FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Introduction

The theme of this paper is to give a review of the forest development in the planning era. It is concerned with the development of forests—area, outturn of forest produce, revenue and expenditure of forests, protection of forests, progress of forest regeneration and afforestation, employment in forest and forest industries, etc.

India’s forest covers 6.89 lakhs square kilometres (sq. k.m.) or about 22 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. The per capita forest area works out at only 0.2 hectare in India. Not only is the forest area proportionately smaller in India but it is also unevenly distributed and the productivity per acre per annum is substantially below the average yield of forests in other countries. In view of these facts the National Forest Policy Resolution of 1952 proposed that the area under forests be steadily raised to 33.3 per cent of the total land area, the proportion to be aimed at being 60 per cent in hilly regions and 20 per cent in the plains.

Area under Forest

The area under forest had fallen by 4 per cent from 7.18 lakh sq. k.m. in 1950-51 to 6.89 lakh sq. k.m. in 1960-61. Viewed at from outturn point of view, there was 6 per cent fall in the forest area under “merchantable.” Considered by legal status, there was 17 per cent increase in the “protected forest area,” 3 per cent fall in the “reserved forest area” and 14 per cent fall in the “unclassed forest area.” Studied by composition, there was 6 per cent increase in the area under “teak” and 14 per cent fall in the “miscellaneous” items, while there was no perceptible change in the area under “coniferous” and “Sal.”

Outturn of Forest Produce

(i) Major forest produce: The total value of the major forest produce recorded 160 per cent increase from Rs. 19 crores in 1950-51 to Rs. 49 crores in 1960-61. In other words, it increased at the rate of Rs. 2.8 crores per annum. The increase in the value of produce in the Third Plan (Rs. 21.3 crores) was $2\frac{1}{3}$ times of that in the Second Plan (Rs. 8.7 crores).

(ii) Minor forest produce: The value of minor forest produce rose by 157 per cent from Rs. 6.93 crores in 1950-51 to Rs. 11.13 crores in 1960-61. In other words, it increased at the rate of Rs. 38 lakhs per annum. The increase in the value of produce in the Third Plan period (Rs. 296 lakhs) was nearly three times of that (Rs. 109 lakhs) in the Second Plan period.

During the period 1950-61 the increase in the value of minor forest produce (Rs. 4.2 crores) was only one-seventh of that of major forest produce. The increase in the value of minor forest produce (Rs. 109 lakhs) in the Second Plan and (Rs. 296 lakhs) in the Third Plan was eight times of that of major forest produce in the Second and Third Plans respectively.
Revenue and Expenditure of Forests

The net revenue from forests increased by 120 per cent from Rs. 15.2 crores in 1951-52 to Rs. 33.4 crores in 1960-61. The expenditure per sq. k.m. was 35 paise in 1960-61 against 14 paise in 1951-52—an increase in expenditure by 21 paise. The revenue per sq. k.m. was 21 paise and 48 paise in 1951-52 and 1960-61 respectively—a rise in revenue per sq. k.m. by 27 paise. In other words, a net revenue of 48 paise per sq. k.m. was raised at an expense of 35 paise per sq. k.m. in 1960-61 against a net revenue of 21 paise at an expense of 14 paise in 1951-52. This trend of raising revenue clearly explains the profitability trend of the venture in the sphere of forestry. The share of expenditure to the net revenue registered an increasing trend by 6 per cent from 67 per cent in 1950-51 to 73 per cent in 1960-61. This increasing trend of the proportion of expenditure to net revenue proves the remarkable growth of activities connected with development of forestry.

Protection of Forests

The forest area under protection to total forest area of the States increased from 30.8 per cent or 273,000 sq. k.m. in 1950-51 to 54.6 per cent or 365,000 sq. k.m. in 1960-61—an increase of 34 per cent or 92,000 sq. k.m.

Forest Regeneration and Afforestation

The total area regenerated and afforested increased from 11,000 sq. k.m. in 1950-51 to 13,000 sq. k.m. in 1960-61—an increase of 2,000 sq. k.m. The total cost of regeneration operations was Rs. 226.9 lakhs in 1960-61 as against Rs. 45.7 lakhs in 1950-51. The cost of regeneration operation per sq. k.m. in 1950-51 was Rs. 417 and it increased four-fold to Rs. 1,749 in 1960-61.

Employment

Forest and forest industries provided employment to 50 lakh persons per day in 1960-61 against 4 lakh persons per day in 1950-51. In other words, the employment opportunity per day in forest and forest industries increased by more than 12 times over the last decade.

Position of Forest in the Third and Fourth Plans

The outlay in the Third Plan for various development programmes was Rs. 51 crores against Rs. 19.3 crores in the Second Plan and Rs. 9.5 crores in the First Plan. In the Third Plan 1.6 lakh acres as against a target of 1.37 lakh acres were brought under plantation of quick growing species and in the Fourth Plan 10 more lakh acres would be covered. Economic plantations covered 6 lakh acres as against a target of 7 lakh acres and there will be an addition of 8.4 lakh acres under economic plantation in the Fourth Plan. Rehabilitation work was taken up on 5.20 lakh acres in the Third Plan and will be extended over an additional 5 lakh acres in the Fourth Plan. Forest consolidation work covered only 25,000 miles out of a target of 46,000 miles and such work will be taken up in the Fourth Plan over 32,000 miles. The work connected with farm forestry covered only 0.60 lakh acres out of a target of 12 lakh acres. The foregoing survey of the position of the forestry reveals that the outlay for various development programme in the Third Plan was 2½ times of that in the Second Plan and 5 times of that in the
First Plan. The progress of the various schemes referred to above was fairly good. In the light of the success of the programmes implemented so far, there will be no difficulty in achieving the modest targets laid down in the Fourth Plan.

Summary

A review of forestry development in India in the planning era reveals that the success of the programmes implemented hitherto was inspiring. In the light of the success of the measures undertaken so far, the achievement of the targets in the Fourth Plan is by all means within the realm of the possibility of the country.

2. A new revenue of 48 paise per sq. k.m. at an expense of 35 paise per sq. k.m. was raised in 1960-61 against a net revenue of 21 paise at an expense of 14 paise in 1951-52.

3. The share of expenditure incurred over the maintenance of the forest and forest industry to the net revenue from the forest and forest industries has registered an increasing trend.

4. The increase in the forest area under protection to the total forest area of the states in 1960-61 over 1950-51 was 34 per cent or 92,000 sq. k.m.

5. The cost of regeneration operations per sq. k.m. had gone up from Rs. 417 in 1950-51 to Rs. 1,749 in 1960-61.

6. The employment opportunity per day in the forest and forest industries increased by more than 12 times during the same period.

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NEEDED RESEARCH IN ECONOMICS OF INDIAN FORESTRY

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Forest represents a greater value to society than most people are aware. However, only a cursory examination of the available statistics and a casual observation at the forest resources of India are sufficient to convince oneself that the resources have been allowed to waste away through over-use, misuse or under-utilization and consequently the present overall output is low. This leaves many domestic needs of the country unfulfilled as well as eliminates the possibility of acquiring more foreign exchange through export.

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