

Executive Summary

*In the wake of the crisis faced by the three prominent protected areas in Rajasthan viz. Sariska, Ranthambhore and Keoladeo the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan constituted a State Empowered Committee on Forest and Wildlife on 26th February, 2005. The disappearance of tigers in Sariska was shocking and the threat of tiger poaching in Ranthambhore was looming large. The SEC swung into action and implemented a series of measures in the affected PAs. An 'Action Taken Report' during the tenure of SEC is placed as **Annexure ES-1**. These measures saved the Ranthambhore Tigers from impending disaster.*

The SEC has made a series of recommendations for 'stemming the rot' and enhancing the management effectiveness for wildlife management both at the park and the state level. While site-specific recommendations have been made at appropriate places in the report, the generic recommendations have been summed up at the end. All major issues affecting the management of wildlife and protected areas have been addressed and several innovative approaches have been suggested which are expected to usher in a new era of wildlife conservation in the state.

One of the prime concerns of the SEC has been inter-alia to revive Sariska by re-introducing the tiger. This has never taken place anywhere in the world. This is the biggest challenge in front of the state and the country and we believe that a well conceived, coordinated strategy backed by sound science and political will is needed.

The current crisis has also exemplified the gross inadequacy of the field formations as well as the administrative setup at the state-level to effectively deal with matters both at the field as well as policy levels. A systematic re-structuring and overhaul of the present organizational structure of the wildlife wing is urgently needed in order to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate and responsibilities.

In the report specific recommendations have been made to improve all aspects of protected area management including protection and intelligence gathering, rehabilitation of villages, research and monitoring, tourism, population estimation and dealing with traditional hunting communities. A master plan for managing and preserving the natural and cultural heritage around Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve needs to be prepared.

At the state level a steering committee chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan has been proposed along with the establishment of a 'Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund'. It is re-iterated that a time-bound implementation of the recommendations made by the SEC is of vital importance.