

PART – I

SUMMARY OF FACTS ON WHICH THE PROPOSALS ARE BASED

1.1 The tract dealt with :-

1.1.1 Climate and Situation

This plan covers the entire demarcated Reserved and Protected forests of the Sahebganj Forest Division. The area of this division comes under the civil District of Sahebganj. The forests stretch from 23°45' to 25°15' North latitude and from 86°55' to 87°55' East longitude. The total area of the Sahebganj is 12,797.385 ha. The major part of these forests are situated within the "Damin-i-koh" (outskirts of the Hills) estate of the Government. The block lying outside the "Damin-i-koh" are ex-Zamindari forests now vested in Government and the Khasmahal forests.

1.1.2 Configuration of the ground

The entire forest division is an upland tract with a central block of hilly country extending from North to South. It consists of hills, plateaus, valleys and ravines. All the nalas including big rivers like gumani and the Bansoloi originated from the central ridge eventually terminates at the river Bansoloi which runs east to west forming the northern boundary of the biggest forest block "the old reserve", situated towards the southern limit of the "Damin-i-koh". In this wide group of hills all aspects are fairly well represented, but the general elevation diminishes towards the south. The hill slopes are generally moderate but at times gradient is very steep. These steep slopes are found mostly towards the North-West corner of the old reserve.

1.1.3 Topography

The forest area is mostly moderately undulated. The area is facing degradation at an accelerated rate mainly due to population explosion. Most important hill range of the division is Rajmahal hill which extend from North to South. The highest of the hills vary from 250 ft. to 1500 ft. Many isolated blank hills or with rooted wastes are met with. The valleys between

the ridges are narrow. The top most point of the Division is jokmari whose height is 1500 ft approximately.

1.1.4 Geology, Rock and Soil :-

A brief note on the geology and economic minerals of the Sahebganj Division is given below based on a note supplied by Shri K. C. Joshi, Senior Geologist. Geological Survey of India, Patna vide his letter no. 25-83/P/BC/(E)/Mic/Tech/72 dated 21st December, 1972.

The archean gneisses and the Gondwana group of rocks constitute the major portion of Santhal Parganas. The tentative sequence of rock types of the area is Given bellow:-

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Alluvium | Recent |
| Laterite | Tertiary |
| Mica Peridotite | |

The area represents a peneplan of a highly deformed and metamorphic archean terrain consisting of a group of parametamorphic gneisses intruded by a suite of syntectonic basic igneous rocks which have also been metamorphosed to the same grade as the country rocks. Subsequent localized intense potash metasomatism attended to the regional granilising process highly affected some of the rocks viz. norite and noriteic anorthosite leading to their hybridization, pegmatites, quality veins, small quantity stocks and discordant unmetamorphosed post archean dolerites occur as intrusive bodies within the gneisses. The parametamorphics include various types of granite gneisses as the dominant member together with sillimanite granite gneiss varying into khondalitic gneiss, amphibolites, felspathic quartzite and minor calc silicate rocks.

The suite of syntectonic basic igneous rocks are represented by the orthoamphibolites, metadolerite, divine metadolerite, hybridized norite and hybridized noritic anorthosite. The pegmatite and vein quartz rocks are in some cases bracciaded and crushed in nature showing development of epidote in the crushed pegmatites. It appears, therefore, that the small granite stocks, pegmatite and quartz veins represent the late to post tectonic intrusive in the area. The post archean dolerites are unmetamorphosed and occur in the form of long and

comparatively thin dyke discordantly cutting across some of the archean intrusive viz. pegmatite.

Gondwana group

Though both the lower and upper gondwana rocks are represented in the area of Gondwana system as a whole is very incomplete and is poorly represented. The lower gondwana are represented by the Talchirs and Barakar group of rocks. The Barakar rocks also contains some coal seams. Their outcrops are found as disconnected patches at several places and the rudaceous faces of the Talchirs is predominant in the area. The beds are conglomeratic and in some places highly gritty with angular fragmentary pebbles. Pebbles and boulders mostly anorthosites are of various sizes and shapes.

Lower Gondwana Rocks

Talachir rocks are exposed in the Barhamni river to the south of Balidih where it attains a total thickness of 181 feet. They are also found in the Bullaikandar river in the valley of Gumani near Dighi and Karmatand.

The outcrops of Barakar group are found in a number of places of which the following are re-important:-

- (i) Tangsuli
- (ii) Panchbyne
- (iii) Brahmani section
- (iv) Gumru
- (v) Near Gopikandar
- (vi) Near Nargani etc.

All these localities are situated to the west of Rajmahal hills but the outcrops are also met with to the East. The thickness of the Barakar is not much and in many places they pinch out almost to insignificant thickness.

The Dubrajpur stage and traps overlap the Barakar rocks in some places. At few places the Barakar roll over directly on the metamorphic, the boundary line not being very distinctly exposed. On the Southern Bank of the river Brahmini the Barakars are represented by a narrow margin of sandstone and shale upto the village Taldiha. Sandstones and shales of various coloured fine to medium grained. Shales are generally argillaceous, black and carbonaceous, sandy shales and blue shales are also found. In the bands of the carbonaceous shales sometimes stringers of coal are noticed. Leaf impressions are abundant in these shales.

The upper gondwana is represented by Dubrajpur sandstone and Rajmahal. The Dubrajpur stage is found to rest on Barakar but at few places the Dubrajpur stage is found to overlap Barakar and rest on the metamorphic, on the south of river Brahmini is faulted. The Dubrajpur rocks of this area are mostly of arenaceous facies, but at some laces a few thin layers of white shales also occur.

These rocks vary from coarse grit to fine sandstones. The grits generally have pinkish and brownish colour and contain angular fragments of quartz. Sandstones of white yellow and red brown types are generally met with. The Rajmahal Group which is represented by intertrappean and traps consists of volcanic rocks, mostly represented by basaltic lavas and constituted the widest portions of the Rajmahal hills and rest most unconformably on the underlying sandstones of different ages. These basic lavas resemble with those of Deccan traps.

Laterites

Laterites forming irregular patches are found at several places to the west of the Rajmahal hills from SURI northwards to the Ganges and on Mahuagarhi hills capping the basalt which often attains a thickness of 200 feet, in the area. They are mostly found in association with the basaltic rocks as cappings. These laterites are of tertiary age and might have been derived from the alteration of the traps. These laterite deposits are followed by alluvium which are of recent age.

Alluvium

Both older and younger alluvium are found in the area. The older alluvium consists of clay with debris of rocks and kankar.

Minerals

Economic minerals found in the area are coal, building stones, road metals, ornamental stones, ghotting lime etc.

Coal

The coal of Rajmahal region are all shaly and poor in quality. Along the western border the Rarakars contain several coal-fields which enumerated from north to south are as follows:-

- (i) The Hura Coalfield
- (ii) The Chuperbhitta coalfield
- (iii) The Pachvara coalfield
- (iv) The Brahmini coalfield

Road metals

Large quantities of good road metals can be obtained from the basaltic rocks which are found to afford a very durable road metal, building stones and grinding stones etc.

Ghooting Lime

Considerable amount of ghooting is present every where in the valleys which are collected by the local people and burnt to lime for domestic purposes.

1.1.5. Climate and Rainfall

The forests lie between latitude 23°45' and 25°15' with the usual three tropical seasons, namely, the hot, the rain and the cold, the humidity being very high during the rains and very low during the hot weather, typical of a Bihar Gangetic plain. The hot season begins

from the end of February and ends in middle of June. If the monsoon is late it may go up to the end of June. The temperature rises to a maximum of 63.90°C (115°F). Thunder storms usually occur in May or even in April causing a temporary relief in temperature. The monsoon usually breaks in the middle of June and continues until the end of September. Showers, very beneficial to paddy crop and locally called "Hathia" occur in October. The cold weather extends from about the beginning of November to February, during which period the days are pleasantly warm with temperature in open of about 96°F. The night are cool and often could with heavy falls of dew. The temperature drops to 2 to 5°C Fogs are not so common except in the deep valleys right inside the forests. They usually occur in December and January. Occurrence of frost is very rare. The details of temperature and rainfall are given in the appendix.

1.1.6 Water supply and irrigation

The general slope of the country is toward N-W and drains into Ganges. The Ganges touches this District a few miles west of Teliagarhi and flows eastwards as far as Sakarigali where it bends to the south-east. The most important river in the north of the District of the Gumani, which rises in Rajmahal hills in the extreme east of Godda Subdivision. At Burhait, it is joined by Morel river coming down from the North, and from this point the Gumani flows a short distance to the east and then turns sharply to the south.

The Baansoli rises at a hill called the Banspaharhill in the Godda subdivision and flows in the easterly direction through pachwara pass and meandering along the northern boundary past the Silingi and Kushkira bunglow leaves district near Maheshpur and flowing past Murarai station on the Eastern railway debauches in the Bhagirathi.

None of the above rivers completely dries up in the hot weather and they carry three to eight feet of water at the time of flood during the rains. The smaller nallahs dry upon the hot weather and during the rains discharge their water quickly into the bigger rivers.

Irrigation

A greater part of the district is hilly. The plains are also undulating with the result that whatever precipitation it receives is accumulated in low areas. To check the run-off hirs and bandhs are being made up by the local people. There are big rivers but due to lack of big dams

they are of little use as far as irrigation is concerned. Most of the wells of the district goes dry during Summer. The depth of wells varies from 20' to 45' mostly being above 30 feet.

1.1.7.1 Area Statement

The total area of Sahebganj Division lying within and outside damin is 12,797.385 ha. spread over two ranges as shown following :-

1.1.7.2 There is considerably confusion about the forest area of the division. The divisional register maintained in the office shows total forest area of the division as 18,828.33 ha. Basically the difference in area statement appears due to lack of records of the undemarcated forests of the division. Even Mr. Jha's plan mentions that nearly 20 villages of U.D.P.F. were covered before writing of the plan in Rajmahal and Pakur Damini range. Divisional Forest Officer, Dumka's letter no. 3944 dated 3-11-1971 addressed to the Conservator of Forests, Magadh Circle, Patna maintains that nearly 289 villages of Rajmahal Damini and 80 villages of Pakur Damini range covering 5023.37 ha and 1351.65 ha land respectively were to be demarcated.

The exact progress of this demarcation work needs to be ascertained and accordingly area statement of the division needs correction. Villagewise and plotwise detail can be obtained from Khatihan. And if still undemarcated or un-notified, steps should be taken to notify these P.F.s. Also records of rightly should be ascertained minutely from the khatihan part II and actions should be taken for giving forest produce to the genuine right holders.

1.1.7.3 State of boundaries

The exterior Boundary of all the reserved and the demarcated protected forests are well demarcated on the ground by means of 6.19 metres to 9.14 metres (20'-30') wide cleared lines and serially numbered woodenposts embedded in stairs of stone. The condition, of these pillars is tolerably good only in the interior. The condition, however, in the case of Houlton Blocks is despairing. The pillars are in good condition and at proper place only in such Blocks where work of redemarcation has been done recently. Otherwise, the condition of boundary pillars and the demarcation line is deplorable. On account of this, large tract of forests in these blocks have been encroachment upon by Kuraon cultivation even beyond the line limiting such

cultivation, that is in regions showing the entry “Kuraon Korete Parbe Na” in settlement records. In general, the condition of most of the pillars is bad. At places there is even no trace of pillars.

1.1.7.4 Houlton Blocks

The eight forest blocks in Pakur Damin, known as “Houlton Blocks” were demarcated and were constituted as demarcated protected forests suspending therein all the rights of private persons for a period of 30 years except as may be exercised under the provision of a Working Scheme (vide notification no. 9128-IIIF-287-R dated the 16th October 1929). This suspension of the rights expired in 1959.

1.1.7.5 Rights and Concessions

The Houlton Blocks are governed by a notification no. 9136-III-F-287-R, dated the 16th October 1928, suspending all rights in the blocks for a period of 30 years subject to provisions as to rights of the people in “the scheme to be drawn up here after”. A scheme was drawn up in 1929 which provided for the rights recognized by the Santhal Parganas Protected Forest-rules, described briefly:-

i) All cultivating raiyats of the Government Estate were permitted to remove, free of charge of their own bonafied use, trees of unreserved species and trees and timber of reserved species (see Appendix) on payment of half the ordinary schedule of rate from the annual coupes.

ii) They were permitted to take the minor forest produce also free of charge and also permitted to soil them at the authorized forest hats (see appendix iv).

iii) Young coupes one to five years old were closed to grazing.

1.1.8 Privilege

Except in each tract as may be specially closed by the forest officer and notified as such the villagers, resident within the forest reserve, have the privilege of grazing cattle,

fishing and hunting within it, subject to special rules forbidding kindling of fires and injury to trees already framed.

1.1.9 Customary rights

Except in such tracts as may be notified as closed by the forests officer, the inhabitants of the village within the forest shall enjoy the customary rights of:-

a) Using dead trees and timber of all kinds and all trees other than sal, salsal, sissoo, asan, fruit bearing trees and trees marked for preservation which are under two feet in girth measured at a height of 3 feet from the ground.

b) Using brushwood known as jhanti and the fruit leaves of forest and jungle trees.

c) Using stone, clay, soil or limetstone provided that the use of products mentioned above in (a), (b) and (c) is restricted to domestic purposes. Sale of these articles is prohibited.

In closing and notifying as closed any tract of forests reserve as described in the above record of privilege and the customary rights, the conservator of Forests shall leave the villagers of each village, for the unrestricted used of the above defined privileges and customary rights on area in size not less than twice the amount of the area ordinarily set apart for cultivation or under cultivation at the time of closure.

No right of privilege of way has been provided for. Further in 1894, on the recommendation of Mr. Dancey, the then conservator of forests, that the provisions of chapter 11 of the Indian Forest Act were unworkable in the "Old Reserve" owing to the existence of a number of villages in it and that the "old reserve" be declared protected Forest by the government vide notification no. 4844-F dated 2nd November, 1894, constituted all lands belonging to the Government in the district of santhal parganas, to be protected forests with the exception of the lands that were already settled.

At the time of Mc person settlement in 1898-1907 an interpretation was sought of government if the old Reserve was a protected Forest under Act VII of 1878. To this the government of Bengal in their letter no. 1404-T.R. dated the 4th July 1902 replied that the Old Reserve was a protected forest and that if any area is now settled with the cultivators or others, it will cease to be a protected forests. All the villages, including the villages inside the reserve, were in consequence settled according to the regular procedure and the record of rights tht was prepared then, gave the villagers the right to graze and to remove forest produce as permitted by the forest rules for the time being in force. Since then, the "Old Reserve" was treated as a demarcated P.F. till 1931-32. The villagers did not exercise their rights probably because they had no necessity to do son, there being plenty of forest excluded from demarcation in close proximity in their villages.

At the time of Davis's settlement of 1922-35, the old Reserve was treated as P.F. and settlements were carried out in all the villages inside the old Reserve. The record of rights which is in a printed standard form gives the villagers the rights to graze the cattle and to take forest produce from within their village boundaries.

All raiyats of the Damin-i-Koh Government estate having occupancy rights are entitled to the privileges accorded to raiyets by Regulation III of 1872 in the P.Fs of the district. All cultivating raiyats of the estate can remove free of charge trees of unreserved species for their own use from any area within their village boundaries. The grazing of cattle and the removal of fuel and fodder from the forests within their respective village boundaries are also permitted free of charge. Trees of reserved species (numbering in all 23) are to be sold to the villagers for their own domestic use from their village forests (which include all the P.Fs) at half the ordinary schedule of rates and the trees of the unreserved species, if taken from areas other than forest within their respective villages, are also to be supplied at half the ordinary schedule of rates. In addition to the above the privileges of selling Minor forest produce at forest hats specially prescribed for the purpose, is granted to all the raiyats of the estate. Paharia raiyats are specially privileged to remove trees of the unreserved species under 2' in girth from the limits of the villages in which they reside, for sale at such hats 9vide rule 6 of santhal parganas P.Fs rule). It may be noted, however, that these special rights of the paharias refer to the paharia villages settled under the Paharia record of rights. It is not intended that individual paharia who happens to live in santhal villages should have rights district from their Santhal and Diku civil villages.

Paharia rights

Regarding the rights of the Paharias, definite areas have been apart for the paharias to practice kuraon. They can remove trees and other produce from their areas and sell it free in forest hats levy being imposed on the purchasers of the produce.

Right holders have rights to lop any tree lop the cultivation of lac and feeding sild worms.

Bonafide cultivators of government ladn may graze free of charge, the cattle kept by them for their own household or agricultural requirements or any forest land within the limits of the village in which they reside. The grazing of all other cattle is prohibited except in areas set apart for them. No cattle or other animals may be grazed in area closed to grazing.

1.1.9.2 Concessions

In addition to the above rights the D.F.O. has the power to grant annual license to village astisans to remove fuel of unreserved species for the purpose of their trade on payment of prescribed fee enforced for the time being.

The requirement of local turis are met by imposing special condition in the sale list. Their requirements are met by the Bamboo coupe purchasers at rates prescribed by the forest Department.

In consultation with the Deputy commissioner grazing of cattle beyond the limits of their villages may be permitted.

1.1.9.3 Rights outside Damin areas

The usual rights of timber, firewood and grazing have been allowed. Rights are confined to the resident tenants. All the rights have been allowed as per khatihan Part II. A right holder can be allowed, subject to the availability of forest produce, to have the maximum quantity of timber and fuel as given below:-

- i) for house repairs - 4 cft.
- ii) for repair of cowshed - 2 cft.
- iii) for ploughs - 3 cft.
- iv) for fuel - 14 headloads

The rights are allowed subject to the following conditions :-

- (i) That in no circumstances shall goats and sheep be allowed to graze in any part of the forest.
- (ii) That those parts of the forests where plantations have been undertaken such areas will remain closed to grazing for 5 years.
- (iii) In no circumstances fire should be used in exercise of these rights.

To meet the demands of the right holders the coupes shall be laid out according to the provisions in part II of this plan one year in advance. The requirement of the rights holders will be the first charge on these coupes. The surplus only has to be auctioned by the state trading wing.

