



सत्यमेव जयते

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WORKING PLAN IN GENERAL

- ❖ Working Plan has been the main instrument of forest planning (more exactly forest working) in the country for scientific management of forests. It is a very useful document for evaluating the status of forests and biodiversity resources of a forest division, assessing the impact of past management practices and deciding about suitable management interventions for future. Periodical up-dating and revision of working plan is essential to keep pace with the trends emerging out of forest–people interface and to address national and international obligations. Brief historical reference of planned working of forests in India may be counted as under;
- ❖ The first planned working of forests in the country was crafted in 1837 by Mr. U. V. Munro, the then Superintendent of Forests in Travancore. On the basis of his personal observation and long experience of working in the woods he estimated that about 100,000 trees of teak were fit to be felled. Later in 1856, Dr. Dietrich Brandis propounded the fundamental principle that the first class trees (trees over a prescribed diameter) to be felled in a year should be restricted to the growing stock of the second class trees that will eventually replace them in that year. Based on this principle of yield control, he prepared the first forest management plan using strip sampling for the Pegu Yoma Forests of Myanmar in the year 1860.
- ❖ After India became independent in 1947, the forest department undertook big drives to recover substantial areas under the working plans. For the next half a century, the state/provincial governments adopted their own provincial working plan codes. As per regional requirements, provincial working plan codes were adopted in different states of the country. However with the intervention of Hon. Supreme Court of India in 1996, it was clarified that all working plans were to be approved by the Central Government on account of forests being brought in the concurrent list. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Govt. of India then adopted a uniform code, the National Working Plan Code - 2004 for preparation of working plans for the management of forests under the prescriptions of a working plan/scheme to standardize the procedure. The working plan facilitates monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment of forest management practices being followed in the country. Latest National Working Plan Code 2014 came into existence from Govt. of India for implementation of Working Plan.
- ❖ **Technology & Acts associated with Working Plan.**
- ❖ Preparation of working plan is a highly technical exercise undertaken at regular interval in each forest division. The preparation of the working plan is based on stock and vegetation maps which is prepared through ground surveys. Recently, the use of modern tools like remote sensing, GIS and GPS is being utilized for preparing the forest cover maps of forest divisions. Every working plan includes the area specific scientific prescriptions for proper management of forests of a particular forest division, while working schemes are prepared for smaller areas for a specific purpose or for forest areas under the control/ ownership of such bodies as private, village, municipal, cantonment, autonomous district council (especially in north eastern states), etc. These prescriptions enable necessary co-existence of development with nature for simultaneous implementation of Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest Conservation Act, 1980, Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), Biological Diversity Act, 2002, and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006; and meeting the requirements of the objectives of the National Forest Policy and other international conventions/agreements.

SMALL FRONTS OBJECTIVES OF FOREST MANAGEMENT & PLANNING

- ❖ Forest Management Planning must provide for sustainable management of forests and its biodiversity as enshrined in the National Forest Policy, encompassing the ecological (environmental), economic (production) and social (including cultural) dimensions. The objectives for attaining this goal include conservation of forests and reducing forest degradation, maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem services including ecotourism, enhancement of forest productivity together with establishment of regeneration to improve forest health and vitality as per ecological and Silvicultural requirements of the species, progressively increasing the growing stock and carbon sequestration potential, maintenance of biological diversity, sustainable yield of forest produce, prevention of soil erosion and stabilization of the terrain; improvement and regulation of hydrological regime; people's involvement in planning and management of forests fulfilling socio-economic and livelihood needs of the people, albeit with simultaneous implementation of Indian Forest Act, Wildlife (Protection) Act, Forest Conservation Act, Biological Diversity Act, PESA Act and Forest Rights Act. All these entail that the specific composition and the structure of forests must harmonise with the environment of the locality.
- ❖ All forests are to be sustainably managed under the prescriptions of a working plan/scheme. The National Forest Policy clearly states **"No forest should be permitted to be worked without an approved working plan by the competent authority"**. It is the duty of the manager or owner of the forest area to ensure the preparation of the working plan / scheme. The authority as designated by the MoEF, will approve the working plan and ensure its implementation. Even working schemes have all major elements of a working plan and these schemes also need the sanction of the competent authority.

Organization

- ❖ The number of Working Plan circles and Working Plan divisions depends upon the workload, i.e. number of territorial divisions for which Working Plans are to be prepared/ revised. Working Plan is generally revised every 10 years and on an average, one conservator supervises the work of four Working Plan divisions. It is a legal document for Forest Management & Plan.
- ❖ The Working Plan of forests other than those under the control of Forest Department like municipal, cantonment, private, village, etc. forests can be prepared by working Plan Officer on the request of the owner by owner themselves or through outside consultants. Micro-plan of jointly managed forest is prepared by forest staff of territorial division as per MOU and in consultation with the communities involved. The micro-plan so prepared is integrated with the Working Plan of that territorial division.

Identification of Area

- ❖ The identification of the forest division whose normal Working plan is to be prepared or revised is done by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests in consultation with the senior officers of the Working Plan Organization. For other areas, this is mainly demand driven. In JFM areas, it is on the basis of a MOU between the local community and the forests Department.
- ❖ The task of Preparation/revision of Working Plan is undertaken by WPO for the forest divisions within his jurisdiction as an essential function of the division. In addition, the PCCF or the competent authority may assign to him the task of preparing/ revising Working Plan of other forest divisions to meet the target.