

Executive Summary

The "Evaluation of Survival Rate of Afforestation / Tree Plantation Activities carried out in District Barmer of Rajasthan during the year: 2002-03", was undertaken in Mid June 2004, as soon as the first installment of the assignment fee was released in the last week of May 2004.

The forest department under the overall charge of Deputy Conservator of Forest (District Forest Officer) mainly undertook the afforestation and tree planting activities in the district during 2002-2003. However, the programmes like: "20-Point Programme" has simply remained as targets on the paper, as fully explained at Para-2.01 of the Main Report.

From the study it is clearly evident that the **Forest Department is the only agency involved in creating the green cover in the district**. Other departments, seem to be associated with the programmes like: "20-Point Programme", but there is hardly any authentic confirmation about records pertaining to: site identification and, physical verifications, rather to be specific, that community participation is not at all palpable. They have not even contributed to protection of the plantations against damage by stray livestock or ploughing their fields.

Out of the 54 sites covered fewer than 4 Schemes, around 24 site-plots were visited, by taking 209 samples. The overall survival rate of sample plants undertaken by the Forest department, during 2002-2003 in Barmer district, comes to approx. 80%.

The survival percentage of different samples under various schemes' ranges as follows: -

- a) Afforestation-I: overall 81.36% and, ranging from 60% (in Rabasar-Dudawa of Chohtan Range) to 903% (in Ram Deoria of Sheo Range and, Rakhi of Siwana Range); respectively;
- b) Afforestation-II: overall 65% in Kiradu (Hathma) in Barmer Range;
- c) Sand Dune Stabilization: overall and, ranging from 60% in Gadra Road (in Sheo Range) to 85% in Hodu (in Sindhri Range);
- d) Shelter Belt-II: overall 78.75% and, ranging from 65% in Dudawa (in Chohtan Range) to 90% in Didas (in Siwana Range) respectively.

The major species grown are: *Acacia Tortilis (Israel Babool)*; *Ber (zyziphus)*; *Rahida (Techomalla Undulata)*; *Neem (Azadirachta indica)*; *Aonla (Emblica officinalis)*; *Baheda (Terminalia ballerica and, others*.

It is strange that the "Afforestation and tree planting activities" as reported by the district authorities under 20-Point Programme (included as point 16), is simply proving as a paper tiger / targets on paper assigned to different agencies / Departments Viz.: Blocks, Depts, Educational institutions / Schools etc. under the Chairmanship of Collector with DFO as the Convener. Further as informed, there is no specific funding being provided from any dept., therefore, no departmental information on plantation status is readily available from any source including DFO's office. With this in mind, an 'Off-the-cuff' remark made by the few officials is pertinent, who mentioned, "if all the targeted plantations envisaged over the years had been taken up, Barmer district, by now would have turned into a dense forest." However, all the concerned officers have now agreed to monitor the implementation of the "20-Point Programme", more seriously in the future.

With this backdrop, Govt. of India & State Govt. may take a critical view on this, whether mention of “20-Point Programme”, should continue to find a place in the records simply as targets on paper and / or any possible funding will have to be organized under “20-Point Programme”, at least for nursery activities to the forest dept. for raising and distribution of seedlings (of 1½ to 2 years old) on concession-al rates to other depts. / General public. Such funded plantations would eventually be recorded and, consequently monitored by the dept. Further, this calls for public awareness about the high priority on bio-diversity / nature conservation in the larger interest of the district area.

The efforts made by the Forest Dept. in increasing the green cover cannot be undermined. Therefore, the State Govt. should critically examine whether the Village Panchayat's are geared up and, equipped with where-withal to take over the plantations at the end of the leased period. Incidentally, the State Govt. through recent circulars has advised the Forest Dept. to take up re-plantation in the wastelands / degraded forest lands / old Panchayat's land plantations. That clearly indicates even though the Panchayat Raj System in Rajasthan has four-tier-system under the overall charge of Principal Secretary (PS), Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Govt. Secretariats level at Jaipur, but it has yet to penetrate down the line in the Barmer District / Zilla Parishad (ZP); Block / Panchayat Samiti (PS); and, Gram Panchayat (GP).

Therefore, the Forest Dept. in association with PR Institutions need to support Village Panchayats', to form village forest committees and, to empower them with up keep of forests, before the expiry of lease agreements. These VFC's, as part of the village forests should cater for consumption of the villagers, because, closure of the entire area for grazing is not feasible. The authorities should tackle the problem as in Barmer (unlike in West Arid Region) grazing and excessive fuel wood collections are the main problems faced by the forests.

Component-wise observations and, suggestions made in the main Report, may also be examined and, necessary follow-up action taken so that the programme grows from strength to strength.

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Annex-1 (Page 1/2)

Selected Indicators of Success Criteria: proposed in relation to the Management Guidelines for afforestation and, tree plantation activities envisaged by the National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board (NAEB), Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India (MoEF, GoI) have been devised. An attempted qualitative success criteria on component / activity for this mid-term evaluation report are given below: -

Component / Activity	Indicator	Norms fixed	Achievement up to 30 th June '03	Remarks
1. Project Plantation Works / Activity	a) Overall % survival of all the forestry programmes	100 (Sample 17 out of 30 Sites)	80% (Sample 209)	Because of 2 years drought seasons and, gap filling not done due to non-availability of funds
	b) % Survival of Afforestation-I	11 sites sampled out of 32 sites	81.36%	-Do-
	c) % Survival of Afforestation-II	1 site sampled out of 2 sites	65.00%	-Do-
	d) % Survival of SDS	4 site Sampled out of 9 sites	78.75%	-Do-
	e) % Survival of SB-II	8 sites sampled out of 11 sites	78.75%	-Do-
2) 20-Point Programme	% Survival	Sites claimed on paper throughout the district	No physical verification possible	Records should now be maintained. Funding arrangements may also be explored.
3) Exposure Visits / training	a) % of Rangers trained	80	None	Members keenly awaiting orders. Process be initiated
	b) % Foresters	80	None	-Do-
	c) % of Forest Guards	80	None	-Do-
	c) % of WDT trained	80	None	-Do-

Selected Indicators of Success Criteria (Contd.)

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For National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board (NAEB), MoEF, GoI
EVALUATION OF SURVIVAL RATE OF AFFORESTATION / TREE PLANTING ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT
DURING 2002-03 IN BARMER DISTRICT (RAJASTHAN)

5) Nursery / Seedlings / Plant material	For 1,275 ha. Area, seedlings grown	36.300 lakhs (No.)	All distributed	Few nurseries be modernized with latest: jet-drip-mist – irrigation-systems. Good quality nursery bags are made available at all the nurseries.
6) Soil Testing facility	No facilities available	-	-	Refer suggested Technological measures at Para-8.05
7) Administrative Measures	-	-	-	Refer suggested Administrative measures at Para-8.05
8) Financial achievements	Targets and Mile stone	Rs. 756.91 Lakhs	100%	Satisfactory
9) Employment generation	Target Labor-material component	100 60:40	Local population not satisfied	More involvement of local population is suggested for future More emphasis required