

Chapter-I

Organization and Functions of the Forest Department

1.01 Introduction:-

The subject 'Forests' was included in the seventh schedule of provincial legislative list referred to in Section 100 of the Government of India Act, 1935. The administration of the Forests in the then Bombay Province was entirely under the control of the provincial Government and was dealt with in the Agriculture and Forest Department of the Secretariat.

The subject has been included in the concurrent list in 1976, as per 42nd amendment to the Constitution of India. The subject is now being dealt with by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in the Government of India and by Revenue and Forest Department of the Government of Maharashtra.

1.02 Organization of the Forest Department:-

- 1.02.01** Awareness of the Forest management for meeting the industrial requirements of Teak was felt by the British Government in England in the year 1805. Dr. Gibson, Superintendent of Botanical Gardens, Bombay Presidency was appointed to act as 'interim' Conservator of Forests from 1841 to 1842. He later became the first Conservator of forests with a small staff in 1847.
- 1.02.02** A charter for protection and preservation of the Forests was drawn in 1865. The enactment of Indian Forest Act, was done in 1878, and this act was in force in the State till 1927. The present Indian Forest Act, dealing more comprehensively with the aspects relating to Forests, was passed in 1927, which is now in force. It has been amended from time to time to make it more effective.
- 1.02.03** In 1892, Department was re-organized forming 3 circles corresponding to Revenue Divisions. For the first time, a Chief Conservator of Forest was appointed in 1917. The Department ceased to be ancillary to the Revenue Department from 1921.
- 1.02.04** The first conservancy in Berar (which is a part of present Maharashtra State) came under British Rule in 1855. The foundation of regular forest administration was laid in Berar and Melghat by Sir Brandis in 1869. First conservancy in Vidarbha was started after purchase of ex-jamindari forests of Aheri, which was brought under Working Plan in 1895.
- 1.02.05** Reorganization of the State was done in 1956. Due to bifurcation of reorganized bilingual Bombay State, present State of Maharashtra was constituted in May, 1960. The Forest area of the then Maharashtra State was 67321.87 Sq. Kms, which included 6604.5 Sq. Kms of area in charge of Revenue Department and 3670.03 Sq. Kms area of forest in charge of private individuals. The Forest Department then consisted of 6 territorial circles, 25 territorial divisions, 3 independent sub divisions and functional divisions of Working Plans, silviculture, utilization and a Forest Engineer.
- 1.02.06** The formation of present structure of Forest Department is due to expansion of the Department, creation of additional posts of Chief Conservator of Forests, Conservators and Divisional Forest Officers in 1964, formation of Indian Forest Service from 1st July 1966, creation of Forest Development Board and subsequently Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd., introduction of State Trading in Minor Forest Produce, creation of

Social Forestry Wing and reorganizations of the department in 1964, 1981, 1983, 2011 etc.

1.02.07 The Forest Department: - The present Forest Department is headed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), who acts as a Team leader and a coordinator of all activities and programmes of the Forest Department and Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd. and work outside the forest areas on non forest wastelands and community lands. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) is assisted by Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Wildlife), Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Production and Management), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Personnel), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Administration-Subordinate Cadre), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Budget, Planning and Development), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Non Timber Forest Produce, Monitoring & Evaluation), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Protection), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests and Nodal Officer, Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Conservation), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (CAMPA), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Information, Technology and Policy), Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (Research, Education & Training) who deal with the subjects allotted to them. The Forest Department in Maharashtra State is divided into 11 Territorial Circles, 44 Territorial Forest Divisions and 7 Independent Sub Divisions. The Divisions are further sub-divided into 369 Territorial Ranges, the 1460 Rounds and 5515 Beats as on 2011. In addition to these territorial units the Wildlife Wing has 4 Circles, 14 Divisions, 65 Ranges, 167 Rounds and 688 Beats. There are 5 functional circles and they are assigned the works of Research, Working Plan, Education, Evaluation, Training etc. The Organisation Chart of Forest Department as well as the Wildlife wing has been shown in {Annexures I(1), I(2)}. Statement showing Range, Round & Beat has been given in Appendix 1.

1.02.08 In addition to the above staff, officers from Public Works Department (Engineers), Medical Department (Medical Officers), and Revenue Department (F.S.O. etc.) are taken on deputation.

1.02.09 The F.D.C.M. Ltd.:- The Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd. is headed by Managing Director in the rank of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. He is assisted by one Chief General Manager in the rank of Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests & three General Managers in the rank of Chief Conservators of Forests in the headquarter & four in charge of Territorial Regions in the rank of Chief Conservators of Forests, one Regional Manager in the rank of Conservator and 16 Divisional Managers in charge of territorial or functional Divisions in the rank of Dy.C.F. / D.F.O. and 43 Assistant Managers in the rank of Assistant Conservators of Forests. The organization consists of 74 Ranges, 204 Rounds and 423 Beats as on 2011.

1.02.010 The Social Forestry Department :- The Social Forestry Department is headed by the Principal Chief Conservators of Forests and Director General, assisted by 6 Chief Conservator of Forests and Deputy Director General in charge of Territorial Circles, corresponding to Revenue Divisions and 1 Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Additional Director General at the Head quarter. There are 33 Divisions corresponding to the 33 Districts and 3 Divisions at Head Quarters headed by Dy Directors of Social Forestry in the rank of Dy. Conservator of Forests. The Social Forestry Organisation is provided with 82 Assistant Directors, (56 in the field and rest in the office of the Director and Joint Directors) in the rank of Assistant Conservator of Forests, 301 Plantation Officers in the rank of Range Forest Officers, 600 Assistant Plantation Officers in the rank of Foresters and 208 Plantation Kotwals in the rank of Forest Guards.

The sanctioned staff in Forest Department and Social Forestry (As on 31-03-2011) has been shown in the Appendix 2.

1.03 Functions of the Forest Department:-

The functions of the Forest Department are:-

1.03.01 Protection, Conservation & Development of Forests:-

- (i) To take measures to protect forests, wildlife and natural eco-system from damage, theft, fires, degradation, misuse and abuse.
- (ii) To conserve soil, water to protect and improve its fertility, preserve wildlife, total biological diversity through net-work of National Parks, Sanctuaries, Biosphere reserves to provide corridor to maintain genetic continuity.
- (iii) To carry out all round development of forest areas to enrich present forest, increase their productivity by taking up plantations. Implement need-based programme of afforestation for production of fuel, fodder in open and remote areas, carry out construction and maintenance of roads, administrative and residential buildings, maintain mechanized units of logging, transport and communication system for management, maintenance, use and improvement of the forest.

1.03.02 Scientific Management of the Forests:-

- (i) To carry out scientific management through Working Plans consistent with permanence, maintenance and improvement of the forest eco-system and to meet the demand of rural populace to permissible extent.
- (ii) Management of catchment areas of watersheds, degraded forest lands and waste lands on the principles of land capability and land use to meet growing demands of local populace. Promote industries to procure their requirements through farmers or by building their own resources. Avoid making supply of forest produce to industries at concessional rates. Supply of raw material to cottage industries if surplus is available over and above the requirement of rural-tribal populace.
- (iii) To regulate the rights and concessions of the local populace including those of grazing to the extent of carrying capacity of the forest without depleting the resource and only to the extent of bonafide needs.
- (iv) To improve the capacity of production optimized by increased investment on adoption of advance technology, research and development.
- (v) To carry out replenishment of degraded and inferior forests with indigenous and ecologically established valuable species, production of fodder, use of pasture on cutting terms by encouraging stall feeding of the cattle.
- (vi) Development of Farm Forestry, Social Forestry in non forest areas outside the reserved forests to increase total production capacity to reduce pressure on Government Forests.

1.03.03 Research, Extension, Education etc.:-

- (i) To carry out research in Silviculture, Ecology, Seed and Seedling production, regeneration, Utilization, Pathology and other fields in forestry in the interest of better conservation, management and sustenance of the forests. Research in Wildlife, Tribal Development and Technological Improvements in the areas closely related to forest.
- (ii) To impart education and training to foresters in professional matters and scientific disciplines, educate public in respect of Forest, Wildlife, Social Forestry, management of community forestry. Promote specialization in the field of forestry.
- (iii) To create awareness of populace for best land use, for raising, fuel, fodder, crops on available waste land not under active cultivation, promote farm forestry, social forestry, participate in watershed management carried out for integrated development of the area, eco-development works now being introduced to promote and motivate populace for joint forest management, create infrastructure for sustenance of the developed areas.

- (iv) To survey and build up adequate data base by collection of appropriate information on forests and forestry through undertaking systematic surveys and collecting information essential for management of the forests. Develop built-in capacity to collect and feed this information on forest land, crop growth, market trends, personnel resources and development etc. through appropriate Management Information System.
- (v) To carry out proper monitoring and evaluation for improvement and review of the specific projects and works prescribed under approved Working Plans.
- (vi) To create adequate legal support to forestry, forest protection, conservation and management, farm forestry, joint forest management, social forestry, protection of interests of farmers, economically weaker sections, women and tribal in developing trees and forests by conferring on them suitable rights of ownership and usufructs. Develop suitable import-export strategy for forest produce in the interest of forest conservation.
- (vii) To build-up suitable financial support for development, maintenance and sustenance of forest.

1.04 Relations with the Government of India:-

1.04.01

- (i) The subject of Forests and Wildlife in the Central Government is dealt with by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The Director General of Forests (previously designated as Inspector General of Forests) may correspond officially with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF)/Principal Chief Conservators of Forests/ Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests on technical and professional matters and on subjects on which he may require information or desires to make suggestions.
- (ii) He may write to the State Government with reference to professional matters, make inspection tours and submit to Government report or notes on forests visited, either directly or through the Government of India.
- (iii) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has established the regional offices of the Department of Environment, Forests and Wildlife to deal with the matters of forest conservation, ecological matters, and disforestation. The State of Maharashtra is covered under the jurisdiction of Regional C.C.F., Western Zone with office at Bhopal. The functions of the Regional C.C.Fs. are narrated in the **Govt. Resolution No. 37-3/85-F-P, dated 7-4-1986** of the Government of India. Please see in sub para 1.04.02.

1.04.02 Functions of Regional Chief Conservators of Forests:-

- (i) To monitor and evaluate all on-going forestry development projects and schemes with specific emphasis on conservation of forests.
- (ii) To assist the States/Union Territory Govts. in preparation of the proposals involving diversion of forest lands for non-forestry purposes under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for expeditious processing and disposal of such cases.
- (iii) To undertake physical inspection of sites in cases of diversion of forests involving an area of more than 40.0 ha.
- (iv) To monitor the implementation of conditions stipulated by the Central Govt. in proposals approved under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- (v) To assist the States and Union Territories in the preparation of management plans for working of forests under their control within the frame work of guide lines issued by the Central Govt. from time to time.
- (vi) To assist the States and Union Territories in streamlining collection, storage and retrieval of data covering all the facets of forests and forestry activities and to transmit such data to the Central Government/Central data Processing Centre.

- 1.04.03** The Headquarter Unit located at New Delhi will be responsible for supervision and coordination of all the activities in relation to the functions assigned to the Regional Offices as enumerated above under the overall control of the Secretary to Govt. of India in the Department of Environment, Forests & Wildlife and will be part of the Secretariat.
- 1.04.04 Other matters:-** The Government of India regulates the deforestation and monitors the process of conservation, preparation of Working Plan for regulating and implementing the schemes of protection and conservation of environment and wildlife by monitoring activities and regulation of the State Government and observance of implementation of the provision of central acts, legislation on wildlife etc. in general and The Forest Conservation Act 1980 in particular.
- The liaison between Central and State Government for the purpose of processing deforestation proposals is kept through the Nodal Officer representing Forest Department of the State. The planning process is also closely monitored by the Central Government, through the Regional C.C.Fs. who is a member of the Committee for finalization of Working Plan of Forests prepared in accordance with policies and guidelines issued by the Government of India or the Honourable Supreme Court of India.
- 1.04.05** The Government of India is also associated with State Governments in the activities of Social Forestry, development of Wildlife and nature conservation etc. through financial support of centrally sponsored or centrally aided schemes.
- 1.04.06** The Forest Research Institute is now designated as Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education, Dehradun and carries out the functions of forestry research and imparting training to State Forest Service Officers including R.F.Os. Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy of Dehradun imparts training to Indian Forest Service Officers. I.C.F.R.E. runs research institutes at Dehradun, Coimbatore, Jabalpur, Jodhapur and Kurseong to cater to the regional needs of research. Wildlife Institute of India at Dehradun carries out work of research on wildlife and bio-diversity conservation and imparts training to the Forest Officers working in the States.
- 1.04.07** Indian Institute of Forest Management is established at Bhopal for catering to the needs of management studies in forestry in the country to create managerial and professional skills required for managing forestry related activities outside forest areas.
- 1.04.08** The Government of India also keeps liaison with international institutes like O.D.A., C.I.D.A., S.I.D.A., I.U.F.R.O. etc. of research and education in forestry, nature conservation, wildlife, environmental protection, etc. for the benefits of the States.

