

CHAPTER -5 GENERAL HISTORY OF FORESTS

1.5.1 The forest reservation of forests in Koderma Division was done in 1880 and 1893 when the old reserve of Koderma Block was notified as reserve forests by the Bengal Government. The was placed unde Palamu Forest division for administration.

1.5.2 Rest of the forest was in the hands of the Zamindars and was not under any scientific management.

1.5.3 In between 1918 and 1933, the management of forest belonging to the Ramgarh Estate was taken over by the State under section 38 of the Indian Forest Act.

1.5.4 However, most of the remaining forest remained under the Zamindars and were subjected to indiscriminate felling and clearance. The increasing population helped in accelerating the process of exploitation of the forests. This problem was further compounded by the advent of the Second World War during which period considerable pressure was felt on the forest to meet the war effort. This was followed by the enactment of the Bihar private Forest Act in 1946. The provisions of this Act were misunderstood by the owners and villagers who felt that the forest will vest with the Government and they will be depraved of the forest produce from these forests. This led to wide spread felling of the forests which led to their depletion. With the enactment of the land reforms Act in 1950, the entire private forests were vested in the state and by 1952 all the erstwhile private forests were brought under the preview of the Indian Forest Act.

1.5.5 Since then all the forests of the area are under State control and principles of scientific management are being applied to them.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:-

1.5.6 Koderma reserve was first notified in 1890 and placed under the Palamau Forest Division for management. In 1920, Hazaribagh Division was created to manage the forests of Koderma and Kuruchutta. In 1932 this division was abolished and the Koderma forests reverted

to Palamau division for administration. The forest of Ramgarh estate was looked after by the Private estate Forest Officer under the Direction division.

1.5.7 With the creation of Hazaribagh Forest Division on 1.11.1943 (Govt. notification no. 4754-VIF-40-43 dated 14.10.92)

1.5.8 Koderma Forest Division became operational from 24.4.1957 (Govt. notification no.c/F-7014/56-2348 R date 5.10.1956) and after readjustment of certain areas took its present shape after 10.4.1961

PAST SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT & THEIR RESULT:-

1.5.9 As has been discussed in the foregoing paragraphs the forests of Koderma Division have had a chequered administrative history undergoing a lot of chopping and changing. The forests were being managed under different scheme and plans and the Working Plan written by Shri R. Prasada was the first plan to encompass the entire division in its present form.

KODERMA RESERVE:-

1.5.10 Koderma Reserve was notified in 1880 and 1883. The first working scheme was prepared in 1918-19. Five felling series under coppice with standard system were constituted.

1.5.11 This scheme was revised in 1927-28 in which the retention of standards was discontinued. Mr. Benskin, Conservator of Forests made some further modifications to meet the demands of mica mines. His main prescriptions were:-

- (1) Retention of 25 standards /are to meet the demands of the mica mines.
- (2) Thinning and cleaning in 10th, 20th, 30th years.
- (3) Sowing and planting up of blanks.
- (4) Fire protection rules were introduced.

1.5.12 The next Working plan for these forests was prepared by W.D.M. Warren in 1938-39. He prescribed retention of 8-10 standards prepare as seedbearers. Contour

trenching was recommended to improve the stock. Special regulations to meet the demands of the mica miners were introduced.

1.5.13 The next plan for these forests was prepared by Shri. P. Mishra for the period 1956-60 to 1968-69. He constituted 4 Working Circle viz.

- (1) Coppice Working Circle.
- (2) Salai Selection Working Circle.
- (3) Bamboo (Overlapping) Working Circle.
- (4) Khair (Overlapping) Working Circle.

1.5.14 Areas allotted to Salai selection Working Circle were carved out from the Coppice Working Circle areas. Cleaning in worked over coupes of Coppice Working circle was prescribed but discontinued after 1969 as it was felt that it was encouraging theft and generally leading to depletion of forests.

1.5.15 Hill tops and steep slopes were allotted to Salai Selection Working Circle. This was done to protect the hill tops and steep slopes by prohibiting coppice felling. The minimum exploitable girth of Salai was 3'. There was only one felling series with a felling cycle of 20 years.

1.5.16 Six felling series were constituted in Koderma R.F under Mishra's plan with a cutting cycle of 4 years.

1.5.17 Only one Khair felling series was constituted in which the exploitable diameter was 6". The yield was regulated by area.

1.5.18 A scheme for exploitation of Semal for feeding the match splint factory at Koderma for the period 1966-67 and 1975-76 was prepared by Shri R. Prasad. The exploitable girth of Semal was fixed at 4'.

RAMGARH EX-RESERVE:-

1.5.19 The legal history of these forests has been detailed with in chapter I.

1.5.20 The first working scheme for Ramgarh forest was prepared by Breaky in 1934. He prescribed freeing of Sal poles from Salai and other miscellaneous species. This resulted in heavy exploitation of Salai.

1.5.21 This scheme was revised by Gibson in 1935-36 who prescribed the following Working circle.

- (1) Coppice Working Circle.
- (2) Selection Working Circle.
- (3) Bamboo & Khair Overlapping Working Circle.

1.5.22 Gibson's plan was revised by Shri B.N. Prasad in 1953-54 in which he deleted the selection working circle prescribed by Gibson. He adopted coppice with standards system with special provision for the utilisation of mature Salai trees in advance coupes. Special attention was given to regeneration and providing bigger timber for agricultural and house hold needs of the local people and also the preservation of Sal.

EARTHWHILE PRIVATE FORESTS:-

1.5.23 These forest were under private ownership till 1947. These forests suffered maximum damage before they were taken over by the Govt. after the enactment of the Bihar private Forest Act in 1946 and the subsequent land reforms Act in 1950.

1.5.24 On assumption of control of these forests by the forest department in 1948, a working scheme approved by the conservator was introduced and the forests were placed under coppice system.

1.5.25 Subsequently the forests of Koderma Range and Domchanch Range were being worked as per the prescriptions of the working plan of Hazaribagh Division written by Shri. B. N. Prasad for the period 1957-58 to 1966-67. The forest of Gajhandi and Chauparan Ranges were worked as per prescriptions of the Working Plan of Chatra division written by Shri B. N. Prasad for the period 1957-58 to 1966-67.

1.5.26 The Working circle prescribed under the above working plans were

- (1) Coppice Working Circle.
- (2) Protection working circle.
- (3) Afforestation working circle.
- (4) Khair (Overlapping) Working Circle.
- (5) Bamboo (Overlapping) Working Circle.

1.5.27 Main silvicultural system adopted was coppice with standards. Rotation adopted were 40 years and 30 years standards were retained with a dual purpose of hope in establishing regeneration and providing bigger timber for agricultural and domestic needs of the people. Retention of standards was as follows:-

40 year rotation: - 8-10 standards of 1'to 2'girth/acre.

30 year rotation: - 5-10 standards of 1'- 2' girth/acre.

Hilly & open areas:- 10-25 standards of 1'- 2' girth/acre.

1.5.28 Separate Bamboo (Overlapping) Working circle was created with a felling cycle of 4 years. There were 9 felling series in Chauparan range and 4 felling series in Koderma. The prescriptions worked fairly well.

1.5.29 Only one Khair felling series was constituted under the Khair (Overlapping) Working Circle exploitable diameter was fixed at 6'. Felling cycle was 30 years in Chauparan & 15 years in Koderma Range.

SHRI R. PRASADA'S WORKING PLAN:-

1.5.30 This plan was prepared for the period 1973-74 to 1982-83. As mentioned earlier this is the first comprehensive working plan for Koderma forest division replacing different working plans which were operational before.

1.5.31 He prescribed the following working circles:-

- (1) Coppice Working Circle.
- (2) Plantation cum Rehabilitation working Circle.
- (3) Salai Selection working Circle.

- (4) Protection working Circle.
- (5) Bamboo (Overlapping) working Circle.
- (6) Khair (Overlapping) Working Circle.
- (7) Matchwood (Overlapping) Working Circle.

1.5.32 The bulk of the forests were placed under the coppice working circle. The silvicultural system adopted was coppice with standards the rotation was 40 years in Koderma R.F. and a few will stock P.F.S. In the rest of the forest rotation was fixed at 30 years.

1.5.33 The number of standards to be retained was fixed at 15/acre. Apart from this upto 20 fruit trees per acre were to be retained, where available.

1.5.34 The yield was regulated by area. The annual coupe was determined after deducting the blanks, scrube open and eroded areas unlike Shri B.N. Prasad's plan.

1.5.35 The coupes have been generally classified into two categories, namely community coupes and commercial coupes. Community coupes were those coupes where the demand of the right holders was more than the available yield. Only coupes where the yield was expected to be higher than the requirements of the right holders were designated as commercial coupes.

1.5.36 Total No. of felling series constituted is as follows:-

Range	Commercial	Community	Total
Koderma	13+4=17	2	19
Gajhandi	22	4	26
Domchanch	21	5	26
Chauparan	<u>40</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>25</u>
	<u>80</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>96</u>

1.5.37 Clearings were prescribed in the annual coupes following the year of felling. All high stumps and damaged standing trees, whether marked for felling or standards, were to be cut. Cleanings were also prescribed in the 5th year after the main felling.

1.5.38 No thinning were prescribed in the areas of 30 year rotation. In the 40 years rotation crops one mechanical thinning after 20 years has been prescribed.

1.5.39 Grazing was prohibited from forests which were completely free from grazing. In the remaining forests filled areas were to be closed for 5 year of after felling.

1.5.40 However, the cultural operations of Shri Prasada's plan were not implemented rigorously prescriptions regarding cutting and cultural operations could not be implemented for paucity of funds. The filled over area were not protected against grazing and fire. This has resulted in general deterioration of the coupe.

1.5.41 The area under this Working Circle was 63.45.57 ha. In shri Prasad's plan which has shrunk to ha. How ever in the reduced area the crop density was come down to between 0.3 and 0.4 in most cases.

1.5.42 plantation cum rehabilitation working circle was created to attend to Sal rooted wastes blanks and scrub forests. The area under this Working Circle was 22.268.34 ha.

1.5.43 Subsequently a scheme of exploitation of plantations of Koderma forest Division for the period 1975-76 to 1984-85 by Shri L.K. Panday, the then working Plans Officer.

1.5.44 The silvicultural system adopted was clear felling with artificial regeneration. The rotation fixed was 10 years, Khair, Semal, mahua, Kaju<Bamboo and Teak were not to be felled.

1.5.45 Salai Selection working circle extending over an area of 1970-76 ha was created covering salai bearing areas on hill tops and steeper slops felling cycle of 20 years with an exploitable girth of 3' was prescribed. This system has worked satisfactorily however, with the creation of Gautam Budha wild life sanctuary and the Koderma wild life sanctuaries the effective area under this working circle has shrunk to only 1065-64 ha. Hence it is proposed in the present working plan to merge this working circle with the coppice selection working circle.

1.5.46 A total area of 1230.90 ha unfit for copies working and could not be planted up. These included precipitous slopes, and severely gullies and eroded areas.

