

**TWELFTH KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**COMMITTEE  
ON  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
(2006-2008)**

**TWENTY SIXTH REPORT**

(Presented on 10th July, 2007)



SECRETARIAT OF THE KERALA LEGISLATURE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
2007

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**COMMITTEE  
ON  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
(2006-2008)**

**TWENTY SIXTH REPORT**

**On**

**Paragraphs relating to Forest and Wildlife Department, contained in  
the Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for  
the years ended 31st March 1994 No. 2 (Civil) and 2001 (Civil)**

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (2006-2008)

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Shri K. Gireesa Kumar, Joint Secretary  
” K. Ravikumar, Deputy Secretary  
Shri. J.Ramakrishnan Potti, Under Secretary.

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Committee on Public Accounts, having been authorised by the Committee to present this Report on their behalf, present the Twenty Sixth Report on paragraphs relating to Forest and Wildlife Department contained in the Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the years ended 31st March 1994, No. 2 (Civil) and 2001 (Civil).

The Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the years ended 31st March 1994, No. 2 (Civil) and 2001 (Civil) were laid on the Table of the House on March 31, 1995 and March 15, 2002 respectively.

The Committee considered and finalised this Report at the meeting held on May 16, 2007.

The Committee place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them by the Accountant General in the examination of the Audit Report.

Thiruvananthapuram,  
10th July, 2007.

ARYADAN MUHAMMED,  
*Chairman,*  
*Committee on Public Accounts.*

## **REPORT**

### **FOREST AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT**

#### **AUDIT PARAGRAPH**

#### ***Loss on account of planting in submersible area***

The Eco-restoration scheme in Hydro Electric Project, Idukki envisaged planting of trees in the submersible area of about 300 hectares between Full Reservoir Level\* (FRL) and Minimum Drawdown Level (MDL) of the reservoir, where the extent of submerging could not affect the survival of plants. The research wing of the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) intimated the Forest Department in February 1987 that the planting can be done up to 6 metres down from the FRL. Between 1987 and 1989 the Social Forestry Wing of the Forest Department raised plantation around Idukki reservoir under the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme in 845.60 hectares which included an area of 201.61 hectares lying below 6 metres from the FRL. As the plants could not withstand water-logging for more than 1 or 2 months, the plantation raised in the area of 201.61 hectares could not survive and perished. The loss by way of expenditure on raising the plantations amounted to Rs. 23.39 lakhs.

In another case, the Wildlife Wing of the department planted bamboos in August 1988 in 17.37 hectares well below the permitted level of 6 metres down from the FRL. The entire plantation got water-logged and perished. The expenditure on this account was Rs. 0.62 lakh.

Government stated in July 1993 that as the planting was done disregarding the limit of 6 metres down from the FRL, Government sustained a loss and that the Chief Conservator of Forests had initiated disciplinary action against the delinquent officers.

[Paragraph 3.2 contained in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 1994 No.2 (Civil)]

Note furnished by Government on the above audit paragraph is included in Appendix II of this Report.

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\* Full Reservoir Level (FRL), for Idukki Reservoir is 732.62 metres and means the level up to which water is intended to be stored in the reservoir while Minimum Drawdown Level (MDL) is 694.9 metres and means the minimum level required to draw water from the reservoir.

In reply to the Committee's query about the loss on account of planting in submersible area; the witness, Secretary, Forest & Wild Life informed that the usual practice was to plant above the level of submersible area. i.e., the area of about 300 ha. between Full Reservoir Level and Minimum Drawdown Level. When estimate was taken for planting trees, a portion of the area below the permitted level also got included in the estimate. The area became water-logged after five years of planting and the plantation perished. When enquired how such a mistake occurred when information about the submersible area of the dam site was already available, the Secretary submitted that it had been an error of judgement and was not deliberately done. The witness also informed that disciplinary action had already been completed in all cases. When enquired about the dropping of action against three officers, the Secretary replied that they were exonerated as their explanation had been satisfactory.

#### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

**2. The Committee is not satisfied with the explanation that error of judgement was the cause of the mistake in the preparation of estimate. Repeated error of judgement on the part of the officers pointed to negligence in preparing the estimate. The Committee observes that proper direction need be given to avoid the recurrence of such issues.**

**3. The Committee desires to take action to recover the loss occurred, from the delinquent officers.**

#### AUDIT PARAGRAPH

#### ***Infructuous investment on the purchase of a motor boat***

Government ordered in March 1982 the purchase of two hydrojet speed boats at a cost of Rs. 3.30 lakhs each for use in the Neyyar and Periyar Wildlife Sanctuaries. The unsatisfactory performance of the boat purchased for Neyyar Sanctuary at a cost of Rs. 3.19 lakhs was mentioned in paragraph 3.7.06 (vi) of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1983-84 (Civil). The Public Accounts Committee in their 57th report observed (March 1989) that the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Ports Department who had inspected the boat and issued fitness certificate was guilty of negligence. The Committee also recommended that disciplinary action should be taken against the officer who was responsible for not taking steps to replace the engine within the guarantee period and to realise the cost from the supplier firm. Government in their Action Taken Statement stated (May 1991) that the departmental officers had taken timely action for the repairs and that there was no wilful delay on the part of any officer. Further recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee is awaited (October 1994).

The boat intended for use in the Periyar Sanctuary was acquired in August 1982 at a cost of Rs. 3.11 lakhs. The boat after trial run in August 1982 itself developed engine trouble and caught fire. The failure of the engine was attributed to defective electrical system. Even after repairs in October 1982, the boat could ply till December 1982 only when it developed engine trouble again. Thereafter the boat had been lying idle. Considering it uneconomical to repair the engine, the Chief Inspector of Boats opined in November 1990 that it would be better to condemn the vessel. However, the boat has not been condemned so far. Thus the investment on the boat proved infructuous.

The matter was referred to Government in June 1992; reply has not been received (October 1994).

[Paragraph 3.3 contained in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 1994 No.2 (Civil)]

Note furnished by Government on the above audit paragraph is included in Appendix II of this Report.

4. Replying to the Committee's query, the witness, Secretary, Forest & Wildlife Department clarified that before purchasing the boat, an engineer from the Ports Department had issued fitness certificate and that there was nothing wrong with the procedure adopted for the purchase. He added that one of the boats had developed engine trouble and had caught fire during the trial run itself. Even after repairs it could not be used for long. Hence it was disposed of in public auction.

5. The Committee pointed out that the defective boat, purchased in 1982 for Rs. 3.11 lakh could fetch only Rs. 3600 when auctioned in 2001. Timely action could have been taken to condemn the boat in 1982 itself.

6. The Committee then enquired about the insurance coverage for the boat and also whether the boat had caught fire within the guarantee period. The witness replied that Government vehicles had only third party insurance. The witnesses could not give a satisfactory answer to the question of the Committee as to whether the boat had caught fire within the guarantee period or not. The Secretary could not give the exact reasons for the engine trouble.

7. The Committee expressed dissatisfaction over the failure of the department in providing necessary details regarding the issue. The Committee required the Department to report whether the boat had caught fire within the guarantee period; whether action had been taken against the officers responsible and also whether steps for realising the cost from the supplier firm had been taken.

### Conclusions/Recommendations

8. The Committee notes that the defective boat, purchased in 1982 for Rs. 3.11 lakh could fetch only Rs. 3600 when auctioned in 2001. The department has failed to take timely action for the disposal of the boat in the year 1982 itself which lead to heavy loss in the transaction. The Committee desires to know the reason for the delay in taking necessary action.

9. The Committee is dissatisfied about the failure to furnish the report regarding the issue, that the boat had caught up fire within guarantee period or not, which the witness had assured to submit to the Committee. The Committee views this lapse seriously. The Committee recommends that action be taken against the officers responsible for the loss and steps be taken to realise the loss from the supplier firm. The Committee desires to call the officers of the department to collect more information regarding the issue.

AUDIT PARAGRAPH

#### *Construction of a tourist hall at Thekkady*

Mention was made in paragraph 4.10 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1985-86 (Civil) of the irregularities in the award of contract as well as the delay in execution of the work of a tourist hall at Thekkady.

The work of the tourist hall (estimated cost: Rs. 3.10 lakhs and revised to Rs. 5.88 lakhs in November 1982) which was intended for providing accommodation to tourists visiting Thekkady, commenced in April 1979. After spending Rs. 8.75 lakhs, the building, even in 1985, remained incomplete in many respects, including water supply and electrification. On the abolition of the Forest Engineering Wing in August 1986 which was in charge of the work, the building was transferred to Public Works Department (Building and Local Works Wing). Though action was initiated in November 1987 by the Forest (Wild Life) Department to get the building transferred to it from the Public Works Department, for reasons not on record, it was handed over by the Public Works Department only in October 1991. Though the electrification works were completed in March 1988 at a cost of Rs. 0.53 lakh, the water supply arrangements and other additional works had not been carried out by the Public Works Department. In the meanwhile, at the instance of the Forest Department, the building was inspected by a technical team from the Lal Bahadur Sastri Engineering Research and Consultancy Centre, Thiruvananthapuram (LBSC), an autonomous Government organisation, in July 1991. The LBSC in their report (September 1991) stated that during rainy season the capillary rise of water through the foundation soil wetted the floor, that there were cracks in the walls capable of

letting water inside, which dampened the walls and the floor, that the roof was leaking in many places and that the wooden frames of doors and windows deteriorated mainly on account of leaking of water through walls. The LBSC suggested certain rectificatory works. However, the works have not been undertaken as of March 1994. The department stated in September 1992 that the building originally intended to be a tourist hall, on completion, was planned to be utilised as Environmental Study Centre to cater to the needs of nature education programmes, research and veterinary care. The reasons for this change of purpose were not on record.

The expenditure of Rs.8.75 lakhs incurred on the construction of building till 1985 has, however, remained unutilised for the past 7 years. The estimated cost of additional and rectificatory works (August 1992) including cost of water supply arrangements to be provided (February 1994) was Rs. 4.80 lakhs, which did not fully take into account the recommendations of the LBSC.

The matter was referred to Government in June 1992; reply has not been received (October 1994).

[Paragraph 4.16 contained in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 1994 No.2 (Civil)]

10. When enquired about the failure to furnish the Statement of Remedial Measures Taken on the Audit paras, the witness, Chief Conservator of Forests, replied that even though the work was started by the Forest Department's Engineering Wing, later the construction was transferred to Public Works Department and hence the file relating to the construction works also were transferred to them. The Secretary, Forest & Wild Life Department added that as Public Works Department could not locate the files, enquiry about delay in constructing the building could not be conducted and hence the department failed to furnish the Remedial Measures Taken Statement.

11. To the Committee's query about the present position of the building, the witness replied that it was being utilised for various purposes – as a Training Centre, as a laboratory and also as a centre for conducting Wildlife exhibition.

#### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

**12. The Committee notices that the work for constructing the Tourist Hall at Thekkady, which commenced in 1979, could not be completed even in 1994. The Committee understands that an enquiry could not be conducted to find out the cause for the delay as the related file was missing. This is not acceptable to the Committee. The Committee directs Forest & Wildlife department to locate the file without any delay and to seek explanation from**

**the officer responsible for the delay in locating it. The Committee urges the department to conduct an enquiry into the reasons for the delay in completing the building, to fix responsibility for the lapse and to furnish a report in this regard. The Committee also requires to be furnished with the details of the total money spent for the construction.**

AUDIT PARAGRAPH

***Unfruitful expenditure on migratory corridor for elephants***

Based on a request (March 1992) from Chief Conservator of Forests (Wild Life) (CCF), District Collector, Wayanad (DC) initiated (July 1994) proceedings for acquisition of 408 hectares of land in Thariode Village. The land was necessary for establishing migratory corridor for elephants under the cent per cent Centrally sponsored 'Project Elephant Scheme'. The scheme was aimed to facilitate free movement of elephants in the habitats lying within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and the Western Ghats and to reduce elephant-human conflict and potential loss of human lives and crops.

Divisional Forest Officer, Mananthavady in Wayanad District released Rs.1.08 crore to DC between September 1994 and December 1998, for acquisition of land in three blocks\*.

In the first block 86.9 ha. of land was acquired by the Revenue Department at a cost of Rs.1.08 crore and was handed over to the Forest Department in November 1995. The land acquisition proceedings for the second block for 107.3 ha. of land valued Rs. 96.57 lakh was completed by May 1996. However, the land could not be taken over by the Forest department due to paucity of funds.

Survey work for the third block comprising 212.2 ha. of land was not completed by DC and the requirement of funds assessed so far (April 2001).

Scrutiny revealed that though the Principal Secretary, Forest Department suggested (October 1998) to complete the project by providing funds from State sector, CCF did not make any effort for provision of funds in the State budget. Thus, only 21 per cent of the land required for the project could be taken possession in all these years. As a result of this failure of the Forest Department, the project intended to enable unhindered movement of elephants in their habitats and thus reducing elephant-human conflict and potential loss of crops and human deaths has not taken off and Rs.1.08 crore spent on acquisition of part of the land had remained unfruitful.

The above matter was referred to the Government in April 2001; reply has not been received (October 2001).

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\* Block No. I 88.5 ha, Block No. II 107.3 ha, Block No. III 212.2 ha, Total 408 ha.

[Paragraph 3.7 contained in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 2001 (Civil)]

Note furnished by Government on the above audit paragraph is included in Appendix II of this Report.

13. The witness, Secretary, Forests & Wild Life informed that the Project Elephant Scheme which envisaged establishment of migratory corridor for elephants, was a cent-percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme for reducing elephant-human conflict and for preventing loss of human lives and crops. Portion of the land necessary for the scheme had been acquired using the funds provided by the Government of India. But land acquisitions could not be continued as Government of India had stopped funding. The witness claimed that the department had utilised almost all the funds provided for the scheme. He added that the state government was also not allotting money for land acquisition as Government of India had stopped providing funds for the scheme. He further added that though the scheme was not complete, it has helped in reducing human-elephant conflict in the acquired area coming under the project.

#### **Conclusion/Recommendation**

14. **The Committee understands that a cent percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme ‘Project Elephant Scheme’ aimed at facilitating free movement of elephants in the habitats lying within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and the Western Ghats and to reduce elephant-human conflict and potential loss of human lives and crops could not be materialised because of the stoppage of Central fund in the midway. Of the total 408 hectares of land required for the project, 86.9 hectares could only be procured and handed over to the Forest Department at a cost of Rs. 1.08 crore. The rest could not be acquired because the Central Government had stopped their funding. The Committee likes to note that no effort on the part of the State Government had been made for the provision of funds in the State Budget for the continuation of the Project in the State. Unless the State Government take any initiative to continue the project, the amount of Rs. 1.08 crore already spent for the project would remain unfruitful. Hence the Committee recommends that the State Government should take urgent steps to revive the scheme and complete “the Project Elephant Scheme” in the State.**

Thiruvananthapuram,  
10th July 2007.

ARYADAN MUHAMMED,  
*Chairman,*  
*Committee on Public Accounts.*

## APPENDIX I

## SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>Sl.No.</i>	<i>Para No.</i>	<i>Department Concerned</i>	<i>Conclusions/Recommendations</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	2	Forest & Wildlife Department	The Committee is not satisfied with the explanation that error of judgement was the cause of the mistake in the preparation of estimate. Repeated error of judgement on the part of the officers pointed to negligence in preparing the estimate. The Committee observes that proper direction need be given to avoid the recurrence of such issues.
2	3	„	The Committee desires to take action to recover the loss occurred, from the delinquent officers.
3	8	„	The Committee notes that the defective boat, purchased in 1982 for Rs. 3.11 lakh could fetch only Rs. 3600 when auctioned in 2001. The department has failed to take timely action for the disposal of the boat in the year 1982 itself which lead to heavy loss in the transaction. The Committee desires to know the reason for the delay in taking necessary action.
4	9	„	The Committee is dissatisfied about the failure to furnish the report regarding the issue, that the boat had caught up fire within guarantee period or not, which the witness had assured to submit to the Committee. The Committee views this lapse seriously. The Committee recommends that action be taken against the officers responsible for the loss and

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
			steps be taken to realise the loss from the supplier firm. The Committee desires to call the officers of the department to collect more information regarding the issue
5	12	Forest & Wildlife Department	The Committee notices that the work for constructing the Tourist Hall at Thekkady, which commenced in 1979, could not be completed even in 1994. The Committee understands that an enquiry could not be conducted to find out the cause for the delay as the related file was missing. This is not acceptable to the Committee. The Committee directs Forest & Wildlife department to locate the file without any delay and to seek explanation from the officer responsible for the delay in locating it. The Committee urges the department to conduct an enquiry into the reasons for the delay in completing the building, to fix responsibility for the lapse and to furnish a report in this regard. The Committee also requires to be furnished with the details of the total money spent for the construction.
6	14	„	The Committee understands that a cent percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme ‘Project Elephant Scheme’ aimed at facilitating free movement of elephant in the habitats laying within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and the Western Ghats and to reduce elephant-human conflict and potential loss of human lives and crops could not be materialised because of the stoppage of Central fund in the midway. Of the total 408 hectares

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(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
			<p>of land required for the project, 86.9 hectares could only be procured and handed over to the Forest Department at a cost of Rs. 1.08 crore. The rest could not be acquired because the Central Government had stopped their funding. The Committee likes to note that no effort on the part of the State Government had been made for the provision of funds in the State Budget for the continuation of project in the State. Unless the State Government take any initiative to continue the project, the amount of Rs. 1.08 crore already spent for the project would remain unfruitful. Hence the Committee recommends that the State Government should take urgent steps to revive the scheme and complete “the Project Elephant Scheme” in the State.</p>

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APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF ACTION TAKEN ON THE AUDIT PARA NO. 3.2 (LOSS ON ACCOUNT OF PLANTING IN SUBMERGIBLE AREA) IN THE REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31-3-1994 NO.2 (CIVIL)

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Para No.</i>	<i>Audit para</i>	<i>Action Taken</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	3.2	<p>The Eco-restoration scheme in Hydro Electric Project, Idukki envisaged Planting of trees in the submergible area of about 300 hectares between Full Reservoir Level 5(FRL) and Minimum Drawdown Level (MDL) of the reservoir where the extent of submerging could not affect the survival of plants. The research wing of the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) intimated the Forest Department in February 1987 that the planting can be done up to 6 metres down from the FRL. Between 1987 and 1989 the Social Forestry Wing of the Forest Department raised plantation around Idukki reservoir under the Rural Landless. Employment Guarantee Programme in 845.60 hectares which included an area of 201.61 hectares lying below 6 metres from the FRL. As the plants could not withstand water logging for more than 1 to 2 months, the plantation raised in the area of 201.61 hectares could not Survive and perished. The loss by way of expenditure on raising the plantations amounted to Rs. 23.39 lakhs.</p>	<p>Based on the report of the Chief Conservator of Forests (Vigilance), disciplinary action was initiated against the following officers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Sri Pothen I. Jacob, Assistant Conservator of Forests.</li> <li>(2) Sri R. Rajendran, Range Officer.</li> <li>(3) Sri G. R. Mohandas, Range Officer.</li> <li>(4) Sri C. Rajasekharan, Range Officer.</li> <li>(5) Sri R. Ramakrishnan Nair, Range Officer.</li> <li>(6) Sri S. Unnikrishnan, Range Officer.</li> <li>(7) Sri G. Appukutan Pillai, Range Officer.</li> </ol> <p>Action against Sri Appukuttan Pillai was initiated at Government level under rule 3 Part III Kerala Service Rules, since he had retired from service on 30-4-1990. Later on</p>

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<p>In another case, the Wild Life Wing of the Department planted bamboos in August 1988 in 17.37 hectares well below the permitted level of 6 metres down from FRL. The entire plantation got water logged and perished. The expenditure on this account was Rs. 0.62 lakh.</p> <p>Government stated in July 1993 that as the planting was done disregarding the limit of 6 meters down from the FRL, Government sustained a loss and that the Chief Conservator of Forests had initiated disciplinary action against the delinquent officers.</p>		<p>he was exonerated of the charges, as he took charge of the area after all the planting works were over.</p> <p>Memo of Charges were issued to all the other officers. Since the Written Statement of Defence was not satisfactory, orders have been issued to conduct a formal enquiry vide G.O.Rt.No.66/95.F&amp;WLD dated 21-2-1995. The enquiry officer has reported that charges against S/Sri Pothan. I. Jacob, Rajendran and Mohandas could not be proved where as charges against the other three officers were partially proved. Action against the first three officers were dropped (Vide G.O.Rt.No.507/99/F&amp;WLD dated 16-12-1999 and G.O.Rt.No. 344/99/F&amp;WLD dated 31-8-1999). Show Cause Notice were issued to the following officers for barring of one annual increment without cumulative effect</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Sri G. Rajasekharan, Range Officer.</li> <li>(2) Sri S. Unnikrishnan, Range Officer.</li> <li>(3) Sri R. Ramakrishnan Nair, Range Officer.</li> </ol> <p>The remarks on their explanation are being awaited from Chief Conservator of Forests.</p>

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

**FOREST & WILDLIFE (D) DEPARTMENT**

STATEMENT OF ACTION TAKEN IN RESPECT OF THE PARA 3.3 OF COMPTROLLER AND  
AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31-3-1994

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Para No.</i>	<i>Dept.</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action Taken</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	3.3	Forest & Wildlife	<p><i>Infructuous investment on the purchase of a motor boat</i></p> <p>Government ordered in March 1982 the purchase of two hydrojet speed boats at cost of 3.30 lakhs each for use in the Neyyar and Periyar Wild life Sanctuaries. The unsatisfactory performance of the boat purchased for Neyyar Sanctuary at a cost of Rs. 3.19 lakhs was mentioned in paragraph 3.7.06 (vi) of the Report of the Comptroller &amp; Auditor General of India for the year 1983-84 (Civil). The Public Accounts Committee in their 57th Report observed (March 1989) that the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Ports Dept. who had inspected</p>	<p>The unserviceable boat engine under the control of Deputy Director (Project Tiger), Thekkady has been disposed of in public auction on 15-11-2001 for Rs. 3600 as per the existing rules. In the circumstances the observations may be dropped.</p>

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(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
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the boat and issued fitness certificate was guilty of negligence. The Committee also recommended that disciplinary action should be taken against the Officer who was responsible for not taking steps to replace the engine within the guarantee period and to realise the cost from the supplier firm. Government in their Action Taken Statement stated (May 1991) that the departmental officers had taken timely action for the repairs and that there was no wilful delay on the part of any officer. Further recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee is awaited (October, 1994).

The boat intended for use in the Periyar Sanctuary was acquired in August 1982 at a cost of Rs. 3.11 lakhs. The boat after trial run in a August 1982 itself developed engine trouble and caught fire. The failure of the engine was attributed to defective electrical system. Even after repairs in October 1982 the boat could ply till December 1982 only when it developed

engine trouble again. Thereafter the boat had been lying idle. Considering it uneconomical to repair the engine, the Chief Inspector of Boats opined in November, 1990 that it would be better to condemn the vessel. However, the boat has not been condemned so far. Thus the investment on the boat proved infructuous.

The matter was referred to Government in June 1992, reply has not been received (October 1994).

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ACTION TAKEN STATEMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL  
OF INDIA FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2001—PARA 3.7 UNFRUITFUL  
EXPENDITURE ON MIGRATORY CORRIDOR FOR ELEPHANTS

<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Action Taken</i>
(1)	(2)
<p>‘Full extent of land necessary for establishing a migratory corridor for elephants in Waynad district was not acquired even in 9 years. As a result expenditure of Rs. 1.08 crore on partial acquisition of land remained unfruitful.’</p> <p>Based on a request (March 1992) from Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) (CCF), District Collector, Waynad (DC) initiated (July 1994) proceedings for acquisition of 408 hectares of land in Thariode. The land was necessary for establishing migratory corridor for elephants under the cent per cent Centrally sponsored ‘Project Elephant Scheme’. The Scheme was aimed to facilitate free movement of elephants in the habitats lying within the ‘Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve’ and the Western Ghats and to reduce elephant-human conflict and potential loss of human lives and crops.</p> <p>Divisional Forest Officer, Mananthavady in Waynad District released Rs. 1.08 crore to DC between September 1994 and December 1998, for acquisition of land in three blocks.</p>	<p>The proposal to acquire land for the elephant corridor was made after considering the overall requirement for ensuring safe movements of wild elephants. The scheme was implemented as part of the Project Elephant which is a 100 percent. Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Though we had requested to acquire 408 ha. in Thariyodu Village, so far only 86.8762 ha. are acquired by the District Collector, Waynad. The acquisition could not progress as desired for want of release of funds from the Government of India. However to conclude that the expenditure already incurred for acquiring the land has become unfruitful is not correct for the reason that it was not the aim to create new corridors for elephants. The idea is to make the existing corridors more safe by acquiring portions falling under the ownership of private individuals. The elephants, especially in Waynad move freely causing lot of damage to the private properties and resentment among the public. In fact, all the elephant tracks are long established and age old.</p>

In the first block 86.9 ha. of land was acquired by the Revenue Department at a cost of Rs. 1.08 crore and was handed over to the Forest Department in November 1995. The land acquisition proceedings for the second block for 107.3 ha. of land Valued Rs. 96.57 lakh was completed by May 1996. However, the land could not be taken over by the Forest Department due to paucity of funds.

Survey work for the third block comprising 212.2 ha. of land was not completed by District Collector and the requirement of funds assessed so far (April 2001).

Scrutiny revealed that though the Principal Secretary, Forest Department suggested (October 1998) to complete the project by providing funds from State sector, Chief Conservator of Forests did not make any effort for provision of funds in the State budget. Thus, only 21 per cent of the land required for the project could be taken possession in all these years. As a result of this failure of the Forest Department, the project, intended to enable unhindered movement of elephants in their habitats and thus reducing elephant-human conflict and potential loss of crops and human deaths has not taken off and Rs. 1.08 crore spent on acquisition of part of the land had remained unfruitful.

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The aim of the acquisition was to make these tracks safe so that the local people will not harm the animals. Therefore even if we could acquire only a portion of the proposed corridors, the movement of the animals in the acquired areas has become safer. Therefore the expenditure can not be considered as unfruitful.

Moreover, as and when funds are available, steps will be taken to acquire the remaining areas also.