

PART - I I

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER – 1

BASIS OF PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

The sandal Forests in Marayoor are the only compact tracts of sandal Forests remaining in the State. About 1400 hectares of notified sandal Forests, exists in Marayoor. This is in addition to other Forests in Marayoor Division and adjoining Chinnar Sanctuary having Sandal trees comprising of about 500 hectares. Sandal trees are also found in the private holdings and other revenue lands in Marayoor. During the five year period from 2001 to 2005, there was unprecedented and rampant smuggling of sandalwood trees, in which, thousands of sandal trees were felled and smuggled away from the Forests and other lands by the powerful armed sandal mafia operating in and outside the state.

A combination of seemingly unrelated factors operated simultaneously to create a huge wave of sandal fellings that lasted for about five years. Some of these factors are given below:

- The availability of extractable sandal in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka was greatly reduced as the remaining trees were salvaged by the authorities to defeat the smugglers.
- Unprecedented increase in the price of sandal due to the twin factors of demand and scarcity.
- The economic slump in the plantation sector led to large scale unemployment in the neighbouring areas.
- It is extremely easy to fell and remove sandal in a very short time.
- The lure of a 'fast buck' among the people of Marayoor especially the tribals.
- The political patronage enjoyed by the sandal oil extraction units operating in Kerala especially Palghat District and Kasargode Districts.
- The sudden growth of tourism industry and the consequent influx of large number of outsiders and vehicles into Marayoor.
- The large scale media coverage on Marayoor sandal which in fact helped in 'advertising' sandal availability in Marayoor among mafia groups.
- Non-payment of wages to local watchers over a long period.

- Delay in collection and disbursement of proceeds to owners of private holdings of sandalwood, due to certain bureaucratic bottlenecks.

The people living in the small villages in and around Marayoor and the tribal communities settled in the hilly slopes have been helping the Kerala Forest Department in protecting the sandal Forests from time immemorial. But the influx of sandal smugglers supported by the powerful sandal mafia has alienated the local communities who were protecting the sandal Forests. The mafia have lured the local gullible youths and tribals by providing them with quick money and liquor and colluded with officials and politicians for smuggling Sandalwood. After the formation of the new sandal Division at Marayoor, the situation could be reversed to pre-2001 situation.

The Forest Department could not protect the trees completely due to lack of sufficient staff, infrastructure and other reasons. The department adopted several strategies for achieving the goal of complete protection from sandal smuggling and development of sandal forest from degradation. The strategies included physical protection of sandal Forests; mobilizing the local people and tribal communities in protecting sandal trees through PFM, creating awareness, intensive regeneration of sandal trees, controlling of grazing, prevention of ganja cultivation etc. The people of Marayoor have been traditionally protecting the sandal Forests. There existed a unique symbiosis between the local people and the forest officials in the past for protecting the Sandal Forests. It is necessary that we intervene at this stage in order to protect the remaining tract of sandal Forests existing in the State. It can be achieved through PFM and NWFP management.

Undulating and precipitous terrains devoid of tree cover with exposed soil are subject to soil erosion. This process leads to siltation of rivers reduction of soil fertility and water retention capacity. So water and soil conservation should be given priority.

Bamboo is in great demand for paper, pulp industries and cottage industries. These resources are dwindling fast due to lack of proper treatment in terms of protection from biotic factors and efforts should be made to enable their natural propagation.

The National Forest Policy 1988 of suggests certain guidelines for future management of Forests. The paradigm shift from use-oriented management to conservation orientation has given a totally different perspective to the principles of forest management. Though Forests have been recognized as global resource in terms of ecological values and biodiversity, dependence of communities on Forests for their sustenance has led to the recognition of their undisputed role in conservation. Therefore, their participation has been recognized as an integral part of forest management. It is thus of great importance that Forests are managed for achieving optimum

productivity on a sustainable basis. For scientific and intensive management of existing natural Forests and plantations these principles have been adopted in the present Working Plan.

Government of Kerala, in tune with the principles contained in the National Forest Policy 1988, laid down the following objectives for Forest Management in the State as per order G.O. (MS) No.03/98/F& WLD Dated. 07/01/1998. The copy of the order is given in **Appendix- LVII**.

- To protect and conserve valuable sandal Reserves as the wealth of the nation and for posterity, in particular with regard to biodiversity, soil, water and historical, cultural, religious and aesthetic values.
- To increase tree cover and productivity of natural Forests plantations to meet the Forest products and services.
- To improve the standard of living of the tribes and other Forest dependent communities.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF MANAGEMENT

1. To protect and improve the existing sandal
2. To protect and preserve the forests and biodiversity of the tract such that their extent, character and eco-system service values are improved substantially.
3. To protect the precipitous steep slopes and river catchments.
4. To improve the infrastructural facilities to meet the challenges of Management.
5. To improve living conditions of the tribals and forest dependent communities.
6. To protect and conserve the wildlife and its habitat.
7. To restore exotic plantation areas proximate to PAs back to shola-grassland ecosystem.

1.2 METHOD OF TREATMENT

To attain the above-mentioned objects of management, keeping in view of factors stated above, following method of treatments of the forests are proposed.

1. Protection of the sandal Forests through permanent boundary demarcation and consolidation, ecorestoration of wattle plantation

areas with natural growth effective patrolling, prosecution of Forest offence and adopting effective measures against fires, grazing, illicit removal of trees, unauthorized occupation and cultivation of forest areas. Enrichment of sandal and eco restoration through appropriate watershed management treatments.

2. Development of NWFP resource, its sustainable harvest, protection and conservation of Forests etc will be mobilized with the active involvement of the Forest dependent communities, Scientific management of flowered area of bamboo and augmentation of their growing stock by natural and artificial regeneration etc.
3. Special habitat improvement activities will be under taken to sustain wildlife diversity and to protect and conserve high biodiversity value areas such as sholas and climax grass land in the Division.

1.3 WORKING CIRCLES AND THEIR CONSTITUTION

The following working circles are constituted in order to achieve the above objects of management.

- Sandal Working Circle
- Protection cum water conservation working circle
- NWFP working circle
- Wildlife Management and Biodiversity Conservation working circle
- PFM & Eco-tourism working circle
- Miscellaneous prescriptions

1.4 DETAILS OF WORKING CIRCLES

Working Circles	Extent(ha)	Distribution	Reason
Sandal Working Circle	6172.00	All sandal reserves, proposed reserves and sandal bearing tracts	To conserve, protect and increase the sandal stock and to facilitate extraction in a judicious manner.
Protection-cum-Water Conservation	6260.094	All the forest areas of this Division	To protect the Forests against the prevailing threat factors for the eco restoration of the degraded forest areas, restoration of wattle plantation areas and to conserve soil and moisture.

Working Circles	Extent(ha)	Distribution	Reason
NWFP Working Circle	6260.094	The entire forest areas of the Division	To conserve and to improve NWFP and other natural resources like bamboo for promoting its sustainable management.
Wildlife Management and Biodiversity Conservation Working Circle	6260.094	The entire forest and plantation areas of the Division.	For protecting the diversity of wildlife in the Division by special habitat improvement activities and for conserve high biodiversity value areas such as sholas, climax grassland etc.
PFM & Eco-Tourism Working Circle	6260.094	The entire Forests and plantation areas of the Division and also the non-Forest fringe areas.	To involve the public in the protection of Forests and to facilitate eco-tourism & implementation of FRA.

1.5 PERIOD OF THE WORKING PLAN

The period of the Working Plan will be 10 years from 2010-11 to 2019-20. Revision of the plan should commence in 2017–18. It is sincerely expected that there will not be any changes in the policies or management principles in the near future that may necessitate intermediate revision of the plan.