CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL FORESTRY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The word "Forest" is derived from the Latin word "Foris" which means areas which are outside the cultivated lands and contain untended and dense tree growth. For almost a Century, forests in India were considered a handmaid of agriculture and were cut down for bringing more land under cultivation.

Over the last three decades about 25 million hectares of land that originally had tree cover of some sort has been laid bare for agricultural and other uses and now comes under the category of "Waste lands". To reclaim these lands, the Social Forestry Programmes were launched in several parts of the Country. The concept of Social Forestry is not alien to the Country as it has been preached since the time of Lord Buddha, though it was not properly implemented. A Century ago, the British Rulers were stressing the need for forests for the use of the village community and making provisions for their development. But vested interests became an impediment to the
achievement of this objective and slowly, but inexorably, forests started dwindling.

While the forester's Wail half a Century back stressed about the need for arresting the reckless onslaught and recovering denuded areas ended in a whimper, the same thoughts have crossed the minds of people now and what was a whimper has boomed into almost a battle cry. And bolstering the cause further are the Chipko and Appiko movements. The result is that even the construction of dams for the benefit of the people has come under fire.

Against the accepted 33 per cent of forest area in the total land area, there is at present barely two-thirds of this area under forests. And even out of this, roughly 14 per cent can be classified as productive. The anomaly of the situation can be seen from the fact that the Andamans have 80 per cent of the total area under forest cover. While a few decades ago, most of the Calcutta-based plywood factories were drawing their requirements from the Andamans, now even a plywood factory located there has to import Malaysian timber to meet its needs.

As the term itself indicates, there are two aspects of Social Forestry Programmes. One is the forestry aspect which the Forest Department of Government is taking care of as it has
the necessary infrastructure. The word forest sparks in most of the people the vision of a densely wooded area with tall trees, their crowns spreading into the sky and sideways, with thick entangled mass of vegetation at the ground level, with meandering streams of clear water and with the free and inspiring wild life.

This is the forest which is required to protect soil erosion, to conserve water, to check run off and for perennial supply to the streams and to protect our environment from the various pollutions, besides providing people the needed timber, firewood and countless number of other edible and non-edible products for sustenance and for the bio-aesthetic appeal.

Since the beginning of World War-II, the forests in India have been denuded rapidly and it has already reached a stage where it has become impossible to restore them. People are axing our very supporter, the consequent tragedy being enormous. The rate of denudation has been estimated to be of the order of 40 per cent by 2000 A.D. in this Country.

But the other aspect, namely "Social" rather sociological, has got to be equally emphasised. According to the study conducted by the Centre for Science and Environment, "A fundamental reason for the failure of the Social Forestry Programme to help the most needy is that it expects an unrealistic degree of collaboration between the villagers who use
the forests and the Forest Department personnel who police them. Many villagers in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere are reluctant to let the Forest Department afforest their common lands, for fear that they may claim the afforested areas as theirs. Poor rural families have even been reluctant to accept seedlings distributed free for homestead plantations through Social Forestry Programmes for fear that planting them will somehow give the Forest Department a claim on the land."

A clear distinction has to be made between Traditional Forestry and Social Forestry. Though not mutually exclusive in their roles, there are clear differences between the two. Social Forestry is not mere afforestation. It is also production forestry aimed at reasonable returns through intensive forestry practices. It is aimed at generating new economic opportunities in the villages and encourage people to take up diversified activities instead of resorting to farming in marginal and sub-marginal lands or remain fixed as agricultural labourers only.

Social Forestry should form part of the integrated rural development and the beneficiaries involved in the Social Forestry Programmes should be encouraged to take up dairy or poultry development as an additional source of income all the year round. It has to be accepted as an young partner in the
general forestry activity and not a competitor to it and fostered with all the tenderness needed.

Social Forestry has come of the age with its inclusion in the 20-Point Programme launched in 1975. The National Commission on Agriculture (1976) recognised it as a distinct activity - the Social Forestry within the forest sector. In defining Social Forestry, the Commission went beyond the concept developed in the West stating that in the Indian context Social Forestry should not only aim at creating new resources, affording protection and recreation benefits to the community, but should also include the activities concerned with growing fuel-wood and fodder needs of the community.

The objectives of Social Forestry are as follows:

1. To make India self sufficient in respect of fodder, fuel-wood and small timber demands to increase production and reduce the gap between demand and supply thereby conserving the natural forests which are very much needed to protect the environment.

2. To alleviate the rural economic distress, both by production of forest produce and creation of employment.

3. To educate and rouse tree consciousness among the public.
4. To popularise economic tree plantation, and

5. To optimise the use of agricultural land.

The National Forest Policy, 1952 and the National Commission on Agriculture of 1976 stipulated that 33 per cent of the land area should be under forest cover in order to maintain the ecological balance and sustained economic development. As against this ideal, there is only 14 per cent of forest cover in India. Thus the forests are virtually at the threshold of extinction. The demand for timber and firewood of the growing population is beyond the carrying capacity of forests. The forests in India, at present, are confined and relegated mostly to the tops of the hill-ranges and their slopes. If people cannot at least conserve these caps, catastrophe engulfs.

In order to protect the left over forests, it is inevitable to grow timber and firewood outside forest areas to meet the growing demands, the back-yard of the houses can effectively be planted with trees that can meet the demands of the society.

Thus, there has been a wide-spread demand for the promotion of Social Forestry in the Country. Accordingly, the planners and policy makers in India have adopted the Social Forestry as a sector of top priority and gave it an important
place in the Country's development agenda at the Centre as well as State levels.

Need for the Study

The present study on "Social Forestry" is a multi-disciplinary theme. However, it comes largely under the purview of Economics, Ecology, and Administration. In view of its ecological and economical importance in the recent times, a few studies with macro-level perspective have been taken-up when the regions were under the implementation and evaluation of Social Forestry Programmes is undertaken. Many of these studies have been under-taken by the Research Institutes like National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad, Forest Research Institutes, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Dehradun and Jabalpur. The studies on Social Forestry taken-up by the Research Institutes were by and large confined to the analysis of economic benefits as well as ecological improvements of the Social Forestry Programmes. But the other one which the most important aspect touches intrinsically the fringe of the present theme - Administration aspect has not been taken up so far. As a matter of fact any programme essentially involves the organisational setup, policy implications, and socio-economic, and political considerations. In this perspective, it is very clear to state that the studies on Social Forestry theme cannot be excluded from the
administrative angle. So far, there are no such studies to examine the administrative set up and policy implications about the success or failure of these programmes. Considering the need of the comprehensive understanding of the theme, the present study has been taken up to fill the gap - administrative importance besides the ecological and economical.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The aim of present study is to examine the implementation of various Social Forestry Programmes in order to assess their role in the development of rural poor. The study is mainly addressed to explore how the Social Forestry Programmes are implemented and also the key agencies which are involved in the process. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To analyse the evolution of Social Forestry Programmes in India with special reference to Andhra Pradesh.

2. To describe the various administrative agencies involved in the implementation of the Social Forestry Programmes.

3. To examine the process of implementation of the policies of the Social Forestry Programmes.

4. To understand the co-ordination among the different administrative bodies in the popularisation of Social Forestry Programmes among the rural poor.
5. To delineate the interference of the political bodies with the administrative agencies of Social Forestry, and

6. To assess the impact of Social Forestry Programmes on economic conditions of the beneficiaries as well as ecological improvement of the areas.

HYPOTHESES

In the present study the following null hypotheses are formulated for testing:

1. There is no significant influence of socio-economic variables pertaining to Social Forestry Programmes like (a) Social status (b) Education (c) Types of land holdings and (d) Sizes of land holdings and total achievement.

2. There is no significant difference on the awareness of the Social Forestry Programmes with regards to the three districts.

3. There is no significant difference among the beneficiaries on the procurement of seedlings with regards to the three districts.

4. The availability of physical facilities for the maintenance of the species does not significantly vary among the three districts.
5. The output benefits received from the Social Forestry Programmes does not significantly vary among the three districts.

6. There is no significant difference in the opinion towards the Social Forestry Programmes with regards to the three districts, and

7. The contribution of the each one of two factors relating to the Social Forestry Programmes - beneficiaries, promoters and administration in predicting the achievement is not significant.

STUDY AREA

The present study area includes Anantapur district of Rayalaseema region; Mahaboobnagar district of Telangana region; and Prakasam district of the Coastal region of Andhra Pradesh. These three districts are selected for the study on the following reasons: They are

1. All the three districts chosen from the three regions of Andhra Pradesh are very backward in terms of socio-economic development.

2. In all three districts the agriculture is precarious but endowed with vast agricultural lands.

3. The initiation and implementation of Social Forestry Programmes in these districts is on extensive scale.
In view of the prevailing distinct geographical and socio-economic conditions and need for the implementation of Social Forestry Programmes for the achievement of both economic and ecological importance, these three districts from three different regions of Andhra Pradesh are chosen for the present study.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study is based on survey method using both primary and secondary sources of information. The secondary information has been collected from the relevant documents, records, office manuals, files, news papers etc., of the concerned departments and other agencies. The primary data have been collected from the field by employing statistical methods like, Sampling Procedure, Questionnaire, Interview, and Observation. The Interview Schedule was prepared for the collection of sample data. Each Schedule is divided into six parts covering the general Socio-Economic background of the respondent, Awareness of the respondent about Social Forestry Programmes, Procurement of seedlings, Maintenance of the species, Output - Benefits received from the Social Forestry Programmes, and Opinion of the respondent about the Social Forestry Programmes. The Primary data have been analysed with the help of statistical methods, (both descriptive and inferential like Classification, Tabulation,
Averages, and Hypothesis Testing). In addition, the Cartographic techniques like the preparation of the distributional maps have been included.

SAMPLE

In order to examine and assess the impact of the implementation of Social Forestry Programmes on the rural people, the primary data have been collected from the beneficiaries by employing sampling procedure.

In the present study a simple random sampling method is employed to select the sample units. From each district 100 samples are chosen randomly. However, care has been taken to ensure that all categories of beneficiaries consisting of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes, Land Lords and others are included in the sample. On the whole the needed information with the help of the Interview Schedule has been collected from 300 beneficiaries in all the three districts. The Interview Schedule is consisted of both open-end and closed-end questions.

CHAPTERISATION

CHAPTER ONE deals with INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER TWO describes AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL FORESTRY PROGRAMMES.
CHAPTER THREE analyses EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL FORESTRY IN INDIA
CHAPTER FOUR deals with the GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL FORESTRY IN ANDHRA PRADESH
CHAPTER FIVE traces the ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL FORESTRY PROGRAMMES
CHAPTER SIX gives PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA AND THE DISTRIBUTIONAL PATTERN OF THE NATURAL VEGETATION.
CHAPTER SEVEN ANALYSIS OF THE EMPIRICAL DATA
CHAPTER EIGHT deals with SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS