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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
(2009-2011)

HUNDRED AND TWENTY THIRD REPORT



(TWELFTH ASSEMBLY)

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, ASSAM
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON THE REPORT OF THE
COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF
INDIA (CIVIL) FOR THE YEARS 1993-94,
1994-95 AND 1995-96 RELATING
TO
FOREST DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM.**

Presented to the House on 02-03-2010.

**ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT
DISPUR : GUWAHATI-6.**

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Chairman:

1. Shri Phani Bhusan Chaudhury

Members:

2. Shri Rajendra Prasad Singh
3. Shri Rameswar Dhanowar
4. Shri Gobinda Chandra Langthasa
5. Shri Abdul Khaleque
6. Shri Rajib Lochan Pegu
7. Shri Padma Hazarika
8. Shri Girindra Kumar Baruah
9. Smti Kamali Basumatary
10. Shri Ranjit Dutta
11. Shri Jagat Singh Engti
12. Shri Anwarul Hoque
13. Shri Membor Gogoi

Secretariat:

1. Shri G.P.Das, Secretary
2. Shri B. Basumatary, O.S.D.
3. Shri P.K. Hazarika, Deputy Secretary
4. Shri K. Rahman, C.O.

(ii)

PREFATORY REMARKS

I, Shri Phani Bhusan Chaudhury, Chairman, Committee on Public Accounts, Assam Legislative Assembly having been authorized to submit the report on its behalf present this Hundred and Twenty Third Report of the Committee on Public Accounts on the Audit paras contained in the Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 pertaining to Forest Department, Government of Assam.

2. The Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 was laid before the House on 18th September, 1995, 15th June, 1996 and 8th April, 1997.

3. The Reports mentioned above relating to Forest Department has been considered by the Committee in its meeting held on 28th May, 2009.

4. The Committee has considered the draft report and finalized the same in its sitting held on 24th February, 2010.

5. The Committee has appreciated the valuable assistance rendered by the Principal Accountant General (Audit), Assam and his Junior Officers and staff during the examination of the Department.

6. The Committee thanks to the departmental witnesses for their kind co-operation and offers appreciation to the Officers and staff dealing with the Committee on Public Accounts, Assam Legislative Assembly Secretariat for their strenuous and sincere services rendered to the Committee.

7. The Committee earnestly hopes that the Government would promptly implement the recommendations made in this report.

Dispur:
The 24th February, 2010.

PHANI BHUSAN CHAUDHURY,
Chairman
Committee on Public Accounts.

Forest Department

Purchase in excess of requirement

(Audit para-3.14/C&AG(Civil)/1993-94/(P-57-59)

1.1 The audit has pointed out that the a test-check of records of Divisional Forest Officer(DFO) Social Forestry Division, Silchar revealed that 208 rolls of half goat proof fencing worth Rs. 0.68 lakh and 155.94 quintals of barbed wire worth Rs.1.75 lakhs purchased between 1985-86 and 1987-88 respectively were lying unutilized in stock till the date of audit (March 1993). The requirement of both the material during the intervening periods up to 1991-92 was almost met by Divisional Forest Officer by fresh purchase as shown below :

Year	Opening Balance	Quantity purchase	Quantity utilized	Closing balance(Rolls)
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(A) Half goat proof fencing (rolls)

1988-89	224	48	64	208
1989-90	208	64	64	208
1990-91	208	32	32	208
1991-92	208	27	27	208

(B) Barbed wire (Quintals)

1988-89	255.28	125.13	188.47	191.94
1989-90	191.94	527.96	527.96	191.94
1990-91	191.94	239.61	275.61	155.94
1991-92	155.94	283.72	283.72	155.94

In September 1992 the Beat Officer, Sadar Beat, Silchar reported to DFO that 163 rolls of half goat proof fencing and 91 quintals of barbed wire out of 208 rolls and 155.94 quintals respectively were completely damaged and proposed write off for Rs. 1.64 lakhs being value of the materials. The loss could have been avoided had the fresh purchase been made after utilization of existing stock. (b) Similarly, Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, Karimganj purchased 329.02 quintals of barbed wire in 1986-87 against the actual requirement of 166.68 quintals. Consequently 162.34 quintals remained in stock as unutilized. In the subsequent period of 3 years from 1987-88 to 1989-90 further fencing materials as required were purchased by the Divisional Forest officer without utilizing the quantity in stock. A quantity of 84.16 quintals was utilized in 1990-91 reducing the balance to 78.18quintals worth Rs.1.66 lakhs. Again in 1991-92 full quantity of requirement was purchased

without utilizing the material in stock. The Divisional Forest Officer in January 1992 proposed to the Chief Conservator of Forests, for the utilization of the old stock of 78.18 quintals of barbed wire in the plantation area to be brought under advance work. But the Chief Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry, Assam had not permitted utilization of the old stock without assigning any reason (January 1992). This resulted in blocking up of fund at the end of 6th year of purchase (February 1993).

1.2 The department by their written reply has stated that (A) as directed by the CCF (SF), Assam vide his letter No.SFD/G/VII-P/Fen/86-87, dtd. 21.02.1987 and the then CF, WASFC, Guwahati's letter No.SWD/Fen/86-87,dtd. 22.02.1987, the DFO (SF), Silchar had lifted 255.09 Qntle of barbed wire from Basistha Nursery in Guwahati under SF, Division, Guwahati Subsequently in a discussion held in the office chamber of the CCF, SF, Assam on 09.03.1987 it was decided to utilized the earmarked Budget provision for purpose of fencing materials to avoid the financial complicacies. As regards of the goat proof fencing the same was taken delivery from the than DFO, Silchar Division (Territorial Wing) during the time of creation of this Division. But the same could not be utilized due to non receipt of any instruction from the authority. More over the CCF.SF, Assam vide his letter No. SFD/G/VII-P/Fen/86-87, dtd. 26.03.1993 in which he has conveyed instruction not to utilize the old fencing materials in the plantation. However, the CCF. SF, Assam vides his letter No. SFD/G/VII-P/Fen/86-87, dtd. 29.05:1993 asked to utilized the all fencing materials in the plantation that created during 1993-94. But, only 80 Qntls of fencing materials from old stock could be utilized and rest i.e. 175.09 Qntl of barbed wire was found damaged. And similarly the half goat proof fencing materials amounting to 163 rolls could not be utilized.. (b). The old stock of 78.18 quintal of barbed wire have been utilized for the various plantation works under different schemes during 1993-94 as per instruction communicated by the CCF,SF, Assam vide his letter dtd. 29.05.1993.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.3 The Committee heard the deposition of the Departmental representatives and observed that huge amount of wasteful expenditure were made by the department by purchasing materials far beyond their actual requirements. This happened due to lack of proper planning and prior assessment of their need. The Committee while expressing its displeasure at this wasteful expenditure directed the department to conduct an enquiry and to fix responsibility against the erring officials and to submit a report to the Committee within thirty days from the date of presentation of this report before the House.

Unauthorized payment of wages

(Audit para 3.15/C & AG(Civil)/1993-94/(P-59)

1.4 The audit has pointed out that according to the instructions issued (July 1992) by the Chief Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry, Assam to all Divisional Forest Officers under social forestry wing, wages rate for unskilled labour was to be limited to Rs.25 per day until the rates are received by the Labour Department. No such revision of rate by the Labour Department was found on the record produce to audit. However, it was ascertained from the DFO, Karimganj Division (vide his letter dtd. 16-02-93) that rate of Rs.25 per day was being paid by him for unskilled labourer. It was notice in audit (February 1994) that the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Social Forestry Division, Karimganj incurred an extra expenditure of Rs.1.24 lakhs towards payment of wages to unskilled labourers at Rs.26.30 per day instead of at Rs.25 per day from July 1991 to December 1992. Consequently there was extra payment of wages to the tune of Rs.1.24 lakhs which was irregular.

1.5 The department by their written reply has stated that the said audit objection on the para-3 of part-II-B against audit objection vide A.G's letter No.IC-II/26-2/93-94/664, dtd. 30-07-93 in question has also been dropped by the A.G. Assam vide his letter No.IC-II/26-2/93-94/131, dtd. 26-04-97. Actually, the payment of wages to daily labourers engaged for different schemes were made 25/- per day along with a variable dearness allowance @ Rs. 1.30 paise (i.e. 25.00+1.30=26.30) just complying with the norms provided by the Chief Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry, Assam and Govt. of Assam's letter No.GLR.628/78/69, dtd. 12-09-90 and hence the question of payment @ Rs.26.30 instead of Rs.25.00 per day to the labourers could not be treated as irregular and extra payment. In this connection the detailed replies to the points was submitted to the AG, Assam with a copy to the Secretary, to the Govt. of Assam vide DFO, Karimganj Social Forestry's letter No.B/SFK/A-5(a)/2365-2366, dtd. 13-12-96.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.6 The Committee is satisfied with the reply of the departmental witnesses and decided to drop the para.

Unauthorized expenditure

(Audit para 3.16/C & AG(Civil)/1993-94/(P-59)

1.7 The audit has pointed out that in pursuance of a Government decision (February 1986) to establish a bird sanctuary in Assam, the Chief Conservator of Forests, (Wild Life) directed (April 1986) the Divisional Forest Officer, Sivasagar to submit a feasibility report for creating the sanctuary in Sivasagar Division. The proposal of the Divisional Forest Officer submitted in March 1988 was found in December 1991 by the Chief Conservator of Forests to be unsuitable as the proposed area under Panidihing Reserve Forest had been heavily encroached by the villagers and fisheries that existed inside the forest area rendering it unsuitable for establishing Sanctuary. It was, however observed (June 1992) in audit that the Divisional Forest Officer had incurred expenditure of Rs.2.91 lakhs during 1991-92 towards construction of camp huts and protection duty in the proposed area. The expenditure incurred did not have the sanction or approval of the Government and was thereof unauthorized. The Divisional Forest Officer admitted (June 1994) that Government sanction for expenditure incurred had not been received.

1.8 The department by their written reply has stated that the Panidihing Bird Sanctuary is situated partly in Panidihing RF and partly in N.C. area of Panidihing mouza. It comprises of total area of 3993.0 hect. Out of which 293 hect. is within Panidihing RF and remaining 3700.00 hect. falls within the N.C.area of Panidihing mouza. Though the proposal of the DFO to constitute Panidihing Bird Sanctuary was rejected by the CCF but later on it was notified as a Bird Sanctuary vide Notification No.FRW.71/95/9 dated 18/12/95 and the Govt. has appointed the Deputy Commissioner, Sibsagar District as it's Collector. During 1991-92 the Divisional Forest Officer had incurred expenditure of Rs.2.91 lakhs towards construction of camp huts and for protection duty in the proposed area. Panidihing Bird Sanctuary is a suitable place for migratory birds and local birds. It is essential to preserve the ecology of the area from encroachers and poachers. The details of the expenditure are as below :-

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Cost of Camp/huts | Rs. 12,700/- |
| 2. Works for protection Activities in the Panidihing area | Rs. 2,26,300/- |

Above amount for from the non-plan budget and it was not a part of any plan scheme. As such, it did not require any sanction from the Govt. Since the area had already been notified as a Wildlife Sanctuary on 18/12/95, the said expenditure has proved it's worth.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.9 The Committee heard the deposition of the departmental representatives and observes that any expenditure needed Government approval and sanction irrespective of whether it was plan fund or non-plan fund. Sanction from the competent authority was necessary. If Govt. approval or sanction was not taken, the only way out is to take ex-post-facto approval and to ensure that in future such irregularities do not recur. The Committee therefore, recommends that the Department should take necessary steps to obtain ex-post-facto approval immediately of the Govt. to regularize the expenditure and decided to drop the para.

Wasteful expenditure on plywood plantation.

(Audit para 3.17/ C & AG(Civil)/1993-94/(P-60)

1.10 The audit has pointed out that the Divisional Forest Officer, Sonitpur East Division, Biswanath Chariali Created plywood plantation in 110 hectare at Selakhati and 125 hectare at Joysidhi (both centre located in Naduar Reserved Forest) at a cost of Rs.1.65 lakhs and Rs.2.21 lakhs during 1982-83 and 1984-85 respectively. In February 1991, the Range Officer, Diplonga Range under whose jurisdiction plantation centres were located, reported to the DFO that surviving plants in both the centers were completely destroyed by encroachers. The total value of damage caused by the encroachers was assessed by the DFO (March 1991) at Rs. 4.50 lakhs. In making the assessment the expenditure incurred towards maintenance of plantation on two canters for the period up to 1986-87 and 1988-89 respectively were also taken into consideration. In reply to a query, the DFO stated (June 1994) that no eviction operation on the aforesaid encroached area could be taken up by him due to non-receipt of any co-operation from the civil authority (i.e. Deputy Commissioner, Sonitpur, Tezpur Superintendent of Police, Sonitpur, Tezpur) despite repeated request. Thus, departmental failure to prevent encroachment in plantation area had rendered the entire expenditure of Rs.4.50 lakhs on plantation as wasteful one.

1.11 The department by their written reply has stated that the Plywood plantation was created in 110 hect under Selaikhati centre and 125 hect. In Jaysiddhi Centre during 1982-83 and 1984-85 respectively in Naduar RF under Diplonga Range of Darrang Division (now Sonitpur East Division, Bisanath Chariali. The said plantations were damaged by encroachers during March 1991. The follow up action taken by Forest Department was as follows : The R.O, Diplonga Range reported the matter to the DFO, Darrang Division(hereafter DFO) vide WT Message dated 08/03/91. On receipt of information, the DFO immediately intimated the matter to the D.C., Tezpur with information to DISPOL, Tezpur, CONFOR NORTH Tezpur, Commissioner NAD, Tezpur and SDPO Biswanath Chariali. The encroachers mostly came from Rangapara/Harishinga/Tangla/Jonai and were constructing temporary shed destroying forest and plantation. DFO requested the DISPOL, Tezpur to depute 3 Section of Armed Bn. to assist in ejection operation schedule on 22/03/91. The DFO also requested the DEPCOM Tezpur to depute Magistrate accordingly. The Additional D.C., Tezpur by the W.T Message dated 06/05/1991 (Annexure-III) expressed inability to spare Police Armed Force for evection due to election. The DFO reported the details of encroacher to the CF, NAC and the

Commissioner, NAD Tezpur vide his letter No. A/FDE/Naduar RF/209 dated 18.03.91. The DFO had also apprised the DC, Sonitpur about the fresh encroacher in Naduar RF and requested the D.C., Sonitpur to assist early to take up eviction. In the meantime the encroachers filed a petition in the Hon'ble Guwahati High Court which was admitted as CR No. 3166/91. The DC, Sonitpur requested the SR. Govt. Advocate, Assam to take appropriate action to vacate the order of Hon'ble High Court dated 18/06/91 in the said writ petition. The DFO again requested the DC, Sonitpur to depute Magistrate and Armed Police Force to assist in eviction vide his letter B/FSE/Genl/314-36 dated 12/03/93 with copy to S.P., Sonitpur and higher official of the Department. But the Additional District Magistrate, Sonitpur had again refused to provide Police force due to non availability to sufficient police force as the encroachment has increased in the meantime. Even the DFO informed the PCCF, Assam about the grave situation of encroachment and non availability of sufficient force to evict the encroachers, DFO requested the PCCF, Assam to take up the matter with the DGP, Assam to deploy force to assist in eviction of the encroachers. Though the DFO tried to evict the area from encroachment but due to lack of support from the district Civil and Police, the eviction could not be taken up and the plantation areas could not be restored. It is a fact that the very few forest officials posted in the field could not stop encroachment of such organized and large number and large number and it was necessary to get help from the District Authority.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.12 The Committee carefully considered the written reply as well as the oral deposition made by the departmental representatives and directed the department to initiate necessary action to clear the encroached areas from illegal encroachment and submit a report to the Committee regarding action taken by the department within sixty days from the date of presentation of this report to the House.

Loss due to fire

(Audit para 3.16/C & AG (Civil)/1994-95/(P-98-99)

1.13 The audit has pointed out that a test-check of records of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Southern Afforestation Division, Haflong in September 1994 revealed that 1202 hectares of plantation of pine species, out of 1409 hactors created and maintained in sixteen different centres within the created and maintained in sixteen different centres within the jurisdiction of three ranges (Umrangsho, Makoiram and Rongpongong) under annual afforestation schemes for the years 1980-81 to 1990-91 by the DFO, were gutted by fire that took place repeatedly in twenty eight occasions between March 1984 and March 1991. In all cases the fire in plantation centres broke out particularly in the months of February and March of each year. The loss involved was Rs. 18.19 lakhs (being the proportionate amount of the total cost of creation and maintenance amounting to Rs.22.42 lakhs for 1409 for hectares). A perusal of reports of the concerned Range Officers/Divisional Forest Officer indicated that incidence of fire inside the plantation centres was due to : (i) hand work of local cattle grazers and other miscreants. (ii) selection of plantation sites in disputed area along the inter state boarder with Meghalaya as well as in fire pone area and, (iii) non-allotment of required funds for clearance of heavy growth of thatch and other weeds from plantation area which aided quick spreading of fire throughout the entire plantation area after origination. Thus, creation of plantations on unsuitable sites without providing adequate fire control measures and watch and ward resulted in loss of Rs.18.19 lakhs.

1.14 The department by their written reply has stated that as per decision taken on AOC meeting held on /04 against the IR, issues vide no.IC-II/27-38/(4-95/1562, dtd. 03-02-95 for the period from 11/79 to 4/94 for Part IIA, para 1 & 2 communicated vide No.IC-II/27-38/94-95/1761, dtd. 03-01-05 that the lost plantation areas due to fire had been refilled/re plantation from the plan fund of the department.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.15 The Committee heard the deposition of the departmental representatives and observes that due to lack of modern and scientific fire fighting equipments the department could not control the forest fire. The Committee therefore, recommends that the department should initiate step to procure latest modern and scientific fire fighting equipments to control such fire in future and decided to drop the para.

Unfruitful expenditure

(Audit para 3.17/C & AG(Civil)/1994-95/(P-99-100))

1.16 The audit has pointed out that a test-check (December 1993) of the records of DFO and further information furnished by him (August 1995) revealed as under : (a) Rs.0.50 lakh sanctioned in November 1991 was spent in March 1992 on soil testing for exploration of suitable ground water table (for which no provision was made in the estimate) although the Circle Conservator of Forests instructed (October 1991) the DFO to utilize the amount on construction of over head tank. For the installation of DTW etc. the DFO instead of inviting competitive tenders collected a single tender from a local firm "A" on 30th March 1993. The firm "A" offered Rs.2.91 Lakhs for the work. The DFO accepted the offer although it was substantially higher than the estimated cost of this portion of work and not within the financial powers which limited to Rs.25000 per work, and issued the work order to the firm "A" on the same day without entering into any agreement and obtaining security deposit. The DFO paid Rs. 1.50 Lakhs to the Contractor on 31st March 1993 i.e the day after the issue of work order without recording the item wise measurement of the details of work done by him to justify the payment. No report on the successful completion of the work was made available to audit. In reply the DFO stated (August 1995) that boring of DTW carries out by firm "A" eventually met with failure due to non availability of water bearing strata. He further stated that since exploration of a suitable ground water table through boring tests was pre-requisite in DTW, the construction of overhead tank was not done. The contention of the DFO is not acceptable to Audit on the ground that when boring tests in the area conducted by the division failed to yield any favorable result, the decision to install DTW through the firm "A" in the same locality was unjustified. Thus expenditure of Rs. 2 Lakhs on the scheme proved unproductive as the intended purpose of providing water supply has not been achieved (August 1995).

1.17 The department by their written reply has stated that (a) Soil testing is mandatory to exploration of ground water table before finalizing site for deep tube well and hence it was to be carried out in 1991-92. Payment in installments were made to the Firm "A" to whom the work was awarded for their bid for exploration of suitable ground water table for the year 1992-93. (b) Since the amount of Rs.1.50 lakhs, earmarked as phase II for the year 1992-93, was released at the very fag end of the Financial Year, the DFO did not have adequate time to observe the necessary formalities for a competitive tender. As Deep Tube Well boring requires sophisticated test boring in the very difficult Geological strata

situated along the bank of Brahmaputra at Tezpur where the Division office complex is situated. Further, such type of boring is difficult and the same was possible by only these firms which are specialized in such job. As there was no time and the firm with sophisticated machineries were limited so the DFO had to engage the service of the Firm "A" though he was the only tenderer. The completion report of the work was not on record due to the fact that all the attempts made at various test boring sites met with failure. Since the exploration of a suitable ground water table was a pre requisite in implementation of the scheme, construction of over head tank and purchase of motor pump could not be done. Though the expenditure is termed as unfruitful but there is no malafied intention to cause it as wasteful expenditure. The entire bank of the River Brahmaputra where the Division Office is situated is full of huge boulder deposit lying underground. So it was extremely difficult to get a suitable ground water table at an affordable cost.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.18 The Committee observes that as per existing Government Rules the department should have invited tenders from interested parties but in this case the department did not follow the proper procedure and awarded the work to local firm which is violation of Government Rules. The Committee therefore, recommends that the department should be careful so that such irregularities do not recur in future. With this recommendation the Committee decided to drop the para.

Idle investment on steel rods

(Audit para 3.6/C & AG(Civil)1995-96/(P-49)

1.19 The audit has pointed out that a test-check (January 1995) of records disclosed that between July 1991 and December 1991 the PCCF purchased further quantity of 28.260 tones steel rod (6 mm: 30.850 tones, 16 mm: 17.680 tones) costing Rs.4.97 lakhs and 2.02 tones GCI sheet worth Rs.0.39 lakh for the same purpose although alternate site for the building had not been selected. Government approval of estimate/technical sanction vis-à-vis purchase of materials for the proposed work were also not made available to audit. The entire stock of materials remained unutilized as of March 1996. Purchase of building materials before actual possession of site was injudicious and resulted in idle investment of Rs.19.84 lakhs (excluding value of bricks) for a period ranging from 4 to 7 years as of March 1996. Information about actual quantity of the materials in stock and their present condition was not available as physical stock verification had not been conducted during the entire period.

1.20 The department by their written reply has stated that the iron rod and bricks which were purchased during the year 1988 and 1991 for construction of office building at Panbazar Kacharighat could not be utilized due to non accordance with permission by the GMDA to construct the multistoried building. As the materials particularly to iron rods were lying for considerable time in the open, the quantity of the same deteriorated. Therefore, the Principal Secretary, Forest Department was requested to accord permission to allow disposal of the scrap condemned as per procedure. The Govt. of Assam issued a NOC to disposed the rusted steel rods. Accordingly, a committee for condemnation of the same was constituted and as recommended by the Committee, short rate notice published inviting tenders from the intending bidders and the materials were sold at the highest offered rate amounting to (Bid value Rs. 10,55,900/- + Tax Rs.46,460/-) Rs. 11,02,360/-) and deposited the amount to the Govt. exchequer as revenue under the Head of Account 8782 Forest Remittance vide challan No.4/11130, dtd. 27-04-05. The Bricks which were purchased at the same time was utilized in the extension part of the CCF(T) office building and development of the yard in the office campus.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.21 The Committee heard the deposition of the departmental representatives and observes that the department purchased the building materials even before obtaining building permission from GMDA. Purchase of building materials before actual possession of site was injudicious and resulted in idle investment as well as lost to Government exchequer. The Committee therefore, recommends that the department should be careful so that such lapses do not recur in future.

Unproductive expenditure on logging operations/wild life sanctuary

(Audit para 3.7/C & AG(Civil)/1995-96/(P-50-51))

1.22 The audit has pointed out that after scrutiny by audit (November 1995) revealed that the division having strength of 83 personal had carried out logging operations to the extent of 342.10 cubic meters of timber, on an average, annually between 1989-90 and 1993-94 against the estimated annual quantity of 25000 cubic meters. After 1993-94 no logging operations were carried out. The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Logging Division informed (July 1995) the Conservator of Forests, Eastern Assam Circle, Jorhat that despite his effort timber operation of departmentally marked trees had not been entrusted to Logging Division by the territorial divisions since 1994-95 on the plea that the works would be executed by them. Thus, the staff and machinery of Logging Division largely remained idle from April 1994. The Department had not taken any measure to activate the functioning of the division and to utilized the staff and machinery which resulted in payment of salaries and other expenses amounting to Rs.34.62 lakhs on idle staff as of March 1996. Outturn during 1989-90 to 1993-94 was also hardly 1.37 percent of the capacity. Thus the work load of the Division was inadequate since its inception in 1989. (b) after scrutiny of records of the DFO by Audit (September 1994) and further information obtained (June 1996) from the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Wild life, Assam revealed that the DFO spent Rs.19.28 lakhs till March 1991 for building up the required infrastructure as envisaged under the scheme. The remaining amount of Rs.2.26 lakhs (Rs.21.54 lakhs-Rs. 19.28 lakhs) for procurement of Sanghai deer remained unutilized (March 1992) and was adjusted against release of funds in the subsequent year for other works. The scheme had been discontinued from 1991-92. But the reasons for non procurement of Sanghai deer and measures taken for utilization of infrastructural facilities created under scheme were not stated. Thus funds to the extent of Rs. 19.28 lakhs proved unproductive for over five years as of March 1996.

1.23 The department by their written reply has stated that the procurement of Sanghai from Manipur for introduction at Wildlife sanctuary met with rough weather as their was vehement Manipur against the proposed introduction. Sanghai being endemic Manipur in the whole world bore a significant status and due protest the proposed introduction had to be shelved. Under the circumstances the amount of Rs.2.26 lakhs unutilized and adjusted against subsequent release of fund regularizing the net amount released by the Govt. of India Development of Wildlife

sanctuaries" schemes. As regards, the expenditures incurred against building of infrastructure the same are being utilized for general protection

of Pobitora Wildlife sanctuaries. Tinsukia Logging Division could not be entrusted the work of timber operation due to various restrictions imposed on tree felling by the State Govt. as well as the Hon'ble Court of India. However, the staff of the Division did not remain idle during the said period. They were engaged for combing operation in various Territorial.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1.24 The Committee is satisfied with the reply of departmental representatives and decided to drop the para.