

CHAPTER - IX

FORESTRY

9.1.0. Assam is known for its extensive forest areas and availability of rich floras and faunas besides other valuable forest products. The forest area in Assam as per the latest assessment by the Forest Survey of India (F.S.I) is over 35 per cent of the geographical area both within and outside the notified forest area. This forest cover is more than what the nation aspires to achieve by the end of 11th Plan. The concept of extension forestry initiated in the early eighties under State plan has percolated down well in terms of extent of forest cover outside the notified area. As per information available from the State Forest Department, the total area under Reserved Forest is 15,198.44 Sq. Km. while the area under Proposed Reserved Forest is 3,196.77 Sq. Km. Thus the reserved forest area constitute around 20% (twenty percent) of the total geographical area of the State. However, the scenario within the notified area depicts a none-too-encouraging position in terms of degradation during the last 20 years due to various biotic factors. As a result, considerable rich biodiversity has been lost which need to be re-built again.

The changes in Natural Forest area are of the following two types :

- (i) Decrease in area under actual forest due to encroachment, shifting cultivation, erosion of river banks, etc.
- (ii) Reduction in density due to heavy biotic pressure like smuggling, grazing, shifting cultivation etc.

The total wildlife protected Areas in Assam is 3925 Sq. Km. The category wise wildlife Protected Areas are as follows :

- a) National Park 5 Nos. 1978.00 Sq. Km.
- b) Wildlife Sanctuary 18 Nos. 1932.00 Sq. Km.
- c) Proposed W. L. Sanctuary 2 Nos. 15.00 Sq. Km.

9.2.0. The forests products of the State mainly comprised of Industrial Wood, Fuel Wood, Bamboo, Stone, Thatch, Cane, Sand, etc. A good amount of revenue is earned by the State Government from its various Forest Products. The amount of revenue earned from the forest products during the last five years are shown in the table below.

Year	Timber	Others	Total
1	2	3	4
1999-2000	299.85	1,172.98	1,472.83
2000-2001	286.40	1,190.10	1,476.50
2001-2002	117.67	1,090.10	1,207.77
2002-2003	67.37	1,786.63	1,854.00
2003-2004	158.07	1,758.75	1,916.82

Source :- Office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam.

9.3.0. The importance of Forestry lies not only with its productivity but also in its capacity to prevent soil erosion. The State Government has therefore continued to impose ban on indiscriminate felling of trees in the State. Thus apart, the depletion of forest resources in the State in recent years have led to the implementation of various forestry development programmes such as Afforestation and Social Forestry, Wildlife management, improvement of Infrastructural Facilities etc. The Department has identified following thrust areas for widening of forest cover in the State.

- Conservation of areas having rich biodiversities.
- Arresting the trend of degradation and reverting the process by reforestation.
- Conservation and development of Protected Area Network.
- Upgradation of research and development activities

Afforestation programme is an important programme being undertaken by the State Forest Department with the co-operation of Central Government. The programme mainly aims at increasing area under Afforestation especially in Residential Area and otherwise Occupied Areas of the State. The scheme-wise achievement under Social Forestry programme for last few years have shown in the following table.

TABLE – 9.2

SCHEMewise ACHIEVEMENT UNDER SOCIAL FORESTRY
PROGRAMME. (Area in hectares)

Scheme	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
1	2	3	4	5
1. Social Forestry General	438	85	Nil	Nil
2. AOFFP	2300	Nil	Nil	Nil
3. TSP	513	420	599	154
4. SCCP	583	1062	817.5	850
Total	3834	1567	1416.5	1004

Source: - Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam.

The achievement of plantation during 9th and 10th Plan has shown in the following table.

TABLE-9.3

DETAILS OF PLANTATION DURING NINETH AND TENTH PLAN

(Area in Hectre)

YEAR	AREA					Total
	State Plan Phy.	Compensatory Plantation	Revolving Fund	Central Sector		
				FDA	Other	
1997-1998	3,384	450	-	-	1,900	5,734.00
1998-1999	2,769		-	-	1,949	4,718.00
1999-2000	8,709	392	-	-	2,981	12,082.00
2000-2001	5,839	185	-	-	4,438	10,462.50
2001-2002	5,502		-	-	3,170	8,672.00
Total	26,203	1,027	-	-	14,438	41,668.50
10th Plan						
2002-2003	1,844		800			2,644.00
2003-2004	1,416		2,800			4,216.00
2004-2005 (Upto Sept/04)	1,108			6,450		7,558.00
Total	4,368		3,600	6,450		14,418.00
Grand Total	30,571	1,027	3,600	6,450	14,438	56,086.50

Source: - Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam.

The Plan and Non-Plan expenditure in last few years are shown in table – 9.4

TABLE-9.4
(Rs. in lakh)

Year	Plan			Non-Plan	
	Budget Provision	Total Expenditure	% of total State Plan	Budget Provision	Total Expenditure
1	2	3	4	5	6
1997-1998	2,200.00	2,200.00	1.47	4,337.53	4,337.53
1998-1998	2,42600	2,42600	1.86	4,337.53	4,337.53
1999-2000	3,636.00	3,175.00	2.78	7,476.67	7,476.67
2000-2001	2,800.00	2,650.70	2.14	5,470.85	5,470.85
2001-2002	2,614.00	2,614.00	1.44	6,345.74	6,351.74
Total of 9 th Plan	13,676.00	13,065.70	-	27,974.32	27,974.32
2002-2003	2,734.06	2,734.06	1.23	5,525.98	5,525.98
2003-2004	1763.00	1,715.00	1.28	8,188.10	8,188.10
2004-2005 Up to 2 nd quarter	1,960.78	580.39	-	10,009.27	4,016.07
Total of 10 th Plan	6,457.84	5,029.45	-	23,723.35	17,730.15

Source : Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam.

The Department of Environment and Forests, Government of Assam has taken up the implementation of the Natural Resource Management and Integrated Livelihood component of Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AACP), aided by the World Bank, as the Forestry Pilot Project. A total budget of Rs.14.89 crores was allocated under this component over a project period of 6 years. This pilot project aims at improving the sustainable livelihood of the communities through integrated approach of rural development and natural resource conservation in forest fringe communities within the broader AACP through participatory planning, implementation and monitoring.

For this pilot project, 10 (ten) Joint Forest Management Committees were formed involving 15 villages spread under Nagaon South Division, Hojai and Kamrup West Division, Bamunigaon. The Pilot Project is expected to boost the effect of forest conservation and development in the State of Assam through local community's participation. The World Bank Aided Project budget for 2004-2005 was approved at Rs.57.30 lakh only and whole amount is received by the department.