

6.3 Functioning of Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi

Central Zoo Authority (CZA) functioned only as a grant releasing agency instead of an agency to ensure conservation of endangered species of animals in zoos. CZA failed to ensure effective protection of animals/breeding programmes in the zoos. It had not fully identified the list of endangered species and undertook conservation breeding programmes for only three of the identified 63 endangered species. There was decrease in the number of endangered animals in the zoos all over the country due to high mortality. There was over-crowding of animals such as tigers, sambar/spotted deer, leopards etc., in a large number of zoos, much beyond the optimal number of animals prescribed under CZA guidelines. CZA was unaware as to whether the zoos were following the norms and regulations introduced by it for upkeep etc., to ensure the proper health of animals in zoos as it did not conduct any regular monitoring of the functioning of zoos. The system of financial management in CZA was also weak with CZA unable to monitor whether the funds released by it were actually being spent by the state zoos for the sanctioned purpose.

6.3.1 Introduction

Central Zoo Authority (CZA), an autonomous statutory body under the administrative control of Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), was constituted in February 1992 under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to regulate the functioning of all zoos/rescue centers¹ in India. The main objective of CZA is to complement the national effort in conservation of wildlife, set standards and norms for housing, upkeep, health care and overall management of animals in zoos. Its primary aim is to enact legally enforceable standards and norms of upkeep and management of animals in zoos and support the conservation of endangered species by giving species, which have no chance of survival in wild, a last chance of survival through coordinated breeding under ex-situ condition.

6.3.2 Functions

The main functions of CZA are:

- Specify the minimum standards for housing, upkeep and veterinary care of the animals kept in a zoo;
- Evaluate and assess the functioning of zoos with respect to the standards or the norms as may be prescribed;
- Identify endangered species of wild animals for purposes of captive breeding and assigning responsibility in this regard to a zoo;
- Co-ordinate the acquisition, exchange and loaning of animals for breeding purposes;

¹ 180 recognised zoos/rescue centers in 2007-08.

- Ensure maintenance of stud books of endangered species of wild animals bred in captivity;
- Co-ordinate training of zoo personnel in India and outside India; and
- Co-ordinate research in captive breeding and educational programmes for the purposes of zoos.

Audit findings relating to the functioning of CZA during 2002-08 are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

6.3.3 Compliance to minimum standards for housing, upkeep and veterinary care of the animals kept in a zoo and evaluation/ assessment of the functioning of zoos with respect to the standards/norms

6.3.3.1 Evaluation and assessment of the functioning of zoos

CZA has laid down a number of guidelines/ norms/ standards specifying the minimum standards for housing, upkeep and veterinary care of animals kept in zoos all over India. Standards have been specified for establishment of new zoos, submission of proposals relating to development activities in zoos and upkeep of animals like elephants, population control measures for lions, tigers and common ungulates. In addition, norms have also been specified for supply of quality feed for zoo animals, health and hygiene like disposing of carcasses of zoo animals, constitution of Health Advisory Committee, monitoring of hygiene and incidence of blood borne diseases in zoos, suggested health monitoring protocol for zoos, measures for preventing avian influenza and welfare of animal like euthanasia of zoo animals.

Audit observed that:

- CZA did not make adequate efforts to check whether the guidelines/norms/ standards prescribed by it were being followed and implemented in the zoos for ensuring the good health and proper upkeep of animals in the zoos.
- CZA had not drawn up a schedule for conducting the inspection of zoos to ensure that the norms prescribed by it were being followed.
- No monitoring reports or any schedule of inspection of all the zoos was provided by CZA to substantiate the fact that it carried out regular monitoring of all the zoos.
- No mid-term evaluation was conducted regarding functioning of the zoos which were granted recognition by CZA.

The fact was also confirmed by National Zoological Park, Delhi, which stated that the compliance report of norms and standards prescribed by CZA was not being prepared by it for submission to CZA.

CZA replied in October 2008 that it regularly evaluates zoos against the prescribed standards, norms and compliance. This reply has to be viewed in light of the fact that National Zoological Park, New Delhi clearly stated that no such compliance reports were being sent to CZA. In addition, no such monitoring reports were available for scrutiny at CZA. MoEF replied in

December 2008 that all facilities are evaluated by a team of experts, drawn from a panel of zoo experts, every 2-3 years. It also stated that there was no technical manpower available with CZA and the mid-term evaluation should have been a regular routine, but could not be adhered to because of the above reasons. It also stated that CZA was regularly receiving compliance reports from different recognised zoos with some exceptions like the National Zoological Park, New Delhi.

The fact remains that most of the zoos were only inspected at the time of granting recognition which happens at the time of request for recognition from any zoo. Also, zoos are given recognition for a period of time like 3-5 years and they are inspected before extending the recognition granted to them. Hence, no mid-term evaluation of zoos took place to ensure whether zoos were complying with the guidelines/norms/standards/ issued by CZA after grant of recognition/extension of recognition. Also, no compliance reports or zoo evaluation reports were produced to Audit, which confirms the fact that regular and sustained monitoring to ensure compliance to guidelines/norms/standards prescribed by CZA was not taking place.

Recommendations

- CZA may ensure that all the guidelines/norms/standards prescribed for health and care of animals in the custody of zoos are being followed.
- CZA may consider constituting a monitoring cell, comprising of technical experts, who could visit the zoos and check them for compliance regularly every year so that the animals in the zoos, which are a valuable resource, receive the best upkeep which guarantees their good health and safety.

6.3.3.2 Master Plan

Rule 10(51) of Recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992 prescribes that each zoo should have a long-term Master Plan for its development and copies of such Master Plans should be submitted to CZA. Master Plan foresees the coordinated physical development of many separate facilities and functions of a zoo, in order to guide growth and control the final outcome. Some of the activities envisaged in the Master Plan are inventory of natural systems, evaluation of data for development programme, preparation of conceptual plan and development of final plan of the zoo. Thus, preparation of Master Plan is integral for the functioning and development of a zoo.

However, only 22 zoos (12.22 *per cent*) of the total 180 zoos had submitted the copies of their Master Plan to CZA. CZA also had not taken any initiative to get the Master plans from the rest of the 158 zoos. In the absence of a Master Plan, the growth and development of zoos would not happen in an integrated and planned manner.

CZA replied in October 2008 that all the Master Plans would be ready by March 2009. MoEF also stated in December 2008 that zoos have been given time till March 2009 to submit their Master Plans.

The fact remains that despite CZA being functional for more than 15 years; it has failed to ensure preparation of Master Plan for each zoo which would go a long way in ensuring proper upkeep and efficient running of the zoos.

6.3.3.3 Rescue Centers

To rehabilitate the confiscated animals from the circuses & closed/derecognised zoos, CZA had provided 100 *per cent* financial assistance for establishment of Rescue Centers within the zoos, but off the display area. The recurring and non-recurring cost of animals kept in such rescue centers were to be met by CZA. For this purpose, seven Rescue Centers were created at a cost of Rs.8.81crore during 1999-05. Apart from this, CZA also spent Rs.19.58 crore for housing, upkeep and health care of 352 animals (or more) in Rescue Centers till August 2008. CZA had not prescribed any acceptable mortality rate for animals kept in the rescue centers; the total mortality rate in the Rescue Centers was 25 *per cent*, with the mortality rate of endangered species like lions being 27 *per cent* and tigers 30 *per cent*.

Despite spending Rs.28.39 crore on creation of the rescue centers and maintenance of animals in it, CZA did not monitor physical performance of these Rescue Centers. None of these centers was ever visited by any design/technical/evaluating committee for their evaluation. Also no annual/six monthly compliance report was received from these centers.

CZA replied in October 2008 that Rescue Centers were being monitored regularly; however no such report was made available to Audit for scrutiny. MoEF stated in December 2008 that the animals in these shelters were heavily hybridised, inbred, old and abused animals from the circuses and were kept for phasing out and that these Rescue Centers were being managed more as old age home for these animals.

The fact remains that from a purely humanitarian point of view, CZA should undertake responsibility for ensuring that these old and abused animals are given proper health care. In addition, since CZA provides 100 *per cent* assistance to these rescue centers, it is also incumbent on CZA to monitor the running of the rescue centers so that it can ensure that these animals are taken well care of.

Recommendations

- Action may be taken by CZA for preparation of Master Plan for long term development of the zoos.
- CZA needs to monitor the working of the Rescue Centers to ensure proper health of animals in the Rescue Centers.

6.3.4 Protection of animals/breeding programmes

One of the main functions of CZA was to complement the efforts for conservation of wild animals and endangered species in India through planned

breeding programmes and ex-situ research including biotechnological intervention for conservation of species.

6.3.4.1 Identification of endangered species and assignment of responsibility to each zoo

CZA had to identify endangered species of wild animals for purposes of captive breeding and assign responsibility in this regard to a zoo. It was noticed in audit that CZA has identified only 63 species, whereas the IUCN² Red List includes 44 species as 'Critically Endangered', 88 species as 'Endangered' and 181 species of animals as 'Vulnerable' in India. Thus, the identification of animals as endangered by CZA is very inadequate and CZA needs to give greater thrust to the identification of threatened animals so that effective conservation of these endangered species can be undertaken.

CZA replied in October 2008 due to lack of funds and expertise, all the threatened animals in the IUCN list had not been identified.

6.3.4.2 Conservation Breeding Programme

CZA had to carry out planned breeding programme for the conservation of wild animals and endangered species.

It was noticed in audit that out of 63 endangered species identified by CZA,



only three species i.e, Red Panda³, Lion tailed macaque⁴ and Western tragopan⁵ were taken up under Conservation Breeding Programme. Funds for the Conservation Breeding Programme were given to



CZA under the head of 'Grants for development of Zoos' and during the Tenth Plan Period, Rs.44 crore was given under this head. During 2007-08, Rs.9.5

² International Union for Conservation of Nature is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network - a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organisations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries.

³ It is a mostly herbivorous mammal, specialised as a bamboo feeder. Its population continues to decline due to habitat fragmentation.

⁴ It is a medium-sized monkey with shiny black fur and long greyish-white hair around its face. According to IUCN, only approximately 2,500 of these animals live scattered over several areas in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Lion-tailed Macaque ranks among the rarest and most threatened primates.

⁵ These birds are commonly called "horned pheasants" because of two brightly-colored, fleshy horns on their heads that they can erect during courtship displays. The Western Tragopan is considered as the rarest of all living pheasants. The world population is estimated at less than 5000 individuals, including a captive population of less than five at the moment.

crore was allotted to CZA separately for the Conservation Breeding Programme and CZA spent only Rs.1.97 crore, that is, only 21 *per cent* of the allotted funds were utilised during 2007-08.

Moreover, even though 'Conservation Breeding of Red Panda' was started in 1995, there was a 33 *per cent* decrease in its population during 2000 to 2008. Thus, breeding programmes for conservation of endangered species needs to be strengthened and expanded by CZA.



CZA replied in October 2008 it was doing its best to expand the Conservation Breeding Programme. MoEF stated in December 2008 that the success of the Conservation Breeding Programme cannot be monitored by the percentage increase in the population, but by maintaining the genetic, physical and behavioral health of the individuals taken up under the programme.

The fact remains that only three species out of the 63 identified by CZA have been taken up for the Conservation Breeding Programme. In addition, decreasing number of animals taken up under the Conservation Breeding Programme is a matter of great concern as its total demise could mean extinction of the whole species.

Thus, CZA needs to include more animals under the Conservation Breeding Programme and ensure successful breeding programmes so that these animals do not become extinct.

6.3.4.3 Preparation of Stud-Book

One of the functions of CZA is to ensure the maintenance of stud-books⁶ of endangered species of wild animals bred in captivity. Though CZA was established in December 1992, only in August 2000 it assigned the task of preparing stud-books of four species to Wildlife Institute of India (WII). In October 2006, WII was further entrusted responsibility for preparation of stud-books of 14 species (including earlier four species). The first progress report on current status of stud-books for these 14 species is expected to be submitted by WII in March 2009. Thus, even after 15 years of its existence, CZA was unable to prepare the stud-books of the 63 identified endangered species. In absence of these stud-books, the work of conservation of endangered species could be hampered.

CZA replied in October 2008 that it planned to prepare stud-books for all 63 identified species. MoEF stated in December 2008 that studbooks were being prepared.

⁶ Stud-book is an official list of animals within a specific breed whose parents are known and is used to identify those animals which are actively breeding.

6.3.4.4 Facilities refused recognition but having animals

There were 1563 animals in 31 facilities in India which have been refused recognition as zoos due to various reasons. CZA was responsible for the relocation of animals among the various zoos but it was noticed in audit that neither were these animals shifted to recognised zoos nor were these released into the wild. CZA also had no information about the status or health of these animals. In the absence of monitoring of these facilities by CZA, CZA had no information as to whether these animals were being sold off or being displayed for profit or still being run as a zoo or meeting a painful death.

CZA replied in October 2008 that it had decided to evaluate all the 31 facilities. MoEF stated in December 2008 that out of 31 such facilities, seven had already been closed and it had decided to recognise the other 24 facilities as regular zoos after getting the undertaking that the zoo operators would arrange sufficient land, finances and were willing to manage the facilities as per the Recognition of Zoo Rules as per direction of the Supreme Court of India.

6.3.4.5 Decrease in number of animals of endangered species

Scrutiny of details of endangered species showed that the number of some species declined from 2002 to 2008 as detailed in the table X below. The reasons of decrease in number of these animals as intimated by CZA was that inventory of the animals had not been sent by some zoos for updating and also due to increase of mortality among animals due to old age. However, no age-wise analysis of deaths was available with CZA.

Name of animals	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Bear Brown	9	11	2	2	2	1
Bear Sun-Malayan	2	2	2	2	1	0
Buffalo Wild	0	3	3	18	1	1
Deer Mouse	15	20	13	13	9	8
Keelback Checkered	27	104	98	98	105	58
Keelback Green	0	15	15	14	14	3
Kite	13	73	17	12	14	11
Kite Black Winged	6	15	6	21	7	6
Langur Nilgiri	30	29	28	27	26	21
Leopard Black	3	5	3	3	2	2
Bonnet macaque	360	445	383	369	388	317
Otter Clawless	0	0	4	4	2	1
Otter Smooth Indian	3	5	1	5	6	3
Pangolin	7	8	6	8	5	5
Pheasant Peacock	4	10	3	3	3	3
Pigeon Nicobar	42	43	45	42	28	22
Ratel	14	15	11	9	8	10
Snake Keelback Checkered	142	74	65	64	58	57
Snake Keelback Olivaceous	11	15	12	11	10	10

Table X

Name of animals	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Turtle Ganges Soft-shelled	228	236	48	45	45	46
Turtle Peacock Marked Soft Shelled	7	7	0	1	2	2
Wolf Indian	52	46	30	36	30	32
Total	975	1181	795	807	766	619

It was also observed that the reasons assigned for death of some of the endangered species were 'due to unknown', 'due to shock', 'due to heatstroke', 'due to infighting' etc. It was also noticed that in many cases of death of the endangered animal, the postmortem reports, though conducted in the year 2004-05 were still awaited in 2008. CZA had not taken any further necessary action to determine the reasons of death of these endangered animals.

The details of reasons of death of these endangered species during 2002 to 2008 are as under:

Table XI

Reasons of death	Number of Animals 2002-2008
Post Mortem Awaited	78
Not fit for Post Mortem	15
Unknown	42
Due to Shock	131
Due to Infighting	90
Heat Stroke	24

CZA should take effective steps to obtain the post mortem reports on time and strive to avert the preventable causes of death like death due to infighting, heat stroke etc.

CZA replied in October 2008 that it was trying its best to minimise the death of endangered species in captivity and to ensure submission of post mortem reports by zoos in case of death of endangered species. MoEF stated in December 2008 that number of individuals of endangered species in captivity in Indian zoos mainly fluctuated because of non receipt of inventory of some of the zoos at the time of compilation of the inventory of animals in the CZA. MoEF also stated that zoos have been asked to communicate the cause of death only of endangered species to CZA.

The fact remains that decrease in the number of endangered species in zoos of India is a matter of great concern as zoos were mainly created with the purpose of conserving these endangered species. The details of reasons of death of even the endangered species as mentioned in the above table are not available with CZA which further points to the lackadaisical attitude of CZA in probing and putting in place remedial measures to stop deaths of animals which are due to preventable causes.

6.3.4.6 Excess number of prolifically breeding species in Zoos

Zoos in India have prolifically breeding species such as tiger, leopard, panther, black-buck, sambar, spotted deer, blue-bull etc. In the interest of operational efficiency, better management and optimal utilisation of resources, CZA's guidelines prescribe the number of animals of various species housed in the zoos should not exceed the number indicated below:

Table XII

Type of Zoo	Optimum number of Tiger/Leopard	Optimum number of deer
Large	10	20
Medium	6	12
Small	4	10

However, it was observed that the numbers of animals of these categories in the zoos was much more than the prescribed limits, as given below:

Table XIII

Name of Zoo	Number of Tiger/ Tiger Bengal
National Park Bannerghata Zoological Garden (Medium Zoo)	44
Nandankanan Biological Park (Large Zoo)	27
National Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	21
Maitri Bagh Zoo (Small Zoo)	18
Sakkarbaug Zoo (Large Zoo)	16
Tiger & Lion Safari, Thyarekoppa, Shimoga (Small Zoo)	15
Aurangabad Municipal Zoo (Small Zoo)	14
Van Vihar National Park (Small Zoo)	13
Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	11
Name of Zoo	Number of Leopards
Sakkarbaug Zoo (Large Zoo)	45
National Park Bannerghata Zoological Garden (Medium Zoo)	21
Sanjay Gandhi National Park (Large Zoo)	20
Van Vihar National Park (Small Zoo)	17
Assam State Zoo Cum Botanical Garden (Large Zoo)	15
Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant High Altitude Zoo (Small Zoo)	12
Dhauladhar Nature Park (Mini Zoo)	9
Tiger & Lion Safari, Thyarekoppa, Shimoga (Small Zoo)	8
Name of Zoo	Number of Spotted/ Samber deer
Van Vihar National Park (Small Zoo)	882
Sepahijala Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	392
Nandankanan Biological Park (Large Zoo)	263
National Park Bannerghata Zoological Garden (Medium Zoo)	229
State Museum & Zoo (Medium Zoo)	216
Lucknow Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	210
Jaipur Zoo (Large Zoo)	207
Assam State Zoo Cum Botanical Garden (Large Zoo)	202
Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	158
Maitri Bagh ZooSmall Zoo	154
Thiruvananthapuram Zoo (Large Zoo)	134
Sayaji Baug Zoo (Medium Zoo)	127
National Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	125

Nehru Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	125
Arinagar Anna Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	116
Kapilash zoo (Mini Zoo)	112
Jodhpur Zoo (Small Zoo)	110
Sakkarbaug Zoo (Large Zoo)	104
Mahendra Chaudhary Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	92
Alipur Zoological Park (Large Zoo)	60

Necessary steps may be taken to control the population of these species or to transfer the excess animals to other zoos so that problems like infighting and death arising from lack of space as well as drain on financial resources of the zoo can be avoided. MoEF stated in December 2008 the zoos have been asked to control of number of animals within the carrying capacity or the prescribed limit with time, as these are live animals and no other mode of disposal can be enforced except relocation or phasing out.

Thus, it is evident that CZA needs to take effective action to curb overcrowding in the zoos, which has serious repercussions on the health and survival of these endangered species.

Recommendations

- CZA may ensure effective protection of animals/breeding programmes in the zoos. The list of endangered species identified by it needs to be comprehensive and complete to ensure the conservation of endangered species. It also needs to undertake conservation breeding programs for the rest of the endangered species.
- CZA may ensure that the preparation of stud-books is completed.
- CZA may also contain the number of prolifically breeding species in the zoos for better zoo management.

6.3.5 Research Projects/ Projects

It was noticed in audit that between 1992 to 2005, CZA did not undertake any research project. It started undertaking research projects only in 2006; currently 15 are underway and 3 were completed. It is emphasised that CZA undertake/sanction more research projects/projects to reputed agencies to co-ordinate research in captive breeding and educational programmes for the purposes of zoos, which is one of the objectives of CZA.

CZA stated in October 2008 that initially it was engaged in achieving and streamlining other objectives/functions and now it is in a position to identify and conceptualise research requirements.

In December 2008, MoEF accepted the above fact and stated that organised research at the national level has been initiated by CZA recently and CZA has already started receiving reports regarding the same.

6.3.6 Financial Management

CZA gets annual grants from MoEF and disburses funds to 68 zoos/rescue⁷ centers all over the country. CZA received Rs.102.23 crore and its expenditure was Rs.104.08 crore during 2002-08.

6.3.6.1 Outstanding Utilisation Certificates

CZA is required to obtain the Utilisation Certificates (UCs) from various zoos/rescue centers immediately on the completion of the work and not later than 12 months from the closure of the financial year. However, it was observed in audit that UCs aggregating to Rs.20.01 crore, i.e. 19.30 *per cent* of grants released for 2000-2007 to 60 zoos were still pending. The table below illustrates the age-wise position of the pending UCs:

Age of pendency	Percentage of UCs pending with reference to the grants released during the year
Pending for more than 5 years	3.28
Pending for more than 3 years	42.22
Pending for more than 2 years	49.61

Although UCs were pending for the last two to four years, CZA continued to release grants to zoos in Hyderabad, Patna, Kolkata, Gwalior, Junagarh, Sikkim and Assam, which was in violation of GFRs. Thus, CZA needs to introduce a mechanism to monitor the funds actually being spent by the zoos.

CZA replied in October 2008 that UCs for grants of Rs.19.11 crore (from 2003-04 to 2006-07) were pending. However, the reply excluded the UCs pending for grants released during 2000-02. MoEF stated in December 2008 that there were only few cases of non submission of UCs within the twelve months time limit and these were mainly because of local reasons in the states.

The reply of MoEF is not acceptable due to the fact that UCs aggregating to Rs.20.01 crore, i.e., 19.30 *per cent* of grants released for 2000-2007 to 60 zoos were still pending, as verified in audit.

6.3.6.2 Unauthorised release of grants

Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) for Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans had recommended that the cost of items related to visitor facilities and all such other works would be borne by the State Government /Authorities controlling the zoo. However, it was observed that CZA had provided financial assistance of Rs.7.78 lakh during 2002-07 for the cost of items related to visitor facilities (construction of parking place, retaining wall at visitors' path and paving of visitors' corridor) for which grants were not to be provided. Some of the zoos to whom this unauthorised grant was provided were Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, CZA violated the financial norms as set out by EFC. Instead of spending funds on its primary activities relating to protection

⁷ CZA provides grants to only those zoos/rescue centers which existed in 1998.

and conservation of animals in zoos, CZA disbursed funds on expenses which the state governments were responsible for.

CZA replied in October 2008 that construction of parking place, retaining wall at visitors' path and paving of visitors' corridor were covered under EFC. The reply is not acceptable as the minutes of the EFC, clearly state that the costs of items related to visitor facilities and all such other works which are not funded at present, will have to be borne by the State Government/ Authorities controlling the zoo.

MoEF stated in December 2008 that creation of footpath to regulate or restrict viewing of animals is treated as part of animal enclosure. Claiming construction of parking place and paving of visitors corridors/paths as part of animal enclosure is incorrect on part of CZA as well as being in violation of EFC norms.

6.3.6.3 Non contribution of the matching grant by states

As per the approved funding pattern, CZA provides 100 *per cent* financial assistance for activities like improvement of housing, upkeep and health care facilities for zoo animals. For certain activities like developmental works in zoos; CZA provides 50 *per cent* assistance and the balance 50 *per cent* is contributed by the state government. It was noticed that though CZA had released its share of Rs.2.24 crore to Argnar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur, the state government of Tamil Nadu was yet to release its matching share of Rs.1.17 crore for the year 1999-2000 and 2006-07.

CZA stated that only eight zoos had released their matching grants during the years 2002-07 and information from other states/ zoos was still awaited. Thus, CZA did not have any mechanism to ensure that the states release their matching grants. As a result, activities essential for functioning of the zoo would suffer in the absence of the matching grants by the states.

In October 2008, CZA also replied that grants are released to states only when MoUs are signed by the state government and CZA has been continuously receiving the UCs for the amount released on 50:50 basis which implies that the state government has released the matching grant. This contention by CZA is incorrect as matching grants were not being released by some of the states, as seen during audit. In addition, it was seen by Audit that CZA had itself noted that grants remained undisbursed due to the fact that the states had not released their matching grant. MoEF stated in December 2008 that CZA releases grants only after receiving the MoUs signed on behalf of the state governments and that it is very rare that zoos fail to get the state share in the proposed activities, though sometimes things may get delayed because of that.

The reply of MoEF has to be viewed in light of the fact that test check by Audit had disclosed non-release of the matching grant by some states. In fact, CZA itself had also informed Audit that only eight zoos had released their matching grants during the years 2002-07 and information from other states/ zoos was still awaited.

6.3.6.4 Non maintenance of details of assets created out of grants released by CZA

According to the MoUs signed by CZA, the zoos/state governments were required to furnish annually, a statement showing the extracts of the assets created out of the grants released by CZA and that such assets should not be disposed off without the prior approval of Government of India/CZA. The total grants released during 2002-2008 by CZA to various zoos for purchase of veterinary equipments was Rs.2.49 crore. However, it was observed in Audit that the details of veterinary equipments purchased during 2002-2008 were not available in CZA, as was pointed out by Audit in the Separate Audit Report on the accounts of CZA for 2005-08. Thus, in the absence of this information, CZA would be unaware of the fact whether equipment was actually purchased by the zoos.

CZA replied in October 2008 that format of MoU would be changed. This reply of CZA has to be viewed in light of the fact that since the equipment were purchased out of the funds disbursed by CZA, it needs to exercise some monitoring and control of the purchases and utilisation of equipment purchased by the state zoos.

MoEF stated in December 2008 that zoos/state governments would be asked to furnish annually a statement showing extracts of the assets created out of the grants released by CZA.

6.3.6.5 Lack of proof of completion of work

CZA had released Rs.26.30 crore during 2002-2007 to zoos towards construction and repair of boundary wall, animal houses, veterinary hospitals, postmortem room, enclosures, feed store & kitchen, separation chambers etc. As per sanction order and MOU, the construction of the enclosures should be in accordance with the designs approved by CZA and photocopies of the measurement books (for the work which was executed from CZA's grant) should also be sent to CZA. But it was observed that no physical verification of the works was conducted by CZA and copy of measurement books and completion certificate were also not received in CZA.

CZA as well as MoEF replied in October/December 2008 that physical verification of works was regularly conducted by CZA's evaluators/experts when they visit the zoo in connection with recognition etc. However, no such physical inspection reports were made available to audit for scrutiny. In the absence of physical inspection reports, it was difficult to verify whether such physical inspections were conducted. In addition, zoos are given recognition for periods ranging from two to three years and thus, officials of CZA visit a zoo after a gap of two to three years for granting recognition/renewing recognition and zoos are not inspected in the interim period.

6.3.6.6 Expenditure incurred through budget procedure of the states

As per Supreme Court order in 1998, the funds released by CZA should be allowed to be utilised by zoo directly without going through the budget procedure of the respective states. As per MoU and sanction orders, the money released by CZA should not be taken in revenue account but should be made available to executing agencies for taking up the work immediately. However, it was observed during audit that only in seven states (Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Gujarat, Nagaland, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu) funds disbursed by CZA were released to the zoo directly, without going through the state budget. Information from other states was not received.

CZA/MoEF replied in October/December 2008 that in most of the cases the funds were utilised by the state zoos directly without going through the budget of the state. CZA also stated that the Supreme Court had only suggested that the funds disbursed by CZA should be allowed to be utilised directly by the zoo. This reply is not acceptable because CZA did not give a list of the state zoos which were utilising the funds disbursed by CZA directly; which, as noted by Audit, were only seven.

Recommendations

- CZA may strengthen its financial management system and introduce checks and controls to ensure that the money being disbursed by CZA is actually being utilised by the zoos for the purposes for which it was disbursed.
- Financial management can further be improved by CZA by not releasing the grants until the state zoos submit the UCs timely and states release their matching grant.

6.3.7 Manpower

It was observed in audit that CZA had 11 sanctioned posts and there were no shortages in the men in position. However, it was also noticed that the sanctioned strength did not include any technical/scientific personnel. CZA admitted that due to absence of technical/scientific staff, it was finding it difficult to provide technical and other assistance to zoos.

MoEF stated in December 2008 that there was a shortage of manpower and the issue has been taken up with the Ministry of Finance in June 2008.

Recommendation

- MoEF may consider sanctioning technical/scientific posts to CZA to enable CZA to emerge as a facilitator for proper improvement of zoos in the country.

6.3.8 Conclusion

The evaluation and assessment of the functioning of zoos by CZA was not very effective. CZA was unaware as to whether the zoos were following the

norms and regulations introduced by it for upkeep etc., to ensure the proper health of animals in the zoos as it did not conduct any regular monitoring of the functioning of the zoos. CZA had not taken action on the non-preparation of Master Plan by the zoos. It did not monitor the working of the rescue centers and as such, was not able to ensure proper health of the animals in the rescue centers. Thus, CZA failed to ensure the health, upkeep and functioning of the state zoos according to the norms/guidelines laid down by it.

CZA also failed to ensure effective protection of animals/breeding programmes in the zoos. It had not fully identified the list of endangered species and undertook Conservation Breeding Programmes for only three of the identified 63 endangered species. Preparation of stud-book by it was incomplete and it was unable to ensure the health of animals kept in the centers which had been refused recognition by it. There was also decrease in the number of animals in the zoos all over the country which were identified by it as endangered. It failed to control the number of prolifically breeding animals it had in the zoos. Thus, CZA failed to meet one of its primary objectives which was the conservation of endangered species kept in zoos all over the countries. Its breeding programme for endangered species was not adequate and it had not actively engaged in research in captive breeding in ex-situ conditions.

CZA did not exercise any checks to verify whether the grants disbursed by CZA to state zoos were actually being utilised by the state zoos for the purposes for which it was sanctioned. In the absence of timely submission of utilisation certificates by the state zoos, CZA was unable to ascertain whether work was carried out by zoos as per the sanction order. Grants were disbursed by CZA for purposes other than by those sanctioned by EFC and CZA had no means of ensuring that the states also released their matching grant. CZA exercised no check to ensure that the state zoos actually purchased and utilised the equipment for which grant was given by CZA. No completion reports or measurement books existed rendering doubts on the actual execution of the work. CZA also had no mechanism to ensure that the funds disbursed by it reached the states directly, instead of being routed through the state budget, which added to the delays in project implementation. As such, the financial management system of CZA was very weak.

Thus, overall, CZA was ineffective in meeting the objectives set out for it and functioned only as a grant releasing agency instead of an agency to ensure conservation of endangered species of animals in zoos and evaluating the functioning of zoos to ensure they followed the norms set to ensure protection of animals.