

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Forests constitute the green gold of the country, because the role of the forests in protection of ecology and environment is well recognised today, than in earlier years. Its role in providing timber, fuel wood, fodder, green manure, medicine, fruits and other forest products also has not remained unrecognised. It is not an exaggeration to say that the very existence of human culture is closely linked with forests.

The overwhelming dependence of the human civilization on the forests is aptly illustrated by the Mesopotamian and Mohen-jo-dara and Harappa civilizations. Why was the Mesopotamian civilisation lost for ever? Why were the Mohen-jo-dara and Harappa civilization wiped out from this continent? A recent study of scientists from Chicago University has discovered answers to these questions. The scientists have come to the conclusion that the land on which the civilizations depended for sustenance became unfertile thus, leading to their sudden collapse.

The "Third World War" - the war against nature - has already begun. There is no doubt that the ill effects of the "Third World War" (against nature) are more serious than the effects of the two World Wars. When we are expanding our wings towards skies, we are being threatened on our own earth. It will be suicidal for man to let six million hectares of his land surface turn into desert every year. From 3123 million acres

of crop land all over the world, we are losing 22,700 million tonnes of top fertile soil annually.

The survival of the top soil depends on the vegetation. But the dismal situation is that the world's trees are being felled at a rate faster than nature or man can replace them. Since 1950, nearly half of the world's forest cover has vanished and an area of the size of Cuba is left barren every year. According to the scientists, in the world, every minute, 40 acres of rain forest is being destroyed. India's contribution in particular, is no less significant. Desertification is death creeping on the surface of earth.

Once upon a time India was known as a "land of honey and milk". But because of the overpopulation and implementation of developmental schemes through Five Year Plans, India presents a gloomy picture. The rate of deforestation in our country is 12 hectares per minute due to which nearly 1 percent of the land surface of the country is being laid bare every year. Though it is claimed that the country's 22.7 percent land surface is covered by forests, the actual forest area is hardly more than 10 percent of the land surface.

Owing to this gloomy situation, soil erosion in India has attained an alarming proportion. According to an estimate, out of 304 million hectares, the total land area of the country, 150 million hectares, i.e. 49.34 percent of the total crop land is affected by serious water and wind erosion. Apart from it, 2.5 million hectares are affected due to

wrong agricultural practices, like shifting cultivation (jhum), expansion of cultivation on mountain slopes and utilisation of high meadows. This shows that over 50 percent crop land area is threatened by desertification.

The energy crisis in the rural sector along with soil erosion and degradation of the environment are some of the direct consequences of large scale deforestation. Severe droughts and floods have become almost a common annual feature in many parts of the country.

There is now a growing awakening and political will for proper management of natural forest and creation of new forests through afforestation and thus, improving the eco-system. It is estimated that the total drain on the national economy because of inadequate forests resulting in burning of cowdung, siltation of reservoirs, floods, draughts, import of oil, etc., would be more than Rs. 10,000 crores annually. The nation can ill afford such a heavy loss. The solution lies in proper management of renewable forest resources.

Forestry holds a big promise for catalysing economic growth, energizing rural development through creation of jobs in the field as well as the factories and most importantly, creation of wealth for posterity. It has been proved beyond doubt that people's co-operation is very necessary in forestry development programmes. Only social forestry programmes can solve all these problems. Social forestry programme is still in its infancy in India. However, sincere efforts are made to review this programme within specified areas in this study.

3(a)

The Social Forestry Programmes have got the momentum in the area where the research work is undertaken. There are many causes responsible for this movement. The monsoon has been irregular, erratic and insufficient for more than a decade in these four talukas. The farmer big or small is caught in the "debt trap". The prices of farm inputs are rising but the output per acre is decreasing. As a result, the farmer is incurring losses. To overcome this situation, he is adopting new strategy i.e. farm forestry, step by step. Social forestry programmes have their strong and weak points. The early research may give some guidelines or suggestions to shape the future of the programme. That is why this problem is selected for the present research study.

The present study entitled "Progress, impact and problems of social forestry with special reference to Gadhinglaj, Ajara and Chandgad talukas in Maharashtra and Hukkeri taluka in Karnataka", is a modest attempt at analysing farm forestry.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research aims to study the following objectives.

- [1] To study the progress of social forestry with special reference to Gadhinglaj, Ajara, Chandgad talukas in Maharashtra and Hukkeri taluka in Karnatak.

3(b)

- [2] To review the effectiveness and impact of extension work carried out by the Department of Social Forestry and the work undertaken by the Farm Forestry farmers.
- [3] To study the problems of Social Forestry Department and the farm forestry farmers residing in Gadhinglaj, Ajara and Chandgad talukas in Maharashtra and Hukkeri taluka in Karnatak.
- [4] To suggest the remedies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted by the researcher comprised of the following.

- i) The data used is collected from the secondary sources i.e. Government Department of Social Forestry.
- ii) The interview method farm forestry farmers is adopted to obtain information regarding impact and problems in farm forestry.
- iii) The farms where the respondents do farm forestry have been visited to collect the relevant information for the present study.

3(c)

- iv) In order to determine the position of farm forestry, a simple and brief case study has been undertaken.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Four talukas i.e. Gadhinglaj, Ajara and Chandgad of Kolhapur district in Maharashtra and Hukkeri taluka of Belgaum district in Karnatak have been studied. Hukkeri taluka is adjacent to Gadhinglaj and Chandgad talukas. Four hundred farm forestry farmers were identified from these four talukas.

After applying the equal proportional principles, one hundred farm forestry farmers were selected. The talukawise sample comprised of the following :

Gadhinglaj	25
Ajara	22
Chandgad	38
Hukkeri	15

100

Thus, the above sample of 100 farm forestry farmers is used for the research study.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

3(d)

Social Forestry in India is of recent origin. It is being implemented in Hukkeri taluka of Belgaum district since 1982, in Gadhinglaj, Ajara and Chandgad talukas of Kolhapur district since 1983. Therefore, the year 1982 has been selected for the study. It may be stated that the social forestry requires rather a longer period to yield its fruits. But because of the intensive efforts in farm forestry, it is showing the encouraging results. Thus, microlevel study of private farm forestry in the area described above has been carried out.

CHAPTER SCHEME

The entire dissertation has been divided into eight chapters as follows.

CHAPTER I	:	Introduction
CHAPTER II	:	Importance of Social Forestry
CHAPTER III	:	History of Social Forestry
CHAPTER IV	:	Models of Social Forestry
CHAPTER V	:	The Forest Policy of India
CHAPTER VI	:	Social Forestry in India
CHAPTER VII	:	Analysis and Interpretation
CHAPTER VIII	:	Conclusions and Suggestions
		Appendices