Chapter IV

POLITICS OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

1914 - 45

The forests of Chotanagpur, which account for about 75% of the total forests of erstwhile Bihar, are very rich in flora and fauna. Here, plant species like sal, sissoo, bijasal, semul, salai, gamhar etc. are found in abundance. These forests also abound in bamboo of different varieties. Ever since the British established their authority over this region, they exploited these forests to meet various imperial needs like construction, railway sleepers etc. These forests served as good source of revenue. The Chotanagpur plateau has the richest cluster of minerals of many varieties like iron ore, coal, copper, bauxite, mica, and limestone as well as certain radioactive minerals. Hence a cautious policy of exploitation of these forests was adopted from the very beginning.
During the early years of railway expansion and thereafter hardwood timber like *sal*, sissoo, etc. were used for railway sleepers. Timber was also used for the manufacture of railway carriages and building purposes. Ruthless exploitations of these forests due to above-mentioned demands, in particular, in the early years of British rule had alarmed the British authorities. As early as 1864, the Commissioner of Chotanagpur had agreed to preserve the *sal* forests of Palamau and indicated the need for the exploitation of Palamau timber.¹ A further step in this direction came in 1867, when the Commissioner of Chotanagpur restricted the practice of topping of *sal* trees in the forests of Singhbhum for *dhoona* or resin. In 1884, Hewitt, the Commissioner of Chotanagpur in his annual administration report pointed out that there was a rapid destruction

1. *Hundred Years of Indian Forestry, 1861-1961*, Forest Research Institute, Dehradoon, Official, 1961, p. 34.
of the forests, especially the private forests. The problem had become much more glaring since more than 75 percent of the forests of Bihar came under private forests, and no control, whatsoever, could be exercised over these forests, till the passage of the Private Forests Act after the Second World War. Increasing demand for timber particularly due to large-scale expansion of railways, exploitation of rich ore mines, construction of houses and the manufacture of household furniture, were responsible for unprecedented felling in these forests. At the same time, increase in population of Chotanagpur resulted in reclaiming jungles for inhabitation and cultivation. These were compelling factors for the government to make sincere efforts to conserve the forests of Chotanagpur so that it could be utilized in a planned way.

In order to manage the rich forest wealth, the Chotanagpur Forests Division was formed in 1884 comprising of the forests of Palamau, Hazaribagh and Singhbhum. With the formation of the separate
province of Bihar and Orissa in April 1912, the division was again reorganized into the following categories:

1 Palamau, which included the 'reserved' and 'protected' forests of Palamau and Hazaribagh districts;

2 Singhbhum, which included the 'reserved' and 'protected' forests of the districts of Singhbhum and Ranchi;

3 Chaibasa, which included the 'protected' forests of Singhbhum and Manbhum. It was subsequently named as Kolhan division.

In Singhbhum division, another reconstitution took place in 1916 whereby all the forests in the Porahat Estate were removed from Singhbhum division to Porahat division while Saitba, Sartara and Latua blocks were retransferred from Kolhan to Singhbhum division. In 1924, Singhbhum division was split up into independent division called, Kolhan and Saranda division. Thus, by 1924, four forest divisions had been constituted with
headquarters at Chaibasa for the purpose of control and management of the 'reserved' and 'protected' forests situated within the district of Singhbhum.\textsuperscript{2} From December 1936, a fourth forest division known as Dhalbhum division was formed with headquarter at Ghatshila and all forests were taken over from the zamindar of Dhalbhum Estate.

During the First World War, Indian forests were put to heavy use. It was for the first time during the First World War that an enormous potential value of forests was realized.\textsuperscript{3} In Order to meet increased demand of timber, every possible use was made to substitute indigenous timbers for imported ones. Timber and bamboo were supplied for the construction of bridges, piers,

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{Roy Choudhary, P. C.:} Bihar District Gazetteer, Singhbhum District, 1957, p. 31.
\item \textbf{Stebbing, E. P.:} The Forests of India (Vol. II), London, 1927, p. 64.
\end{enumerate}
buildings, huts etc. A substantial proportion of this demand was supplied from the forests of Chotanagpur. In Singhbhum, the _sal_ trees in Saranda forests are still famous for their quality all over India. Even remote areas of these forests were exploited in order to meet increased demands of the ‘Timber Branch’ of Munitions Board’ which was created during the First World War to regulate the supplies of timber and other forest produce. The dearth of forest officials, many of who were sent to serve in the army resulted in severe constraints on the already available manpower.⁴

A far-reaching consequence of this development was that the forests were exploited in unplanned manner and the officials noticed large-scale wastage later.

India was the largest producer of Lac in the world and more than 50% of it came from Chotanagpur region. Lac in its various

⁴ _Hundred Years of Indian Forestry, 1861-1961, Forest Research Institute, Dehradoon, Official, 1961, p. 54._
forms was used abroad as sealing wax, stiffening agent, dye and as insulator in electrical circuits. The export of Lac yielded considerable revenue. During 1914-15, Lac worth Rs. 1,605,743/- was exported. 5 It increased to 7,58,25796/- by the end of 1920-21.6 Another forest produce, *Mahua* flowers were exported to Marseilles in huge quantity for the manufacture of cheap brandy. It may be pointed out here that *Mahua* trees are found in abundance in the forest regions of Chotanagpur.

During the period of the First World War, significant changes were noticeable in the working of the Forest Department of Bihar and Orissa (Bihar and Orissa were separated from Bengal in April 1935).


1912). These are summed up in following table:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1914-15</th>
<th>1920-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Area of forest under the Forest Department</td>
<td>2790 Sq miles</td>
<td>3030 Sq miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Expenditure on Communication and Building</td>
<td>Rs. 83,592/-</td>
<td>Rs. 1,07,112/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Out-turn of Timber and Fuel-wood</td>
<td>1,8252,302 Cubic ft</td>
<td>18,509000 Cubic ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Minor Forest Produce</td>
<td>Rs. 2,38,057</td>
<td>Rs. 2,50,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Revenue from Forests</td>
<td>Rs. 5,49,799/-</td>
<td>Rs. 8,10,602/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Expenditure on Conservancy and Works</td>
<td>Rs. 1,52,985/-</td>
<td>Rs. 2,26,337/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One remarkable feature of the First World War period was a significant increase in the revenue derived from these forests. Compared to revenues derived from the forests, expenditure on conservancy was very little implying that the British had little care for conservancy and were more interested in revenues.

After the First World War, large-scale study of forests was made and regeneration works undertaken so that the damages done during the War years could be replenished. As pointed out earlier, due to dearth of forest officials during the War years, large scale unplanned felling of trees took place. In post-war years, revised working plans were drawn up for different forest regions as a result of which regular high forests with scientific management increased from under 1% in 1919 to 13% in 1924 for Bihar and Orissa. 8 Silvicultuists were appointed in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa,

8. Annual Return of Statistics Relating to Forest Administration in British India for the Year 1923-24,
Govt. of India, Official, Calcutta, 1925.
Burma, United Province, Central Province and Madras with a view to scientific regeneration of the various species damaged extensively during the war. \(^9\) Researches for natural regeneration of *sal* tree, which was an important hardwood of United Province and other eastern states including Bihar and Orissa, from seed were carried out because artificial regeneration was, by and large, a labor problem. \(^10\) At the same time, enquiries were also conducted on the damage of *sal* and teak trees during the War years and its silviculture studied in detail during the 1920s in Singhbhum forests in Saranda, Kolhan and Porahat divisions in the early 1930s.

\[\text{\footnotesize 9. Ibid,} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize 10. Ibid.} \]
Realizing the invaluable support given by the Chotanagpur forests during the First World War, the forest department tried to manage these forests in a scientific way. Thus, tree non-territorial forest division was created. These were:

1. Forest Research Division (Silviculture and utilization) to deal with the problems of forest research and proper utilization of forest products. The utilization of various timbers for which Chotanagpur forests were famous was facilitated by the forest research division. Thus, substitutes of certain varieties of timber could be found out.

2. Forest Working Plan Division, to prepare working plans for the execution of territorial divisional forests. This division was formed keeping in view the utilization of forest products during the war, and to chalk out revised working plans so that the territorial division could be managed in better ways and regeneration work carried out scientifically.
3. Forest Engineering Division, for the construction of roads, bridges, buildings, bandhs, irrigational channels etc. The forest officials while extracting timber and other products during the war years faced great difficulty. Hence the creation of this division facilitated the construction of roads, bridges, buildings etc.

Till 1919, no proper method was used for growing of wood and the system used was either by selection of coppice with standards. This system had proved inadequate and therefore it was modified and an uniform system introduced into the sal forests of Singhbhum Division so that good sal timbers could be obtained. Uniform system or 'shelter wood compartment' system, which was applied in Saranda, Kolhan and Porahat divisions were in reality, clear felling. In this method the old sal crop was cut out, leaving a certain number of poles left scattered over the area. The modified procedure in some parts was to take out these poles as well and then burn the area in early April. The fire burnt down all the young generations, which were prolific on the ground, but didn't kill the
roots of the *sal*, which sent up strong shoots from beneath the surface. Under this treatment, a dense crop of young shoots was obtained, which was both seedling and coppice, all over the compartment. The new method proved to be a great boon for timber production.

In Palamau, J.W. Nicholson introduced a comprehensive working plan for the first time in 1932, which covered almost all approachable and workable areas of the forests. Under this plan the forests of Palamau division were divided into seven working circles:

1. Selection
2. Coppice
3. Village
4. Teak Plantation
5. Bamboo
6. Kath and
7. Miscellaneous
Later, during the Second World War, one more working circle called Salai Working Circle was formed for meeting the demands of packing boxes. The most important feature of this working plan, however, was the teak plantations working circle, which was aimed at introducing an exotic species in the area, which was of immense economic value, and very much in demand.

In order to protect the forests from grazing, fire etc., several measures were initiated. Initially, goats were prohibited in practically all government forests, but realizing the necessities of the local inhabitants, only those areas were closed to grazing on which young saplings were planted. ¹¹ Fire was the real danger to the forests and hence, effective measures were taken so that the valuable vegetation was not destroyed. Fire protection measures

included appointing of firewatchers to look out for fire, clearing of boundary lines and special fire lines, which traversed the forests. These lines helped to isolate fire that had started. Once a fire was noticed, the whole of the forest staff in the neighbourhood had to turn out and try to extinguish it with the help of the villagers, the method adopted to extinguish these being beating and counter-firing. In order to minimize the risk of fire entering or originating in the forests, special rules were made under the Indian Forest Act.

Lac was an important forest produce of Chotanagpur. India was the largest producer of lac in the world and more than 50 percent of it came from Chotanagpur. As has been cited earlier, the export of lac yielded substantial revenue and hence efforts were made to increase its production. Lac is a secretion produced by the females of the lac insects deposited on the twigs of the host trees like kusum, palas, ber etc. Lac, in its various forms was used in many industries e.g., carpentry, tannery, electrical uses etc. It was used as varnish and colour medium for ornamentation and as stiffening medium. It was also used as sealing wax, for lacquer work, etc. in foreign countries.
and later in India also, it came to be used as a constituent of varnish and polish for furniture and metal ware, as a stiffening material for hats, as an ingredient in lithographic ink. It was also used in the manufacture of gramophone records, buttons, imitation jewellery and oil cloth etc. Shall-lac had become a great military necessity as it was as important constituent for making electric insulators and explosives.  

In whole of Chotanagpur division, kusum and palas trees were in abundance and therefore, large quantity of lac was produced from the region. Since it yielded significant revenue earlier, the government took effective measures to control the lac production and its trade. The lac industry was notorious for fluctuation in prices and upsets through climatic vagaries. Researches in scientific cultivation of lac were, thus started at the Agricultural Research Institute at Pusa in Delhi in 1908. Subsequently, due to unprecedented rise in lac prices

especially towards the end of the First World War, the government instituted a special enquiry commission under H.A.F. Lindsay and C. M. Marlow in 1919-20 to look into the lac cultivation industry. This committee recommended for an intensive cultivation of lac in Chotanagpur. In pursuance of this recommendation, the Indian Lac Research Institute was established at Namkum near Ranchi in 1925 where intensive research works were conducted in lac production. Among numerous researches of this Institute was a probe into new uses of shell-lac, improvement of lac harvest, researches into diseases, parasites and other enemies of lac and means to eliminate them, and standardizing of lac products. On these recommendations, the Forest Department of Bihar and Orissa initiated programmes for improvement of lac production.  

Thus, by the beginning of the Second World War, the activities of the forest department were fairly streamlined to meet any future

eventuality. The Second World War, which was of greater magnitude than the First World War, and which came physically much nearer to India, resulted in full-scale exploitation of forest resources. Enormous quantity of timber was extracted (from almost every wood species) causing excessive felling in almost all forest division of provinces. The impact of the Second World War was, therefore, felt more severely on the Indian forests. The normal working of the Department had to be expanded to meet the unprecedented demands of the defence department for timber. War demands had increased especially on account of cessation of imports of timber from Europe, U.S.A. and Canada due to

14. *Hundred Years of Indian Forestry*, op. cit., p. 29.

shipping difficulties and also because, from 1941 onwards, India was called upon to meet entire timber demand of the Middle East forces and later on, of the allied forces in Iraq and Persian gulf. This demand further increased in volume due to loss of Burma and the Andamans in early 1942.

In order to meet these enormous war demands of timber and to regulate it, Timber Transport Advisory committees were formed in various provinces and states for allocating transport facilities (wagons). Early in 1940 a Timber Directorate was set up in the Department of Supply in Delhi to channel the supplies of forest produce from the provinces. These demands put heavy strain on the forests of Chotanagpur not only for hardwoods like Sal, Sissoo, Bijasal, Teak etc. but also for softwoods like Salai and Semal for

making packing boxes and other ancillary demands. During this period, the Sal timber from Singhbhum, in particular, was sent out huge quantities. The forests of Hazaribagh district, which were most accessible, were ruthlessly exploited, as there was an unlimited demand for timber and poles. Indiscriminate felling went on everywhere and almost all-good timber was cut and removed.17.

With the opening of the Central Indian Coalfield Railway in 1929 (now Eastern Railway) in Palamau, the process of forest destruction got undue impetus. Landlords, who were interested in ready cash, started cutting and selling their forests at a very rapid rate. Destruction, however, was accelerated on account of a very much-

inflated demand during the Second World War and the damages done to such forests in meeting the unlimited requirements of Defence Department was enormous.\textsuperscript{18}

Before the Second World War, there were few sawmills in India, and it was largely due to their development that war demands could be met.\textsuperscript{19} Saw mills were introduced in many forest areas to extract timber of special sizes e.g. Saw mills were set up in Saranda forests of Singhbhum in the 1930s to cope-up with the increased demands for railway sleepers and later of the Defence Department. Charcoal burning was also stepped up in the forests of Hazaribagh and Palamau, in particular, for the generation of producer gas, which was to replace petrol.

\textsuperscript{18} Roy Choudhary, P. C.: \textit{Bihar District Gazetteer, Palamau District,} 1957, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{India’ Forests and the War,} op. cit. p. 86.
Early during the Second World War, labour supply was adequate. But, as demands increased, it proved to be a serious bottleneck in several parts of the country. This was particularly the case where the hand sawing in the forests was the main method of conversion e.g. the Himalayan coniferous forests, the sal forests of U.P., Bihar, Orissa and other eastern states. This shortage of labour was partly due to a particularly long period prior to the war when demands for timber in the country were small, resulting in other means of livelihood by the erstwhile sawyers. The dearth of skilled fellers and sawyers resulted in excessive felling and damage and wastage of the sawn material.

As a result of the forest policy in Chotanagpur during the Second World War, many changes took place in the forests as well as working of the Forest Department. These have been put in the
following table:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1941-42</th>
<th>1944-45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Area of forests under Forest Deptt.</td>
<td>2019 sq. miles</td>
<td>2048 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Forests under regular working plan</td>
<td>1700 sq. miles</td>
<td>1756 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expenditure on communication and building</td>
<td>Rs. 69,362/-</td>
<td>Rs. 1,32,936/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Out-turn of timber and fuel wood</td>
<td>6613000 cft</td>
<td>9,418,000 cft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Minor Forest produce</td>
<td>Rs. 299790/</td>
<td>Rs. 3,56,998/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Revenue from forests</td>
<td>Rs. 1060235/</td>
<td>Rs. 21,94,503/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Average out-turn of timber (per sq. mile)</td>
<td>3275 cu. Ft.</td>
<td>4599 cu. Ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. *Annual Return of Statistics Relating to Forest Administration in British India of the Years 1941-42 to 1944-45*, Govt. of India, official.
From the above table, it is clear that revenues derived from the forests of Chotanagpur almost doubled between 1941-42 and 1944-45. Also, there was a great increase in expenditure on communication and building because increased demands for timber and other forest produce could be met only if a better communication network was available. Among the Minor Forest Produce, gum, resin, lac etc. were very important and a substantial quantity was exported to various European countries. During the Second World War, the export of these items increased from 1,272,764 Pounds in 1939-40 to 3,193,315 Pounds in 1944-45. 21.

The damages done by the unprecedented demands of the Second World War had its impact on the forests of Chotanagpur to a considerable extent. However, Chotanagpur had little advantage over other forest regions that were the direct war fronts ie., forests of North-Eastern states. The damage done was, nevertheless,

21. *India’s Forest Policy and the War*, op. cit. p. 54.
colossal and it took a long time for the forest authorities involving huge sums of money to replenish the destroyed forests. Military demands for hardwoods like sal, sissoo, teak, bijasal etc. in particular, had resulted in serious overall felling of these species in northern and eastern forests. The Forest Department thus strove very hard to bring the vegetative balance at pre-war level. At the same time, military demands for firewood were heavy, and forests were drained of many species to meet these demands. However, more serious in effect, although difficult to ascertain, was the orders to supply timber of special sizes and classes. This was especially the case of the sal forests of U.P., Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. This kind of demand resulted in huge quantities of timber being wasted and indiscriminate felling done to meet them.

After the Second World War, large-scale industrial, agricultural and social schemes including the expansion of railways were taken up. These developmental schemes had been held in abeyance due to increased war demands. The construction work in these areas were
thus, started, which required the use of timber and other forest products. However, these demands were compensated for by regeneration schemes to replenish the destroyed species. During the Second World War, on the other hand, regeneration works were hardly taken up side by side with exploitation. Thus, a systematic use of Chotanagpur forests started after the Second World War. Apart from Revised Working Plans for different forest divisions, large tracks of forests, hitherto outside the control of the Forest Department, were brought under the 'reserved' forest category. This was particularly done in the states of Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, U. P., Central Provinces, Sind, Bombay, Madras etc. As a part of the Post-War forest policy drawn up by Herbert Howard, a number of new forest divisions were created in Bihar, Bengal, Central Provinces and Berar, Madras, Orissa and U.P.²² The Forest Department of Bihar took special measures to bring the private

forests under their control. Private forests constituted more than 75% of the total forest area of Bihar and the Forest Department constantly strove to bring these under the purview of the Department.

The invaluable help rendered by the forests of Chotanagpur during the world wars in the larger interest of the British Empire is, thus, commendable. But, at the same time, it forces us to look deep into the impact on by these forests. The timber species of Chotanagpur especially the hardwoods, were severely affected by the war demands. These forests were also denuded of Salai, and Semul trees as also the bamboo. Among other forest products, lac played an important role. It had special significance in military uses because it worked as a very good insulator for electrical circuits and appliances that were now widely used in the war. Lac was also used on a large scale in the manufacture of explosives. For the application of lac in different fields, Indian Lac Research Institute, Namkum, near Ranchi extended valuable help. Thus, lac had more of strategic importance than monetary value.
An important consequence of the war was the use of certain species on a large scale in Post-War years, which were till now considered useful. Some of the species had worked as good substitutes for imported timber and structural steel. Silvicultural research of various species that was taken up at the Forest Research Institute, Dehradoon since the First World War, was of great help in this regard. Intensive research was conducted for species like *Semul*, *Sal*, *Salai*, Fir, Spruce, etc. Of these, *Semul*, *Sal* and *Salai* were in abundance in the forests of Chotanagpur. *Semul* and *Salai* were extensively used for the manufacture of packing boxes and *Sal* was one of the most important hardwood timbers.

In the post-war years, several reconstruction works were undertaken for the forests of Bihar like survey of forest resources, creation of afforestation and soil conservation circles and divisions and introduction of land development programmes.²³

Nevertheless, the colossal damage done had already upset the social and economic life of the local inhabitants. The penetration of the relatively newer people and material forces, created conditions that took the shape of various tribal movements in the region under study. Although these movements were suppressed by the mighty British Empire, nevertheless, these do bring to the fore their simmering grievances against the colonial authorities.

PRIVATE FORESTS

The private forests of Chotanagpur accounted for about 75% of the total forest area. These forests were very rich in trees of various species, which were being ruthlessly exploited by the owners, and tenants of these forests. Although repeated attempts were made by Hewitt, Schlich, Campbell and other forest officials to check indiscriminate felling of trees, there was no control whatsoever
over the management of these forests.\textsuperscript{24} As a result, there was severe deterioration of forests, and soil erosion increased day by day. Since these forests were rich in timber of different varieties such as \textit{sal}, sissoo \textit{bijasal}, \textit{semul}, etc. as well as minor forest produces like lac, \textit{katha}, \textit{mahua}, \textit{sabai} grass etc, the British Government strove throughout to bring these forests under its direct control and regular working plans.

A beginning was made in this regard as early as 1907, when the government of India drew the attention of the provincial governments to the large-scale destructions taking place. Consequently Stephenson Committee was appointed in 1908 to look into the question of private forests. Its recommendations however could not be put into practice.\textsuperscript{25} The then Bengal government also framed a Bill for the control of private forests,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{National Forest Policy of India, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Govt. of India, Delhi, 1952, p. 7.}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid, p. 7.
\end{itemize}

131
but had to be abandoned due to serious opposition from the people with vested interests. The government then tried to persuade the landlords to apply for preservation of their forests under Section 38 of the Indian Forest Act. However, contrary to some positive response that was expected, only a few Zamindars applied under this provision. Again an attempt was made in 1912 in the exploration of ways and means towards imposing some sort of control over these private forests in the larger interests. However, this too met with serious opposition.

Indian forests received much more publicity and attention since the commencement of the First World War than ever before. Thus,


the government was hard pressed for timber and other forest products, which forced the forest authorities to have a fresh look into the question of private forests. In 1916, the commissioner of Chotanagpur, in his report, informed that the only satisfactory and permanent method of preserving the private forests of Chotanagpur was by Legislation, which would restrict the right of both landlords and tenants. Again, in view of opposition from vested quarters, nothing could be done. In 1918, the Conservator of Forests, Bihar and Orissa suggested giving powers to approved proprietors of estates or their servants under the Indian Forest Act and making these forests as 'reserved' forests. However, this could only be done in case of Ramgarh because wide powers given to the landlords were subjected to gross abuse.

A revised Private Forest Bill was prepared in 1925 but the government could not even introduce the Bill in the legislature due to lack of unofficial support. In 1926, the government went so far as to prepare a scheme for the acquisition of large forests areas, but
this was also turned down by the landlord dominated legislature. The forests officials again formulated a plan in 1931 to regulate and control these forests, but the landlords lobby was strong enough to defeat any such move.

The growing importance and uses of forests compelled the government to bring about the Chotanagpur Private Forest Bill in 1939 so that the rich timber and other forests products of these areas hitherto, exploited by its masters could be brought under the control or the forest department. The government was also alarmed at the pitiable conditions of these forests and their ruthless, unplanned exploitation, which already large-scale denudation of the rich vegetation, soil erosion etc. This can be seen from the following statement of objects and reasons of the Chotanagpur Private Forest Bill 1939.

"The bulk of the forests which lie in Chotanagpur belong to the private persons and they are being rapidly denuded by both landlords and tenants. The consequences are becoming serious every year. The land from which the forests is rapidly washed away, leaving bare rock; cultivation is adversely affected; and the climate itself changes for the worse. In the plains, floods become more severe owing to the denudation of the catchment areas.

With a view to preserving such private forests, the government adopted the policy of persuading the landlords to apply under Section 38 of the Indian Forests Act 1927 for the preservation of their forests but the response so far has been very disappointing and the government is convinced that the preservation of these forests is not possible until the necessary legislative measures are undertaken, employing government to take over suitable private forests for management as protected forests. This Bill is intended to achieve this end. 29

29. Ibid, p. 79.
This Bill, which was introduced in 1939, was postponed owing to the Second World War. In fact, during the Second World War, the government demand for timber was much more than ever before. This was mainly due to cessation of imports of timber into India from Europe, U.S.A. and Canada due to shipping difficulties and the earmarking of the timber resources of those countries for war theatres in the west. During the war period, the import of structural steel was also curtailed due to shipping difficulties. The Indian hardwoods, which could be used in bridges, buildings, replaced these and other war uses. The Chotanagpur forests, in general, were abundant in hardwoods like sal, sissoo, Bijasal etc. The private forests met a substantial proportion of this demand. In order to make more and more money the owners of these forests resorted to indiscriminate felling leading to large-scale deforestation.

30. India's Forests and the War, op. cit., p. 37.
After the Second World War, the Private Forest Control Acts were passed in Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and Madhya Pradesh. The general principles underlying the legislation enacted for the control of private forests included:

1. Notification of the private forest area, where control is proposed to be exercised.

2. Issue of felling permits pending compilation of a working plan for the area concerned.

3. Opportunity to be given to the owners of private forests to manage them in accordance with an approved working plan.

4. Power to assume control of private forests in the case of recalcitrant owners who indulge in felling in flagrant disregard of the provisions of the prescribed working plan. 31

After the passage of the Chotanagpur Private Forest Act, massive working plans were drawn up to manage and develop these areas. Felling in these areas had been so severe and indiscriminate that large resources and manpower was required for bringing the region under direct management of the forest department. Proper communication network had to be established and large-scale afforestation work undertaken in order to restore the forest wealth and its scientific utilization.