

## CHAPTER 10 FOREST RECEIPTS

### 10.01 Results of audit

Test check of records of forest receipts maintained in different divisional forest offices, conducted in audit during the year 2000-2001, revealed non/short realisation of revenue amounting to Rs.16.09 crore in 84 cases, which broadly fall under the following categories.

*(Rupees in crore)*

Sl. No.	Categories	No. of cases	Amount
1.	Non/short realisation of revenue	20	4.10
2.	Non/short realisation of royalty	13	1.30
3.	Loss of revenue	19	5.36
4.	Other cases	32	5.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>16.09</b>

During the course of the year 2000-2001, the department accepted underassessments etc of Rs.13.95 crore involved in 74 cases of which 62 cases involving Rs.13.57 crore had been pointed out in audit during the year 2000-2001 and the rest in earlier years.

A few illustrative cases involving Rs.14.46 lakh highlighting important observations are given in the following paragraphs :

### 10.02 Blocking of revenue due to non-raising/non-recovery of demand

Forest land measuring of 5094 acres of the Kurseong Forest Division was handed over to the Defence Department in 1962-63 at an annual rent of Rs.6 per hectare. The annual rent had been revised from Rs.6 to Rs.184.32 per hectare with effect from 1 April 1981 as per decision taken in the joint

meeting of the Forest Department, Government of West Bengal and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) held in July 1981.

Scrutiny of records of the Divisional Forest Officer, Kurseong Division revealed that the MOD had paid rent Rs.65.67 lakh between March 1988 and March 2000 against the total outstanding dues of Rs.71.18 lakh for the period from 1981-82 to 1999-2000 leaving a balance of Rs.5.51 lakh. Further, the demand of Rs.3.75 lakh for 2000-2001 had not been raised. This resulted in non-recovery of rent of Rs.5.51 lakh and non-raising of demand of Rs.3.75 lakh. While confirming the fact the division stated (June 2001) that demand for 2000-2001 was being raised. Final action taken has not been intimated (October 2001).

The matter was reported to Government in July 1999 followed by reminders issued up to July 2001; their reply has not been received (October 2001).

### **10.03 Non-recovery of loss of revenue on resale of forest produce**

Under the provisions of the West Bengal Forest Manual, Part II and standard agreement form appended thereto, a successful bidder is required to pay prescribed percentage of auction value towards security deposit on the spot on completion of the auction and execute an agreement. In the event of default in payment by one or more instalments within the period of agreement or even after termination of the said period the department may resell the lot/balance lot of forest produce and adjust the amount of security deposit by forfeiture. In case the amount fetched on resale together with security deposit forfeited falls short of original sale price, the difference is recoverable from the successful bidder as an arrear of land revenue through initiation of certificate proceedings.

Scrutiny of records of the Divisional Forest Officers, Midnapore (East) Division and Cooch Behar Division revealed (between December 1998 and January 2000) that 10 successful bidders had offered price for 12 depot lots amounting to Rs.10.62 lakh in auction held in 1996-97 and 1997-98. Some

purchasers had paid only one instalment, i.e., 25 per cent of the bid money while the others did not pay any amount excepting the earnest money and also did not turn up to execute any agreement as per terms and conditions of the sale notice. Accordingly, all the purchasers were declared as defaulters and all the lots were put to subsequent auction held in 1998-99 and fetched revenue of Rs.4.79 lakh against Rs.10.62 lakh of original auction value. Although the department had forfeited security deposit and earnest money deposit of Rs.0.63 lakh, no action was initiated against the defaulters to recover the loss of Rs.5.20 lakh through certificate proceedings.

On this being pointed out (between December 1998 and January 2000), the Divisional Forest Officer, Midnapur (East) Division stated (August 2001) that certificate cases were initiated in April 2000 but report on realisation was awaited while the Divisional Forest Officer, CoochBehar did not give a clear reply.

The cases were reported to Government in February 1999 and June 2000 followed by reminders issued up to July 2001; their reply has not been received (October 2001).