

## CHAPTER VII : FORESTRY AND WILD LIFE (EXPENDITURE)

### 7.1 Tax Administration

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) heads the Forest Department under the administrative control of the Principal Secretary (Forests) who is assisted by eight Additional PCCFs (APCCFs) and sixteen Chief Conservators of Forests (CCFs) at Headquarters. The forest area in the State has been divided in six circles each headed by a Conservator of Forests (CF). These circles have been further divided in the Forest Divisions which are administered by the Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) who is assisted in field by the Sub Divisional Forest Officers (SDOs) and Range Officers (ROs).

### 7.2 Results of Audit

We conducted test check of the records of 14<sup>1</sup> out of 60 units relating to Forest Department during the year 2014-15. We found irregularities in irregular, avoidable, unfruitful and excess expenditure etc. involving ₹ 77.76 crore in 254 cases which fall under the categories as detailed in the **Table 7.1** below.

**Table 7.1**

( ₹ in crore )

| Sl. No.      | Category               | Number of cases | Amount       |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | Irregular expenditure  | 65              | 12.00        |
| 2            | Avoidable expenditure  | 48              | 21.61        |
| 3            | Unfruitful expenditure | 17              | 17.10        |
| 4            | Excess expenditure     | 58              | 13.46        |
| 5            | Other irregularities   | 66              | 13.59        |
| <b>Total</b> |                        | <b>254</b>      | <b>77.76</b> |

The Department accepted observations of ₹ 2.65 crore in 23 cases pointed out during 2014-15.

A few illustrative cases of excess expenditure, unfruitful expenditure, etc. of ₹ 2.19 crore are discussed in the following paragraphs.

<sup>1</sup> Two offices of Conservator of Forests and 12 offices of Divisional Forest Officer

### **7.3 Irregular expenditure on teak plantation done in the area already covered by forest**

**The Forest Department prepared the project and executed teak plantation in the area already covered by forests resulting in irregular expenditure of ₹ 1.11 crore.**

On the basis of the proposals made by the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Research and Extension Division (R&E), Raipur; the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Chhattisgarh had sanctioned (November 2011 and June 2012) ₹ 1.54 crore and ₹ 1.58 crore respectively for first and second year work of High-tech un-irrigated teak plantation in 245 hectare area. Of the above sanction, the DFO released ₹2.53 crore (December 2011 and June 2012) to the Forest Extension Officer (FEO), Mahasamund unit for the said plantation in 198.65 hectare area. Out of this, FEO undertook plantation in 100 hectare area of Compartment no. 234 of Mahasamund Division and incurred expenditure of ₹ 1.11 crore in 2011-12 and 2012-13.

During test check of budget files, project reports and Working Plan (WP) of Mahasamund Division for the period from 2011-12 to 2020-21, we noticed (July 2013) that the Division planted (2012-13) 2.50 lakh Teak plants in 100 hectare area, i.e. 2,500 plants per hectare. Plantation of 2,500 plants per hectare (at the interval of 2 X 2 m) is possible only in the blank areas. As per the Compartment History (CH), total area of the compartment no. 234 was 258.78 hectare out of which 255.19 hectare had mixed forest of medium density of 0.5 to 0.6. Further, Google map of the compartment attached with the project report shows that the area taken for plantation was already covered with the forest. As such, plantation of teak at the rate of 2,500 plants per hectare was not required.

However, the Department overlooked the above facts while approving the project report and execution of plantation work. Thus, expenditure of ₹ 1.11 crore incurred on teak plantation in the area already covered by the forest was irregular.

After this was pointed out in audit, the Government replied (September 2015) that 120 ha. area was cleared and 100 ha. area became available for plantation. The compartment had forest of medium density (0.4 to 0.5) and IVB category. As per the Physical verification Report (June 2015) of the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), the plantation was successful and the growth of plants was sufficient.

We do not agree with the reply as the CH of the Compartment no. 234 (2011-12) mentioned that the category of forest in the compartment was IV A having density 0.5 to 0.6 and there was no requirement of further plantation. Therefore, expenditure of ₹ 1.11 crore incurred on the plantation of 2.5 lakh teak plants was irregular.

#### 7.4 Excess expenditure on preparation of plants due to non-observance of norms fixed by the Department

**The Forest Department did not adhere to the departmental norms while preparing the plants under MNREGA and prepared projects at higher rates resulting in excess expenditure of ₹ 57.14 lakh.**

Rule 10 Chhattisgarh Finance Code prescribes that every Head of the Department shall be responsible for applying financial control and observing strict economy in expenditure at every step by his office as well as the subordinate offices. The forest Department had fixed the norms and maximum rates for preparation of plants at the rate of ₹ 10 (October 2010) and ₹ 11.50 (September 2011) per plant for roadside plantations. The departmental rate for preparation of plants for free distribution was ₹ 11 per plant.

During test check of budget files, project reports and other records relating to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Dhamtari, we noticed (August 2013) that *Zila Panchayat*, Dhamtari allotted ₹ 2.27 crore for preparation of 15 lakh plants for free distribution to villagers (3.60 lakh) and use in other works (11.40 lakh) as per the projects prepared by the Department. As per the departmental norms, the maximum admissible expenditure for preparation of plants was ₹ 1.60 crore. Clearly, the Department did not adhere to the norms and prepared the projects at higher rates.

We further observed that the Department had prepared, distributed and otherwise used together 15 lakh plants during the years 2010-11 and 2011-12 and incurred expenditure of ₹ 2.17 crore for this work. Thus, non-observance of departmental norms while preparation of projects and execution of work thereupon as well as lack of economy in spending the public money resulted in excess expenditure of ₹ 57.14 lakh as detailed in the following table 7.2:

**Table 7.2**

(₹ in lakh)

| Name of work                                | Year    | Plants to be prepared | Amount sanctioned/ Expenditure incurred | Maximum expenditure to be incurred as per Departmental norms | Excess expenditure |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| Preparation of plants for free distribution | 2010-11 | 1.80 lakh             | 30.00/ 28.94                            | 19.80  | 9.14               |
|   | 2011-12 | 1.80 lakh             | 30.00/ 28.60                            | 19.80  | 8.80               |
| Preparation of plants for other works       | 2010-11 | 7.20 lakh             | 98.40/ 97.11                            | 72.00  | 25.11              |
|   | 2011-12 | 4.20 lakh             | 69.09/ 62.39                            | 48.30  | 14.09              |
| <b>Total</b>                                |         | <b>15.00 lakh</b>     | <b>227.49/ 217.04</b>                   | <b>159.90</b>  | <b>57.14</b>       |

After this was pointed out in audit, the DFO replied (August 2013) that plants could have been prepared as per departmental norms but such plants would not have been of required height and strength. Most of the works under MNREGA were of roadside plantation for which decorative plants were required whose

seeds were expensive. Also, such plants required more fertilizers which were costly.

We do not agree with the reply as the work was to be executed departmentally following the departmental norms and procedures. Even the technical sanction for the work was also given by the Department. Moreover, the plants prepared for Departmental plantations as per the rates fixed by the Department were successful. The plants prepared departmentally were also given same inputs as proposed in the projects under MNREGA. Thus, non-observance of departmental norms in departmentally executed works led to excess expenditure of ₹ 57.14 lakh.

Matter was brought to the notice of the Department/ Government (March 2015), their response is awaited (November 2015).

### **7.5 Excess expenditure due to plantation of less plants than the norms fixed by the Department**

**Non-observance of norms while preparation of projects and execution of plantation works resulted in excess expenditure of ₹ 51.15 lakh besides plantation of lesser number of plants.**

The forest Department fixed (September 2011) the norms for mixed plantation as follows:

| <b>Year and Plantation activity</b>      | <b>Maximum expenditure to be incurred<br/>(₹ per hectare)</b> |
|--|---|
| I <sup>st</sup> Year (Survey)            | 290   |
| II <sup>nd</sup> Year (site preparation) | 16,000  |
| III <sup>rd</sup> Year (plantation)      | 14,200  |

These norms were maximum and included works of protection, cleaning and cut back operations (CBO) in the area along with the plantation of 1,100 plants per hectare.

During test check of budget files, project reports, plantation report and other records of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Mahasamund, we noticed (May 2013) that on the basis of proposal of the Division for carrying out plantation in 449.36 hectare area in 10 sites, Conservator of Forests (CF), Raipur allotted (October 2011 and May 2012) ₹ 71.90 lakh and ₹ 63.81 lakh for second and third year works respectively. The Department incurred expenditure of ₹ 1.31 crore on the above works in 2011-12 and 2012-13. As per norms, works of protection, cleaning and CBO in the 449.36 hectare area along with the plantation of 4.94 lakh plants<sup>2</sup> was to be undertaken.

However, during scrutiny of project reports and plantation report of the Division, we noticed that the Department carried out plantation work in 265.44 hectare area only and planted 2.37 lakh plants. Though, works of protection, cleaning and CBO were done in the whole area, but no plantation was carried out in 183.92 hectare as required under the departmental norms. As such, funds provided for treatment of 449.36 hectare area along with

<sup>2</sup> 449.36 X 1,100 = 4,94,296

plantation of 4.94 lakh plants as per norms were spent in plantation of 2.37 lakh plants in 265.44 hectare area only and 183.92 hectare were left over without carrying out any plantation.

Thus, non-observance of norms while preparing the projects and execution of plantation works resulted in excess expenditure of ₹ 51.15 lakh<sup>3</sup> besides plantation of lesser number of plants.

After this was pointed out in audit, the DFO replied (May 2013) that site preparation and protection work was taken in 449.36 hectare area and plantation was done in 265.44 hectare area.

We do not agree with the reply as the norms prescribed and the sanction accorded was for plantation of 1,100 plants per hectare along with all other activities including site preparation and protection. If plantation was to be done in lesser area or in lesser numbers, the project report should have been made accordingly and sanctioned for plantation of 1,100 plants per hectare.

Matter was brought to the notice of the Department/ Government (March 2015). Their response is awaited (November 2015).

---

|  |   |                    |
|--|---|--------------------|
| <sup>3</sup> Total expenditure incurred  | = | ₹ 1,31,31,646      |
| Expenditure to be incurred on 265.44 hectare –<br>265.44 X ( ₹ 16,000 + ₹14,200) | = | ₹ 80,16,288        |
| <b>Excess expenditure</b>  | = | <b>₹ 51,15,358</b> |