BIO-GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF TIGER (*Panthera tigris*) IN ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL & MODERN RAJASTHAN: STUDY OF PLANS TO RELOCATE THEM IN RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

Though intimately associated with India the original home of Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), encompass far wide area. The habitat of the tiger is extensive beats of forests. The state of Rajasthan has an area of 342239 sq.km. a largest state of India. The state of Rajasthan encompasses an area which in history was known by various names. The tiger in Rajasthan is distributed in few pockets as of Sariska and Ranthambore. It has been relocated to area of Mukundara hills (Newly establisher tiger reserve). The past and present distribution of tiger, will enhance our knowledge about the species. The hunting / poaching of tiger, increasing population has led to disappearance of the tiger from many parts of Rajasthan through ages. The present study is an attempt on not only of studying past and present distribution of tiger, on Rajasthan level but also studied relocation plans. The present study is based on analysis of literature available on topic at other places, as museum records etc. visits to various places of planned relocation as well as studies in forests, museum, places, paintings of past was done. As from study of various sources it can be said that Tiger is now found only in Alwar, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, Bundi, Kota, Dausa districts in contemporary times. Mukundara hills is name to the relocated tiger and is third tiger reserve of Rajasthan.

Key words: Tiger, Biogeographical distribution, India, Rajasthan

INTRODUCTION

Though intimately associated with India the original home of Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), encompass far wide area. The tiger has disappeared from length and breadth of its earlier home range. The tiger has disappeared from central, northern Asia and many parts of South East Asia.

Tiger is members of small family Felidae. The habitat of the tiger is extensive beats of forests. Thus while studying geographical distribution of the tiger, it is important to note the names the culture provides the tiger. The tiger in Marwari (The language of Rajasthan) is called Wagh.

The state of Rajasthan having an area of 342239 sq. km. is the largest state of India. It is located in north-west parts of India between 23°3' to 30°12' north latitude and 69°30' to 78°17' East longitude. The state of Rajasthan encompasses an area which in history was known by various names as Jungal Desh (Bikaner, Jodhpur), Kuru Jangla, Yodheya (Sri Ganganagar), Kuru Desh, Matsya Desh, Sursena Desh (Alwar). Sivi was in area of Udaipur while Bagan, Maru (Jodhpur), were other area. Bhimnal was known in what in now Barmer while Mad was in what is called Jaisalmer. Swargiri (Sirohi) and Chandrawati (Abu) area of Kanthal is modern Mahi area. In more recent times Rajasthan was divided in Marwar, Mewar, Bagar, Chhapan, Hadoti and Mewat.

I have studied geographical distribution of tiger in Rajasthan and in its various parts through ages as ancient, medieval and modern India.

The tiger was depicted on seals of Kalibanga, Mohanjodaro area in which former is in Rajasthan. Mahabharat depicts tiger destroyed at Indraprasth. Sri Hammir Basu depicts a fight between Govind Rana and a tiger. A story of Akbar hunting in Mewar is a testimony to tiger presence in the area.

According to Arian while describing Alexander’s campaign as also Pliny in area from Indus to Yamuna (which includes area of Modern Rajasthan) was home of tiger. In India iconography refer Durga to tiger; Bhils claim descent from tiger as do Bajrawat Rajputs. Courts of Gupta describe Samudragupta as Tigers layer. In Mughal times there were hunting areas throughout Rajputana. Jahangir refers to tiger during his Ajmer visit that were killed. Paintings of Mewar
depicting tiger hunting are proof of its existence on the Rajasthan as do Kishangarh school. 18th Century of various schools of painting testimony of presence of tigers as does Zodiac sign. There is a 17th Century painting depicting a man and woman sitting with a tiger. There is a story of queen of Pali Thikana of a tiger coming in dreams of her depicting its presence in medieval times in Pali (Map).

Tiger survived ancient, medieval periods to be hunted by British. In 18th Century large states like Udaipur had tigers. In Bundi there are paintings of tigers as in 1950s hunting dog would run down tigers in Karauli. Kota school depict tigers as do between (1800 A.D.) paintings by Gorden driver by a chariot as does goddess Durga sitting on a tiger (Bikaner) and also Shiva Parvati with Tiger Jaipur (1800 A.D.). There are figures of tigers in Jaipur (20th Century) as do erotic paintings of tiger watching a couple in Jodhpur (19th Century). There is a painting of tiger with a Goddess (20th Century) of Jaipur School. These all paintings are proof of tigers found in these respective areas. Various paintings originated at Nathdwara along 1520 A.D. on the black buck, tiger paintings and there are various depiction of tigers on weapons on Bundi, Jaipur etc.

Presently tigers in Rajasthan are distributed in few pockets as of Sariska and Ranthambore (Map). It has been relocated to area of Mukundara hills (Newly establisher tiger reserve). The tigers prey base comprised of 4 Chowsingha, 1121 Cheetal, 80 Chinkara, 180 Neelgai, 47 Sambhar and over 240 Langurs clearly not sufficient prey base as to survive a tiger needs to kill at least once a week. Mukundara hills is the third tiger reserve of Rajasthan, and is home to three relocated tiger and one more which migrated to it from Ranthambhore. Prey base has been enhanced with more Chital Sambhar being relocated to it. Thus as the number of tiger increase there would need much more prey base. Kumbhalgarh sanctuary near Rajsamand can be another home to tiger which has prey base 118 Chowsingha, 9 Cheetah, 18 Chinkara, 248 Wild Boars and 1148 Neelgai and 140 Sambhar. Prey base has to be increased by artificial means so as to relocate tiger to here. Biotic pressure is intense in all over, the places related for relocation of tiger and environment degradation is also widespread.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT**

Various attempts have been made to study geographical distribution as well as breeding of endangered / threatened species but none has been attempted for desert state of Rajasthan. The past and present distribution of tiger, will enhance our knowledge about the species.

**HYPOTHESIS**

The hunting / poaching of tiger and increasing human population has led to disappearance of the tiger from many parts of Rajasthan through ages. The proper understanding of its distribution in past and present in the state of Rajasthan and relocating to habitats of their choices as well as their captive breeding in zoos, natural habitats will help in conserving it.
AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY
Various works on distribution, relocation of tiger, have been forwarded on National level but none has been done on Rajasthan state level. The present study is an attempt on not only of studying past and present distribution of tiger, on Rajasthan level but also studied relocation plans.

METHODOLOGY
The present study is based on analysis of literature available on topic at other places, as museum records etc. visits to various places of planned relocation as well as studies in forests, museum, places, paintings of past was done. Maps were made for distribution of tiger.

The author has also studied journals of various organisations and also analyse records of forest department. Author visited various museums for studying numismatics/, remains rock edicts, other edicts, miniature paintings, other paintings and murals, cave paintings to deduce what kind of species were present there and studied Shikar records of post independence era.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION
As from study of various sources it can be said that Tiger was present in Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Udaipur, Chittor, Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh, Sirohi, Ajmer, Bhilwara, Bundi, Kota, Baran, Karauli, Jaipur, Sawaimadhopur, Alwar, Dausa, Dholpur, Bharatpur, Jodhpur, Rajsamand districts of Rajasthan in ancient, medieval and modern times. It is now found only in Alwar, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, Bundi, Kota, Dausa districts in contemporary times.

Mukundara hills are the third tiger reserve of Rajasthan. Prey base has been enhanced by sending prey base such as Cheetal and Sambhar from various zoological parts, zoos and other areas.

Kumbhalgarh sanctuary in Rajsamand can be the fourth tiger reserve of Rajasthan but prey base enhancement is needed before any such relocation.

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