

CHAPTER – V

PAST SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT

General History of Reserved Forests :-

1. Before Independence, the regular and systematic working of very few forests notified under various sections could be undertaken. People of the village in which there were forests removed their requirements of forests produce without any hindrance. As the reservation progressed, systematic schemes were up for different areas.
2. Timu and Jamgain were declared reserved in 1963. In the same year, a working plan prepared by Sri. A.R. Sharma. System adopted was coppice with 8-10 standards per acre a rotation of 40 years. Cleaning in 2nd and 5th year and thinning in the 14th year were prescribed. However, due to extraction difficulties the prescriptions could never be enforced.

State owned forests:-

3. In case of other State owned forests no regular scheme of working plan could be drawn up till 1951 as the forest settlement proceeding could not be completed earlier. Nevertheless the demands of right holders were satisfied by felling roughly on the lines of coppice systems.

Privately Owned forests:-

4. For the private owned forests which were taken over under sed. 38 of I.F. Act, there always existed some sort of working scheme of working plan under which they were worked.
5. A brief summary of working of these forests under different schemes and plan is given below:

Ranchi Zamindari Ltd. Forests :-

SHARMA'S SCHEME:

6. The first working plan in respect of Pakhar, Kakaang, Kujndo and Honae in Lohardaga as known as Chotanagpur Zamindari Forests was drawn up by Sri A.R. Sharma in 1973 the system adopted was coppice with standard with 40 years of rotation. The standard to be retained was 10 per acre. Two cleaning in the first year following the main felling and the second in the fifth year were prescribed. Prescriptions were H.D. Singh's Plan for these forests were put in Quasi-Commercial carried efficiently resulting in fairly satisfactory regeneration group and the system adopted was coppice with standards. Bisramgarh, Kundo and Honhey were worked under 30 years rotaion while the rest under 40 years.

Sl. No.	Forest	Thana	Thana no.	Area in acre
1.	Jamti	Bishunpur	3	7189.17
2.	Katia	Bishunpur	4	2794.86
3.	Banalat	Bishunpur	10	590.80
4.	Rehaldag	Bishunpur	11	691.01
5.	Hisir	Bishunpur	18	1845.88
6.	Labga	Bishunpur	19	1071.92
7.	Jalim	Bishunpur		513.15
8.	Hendehas	Lohardaga	42	927.02
9.	Birhni	Lohardaga	87	1090.03
10.	Mungo	Lohardaga	86	132.93
11.	Batru	Lohardaga	48	188.10
12.	Hanrup	Bishunpur	65	467.07
Total :-				17501.94

Chaudhary's Scheme

7. Mr. C.M. Chaudhary in 1940-41 had drawn up a provisional working scheme for the forest given below. The prescriptions were similar to those for the forests of Ranchi Zamindari Ltd. As these forests were mostly in accessible areas, prescriptions regarding silvicultural operations and coupe fellings could hardly be carried out.
1. In regard to remaining private owned forests where the Forest settlement proceedings had not been completed, no regular working plan or scheme could be drawn up.

However, to meet the immediate needs of the surrounding population several of these forests were grouped into a number of felling series and felling similar to coppice system were carried out.

2. On the whole it can be said that upto 1952 a greater part of the forest had been worked under coppice with standards system and the result of various working schemes had been generally satisfactory.
3. In the forests which were taken under the B.P.F. Act, coupe system was introduced as the first step towards scientific management. Coupes were opened for villagers in all village units of the forests. The coppice with standards system was introduced. The surplus the rightholders requirements were distributed to the nonright-holders.

H.D. Singh's Working Plan :-

4. The first systematic working plan of Ranchi Forest Division was prepared by Sri H.D. Singh in 1951 which in fact was revised working plan in respect of about 50% of the forest.
5. Though this plan was intended to be brought into force in 1952-53 it actually became relative from 1954-55 in some of the felling series and in other still later. The introduction was not uniform all over the division.
6. In Mr. Singh's Plan the following working circle were prescribed :-
 - (i) Selection working Circle
 - (ii) Coppice Working Circle
 - (a) Non-commercial group.
 - (b) Quasi-commercial group.
 - (c) Commercial group.
 - (iii) Bamboo Working Circle.
 - (i) Kath Working Circle.
 - (ii) Miscellaneous Working Circle.

The Selection Working Circle

7. The Comprised an area of 6,454 acres, all situated above 3,000 ft. altitude. These areas allotted to this Working Circle because the long head to the railhead was a handicap economic exploitation for all except the bigger sized timbers.
8. The system prescribed was Selection-cum-improvement fellings of silviculturally available exploitable trees. The rotation was fixed at 120 years and the felling cycle at 20 years. Minimum exploitable diameter was fixed at 16” for Sal, Asan, Bija, Karam, Dhaura, Gamhar, Jamun, Amsabita, Kena and other miscellaneous spp. 24” for Semal, 18” for Bhurkum Chhatain and 14” for Panjan. Total enumerations were carried out and the annual yield (both normal and defective) trees were fixed at 420. In addition all the dead tree miscellaneous trees of the exploitable diameter were to be exploited.
9. Subsidiary silvicultural operations prescribed consisted of cutting down of the damaged in the annual coupe and a general dressing up of the crop within 100 ft. radius of the trees felled. Any marked trees left unfelled by the purchaser, trees damaged in the course of felling, all top-broken green trees were to be cut back.
10. Nothinning were prescribed as it was apprehended that they would yield material so far unsaleable and thus increase fire hazard.
11. Climbers were to be cut during marking and to be repeated at the Divisional Forest Officer’s discretion.
12. Sowings and plantings were prescribed in the forests.
13. **The Coppice Working Circle :-** In Mr. Singh’s Plan an effort was made to lump the forests into a number of felling series according to the convenience of the right holders. In good many cases attempt was made to form village wise felling series to meet this. In each village suitable extent of forest area depending upon the number of right-holding house-holds was set apart and the area so set apart was treated as a separate felling series purely to meet the admitted rights of the rightholders usually on

a rotation of 30 years, The balance area was then suitably grouped with similar areas of other villages so as to form a separate felling series managed purely for revenue on rotation of 40 and 60 years.

14. The forests under coppice working circle were broadly classified into three main groups:-

(a) **Non-Commercial (Group A)** as stated earlier the whole forest or the portion of the forest of a village, depending upon the number of household, was set apart for meeting the rights. Felling series in most cases was village wise and was exclusively for the bonafide consumption of the rightholders. This worked satisfactorily in few P.Fs. e.g. Masiatu, Salaia etc. but where the demand was poor the coupes were not worked at all e.g. Mungo, Chulhapani, Dundro, Pakhar, etc. The drawback of this arrangement was that abnormally large number of rightholders coupes were to be laidout. Consequently the local staff used to experience difficulty in supervising as well as laying out of the coupes.

22. Prescribing two rotations in the same forest under two sub-working circles brought about difference into the converted crop instead of uniformity which should be the aim.

(b) **Quasi Commercial (Group B):-**

23. This group included the areas the annual coupes of which were in the first instance open right-holders and the surplus, if left was sold in the Second year. The coupe purchasers had set right the bad stumps. This group embraced mostly those areas which were formerly worked under some working plans or schemes. The usual rotation adopted was 40 years but in certain cases it was raised to 60 years while in others it was lowered to 30 years. This arrangement worked satisfactorily all over except in few cases where blanks and unproductive areas occurred coupe-sequence had to be changed. There had been slight deviation from the prescription. For instance, in Tamar R.F. which was put under Quasi-Commercial group under 30 rotation selection fellings were made under Divisional Forest Officer's scheme-removing most all the mature trees.

(c) **Commercial (Group C) :-**

24. All the forests which were not required to satisfy any rights and were to be managed purely for revenue purposes were put under this group. It included the R.Fs and those portions of right-holders. In general the rotation was fixed at 60 years but in certain cases it was lowered to 40 years. Commercial coupes were worked fairly well. Laying out of the coupes along the contours caused difficulty in extraction of forest produce, however, this was modified after on according to the instructions of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Bihar from 1962.

25. The number of standards, to be retained under Sri H.D. Singh's Plan varied from 5 to 15 and in the forests of 40 and 30 years rotation the number of standards was fixed at 8 to 10 respectively. It was observed that due to very few standards the worked over areas in the last to looked like clear felled patches.
26. Elaborate and sound prescriptions for laying out coupes, marking of standards, executions of fellings and subsidiary operations had been laid down in Mr. Singh's Plan. Three thinning & 22nd years and one in 15th year in case of 30 years rotation, had been prescribed could hardly be enforced anywhere in the division. Wherever thinning was no bearing with prescriptions and the thinning programme as prescribed in the plan. Instances are there where thinning had carried out in areas which would form a coupe in the very near future.
27. Considering the poor site quality and open drop, three and two thinning do not appear to be necessary.

III. Bamboo Working Circle :-

28. Under Mr. Singh's Plan there were eight Bamboo cutting out of which only five concern the existing Ranchi West Division, The Bamboo Working Circle received very little attention during the period and was rarely exploited commercially. Chulhapani R.F and Hissir had good solid bamboo but it has been much depleted due to regular theft for exports of Lathies to Gaya District. The condition of bamboo in other areas is so poor that it would hardly be saleable by annual auction. Petty sale by permit was allowed to the "turees" but proper control over them seems to have been rarely exercised. Mr. Singh had prescribed cutting was not satisfactory.

IV. Kath Working Circle :-

29. A separate working circle was created in Mr. Singh's Plan for Kath enumeration was carried out for fixing the yield. The annually yield prescribed was 84 trees above 8% diameter which was neither commercially exploitable nor did it attract any contractors. With the exception of very scattered occurring on the border of

Hazaribagh and Palamau, Khair is rarely noticeable any where in this division. Creation of separate working circle for Khair was not necessary. Khair has not been worked in these forests.

V. Miscellaneous Working Circle :-

30. This included the Plantations on Netarhat Plateau and the specially acquired forests on both sides of the Public Works Department road from Banari to Netarhat and of the foot-path from Marqai to Netarhat.
31. The total area was (60 + 1136) 1396 acres in the villages of Netarhat, Birjiatoli, Chorkahar, Marwai, Range, Langratanr, Balatu, Bote and Chatakpur.
32. Prescriptions were made for tending of loder plantations (of pine) and for raising new plantations. The 'strips' were to be treated as 'Protection forests' only dead and unsized trees were to be filled.
33. The plantations have been raised more or less as planned. Some of the older plantations were affected by the construction work of the Public school at Netarhat. The 'strips' have been though under working according to a scheme drawn up by the Divisional Forest Officer.
34. The prescriptions of Singh's plan were generally sound but unfortunately they were not implemented. The non-introduction of the Selection System in areas where it was prescribed has been particularly harmful because these forests continue to be worked under the Coppice system.
35. Another prescription, the violation of which has been very harmful, was in respect doing Selection markings on steeper hill slopes. The continuance of Coppice System has been resulting in the extension of grassy patches in many of the areas and general deterioration of site quality.
36. No stock mapping was carried out by Mr. H.D. Singh though worked over areas has been shown in the Felling Series history map. As a result the grow area of the forest of felling series formed the area of Salai and bamboo though these occurred in

patches in a felling less. Laying out of coupes on this basis resulted in a wide disparity in the annual yield and in certain cases areas not containing the particular spp. formed a part of the coupe, producing no yield. Wholly unproductive areas fell in a number of coupes which could neither be sold nor the right - holder could be supplied with their requirements.

J.N. SINHA'S PLAN FOR GUMLA AND RANCHI PROTECTED FORESTS :-

37. In 1954-55 Mr. Sinha's Plan (1954-55 to 1963-64) for protected forests vested under Land Reforms Act, 1950 was prepared for the first time but the prescriptions could not be put into practice in all the protected forests from that year.

In Mr. Sinha's Plan the following Working Circles were formed :-

- (i) Right-holder's Coppice Working Circle
- (ii) Commercial Coppice Working Circle
- (iii) Bamboo overlapping Working Circle
- (iv) Protection Working Circle
- (v) Salai overlapping Working Circle
- (vi) Selection Working Circle

Right-holder's Coppice Working Circle :-

38. Each village unit of forests was constituted a felling series and annual coupes were laid out in each of them. About 880 coupes were prescribed to be laid out for the right holders in P.Fs only, this abnormally large number of coupes (some of them being 1 or 2 acres) was a great hindrance to forest, administration laying out of coupes as well as supervision was difficult operation. Silvicultural attention in concentrated way could not be given to all the coupes nor was it practicable.
39. The usual forestry practice in the management of right burdened forestry to group two, three or more village units of forests into felling series. Coupes laid out from one end, felling proceeded to the other and all the villages take their requirements from the annual coupes of the felling series in whichever village it happen to lie at the time. By doing this the laying out of right-holder coupe in each individual 1mauja aviated

saving labour and expense while the group of villages share the fat and the land in equal share. The Administrative and silvicultural reasons seem to have been overruled altogether by Mr. Sinha. More attachment of the villagers to their forests should not be the criteria for constituting a separate felling series in each village.

40. Two different rotations of 20 years, 40 years were prescribed in Mr. Sinha's plan, the former for smaller areas and the latter for larger area. In protected forests where grazing and other biotic factors play an important role in depletion of the forest 20 years rotation could hardly produce anything except for firewood and fencing materials.
41. Elaborate and sound prescriptions for laying out coupes, marking of standards, execution of fellings, clearing, and thinning programmes, duties of gram panchayat and right-holders were laid down in the plan but these were hardly followed anywhere in the division.

Commercial Coppice Working Circle:-

42. To meet the requirement of the non-right-holders and for trade and export the right-free forest were grouped into suitable felling series for commercial exploitation. Rotation prescribed was 40 years and number of standards 8-12 per acre. In large number of cases, the annual area prescribed was too small to attract any contractor e.g. Okrigh (Ormanjhi) 4.55 acres, Kokar (Kuru) 2.31 acres, Mandar (Burmum) 1.19 acres etc.
43. In Mr. Sinha's Plan some of the forests which contained very poor crop were grouped in to a felling series and placed under Coppice Working Circle. These forests were later on made over to Afforestation Division for rehabilitation. Examples are Naro, Kore, Nagra and Mandar of Burmum Range, Morpa and Karak of Lohardaga Range. Other areas falling under this category are Brambey, Socai, Gore, Tatku Tatku Tatkunda, Kanijori and Mahuari of Burmum Range, Chapadih and Kanijori, and Mahuai of Burmum Range, Chapadi and Katingkel of Jarriya Range and Tiril, Machiyatu, Harser and Kolandi of Ranchi Range. Some of the above protected forests put under Commercial Working Circle contain mostly bare rock and unproductive areas e.g. Chapadih and Karingkej etc. Out of 33 felling series of commercial coppice

working circle hardly 18 felling series could be exploited. Detailed instruction regarding cleaning operations, regulation of grazing, marking of standards, execution of fellings as laid down in Mr. Sinha's Plan were never followed.

44. In Mr. Sinha's Plan Protection Working Circle was created with a view to give complete rest to those forests which needed temporary immunity from cuttings. This included (a) Bare of too sparsely clothed rocky hillocks, (b) Sal sapling forests, a plain land with bare floor, (c) Good Sal sapling forest, and (d) Gullied land with sparse vegetation.
45. These forests were prescribed to be placed in complete charge of forest panchayats. One of the recommendations was that, if possible Forest Guards might be withdrawn from these forests for economy as well as to generate sense of greater responsibility in the local.
46. Another prescription was to make trench fences in areas containing sal for protection. The prescription of transfer of forests to panchayats was followed in case of few forests but significant results could not be achieved.
47. Some protected forests under protection working circle have been made forestation division for rehabilitation e.g. Badla, Tati, Senha, Gitilgarh, Jonjro, Tangar and Makandu etc.
48. The very idea of creating a protection Working Circle in Mr. Sinha's Plan has been defeated because due to practically no departmental activities in this forest theft increased considerably and good sal poles were removed by villagers illicitly bringing about further depletion of the forests under protection working circle.

IV. Bamboo (over-lapping) working circle :-

49. In Mr. Sinha's Plan there were altogether 25 bamboo felling series in Ranchi Division. Except for intermittent, irregular and unsystematic working in only nine felling series rise the remaining once were not touched at all for commercial

exploitation. In fact Ranchi division, in general, is very deficit in bamboo. Early good quality bamboo exists in Dugo, Madanpur and Koijam.

Except for these, not a single felling series was prescribed in Mr. Sinha's Plan with a view to remove congestion as soon as possible. However, it was found that in almost all the cases the cutting cycle was raised to 4 years e.g. Omendanda F.S. and Holong F.S. etc.

50. No effort was made during the plan period to rehabilitate the clumps, consequently the condition of bamboo crop deteriorated from bad to worse. Turis, who prefer only second year clumps for manufacture of baskets etc. have accelerated the process of deterioration. Possibly, due to lack of fund, silvicultural operations such as cleaning etc. appear to have been totally neglected in the bamboo forests. As a result of mismanagement of bamboo forest none of the bamboo coupes of Ranchi Division could attract the contractors. Only Madanpur F.S. has been leased on long term basis, where the crop is expected to improve in course of time prescriptions of Mr. Sinha's Plan for the improvement of bamboo crop could not be carried out.

V. Salai (Over-lapping) Working Circle :-

51. In Mr. Sinha's Plan only those areas of Salai were included in this Working circle which could have been economically extracted e.g. part of Burmu Range and Sarju Range (How in Lathehar Division) - !Other Salai bearing areas such as Salaiya R.F. in Lohardaga Range, were left out in Mr. Sinha's plan on the ground of extraction difficulties.
52. The yield was fixed by area felling cycle was fixed at 15 years. No effort was made to form eqriproductive coupes. In the absence of stock maps and also of enumeration figures, sustained yield could not be ensured. Consequently all the exploitable salai trees of Burmu Range were removed within a period of less than 5 years so much so that no coupe of salai could be laidout during 62-63 and onwards. The distribution of trees in lower diameter classes were not well represented. Removal of all exploitable trees above 12" diameter was prescribed in Mr. Sinha's plan ignoring completely the fact that there were no trees to pass over to the next higher class. Hence the present position is such that Salai has been completely exterminated from Burmu Range as no

safeguard was kept. Therefore it is doubtful whether there would be a Salai coupe in Burmu Range at all in the future.

53. The Divisional Forest Officer had prepared a 10 year scheme for selection felling of roughly 1000 Salai trees annually. In Salaiya R.F. 1500, 1000 trees were marked in 1961-62, 1962-63 and 1963-64 respectively. After this no saleable trees were left in the area. Due to paucity of Salai trees in the lower diameter classes, the forest now looks like devoid of salai.
54. The prescription of the village-wise coupe in the right-burdened forests under the rightholders Coppice W.C. increased the work load much in excess of what the staff could cope with. In few cases the prescription of the plan were enforced from 1954-55 e.g. Hartu, Ichhadag of Ranchi Range and sake of Lohardaga Range but in many other areas e.g. Salma, Dumargari, Heslatoli etc. In some forests the prescriptions could be enforced as late as 1958-59. In most of the areas Sinha's plan was not enforced at all. In fact, the entire plan was followed only for a year or two. Subsequently the Divisional Forest Officer, Ranchi & Gumla enforced his scheme in P.Fs by reconstituting the felling series grouping two or more villages together. Though the reconstitution of felling series by the Divisional Forest Officers was total departure from the prescriptions of the approved working plan, it however brought all the benefits silviculturally. The villagers who were so strongly, attached to the forests of their own individual villages started taking then share form a common lot.
55. However, laying out of the coupes according to reconstituted felling series also could not be enforced uniformly all over the division. This is why most of the coupes of Burmu Range were laid out and sold as coupe no. 1 in 1962-1963 whereas in other ranges they were sold as coupe no. 2 in 1962-63.
56. No stock mapping was done by Mr. Sinha for his plan. As a result the gross area the forest of a felling series formed the area of Salai and bamboo even though occurred in the fellings series in patches either over-lapping or segregating. The laying out of coupes on this basis resulted in wide disparity in year to year yield and in certain cases areas not containing the particular species formed the pat of a coupe, producing no yield.

57. Wholly bare areas formed coupes where no operation either for restocking the areas was carried out resulting in no improvement of the condition of development of forest.
58. Fire protection : Measure of fire protection adopted consisted of clearing and burning the outer boundary lines and fighting any outbreaks of fire with the villagers. Due to paucity of funds found grossly inadequate and in some of the Ranges practically nothing has been done to protect the crop from fire hazards.

Forest co-operative Societies

59. Three types of co-operative societies were to promote unity, self-help, co-operation and economic interests amongst its members by organizing and developing forest resources. Any resident of the area above 18 years working as labourer, artisan could become a member. Funds of the society could be raised by (a) sale of shares, (b) loans, (c) subsidies, grant and donations from Government and other sources, the total loans and deposits are not to exceed 10 times the paid up share capital plus the Reserve fund. This limit could be increased by the Registrar. Funds could be kept by the Treasurer of the society who was an elected member. Managing committee consisted of nine persons, two nominated by the Registrar, one nominated by the Divisional Forest Officer and rest from the share-holder.
60. A large number of co-operative societies worked in Burmu and Lohardaga Ranges. The working of coupes by Forest Co-operative societies was found during 1962-63 to be satisfactory. But later on contractors entered this in the name of local people and started partitioning the paid elements. This resulted into deterioration and further annihilation of the societies.
61. **Forest Labourers Co-operative society:**
Organisation of Forest labourers Co-operative society was sanctioned vide letter no. A/E1A-7014/60M-4844 dated the 19th April, 1960 of the Secretary to Government of Bihar, Welfare Department, Patna to the Registrar, Co-operative Society Bihar, Patna, forwarded to Chief Conservator of Forests, Bihar vide memo no. A/E1A/7014/60 W-4844 dated the 19th April 1960

62. Membership of this society was open to major residents of the area belonging to the Schedule Castes or Scheduled Tribes who worked as labourers or artisans in a forest within the area of operation of the Society. As the Scheduled Tribes were poor and might not be able to pay the requisite admission fee and share capital for these societies Government (Welfare Department) decided to initially assist in the shape of (a) Moneta (b) Settlement of coupe on concessional basis and (c) Marketing facilities, The monetary grant was to the tune of Rs. 5720/- and was made available to the society through the respective Central Co-operative Bank.
63. The society had got the right to select in its area of operation one or two coupes of the value of Rs. 5000/- out of those notified for exploitation and to communicate its choice within 15 days of the receipt of the sale list. The society had to deposit Rs. 1000/- or 1.5th of the value of the coupe whichever was less before taking possession of the coupe. The price of the coupe made over to the society was fixed on the basis of the average of previous three year's settlement amount less 10%. After the coupes were handed over the price was to be paid in installments. All the Government agencies and non-official bodies were to see that the forest produce got a suitable market.
64. The Registrar, Co-operative Society engaged a Manager of the rank of Co-operative supervisor who maintained all the records and accounts and guided the society in all matters of purchase coupes. The Managing Committee consisted of three members on each nominated by Forest Department, Co-operative Department and the welfare Department and six representatives of the members. The manager of the society worked as the secretary of the Managing Committee Forest Department's representative remained Ex-office Chairman. One of the member of the Scheduled Tribes members of the society worked as Assistant Secretary who ultimately was to take over the charge of the society from the Manager after 3 to 5 years.
65. The profit of the society was to be utilized for the first five years to build the consolidated fund of the society after setting apart 10% of the amount to spend over the welfare of the workers. Thereafter, a portion of the profit was distributed among

the members of the society in proportion to the wages earned accordingly to the by-laws of the society.

66. The Assistant Registrar, Co-operative society was to exercise over-all control and powers of supervision. The Welfare officer, Chief Conservator of Forests and other Forest Officers and District Officer was to look into the working and the accounts of the society and record their comments in the Inspection Book.

67. Following is the list of the Forest Labourers Co-operative society which worked the coupe during 1962-63 and 1963-64.

1962-63	Forest	Labourer's	Co-op.	Society	Bagru-Saki C.C.8 Rs. 4258/-
1963-64	"	"	"	"	Heswe-Manhept C.C.6 Rs. 5190/-
1963-64	Heswe	"	"	"	Harmur C.C.6 Rs. 7100/-
	Chaprong	"	"	"	Jurni C.C.5 (arrear) Rs. 2650/-
	Barwadag	"	"	"	Sitadih C.C. 3 Rs. 1185/-

68. The numbers of Forest Labourer's Co-operative society was initially increasing after year and this was really a happy state of affairs. The general working of the coupes by such society is satisfactory. Tribal as well as local people get the maximum benefit out of the forest and such a society imparted greater sense of responsibility and love towards the forest. But with time vested interested entered the societies and ruined them.

**EXPERIMENTING ON ASSOCIATING GRAM PANCHAYAT
WITH FOREST MANAGEMENT**

69. Past experience have indicated that association of local people in the management of right-burdened forest is essential for their conservation. As the Gram Panchayat was accepted as unit of local administration that an experiment was launched on 24th May, 1958 when eight Gram Panchayats of Mandar Thana in the district of Ranchi (and three in Chandwa Thana of district Palamau) were associated with the management of 7148 acres i.e. 11.16 sq. miles of forests. The details of Gram Panchayats and the list of forests handed over to them are given below.

Sl. No.	Name of Panchayat	Name of village constituting the Panchayat	Thana and Thana no.	Area in acres
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Tala	1. Tala 2. Badri 3. Bachua 4. Korambo 5. Kamati 6. Hutri	Mandar 30 Mandar 24 Mandar 23 Mandar 29 Mandar 31 Mandar 32	661.00 635.00 612.00 NIL 100.00 NIL
3.	Nagra	1. Sakra S.C. 2. Loiya 1. Nagra 2. Gore	Mandar 24 Mandar 125 Mandar 129 Mandar 128	12.00 129.00 389.00 62.00
4.	Sons	1. Sons 2. Chanho 3. Opa 4. Chatwal 5. Rokadih 6. Pakariya 7. Masmano	Mandar 9 Mandar 10 Mandar 16 Mandar 26 Mandar 25 Mandar 27 Mandar 28	Nil 226.00 146.00 35.00 15.00 NIL NIL
5.	Bayasi	1. Bayasi 2. Madia 3. Kullu 4. Kalygee 5. Hindpuri 6. Chtia 7. Sisai 8. Goke	Mandar 65 Mandar 66 Mandar 63 Mandar 64 Mandar 62 Mandar 68 Mandar 71 Mandar 76	105.00 NIL 136.00 83.00 154.00 56.00 93.00 NIL
6.	Patra	1. Patra	Mandar 7	244.00

		2. Birsa	Mandar	6	NIL
		3. Patuk	Mandar	8	NIL
		4. Betlangi	Mandar	17	NIL
		5. Ara	Mandar	18	670.00
7.	Mendro	1. Mendro	Mandar	76	31.00
		2. Karkara	Mandar	105	NIL
		3. Bkhar	Mandar	81	18.00
		4. Chigri	Mandar	57	12.00
		5. Neodi	Mandar	70	72.00
8.	Totambi	1. Totambi	Mandar	132	NIL
		2. Masmano	Mandar	130	NIL
		3. Baski	Mandar	131	NIL
		4. Jhingri	Mandar	133	NIL
		5. Korambe	Mandar	135	NIL
		6. Sakarpandu	Mandar	136	NIL
		GRAND TOTAL			7148.00

70. In every panchayat under this scheme a Forest Committee with a sub-committee in each constituent village, had been formed specially to deal with forest matters. The job of this sub-committee is to form and supervise patrol parties for better protection. The forest of offence cases were submitted to the Divisional Forest Officer through the panchayat who record their recommendations after ascertaining the facts. This imparted a feeling of partnership among people in management of forests. Surplus of right –holders coupes were primarily sold to the Forest. Co-operative Societies or to the panchayats. The profits there from were utilized by the panchayat for various improvement workd.
71. In a nut shell the object of this experiment was to assign to Gram-Panchayats the responsibility of protection of forests, management of coupes, distribution of forest produce to right-holders from a part of the coupe, sell forest produce from the rest of the coupe, deal with the forest offence cases submitted to the panchayats by the Forest Department staff and utilize the sales proceeds from the coupe in the improvement of forest growth and the boundary pillar by spending 50% amount received and the balance amount utilized for the general benefit of the village under the overall supervision of the Divisional Forest Officer.
72. There might have been certain amount of enthusiasm in the beginning amongst the people when the experiment was launched, but that keenness and interested seemed to be declining when Kapoor was preparing his plan. Tension between villagers of the

same panchayat (e.g. Patratu), petty feud in each village leading to group rivalries rendered the smooth running of this experiment difficult. There were instances where the right –holders did not work the coupes properly e.g. patratu cc2 Nagra cc2, Tal Tala cc2 during 1962-63 in Tala c.c.2 even after repeated request and persuasion by Mukhiya and the local Forest Guard the villagers refused to rectify the high stumps left by them in the felled coupes. The job of the forest sub-committee was to form and supervise parties for better protection but hardly any such sub-committee had been able to execute the assigned duties in right earnest.

73. Consequently thefts in forests increased except in Bhuchaopa and Chanho under Sons gram panchayat. Forest Offence cases, submitted to Gram panchayat by the Forest guards were not enquired into timely by the mukhiyas. Large number of cases remained pending with the panchayats.
74. The return of cases, disposed of and cases pending with Gram panchayats was not submitted by the panchayats to enable the Divisional Forest Officer to know exactly how the Forest offence cases are being dealt with the panchayats. The state of boundary become deplorable. Fresh encroachments appeared. Cleaning and burning of boundary line had never been done. Boundary pillars remained unattended to. There had absolutely no control over grazing.
75. It is fact that the success of this experiment much depend on the Mukhias but Mukhia today is a very busyman. Moreover the general public is more interested in the removal of forest produce rather than doing anything substantial for its preservation. Hence it was felt that conditions were not ideal for this experiment to survive. Haste in pursuing this experiment might lead to embarrassing results. To other community Forests of Bihar a critical study of the results of this experiments might prove to be quite useful. Ideal conditions have got to be created before launching this type of experiment which deals with our forest wealth.

DEPARTMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH GRAM PANCHAYATS FOR FOREST
MANAGEMENT IN BIHAR BY J.N. SINHA

Chief Conservator of Forest, Bihar
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Forest is an unlocked property speared over the landscape. For its due conservation active co-operation of the local people is a condition precedent. It is specially so in the respect of the community forests, that is to say, forests occurring in between or in the vicinity of villages. The local people are allowed, by virtue of recorded rights, to take from the annual coupes, free of charge as much of over for sale even to recover the expenses of management. Thus it is they whom the community forest chiefly serves, yet, in the given conditions of management wholly by Government, there exists little feeling of belonging among the local people who, suspecting and resenting the controls, perpetually try and outwit the protection staff. The result is that community forests, in this state as else where, are being protected as well as they could be. Embarrassing complaints, chiefly bread from misunderstanding and suspicion, arises from time to time. Not are the lower forest staffs without their opportunities community forests. This will create among the people a sense of joint ownership, responsibility and love for the forest.

Forest is not to be given away to the panchayats. The panchayats are only being associated with management. In other way of speaking, it is not giving away the forest but taking in the panchayat. The Forest Department will continue with its administration and over-all responsibility. Scientific management will also continue. Working plans will operate without comprise. Only in protection and improvement of the forest will help be secured from the panchayat by effecting a psychological reorientation. Said a Mukhiya (Headman) of one such panchayat. "We rater put up with shortage of poles but do not steal, for how can we steal our own property, "Government revenue will not suffer, rather, there is likelihood of an increase because of more economical use of forest produce by right-holders, and the consequent surplus left over for sale. Expense of management, will also eventually decrease. The set-up ensured that their ring panchayats shall not have opportunities of forests destruction. The remoter forests, grouped under the term Commercial or National Forests, will continue to be managed independently by the Forest Department as now.

The subject was introduced at the meeting of standing committee of the Central Board Forestry held at Mussoorie in September, 1958, and the Board recommended circulation of the Experience gain in Bihar and Madras for guidance and such action as states might deem fit.

In Madras sizeable parts of reserved forests were virtually alienated and handed over to uncontrolled, almost amorphous bodies, Called panchayats. In those days there were no statutory were simply handed over to them to do what they might like. In such given conditions destruction of forest was their in the act itself. But in Bihar, as stated above, we are not handing over forests to Gram panchayats but only associating the panchayats with management will all necessary controls and safeguards.

The scheme is based on here elementary facts and logic of the statement-

- (a) Those who chiefly derive benefit from the forests should reasonably take a hand in its protection and management also.
- (b) Due conservation of forest will be possible only if the local people regard it as their own property and actively help in protection.
- (c) When every activity in the locality is eventually to be in the charge of panchayats, according to the concept of panchayat Raj Act, how can forests alone be kept away from them.

Management in association with panchayat is already creating in the zones of experiment a feeling of joint ownership among the people and love for the property. And once the people begin to feel that the forest is their own property, even though under the over all control of Government and that the benefits of conservation or the evils of destruction will chiefly be theirs, they will be assured take active interest in its protection. When the Forest Guard will patrol along with the village volunteer force of the Gram panchayat, there will be lesser chances of public complaint against him and false or exaggerated allegations, quite common today, will not be given credence, for he will not be acting alone as now. Cost of management will also get cheapened, for it will be possible in time to substantially reduce the number of Forest Guards and got the panchayat to lay out coupes, clear the boundary lines, carry out silvicultural operations under guidance, plant up blanks, etc. for all of which Government now have to pay.

The commonest misgivings are the following :-

- (i) It is feared that panchayats will destroy the forests. Those hold this view are from the supposition that the Forest Department are handing over the forest to the panchayat and washing their hands off in order to escape embarrassment and criticism. It is also supposed that Government property is being alienated and that unalterable proprietorship is being crated in favour of the villagers.
- (ii) The panchayats are generally supposed not to have acquired sufficient sense of responsibility and trusting the forest to them is naturally held to be risky and as cont among the germ of destruction.
- (iii) Behind all the objections is the implied supposition that the existing state of community for conserving is fully satisfactory a supposition not supported by the facts.

The answer to these misgiving and objections may be as follows:-

- (i) In the first place is not a place of transfer of Government property to the villagers. What is being done is merely to associate the people with scientific management and protection of forest in such a manner that they may acquire a sense of ultimate responsibility of Government remains undiminished.
- (ii) It is true that the scheme will have its teething troubles. For this reason guarded and gradual steps are being taken after successive experimentations. The psychological promises and results so far achieved belief the foreholdings.
- (iii) It has to be firmly admitted that in isolation from the local population the community forests can not be adequately protected. More increase in the number of protective staff will not achieve the objective for the lower executives themselves may prove a poser and instead of plugging the leak we may, in the temptations of intense demand and easy money, be only creating more points of leakage.

Accordingly an experiment was launched on May 24, 1958 in respect of forests covered by 11 panchayats (8 in Ranchi District and 3 in the bordering Palamau District). The area of community forests covered by 11 panchayats is 37.5 square miles.

For purposes of the experiment neighthar has the legal position been altered nor now financial commitments entered into. The overall management does remain as before in the hands of the Forest Department who are still answerable for the safety of the forest. In every constituent

village, has been formed specially to deal with forest matters. The job of the sub-committee is to form and supervise patrol parties (Van Raksha Dal) and generally to take all necessary measures to ensure protection of the forest. Each patrol party is made up of 6 to 8 villagers and for each day of the week there is one party. The patrolling party along with the Forest Guard goes round and even keeps watch by night. Surreptitious cutters who could elude the Forest Guard or intimidate or bribe him cannot do so with the patrolling party. A deterring atmosphere is created. The forest Guard still sends up forest offence cases to the Divisional Forest Officer through the Beat Officer and Range Officer and the power to compound offences or to prosecute offenders rest as before with the Divisional Forest Officer. But the difference is that now the cases go through the panchayat who make enquiries and ascertain the facts and record their recommendations. Normally the Divisional Forest Officer accepts their advice. This ensures that nobody will have grounds for complaints against the forest staff for harassment and also that there will be among the people of partnership in management. Special vigilance is being maintained by post Gazetted Officers for the experimental one and he goes from forest to forest organizing forest Sub-Committees, solving local problems, and seeing to it that the people do not misuse the given opportunities and get gradually trained in forest conservation. If at anytime any of the panchayats be found intractable, the entire management will be taken back into the hands of the Forest Department.

Government has taken up amendment of the Panchayat Raj Act. by which suitable legal powers will be conferred upon the Gram Panchayat in the matters of forest management.

The experiment initiated in May 1958 has yielded very encouraging results which cannot escape even the casual visitor. There is an atmosphere of sober enthusiasm and sense of responsibility among the people. The forests are better protected than ever before. During this period there have been no complaints against the forest staff. The people have themselves carried out small plantations in black patches of the forest. Now, because of the feeling of joint ownership, the panchayat and the right holders individually are vigilant that no body shall take from the common pool of the coupe produce more than the needs. Formerly there was no such vigilance and right holders were taking in excess of needs and wastefully using it. The result is that surplus is now left behind for sale where none existed before. The surplus is being sold through Forest Cooperative Societies instead through contractors by which the local people are also gaining financially.

Encouraged by the result of the first experiment 11 more panchayats in Simdega Sub Division of Ranchi District, accounting for forest area of 38.2 sq. miles, have at a function held at Simdega on the 14th March, been associated with forest management. More and more panchayats are offering to be associated but cautious steps are being taken. Eventually it is hoped that it will be possible to cover by this Scheme all the community forests of Bihar.

Quantitative data and assessment of results during the period of one year from inception of the experiment (May 1958 to May 1959) is given below.

1. Ranchi Forest Division

Total no. of panchayat associated with forest management	Total area of the forest in which panchayat have been associated	Total surplus during 1957-58 after right holders had removed their requirements free of charge	Total surplus during 1958-59 after associating panchayats	No. of forest co-operative societies for med.
	7,138 acres	43.25 acres	91.25 acres	Before 1958 After 1958. 1

2. Sale of coupes

(a) Coupes sold to contractor during 1957-58	2
(b) Coupes sole to contractors during 1958-59	NIL
(c) Coupe sold to Forest co-operative society during 1958-59	1

3. Complaints alleging accomplicity of forest staff in illicit fellings.

(a) 1957-58	4
(b) 1958-59	NIL

4. Cases detected

	Compounding Cases	Prosecution cases
(a) 1958-58	18	10
(b) 1958-59	27	2

III. Assessment of results.

The period of one year is too short for assessing the results of any experiment, especially in such a long term business as Forestry. The qualitative re-orientation is unmistakable but the figures reproduced above also lend themselves to the showing of a definite trend.

Ranchi Division

- (a) It will be observed that in Ranchi Forest Division where 171.50 acres in the aggregate used to be opened to the right holders in the form of several annual coupes for free taking of forest produce for their own bonafide consumption, only 43.25 acres was left unexploited during 1957-58. After the introduction of this Panchayat association there was more economical removal and less wastage as the result of which 91.25 acres was left being as surplus by the right-holders. This surplus will now be sold to the forest Co-operative Societies and this extra 48 acres will fetch in proportionately increased revenue. In addition to the State gaining in the revenue the local people will gain since the profit will now go to them instead of the outside contractors.
- (b) One forest cooperative society has been formed since the introduction of this new scheme. Formerly there appears to have been no incentive. Now the people will be coming forward to take part in commercial exploitation of the surplus forest from which formerly they thought that they had nothing to gain. In this way more active co-operation from the people will be available because they will have financial interest in the forest.
- (c) There used to be embarrassing complaints against the forest staff, some true, some false, prior to the introduction of the scheme there were 4 such complaints received in one year but subsequently there has been no complaint during the one year of the working of this experiment.
- (d) The total number of cases detected in 1957-58 and 1958-59 respectively are more or less the same but whereas 10 cases had to be sent up for prosecution in 1957-58, only 2 cases were sent up in 1958-59, the inference may be that whereas in

the conditions of detection by forest guard alone people had the chance of escaping in the court for lack of acceptable evidence but with the Raksha Dal operating along with the Forest Guard the evidence is overwhelming, so the offenders rather agree to the cases being compounded. In this way bitterness is minimized, for prosecution cases do produce a feeling of harassment.

Community Participation

1. Without willing community co-operation through its active participation, no forest can survive. In this perception, the primary focus of forestry development is to strengthen the economic base of the local community by distributing their usufructuary right over the forest produces. By assuring the local community needs for the forest resources and following the technique of planning corresponding to the absorbing capacity of the local community namely the tribals, the pace of development may be slower in the intermediate stages but it is very crucial for the local community development since it is essentially a transitional phase. Any superimposition of faster pace of development than what the local community can assimilate is bound to be counter-productive.
2. There is a general consensus that in any programme of forestry development people's participation is an important element for its success the future of our forestry movement depends on how far we would be able to carry the community with us. Unless we can create among the people a sense of belonging and make them realize the need of preserving forests both for the interest of the local community and the nation with all our good intention and expertise we may not be able to prevent the increasing denudation of our rich forest resources and our national target to cover 33 per cent of the total area by forest would be a far cry.
3. Hence a number of problems is to be solved while planning large forests (a) the mechanism and institutionalization of people's participation in the forestry programme, (b) synthesis the local community interest with the large national interest, (c) making the two interest mutually complementary instead of being mutually exclusive.

4. The answer to all the above mentioned problems lies in the understanding of socio-economic conditions of the local community, the different levels of economic development of the local community, finally the aspirations and practices of the local community.
5. The State has legalized its right over the forest resource the local community, by and large, yet believes that forests belongs to them. The State asserts its right through formal legal actions while the local community asserts its right through traditional practices of harvesting forest. The situation creates antagonistic relationship between the forest department and the local community leading to the destruction of the forests.
6. The local community is having its subsistence requirement like food, fodder, fuel, shelter from the forests since ancient times. Even such a subsistence based economy whatever might be the cash requirement used to come from minor forest produces.
7. Not being a static community, the consumption and livelihood pattern of tribals has been undergoing slow changes reducing its direct dependence on forest. In this changing process its cash requirement has also been increasing. The poor agricultural activities can provide only a part of its basic food requirements without having any alternative economic occupation, the local community cannot but fall back on forest to supplement its food requirements and cash requirements through minor forest produces the money value of such forest produces has substantially appreciated. Government has nationalized the trade of the minor forest produces as an important source of state revenue and the right of the local community over such minor forest produce is being restricted to strict bonafide domestic use.
8. The next important problem that needs solution is the misunderstanding between the forest department and the local community, each claiming the other as the intruder. It would be impossible to maintain and preserve even the existing forest unless the local community gets interested in its preservation. Unless they get a feeling that such preservation would strengthen their own socio-economic base.

9. These protected forests are normally surrounded by tribal habitation. In planning and executing any forest development plan in areas surrounding the villages which are mostly 'protected' in nature, the local community can easily be made a partner as a definite sharer in the forest produce with the responsibility of the local community for the protection of the above forest. This would be some short would only get a prescribed share of the produce in return for their predetermined services.
10. The inaccessible forests without any human habitation in its surroundings which are generally earmarked as Reserve Forests, or production forests would remain as the exclusive domain of the forest department and would be managed on commercial basis without any local pressure on Reserve forests and the larger national need can be served better.
11. Under the existing policy prescription, the entire forestry programme is departmentally planned and executed. The local community has no direct channel of communication with the forest department hierarchy to make the department aware of the needs, not to speak of, having any 'say' in policy decision. The local community, at best, is connected with the forest department as casual wage-earners from forest activities. Neither they have any stake at its survival nor they expect any future flow of income out of it. There is a feeling in the forest department that it provides employment to the local community which it considers synonymous with local community development. Forestry programmes is no doubt labour intensive and it would be evident that such employment opportunity neither can strengthen the economic base of the local community nor can help in generating a sense of belongingness among the local community.
12. The nature of employment it offers to the local community is purely casual in nature and mostly seasonal. Moreover plantation activities take place mainly during the monsoon, when the local community who have adopted settled agriculture, remain engaged in their win agricultural activities. To execute the targeted programme forest department has to depend, on many occasions, on the labour force from outside the local community. Thus the local community can not get even the full benefit of casual wage employment, on the contrary, the immigration of labour creates economic and social tensions. While in the off-season the tribals migrate to other regions or states

for job. Even when the local workers get casual employment they get wages for the work done while the permanent assets created by their labour virtually becomes the property of the Department.

13. The local communities who consider themselves as the owners of the forest resources in the area are denied any share of capital assets which they create by working as casual labour on the same resources. Since the State ownership of forest resources is formalized the forestry has come up as an organized sector, but because of the backwardness, disorganized and dispersed nature of the labour force, the local community is denied the benefit of participation in the management or even a share of the value added to the capital asset. If any meaningful involvement of the local community in forestry is warranted, then the local community should not be treated as an army of casual labour whose services can be dispensed with at any time, rather should be treated as the co-producers of the forest wealth. As the co-producers they should get rightful share both of the new capital assets and of the surplus generated from it. If this concept is accepted then the mechanism of joint assets and of the surplus generated from it. If this concept is accepted then the mechanism of joint management with the local forest wealth would not only strengthen the economic base of the local community on a permanent basis but also increasing surplus would be available to meet the larger national interest. Meaningful involvement with a sense of belonging of the local community would be possible only if they take part in decision making.
14. Within the set-goal of forestry in macro level planning, the local community may be associated in macro level decision making at local levels. Because of uneven development of different regions, the basic need of the local community from the forests would vary. Forest product mix and they cycle of forestry activities would vary in micro planning. While planning at the micro level plantation of trees should not be considered as the only forest activity rather a bundle of economic activities should be integrated in to the planning of forestry. Plan can be prepared for each small area, which would not be beyond the comprehension of the local community. Only with such a planning perception, active participation of the local community

both in decision making and the development forest to meet the larger national interest would be complementary instead of being exclusive.