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GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH  
FOREST DEPARTMENT

Rc.No.45895/83-J2

Dated: 30-1-1985

Office of the Chief Con-  
servator of Forests,  
A.P. Hyderabad.

Sri K.V.S.Babu, IFS.,  
Chief Conservator of Forests(General)

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CIRCULAR NO. 4/85

Sub: Guide lines for preparation of working  
plans and felling in Forests issued by  
Government of India - Communication of

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A copy of Guide lines for preparation  
of working plans and felling in forests issued  
by Government of India, together with the  
comments of the Chief Conservator of Forests  
on the guide-lines are communicated.

The Conservator of Forests, Project  
Formulation Circle has already received five  
copies of the guide lines mentioned above.

Sd/- Pushp Kumar,  
Addl.Chief Conservator of  
Forests ( W.L.)

// True Copy //

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COPY OF:

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF WORKING PLANS  
AND FELLING IN FORESTS

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Development of forests largely depends upon the quality of working plans and various prescriptions proposed to be undertaken in the particular forest division. The forests have achieved much importance for their productive, environmental and protective functions. Preparation/revision of working plans for proper management of forests is, therefore, of great importance. The set of guidelines proposed here is to ensure quality of working plans covering matters which, in recent times have been recognized as of great importance.

2. Need for working plans

In India 69% of the forest area is covered by working plans. The balance 31% have no working plans. State/Union Territory Governments should take steps for preparation of working plans for the areas yet un-covered under a crash, time-bound programme. All forests areas should be covered by working plans by the end of this decade. In case, preparation of regular working plans would take some time, preparation of regular working plans would take some time, preparation of working schemes should be taken-up immediately for the uncovered areas and be completed by, 1985.

In the North - Eastern region many forests are managed by District Councils. Generally, these forests do not have working plans and are not properly managed. District Councils should be persuaded to prepare working plans for such forest areas with the assistance of the forest department.

Wherever private forests exist, owners of such forests should be persuaded to prepare working plans with the help of the forest department.

• Objectives of management

The working plan should clearly enunciate the objective of management. Such objectives should be in tune with the present policy which emphasises conservation as the most important function of forests. Wherever production forestry is proposed, environmental and social considerations should prevail. Revenue should not be the prime criterion in the objectives of management and it should be clearly stated that meeting the local needs of forest produce should be the first charge on the disposal of such produce.

3. Working plan code

In many States/Union territories working plan codes are available. These codes give guidelines for preparation of working plans. In some States/UTs. however, working plan codes are not available. Immediate steps should be taken by the States/UTs. to prepare working plan codes where they do not exist. In case of smaller States/UTs. it may be possible to adopt the codes prevalent in adjoining States/UTs. For preparation or adoption of such codes, Forest Research Institute may be contacted for guidance.

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4. Preliminary working plan reports:

The preparation of working plan of a Forest Division/ Unit should be preceded by a Preliminary working plan report in two stages.

The First Preliminary Report, in case of revision of a working plan, should briefly review the results of the past management, justify the needs for its revision and make suggestions regarding modifications necessary to improve upon the prevailing management techniques.

The First Preliminary working plan report should also be prepared for the first working plan of any division/ unit, incorporating therein suggestions for management practices to be followed. The report should be prepared by the Conservator of Forests in-charge of the Forest division for which the report is to be prepared. The First Preliminary working plan report should be approved by the Chief Conservator of Forests after discussions in which a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture should also be associated.

The Working Plan Officer, on receipt of the First Preliminary Working Plan Report should reconnoitre the entire area and submit outlines for the working plan, classifying the areas into various Working circles and suggesting the silvicultural system to be followed in each of the working circles depending on the objectives of the plan. This report, which will be the Second preliminary working plan report, will be approved by the Chief Conservator of Forests, in consultation with the representative of the Government of India and experts from the disciplines like, Environment, Botanical survey of India whose assistance should be sought particularly for determination of protection areas and preservation of endangered species.

5. Contents of the working plan:

The working plan codes, wherever they exist, outline, preparation of the plan in two parts; the first part deals with "Summary of facts on which the proposals are based" and the second part covers "Future management strategies with prescriptions of operations". It will be necessary to deal with the following issues as well, in detail in the two parts of the working plan, in case these issues are not mentioned in the working plan code:-

a) Rights and concessions: Besides dealing with the existing rights and concessions on forests, the tribal rights and practices should be properly high-lighted together with mechanism proposed for regulating such rights and concessions.

b) Grazing and Fodder: Grazing is a serious problem in most of the forest areas. A detailed study should be made of this problem and clear prescriptions used as to how grazing need can be adjusted in relation to carrying capacity for forests. The scope for improvement of grazing potential through better management is also required to be brought out. Cultivation & propagation of fodder species including grasses in various forest areas to help meet forage needs especially during distress conditions should be included in the prescriptions.



c) Shifting cultivation: In many forest areas, shifting cultivation is a tradition-bound practice. A study of the local practices should be made and measures to control shifting cultivation, as far as practicable, should be proposed without upsetting the local economic situation and social customs. Alternatives to the existing practices should be worked-out and recommended.

d) Encroachment : Encroachment is fairly wide-spread in many forest areas. An assessment of the problem should be made and to what extent and how this can be controlled should be suggested.

#### 6. Clear-felling of natural forests:

Over years, many silvicultural practices like selection system, uniform system, coppice with reserves, which are based on the concept of harvested trees through natural regeneration, are to be replaced progressively by clear-felling with Artificial regeneration system. The reasons are very many, important of them being anticipated better productivity and operational convenience. However, in view of evidence of continuing depletion of natural forests and need for preservation of all biological diversities which natural forests sustain, it would be necessary to review the existing and proposed management systems involving clear felling with artificial regeneration. As a matter of principle, clear felling of natural forests with artificial regeneration should be avoided as far as possible. However, if it has to be resorted to for compelling reasons e.g. lack of natural re-generation of desired species, poor condition of the standing crops and need for restoration of biological diversity of the original natural crop, a thorough study should first be made. Again wherever clear-felling is resorted to, it should be over very restricted areas of not exceeding 10 ha. in the hills and 25 ha on the plains and, in no case, good natural forests should be clear-felled in preference to poorly stocked natural forests.

#### 7. Restriction of fellings in the Hills:

In view of the poor state of forests in the hills and mountains of the country and necessity of preservation of forests in those areas for soil and water conservation, State Governments should consider banning of all fellings above certain altitude, say 1000 meters, atleast for some years. It will also be necessary to identify critical areas in the hills and mountains, in the catchments of River Valleys, areas prone to landslips, erosion and geologically unstable formations which require protection from felling of forests and need immediate vigorous reforestation. Such critical areas should be totally protected and/or afforested within the shortest possible time and a review of the conditions of such critical areas should be made every five years. Detailed prescriptions of management should be embodied in the working plans for these critical areas.

#### Afforestation of barren and degraded areas:

It is estimated that about 35 million ha of forest land are barren or in degraded condition. Vigorous plantation programmes should be launched for quick re-afforestation of these barren and degraded areas. The working plans should prescribe a quick and time-bound programme of afforestation of such lands within the shortest possible time, if necessary, even suspending the practice of clear-felling and planting in areas where these are in vogue.



## 9. Protection Areas:

The Working plans should deal in detail the management practices relating to the protection areas like, wildlife sanctuaries, National Parks, Biosphere Reserves, preservation plots etc. Internationally, 10% of the geographical areas of the country is being considered for protection in order to protect representative eco-systems in the region and preservation of germ-plasm of diverse nature. At present, in India about 2% of the geographical areas are being treated as protection areas. Working Plan should identify more protection areas and aim at reaching 4% of the geographical area. Such areas should in particular, include Tropical/Subtropical Temperate, Wet/Moist Evergreen/Semi-evergreen forests, Littoral forests, Mangroves and Alpine formations. Detailed management strategies and protection measures should be outlined in the Working Plans for the areas. In fact, it may be advisable to devote a separate chapter on protection areas.

Wherever separate management plans are being prepared for wildlife sanctuaries, National Parks etc. a gist of prescriptions of such plans should be incorporated in the working plan of the territorial forest division.

## 10. Tribal Welfare:

The scheduled tribes live mostly in the forest areas. Forests represent for them a whole way of life; home, culture, worship, food and source of employment and income. Forestry occupies a central position in the tribal economy.

Forest Development and tribal development should reinforce each other and these should gain wide recognition in the working plans. Working plan prescriptions should aim at the welfare of the tribals who depend heavily on the forest for their livelihood, ensuring simultaneously that the forests are concerned.

Tribals are dependent on several forest species like sal (*Shorea robusta*), Muhua (*Bassia* species), Kusum (*Schleichera trijuga*) tendu (*Dispyros* species) and several other species of food and medicinal value. All species vital to the tribal economy should be identified, listed and prescribed for preservation and perpetuation.

Tribals derive usually very low wages by working of forest labourers or by selling fire-wood, and as they do not share in the profits made from the forests, their wages always remain low compared to the industrial labourers. The tribal should be a participating community in harvesting, collecting, processing of all forest produce especially minor forest produce like, oil seeds, tendu leaves etc.

## 11. Monoculture:

A review should be made to see whether monoculture practices should be dispensed within view of its adverse impact on environment. It has also been alleged that such practices lead to less productivity than the natural forests which monoculture replaced. Culture of mixed species of indigenous origin should be preferred to mono-culture; indigenous species should ~~be~~ ~~preferred to~~ receive precedence over exotics. Wherever exotics are planted for reasons of particular need or higher productivity, such exotics should, preferably be intimately mixed with species of natural origin.

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In artificial regeneration operations choice of species should be made judiciously. The choice will not only depend on the site and the silvicultural needs of the species, it should also take into account the consideration of preference of the local population where they are the principal users and for uses to which species will ultimately be put.

12. Reduction of yield prescription:

There is continuous evidence of gradual degradation of the forest stock due to demands on various types of forest produce, principally firewood and due to illicit fellings which have assumed serious proportion in some areas. Such a degradation is obviously the results of removal of forest produce far in excess of that which is prescribed in the working plans. To build-up the stocking of the forests it would be desirable to reduce the fellings by curtailing the fellings. It would be advisable to reduce the felling by 50% of the yield, that is arrived at by normal calculations.

Whenever extra fellings outside working plan prescriptions are done, say for a development project, salvage operations of timber due to flood, snow-damage, land slides etc. such fellings should be adjusted against the working plan yield during the following year.

13. Forest area, stock maps and growing stock

At the time of preparation/revision of the working plans, the working plan Officer should make an accurate survey of the forest area of the division/unit. For this purpose, data available with the survey of India and the Resources Division of the States should also be made use of.

Preparation of stock maps of compartments and enumeration of growing stock of natural and man-made forests together with an analysis of projected increment and productivity of the forests should be carried out. For preparation of forest area and density, the use of aerial photographs may also be made with advantage.

While making enumeration, the growing stock of important plant entities like herbs, shrubs and climbers should also be assessed and a list of endangered plant species should be prepared in consultation with Botanical Survey of India. Protection of such species should be ensured by making specific prescriptions.

Although only two parts of the Working plan have been suggested earlier, additional volumes on stock maps, enumeration of growing stock and a list of protection areas should be added to the working plan.

14. Forest Industry Catchment:

In every State/UT, small and cottage and large industries based on wood and other forest produce as raw material from forests, are functioning. Generally their requirements are met from the natural forests, thus causing considerable pressure on these forests. Although the need of various industries on natural forests may not be completely eliminated due to specific requirements, there should be consistent endeavour to reduce the pressure of the forest industries on natural forests.



The working plan should identify possible catchments for various forests industries in barren and degraded lands and assess the production potential for such lands after afforestation.

The Plan should identify potential for forest based industries in small and cottage industries sector, in particular, and highlight of their development for the benefit of weaker sections of the community, especially tribals. Indigenous processing of oil seeds and use of tendu leaves are two examples.

15. Forest Development Corporations:

Areas leased to the Forest Development Corporations of the States/Union Territories should also be brought under working plans, where no such plans exists. It is understood that forest Development Corporations have been allotted forest areas for clear-felling and regeneration without proper working plan. The plans for such areas should be prepared immediately and completed within the next 18 months.

16. Checking of boundaries

In view of the fact that the encroachment of the forest areas is a serious problem, these should be assessed and enlisted at the time of field work relating to preparation/revision of the working plan.

17. Working plan for social forestry

Working plans for social forestry programme should be prepared. In social forestry programme, afforestation of barren land in possession of the authorities other than the Forest department should also be included.

18. Working Plan Officer:

As working plan is a very important document and its preparation requires considerable skill, it is recommended that a forest officer of atleast 10 years service should be employed as Working Plan Officer.

19. Period of working plan:

The need for frequent revision of Working plans to conform to changed need of the situation, cannot be over emphasised. Normally, the period of working plan should be 10 years but a review should be made after a considered necessary.

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20. Committee for approval of the Working Plan:

The working plan should be approved by the State Govt. after it has been examined by a Committee headed by the Secretary of the State/U.T. Forest department. Experts from other disciplines like Environment, Botanical survey of India etc. besides Chief Conservator of Forests of the State/UT should be included in the committee. A representative of the forestry division of the Govt. of India should be associated in these discussions and his views given due consideration.

22. Working plan cell in the Govt. of India Ministry of Agriculture

A working plan cell has since been created in the Ministry of Agriculture under the Inspector General of Forests. The primary function of this cell is to be assist the State/UT Forest department for preparation/revision of every working plan. This cell should be closely associated at various stages of preparation/revision every working plan in the State/UT.

The Working Plan Cell should also be associated while considering any deviation from the prescriptions of the approved working plan. Deviation should be allowed only after obtaining the approval of the Inspector General of Forests.

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COMMENTS ON GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF WORKING PLAN

1. All forest areas in Andhra Pradesh are covered under working plan.
2. Emphasis is being given to conservation over exploitation.
3. A working plan code exists in Andhra Pradesh
4. This procedure is already being adopted, except that the 2nd is designated as Reconnaissance Report. The procedure suggested is too cumbersome for these reports to be approved after discussions by a committee of experts including a representative of Government of India. Instead, if guidelines are given, they will be adhered to in the interest of expediting of working plan. In Andhra Pradesh Chief Conservator of Forests, are empowered to approve the working plan. The powers have since been delegated to Addl. Chief Conservator of Forests concerned.
5. The emphasis suggested is on rights and concessions particularly to tribals grazing and fodder based on carrying capacity and better management of grazing areas; providing alternative to shifting cultivation etc., will be taken care off. In fact they are being adequately taken care off even now the ITDA Girijan Corporation Plan schemes of the Forest Department etc.
- 6&7: Restrictions suggested on clear felling are kept in view in the new working plans.
8. In working plan emphasis will be laid on affecting such areas even if investment will be higher with objective to cover such areas.
9. Adequate areas are being set apart for preservation of wild flora and fauna.
10. Tribal welfare measures (by way of raising plantations) are being done on the lines suggested already.
11. The views on monoculture will be kept in view to encourage indigenous species.
12. The views on yield prescription to reduce yield to 50% of calculated yield will be kept in view.
13. Stock-mapping is being done.
14. Forest industry catchment approach is also being kept in view. Understocked areas will be identified as possible ~~as~~ catchment for raising industrial plantations.
15. Forest Development corporation is working the areas earmarked under industrial plantation programme.
16. Boundaries are being checked.
17. Seperate chapter is assigned to Social forestry programmes outside and inside reserve forest. Contd...2
18. Suggestion to appoint an officer of over 10 years experience as W.P.O. will be kept in view.
19. Presently plans are being made for 10-15 years, a mid-term review could be done.
- 20 & 21: The committee suggested quick approval of the working plan, hence the working plan cell may issue detailed guidelines to be followed rather than persue the working plan after preparation.