

IMPORTANCE OF FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT AS AN ENVIRONMENT AND CHOICE OF SPECIES IN REFORESTATION WORK.

A.H. CHOUDHURY
Conservator of Forests
Central Circle
Dacca

INTRODUCTION

In spite of wanton clearance done by human beings one third of the land areas of the globe is still under forests. With primitive men, in the natural condition of forests the ideal environment existed for them. So human beings as denizens of forests had no problem in this respect. With scientific and technological advancement civilized men have disturbed the ecosystem. In the highly industrialised developed countries imbalance created due to past neglect of the environment is being viewed with concern. According to many pollution and despoilation of environment and heedness manipulation of ecosystem, if continued could 'destroy the life supporting system of spaceship earth'. Man's biggest task according to many scientists today is therefore 'Saving his environment'.

MAN & ENVIRONMENT

As a biological species man is highly adaptable. At the same time in a diversified social environment latent potentiality of man have a better chance to express his biological endowment and thereby society becomes richer. Social environment on the other hand is very much dependent on physical surrounding. Latent potentialities of the young get a better chance to be actualised when the physical environment is sufficiently diversified. It is for this reason in developed countries Environment Planning is getting importance. Environment science is a dynamic system which takes into consideration the needs of the dynamic society in relation to changing human needs and aspiration. According to environment science 'the scientific basis of conservation is the interdependence of all living things and their complex relation to the physical environment'. "Ultimate goal of conservation is to help men to retain contact with natural forces under which he evolved and to which he remains linked physiologically and emotionally". Man's relation to his environment, however, can not be a 'steady State of Ecosystem'. Because that would mean the end of human adventure and development. Further the physical structure and forces of the environment as well as forms of life associated with the environment are continuously changing and evolving. With man's continuing development, a dynamic ecological equilibrium can only fulfil the purpose to give health and happiness of the community.

FORESTS & ENVIRONMENT

Forest has great influence on environment. Along with realization of importance of forests on environment developed countries are taking special measures to manage forests to improve the ecosystem and to maintain ecological equilibrium. In U.S.S.R. the forests are divided into three groups according to the national economic significance and for appropriate specialization of forest management - to fulfil the productive and protective function as well as to maintain the ecological equilibrium.

FORESTS OF ~~EAST PAKISTAN~~ ^{Bangla Desh}

There are three main blocks of forest in ~~East Pakistan~~ ^{Bangla Desh}:

(i) Hill Forests: It consists of multistoried forest crop of mixed tropical type with bamboo and other species of plants as under growth. Bulk of the constructional & industrial timber is produced from these forests. These forests form the catchment of rivers and canals and as such management of these forests affects the watershed. Before reservation, in most of the areas, the original trees had been cut and 'Jhumming' (shifting cultivation) adversely affected the original crop. As such most of these forests are in the secondary stage of succession. These forests harbour several species of wild life including wild elephant. At present large areas of these forests are being clearfelled and reforested with species of economic value to produce constructional and industrial wood.

(ii) Second Block consists of Sal forests of Dacca, Mymensingh and Northern districts of ~~East Pakistan~~ ^{Bangla Desh}. It has poor quality of sal, badly managed in the past and at present being working mostly under coppice system to produce poles, and firewood to meet the local demand. Some of these forests are being reforested to produce better crop. These forests are surrounded by human habitation.

(iii) The third block of forests is the mangrove forests of Sundarbans. This block protects the coastal district of Khulna from cyclone and tidal bore, yield constructional and industrial wood and harbour wild life including the famous 'Royal Bengal Tiger'. The whole forests is worked under Selection-cum-Improvement system.

REFORESTATION OF EXISTING HIGH FORESTS-VIS-A-VIS forest MANAGEMENT AS AN ENVIRONMENT

Forests of ~~East Pakistan~~ ^{Bangla Desh} is considered as a valuable natural resource of the region. ~~East Pakistan~~ is thickly populated so the scope of increase of forest area is limited. Yield of timber as well as quality of wood is comparatively low. With industrial development as well as general development demand of timber will be increasing. Hill forests particularly contain several valuable timber species which constitute a mixed crop suited to the

environment. Hill forests are also to be managed as watershed, as well as abode of wild life. Economic consideration favours the mono-culture reforestation to get the industrial and constructional wood from these forests. Such management is likely to change the soil, climate, watershed, and as such imbalance the ecosystem. It is, therefore, essential that with proper research suitable species be recommended to get multistoried forests to meet the economic demand as well as to maintain the ecological equilibrium. The present system of reforestation of these areas with teak and few other species has to be examined with its possible effect on environment in future to safeguard against greater calamity in respect of material loss and psychological set back for the people of the region.

In sal forests problem is not serious in this respect as reforestation is being done by the same species of plants. In mangrove forests reforestation work has not yet been taken up. Only by research, one can tell if better crop can be raised in the area by reforestation without disturbing the ecological balance.