

BATTLE ON TWIN FRONTS FOR SIMILIPAL FOOT – SOLDIERS

Every morning a faltering Gouranaga Charan Nayak gets out from his decrepit beat house in Chahala range in the 845 sq. km. core area of Similipal tiger reserve with a stick in hand.

It would be a long day before the forester, who was recently promoted after being a forest guard for 28 years, come back to his beat house in the evening.....

Armed with a lathi and often patrolling the park on foot alone, it is unlikely that the partially deaf forester can do much even if he come face to face with a gang of poachers.

Normally he does not carry the double barrel gun with himself, but field director of the reserve Debabrata Swain & Chief wildlife warden Suresh Mohanty insist the mere existence of foresters and forest guards like Nayak would surely acts as deterrent without which far more poachers would be preying on the 101 tigers they claim are there in the Similipal reserve.

“Searching for illegal intruders in the reserve’s 2750 sq. km area is like looking for a needle in a haystack,” admits Ananta Behara, a forest guard in Nawna (North) range.

Behara, who is set to retire in two years, admits his body is not giving him the support. Languishing without a promotion for 31 years and a monthly pay of around Rs.5,600/- Behara has lost his drive.

In Similipal Tiger Reserve, the poorly armed guards seem to be fighting a losing battle, both against the poachers and malaria.

Almost every forest guard with falling eyesight and age averaging over 50, have suffer from malaria at least twice a year.

Though staff like Behara and Nayak are trying their best, they feel let down by the indifference of the state.

With over 40 % vacancies in posts of foresters & forest guards, none of them can think of visiting their families for more than a fortnight in a year.

The average age of forest guards is above 50.

Debabrata Swain, director of the reserve, admits that many of the guards don’t have the ability to track down poachers.

“ We need young blood to track and catch offenders,” he said.

But that may not be happen soon as the new set of forest guards and foresters to be appointed on contract are not eligible to handle firearm.

Source : The Telegraph, dt. 01.12.2006

Forest around two villages in core of Similipal BR undisturbed.

A study conducted by the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) has said that the ecology of the forests around two villages inside the core of the Similipal Biosphere Reserve remains undisturbed. The Two viullages in question are Jamuna and Jenabil. The study also says that forests around two villages – Kabatghai and Bakua showed moderate disturbance.

The conclusion have been made based on Disturbance Index (DI) study conducted by the AnSI. The DI has been calculated as the percentage of damaged trees to the total numbers of trees per 2000 square metres (20 quadrates of 10 m x 10 m). It was estimated to be below 20 percent in Jamuna and Jenabil villages while it was 22.28% and 23.86 % in Kabatghai and Bakua respectively.

The AnSI researcher found 308 normal trees in their demarcated study area in Jamuna and jenabil villages, against which 54 were marked damaged. In case of the other two villages, 277 normal trees were noticed but 83 were found damaged.

The AnSI has also worked out a ‘ Diversity Index ‘ around the four core villages. Calculation was based on the number of tree species available in given area to the total tree population.

Source : Satyasundar Barik, The Hindu, 30.04.07