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GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
FOREST DEPARTMENT

Rc.No.27661/94-X2(ii),
Dated: 11-05-1998.

Office of the Prl.Chief
Conservator of Forests, A.P.,
Hyderabad - 4.

Sri S.D. Mukherji, IFS.,
Prl.Chief Conservator of Forests.

CIRCULAR NO. 10/98.

Sub:- FOREST PROTECTION - Responsibility for
the destruction of Forests - Regarding.

Ref:- Cir.No 13/95 in Rc.No.23211/95-X3,
Dated: 12-11-1995.

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1. The basic function of Forest Department is protection and regeneration of Forests. All policies and Laws have been made to fulfil this basic objectives. However, there is constant degradation of Forests indicating the facts that forests are not being protected to the desired extent. This is a matter of a great concern and needs to be corrected so as to ensure that protection of Forests.

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Duties of different categories of officers have been enumerated in Forest Department Code (Vol.I). Beat being the primary unit of forest management, detailed circular instructions have been issued on Beat Inspections vide Circular No.13/95 issued in Rc.No.23211/95/X3, dated 12-11-1995). In spite of clear enumeration of duties and detailed instructions to protect the forests not enough care is being taken to ensure the protection of forests leading to forest destruction. While the Divisional Forest Officer is responsible for the general management and protection of forest in the Division, it is generally observed that whenever any destruction takes place the responsibility is fixed mostly on Forest Guards and Section Officers. In some case Forest Range Officers are held responsible and very rarely the Divisional Forest Officers are made responsible.

Forest protection being the main goal of the department, this issue came up for discussion in a high level meeting with the Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Junior Forest Officers Association's office bearers. Hon'ble Minister felt that while the protection of forests in their respective beats and sections is the primary responsibility of Forest Guard and Section Officer concerned, the other senior officers upto the level of Divisional Forest Officers are also responsible for the general protection and hence necessary circular should be issued. This subject was discussed in a meeting with all Chief Conservators of Forests and there was unanimity to fix responsibility for protection of Forests upto Divisional Forest Officer level.

In order to fix responsibility on the officers working at different levels performance of certain basic duties as enumerated below, shall be reviewed:-

- i) Whether the forest was perambulated regularly as per the provisions of APFD Code and the instructions issued in Circular No.13/95 and the destruction or the threat to destruction is reported in time.
- ii) Whether timely action was taken to investigate and apprehend in smugglers in case of illicit felling and report submitted to the next higher officer.
- iii) If timely information with full details was furnished to the Divisional Forest Officer, whether Divisional Forest Officer had taken necessary measures by way of mobilising additional forces within the Department, obtaining cooperation of District administration besides bringing the same to the notice of the Conservator of Forests and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.
- iv) Whether Divisional Forest Officer and staff working under his control have been inspecting the beats regularly as required by the Circular No.13/95.

5. Divisional Forest Officer shall hold monthly meeting with the Forest Range Officers to review the protection situation. All reports made during the previous month shall be examined. Wherever necessary Section Officer/Beat Officer shall be involved in such meetings. Proceedings of such meetings will be kept on record and wherever necessary sent to Conservator of Forests and higher up.

6. All the above matters will be taken into consideration while fixing the responsibility on the destruction of forests and encroachments in Forest areas. In case there is proper reporting and review of the situation at different level up to Divisional Forest Officer and even then destruction takes place because of extraordinary circumstances, which is beyond the control of the department due allowance will be given while dealing with disciplinary cases for forest destruction cases. Implementation of these instructions will be reviewed by the Conservator of Forests concerned regularly and this will form part of both the Division and Circle office inspections.

Sd./- S.D.Mukherji,
Prl.Chief Conservator of Forests

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All the Officers Distribution List 'A'

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