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Executive Summary

“Survival Rate Study of Afforestation and Tree Plantation activities taken under three schemes viz. RDF (Rehabilitated Degraded Forest); PPP (People Private Participation); & FDA (Forest Development Agency), during 2004-2005 in Mahasamund District of Chhattisgarh State” was carried out in last week of April 2006, as per the convenience of The DFO.

The plantation activities had been taken up in 75 plots of the three programmes viz. RDF, PPP & FDA, in five different ranges. The evaluation was, however, confined to 31 sites 41% of the areas (*comprising: RDF=11; PPP=7; FDA=13*), during the evaluator’s visits. It is clearly evident that the **Forest Department is the only agency involved in creating the green cover in the district**. However, the programmes like: “20-Point Programme” has simply remained as targets on the paper. While complementing the role of DRDA, other departments, seem to be associated with the programmes like: “20-Point Programme”, but there is hardly any authentic confirmation about records pertaining to: site identification and, physical verifications, rather to be specific, that community participation is not at all palpable. They have not contributed to protection of the plantations against damage by stray livestock nor helped to take up plantations in their fields.

The overall survival emerging at 76.3 % can be considered as excellent one in terms of forestry definition. The survival has shown its linkage with good advance work, soil moisture regime and also the type of soil. Both the sites are further receiving nutrients from the soil and water run off from the hillocks which naturally get impounded through the natural trenches as well as artificially created contour trenches and V-ditches. The survival can further be explained as excellent since the sites treated are down with heavy biotic pressure in terms of heavy cattle grazing etc.

The major species grown are: *Amla, Teak, Bamboo* and, *Nilgiri*. These species have emerged to be the fast growing species showing a maximum height of 3.50 m, 4.50 m, 3.80, and 6.5 m respectively. However, the lower height attainments in all the Schemes have been due to the plantation made on boulder surface and the upper areas where soil moisture regime have been poor however population of such plants are less than 30% and hence it can be safely said that more than 50% of the plants have attained the desirable height. This also indicates that quality of samplings utilized in the beginning has been better and first year maintenance has been well taken care of. However, plantations now in most of the Ranges need an immediate care and attention, especially the ones under PPP Scheme.

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The area of plantations / area treated under RDF Scheme needs to be verified as no two records give the same area of plot / area treated and number of seedlings planted during the year under reference. This brings in doubt about the exact area treated and the cost incurred therefore.

Under the PPP scheme, the agreement between the Samiti, Panchayats, & Private Agency, seems to have been lop-sided because it does not define an appropriate role for the Forest Depts. Therefore, a question is worth asking, as to why, such an agreement had been entered into with a Private party? Whether the agreement has been entered into with or without the consent of the Forest Dept? No one is able to answer, except passing the buck-on to the then authorities at the time of agreement? However, as per the agreement, the private party is supposed to provide the technical know-how for the maintenance of plantation, which is the missing link affecting the survival of plantations.

With regard to FDA Scheme, the office of DFO, Mahasamund, needs to forward the projects year-wise utilization certificates soonest for the scrutiny of NAEB, MoEF, GoI, so that the Ministry can release the balance funds under the scheme. This needs an immediate follow-up action by the office of DFO, Mahasamund. While doing so office of DFO, Mahasamund, should also forward a copy of the “Detailed Internal Evaluation Report of FDA” conducted and prepared by an Independent Agency¹ during the period from Dec.2004 to January 2005. The Report not only provides the Grade Card for the District as a whole on the different Quantitative, Qualitative parameters and, JFM, on a scale of (1) to (10) but also that for the individual 4-Ranges; individual 30-Samitis as prescribed by the NAEB, MoE&F, GoI. Further, the office of DFO, Mahasamund could also inform the NAEB, MoE&F, GoI about the updated follow-up action taken on the recommendations provided in the Report for ready reference of the Ministry.

Once the NAEB, MoEF, GoI accepts the FDA-Internal Evaluation Report, the Agency could be reimbursed the Assignment Charges, as payable for such a detailed Evaluation Study, if not paid so far.

In all possibility, the efforts made by the Forest Dept. in increasing the green cover cannot be undermined. Therefore, the State Govt. should critically examine how soon the Village Panchayat's / VFCs / Samitis are geared up and, equipped with where-withal to take over the plantations at the end of the leased period.

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¹ Viz. Learn Nature-LNC, C/17, Sector-3, Devinder Nagar, Raipur, CG)