of private sellers of wind power:
Victory Glass and Industries P.Ltd,
Mitford Lane,
Bangalore 560 025.
contact : Mr. SN Dey. Managing Director.

Subhash Turnkey Consultants,
Sunrise Chambers,
Ulsoor,
Bangalore 560 008.
All renewable energy technologies can avail of incentives and discounts from IREDA (renewable energy development agency). For information on this, contact the KREDL (the renewable energy development agency) at Coffee Board Building.

Background:

Personal research
Personal site visits of solar/wind units
General Background Reading

13. Informal Sector Services in Tourism. Dr. Errol D’Souza, Department of Economics, Goa University, Taleigao Plateau, Goa. Manuscript commissioned by the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, for use as a text in a course on Tourism Studies.
18. Literature on National Parks and Sanctuaries provided by the Forest Department. 1997.
19. Literature on Jungle Lodges & Resorts. Provided by Jungle Lodges & Resorts, Shrungar Shopping Complex, MG Road, Bangalore 560 001.