

III LABOUR ORGANIZATION, MODES OF SALE AND DISPOSAL OF WOOD AND OTHER FOREST PRODUCE

The whole subject of Forest Utilization depends on the methods employed in collecting and disposing of the various articles of forest produce in such a way that the forests yield the highest possible income compatible with the maintenance and improvement of the forest. It is therefore necessary to acquire some general knowledge about forest labour and various methods of disposing forest produce. This may be considered conveniently under heads:

- 1 The Organization of Forest Labour.
- 2 Methods of sale.
- 3 System of extraction and disposal of forest produce.

1. THE ORGANIZATION OF FOREST LABOUR

The people of the various jungle tribes make the most satisfactory forest workmen, as they become skilled in woodcraft and in the use of axes or other implements from childhood. While they are more accustomed to the climate and hardships of the jungle than men brought in from outside; the tribal labour is not always to be relied on, owing to the laziness often born of a life of freedom in people whose wants are few. Where local labour is not available, it is imported from outside which increases the cost. For ordinary forest works local unskilled labour can do the job whereas for specialized work, labour may have to be imported.

Classification of Forest Labour: They are of three types.

Local labours are generally unskilled, casual and fluctuation. They may be used to carry out works such as road construction and repairs, departmental burning, nursery works, cultural operations, sawing, planting, trenching, resin tapping etc. Strict supervision is necessary to ensure reasonable output.

Importee labour are acquired when local labour is inadequate or unskilled for specialized jobs and skilled labour with experience of specialized jobs such as saving, floating, roping, felling work, resin tapping, katha extraction, etc. is required. Imported labour means extra transport cost and higher compensatory wages. But they are more efficient workmen. Labour is either imported by the Department through contractor on commission basis or recruited directly by contractors engaged by the department.

Forest Village or Settlement : For large scale, concentrated plantation work employment of permanent labour gangs (settled in forest villages) is justified. In taungya plantations in India and irrigated plantations in Pakistan, there are regular settlements of forest labour, where the department has provided them several amenities, e.g. housing, agricultural land, medical aid, schooling etc.

Wages : Wage level is a result of evolutionary process, and reflects the impact of several economic factors like supply and demand of labour, standard of employment, cost of living and food supplies, proximity to industrial centres, etc. Skilled labor has to be paid more than the unskilled labour as also the imported labour more than the local labour. Work is generally carried out either under the direct supervision of an employee of Government, or of the owner of the forest, or by contract.

System of payment to labour : It is of three types, namely:

- (A) Payment by daily labour.
- (B) Payment by piece – work (per unit of work done).
- (C) Payment under contract.

2. METHODS OF SALE

The chief methods under which sales are conducted, are:

1. *Sale by private bargain* – the price is fixed according to the current market rates, or on the average of past sales.
2. *Sale by public auction* – it is sale by increasing the price; the bidder of the highest price becoming the purchaser.
3. *Sale by tender* – would be purchasers make offers on or before a fixed date, stating the price they are willing to pay. Such tenders are of two kinds, sealed tenders and open tenders.
4. *Sale by royalty or fixed tariff* – the disposal of forest produce is governed by fixed prices, being revised from time to time as conditions change. The tariff prices are fixed as nearly as possible with due regard to current market rates.

3. SYSTEM OF EXTRACTION AND DISPOSAL OF FOREST PRODUCE

To decide a particular system of extraction and disposal of forest produced, the following points need consideration.

1. The maintenance and improvement of the forest.
2. A fair remuneration to the state of forest owner.
3. The prevention of theft or fraud on the part of purchasers or forest employees.
4. The safeguarding of the interests of the local population.
5. The avoidance of unnecessary complication in the system rendering it unworkable, or unintelligible to those who have to carry out the details.
6. The physical conditions of the locality
7. The number and qualifications of the staff responsible for carrying out the work.
8. The capability of financial standing of the contractors or purchasers whose duty it is to extract the produce.
9. The quality and quantity of labour available.
10. The general policy of the Government, particularly as regards the encouragement of private enterprise.

Based on above considerations, the system of exploitation fall into three main groups, as under:

1. Felling and extraction, or collection, by Government Agency.
2. Felling by Government Agency and extraction by purchasers.
3. Felling and extraction, or collection, by purchasers – the methods under which timber and other forest produce may be disposed of to purchasers are grouped into four main heads:
 - (a) Sale of a whole coupe or area: - Sale by lease.
 - (b) Sale of standing trees by coupe.
 - (c) Sale of a few selected trees
 - (d) Sale by means of licenses or permits
 - (e) Sale by the commutation system – payment of a fixed sum once in a fixed period, usually a year, in return for the privilege of being allowed to remove certain classes of produce (petty forest produce required for bonafide domestic use, and not for same or barter) at any time and as often as is necessary.
 - (f) Extraction without previous permit or agreement:
 - the forest produce collector pays duty at a revenue station on the line of export, receiving a receipts for the amount paid in the shape of a removal pass.
 - An export duty is collected at seaport towns.

In the case of private forests this classification holds good, except that the owner's agency takes the place of Government Agency.