Agroforestry Third stage

Forestry Department

**Social Forestry**

Social forestry means plantation of such tress which are useful for community development. The word ‘Social forestry’ was first time, used by Westoby in 1968. He defined as ‘Social forestry is a forestry which aims at producing flow of protection and recreational benefits for the community’’. According to the National commission on Agriculture (1976), social forestry denotes programmes for raising plants and trees for supply of fire wood, fodder and small timber for the community.

Social forestry is the practice of forestry for society, by the society, through the society, especially for fuel, fodder, fruits and small timber requirements of the nearby surroundings. It ensures economic and effective utilization of waste including deserts, aquatic situations such as sides of farm ponds, lakes, swamps, canal seepage area, railway and roadsides, saline and alkaline soils, ravine sites etc, through afforestation with the involvement of village/ rural communities. In the modern times, social forestry is considered as an important tool for rural development.

**Principles of Social Forestry**

**1- Principle of democracy:** Social forestry implies the culturing of trees by the people, for the people and of the people.

**2- Principle of forest area extension:** It aims to increase the forest area by rehabilitating wastelands while producing biomass both for industrial and local uses.

**3- Principle of poverty-eradication:** It is the single largest developmental strategy to eradicate poverty by providing the job.

**4- Principle of employment:** It is continuous process discouraging the migration of labour to the urban habitats.

**5- Principle of Govt. Based programme:** It is primarily a govt. Based programme. Sometimes social forestry is also tagged as ‘sick land for sick people’.

**Components of Social Forestry Programmes**

**1- Farm Forestry:** Objectives of encouraging farmers to plant and raise trees on their own plot of land through free or subsidised supply of seedlings. In dry areas, trees are grown around the farm.

**2- Rural Forestry:** For the benefits of Community as a whole through massive plantations along roadside and canal banks, around tanks and ponds and on the fallow and uncultivable lands. It is also called **Extension Forestry** as the results in extending forests beyond the existing boundaries.

**3- Urban Forestry:** Forestry in the urban areas i.e. on the useless land near govt. Buildings, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, recreation gardens etc, community woodlands are planted by particular communities themselves on land of their own or on that pooled by themselves and benefits of which are shared by them equally.

**Advantages of Social Forestry**

Apart from maintaining ecological balance, social forestry programme will: generate gainful employment for rural poor provide fodder or livestock provide raw material for cottage industry, animal husbandry, sericulture etc. Collection and purification of gum and wax and bee keeping industries can be developed through social forestry and release cow dung as manure make effective utilization of marginal and sub marginal lands improve productivity, stability, sustainability and equity of the agro-ecosystem.

**Promising multipurpose trees for dry lands:**

The multipurpose trees (MPTS) can be defined as the trees grown deliberately or kept and managed for preferably more than one intended use, usually economically motivated major products and or services in any multipurpose land use system, especially agroforestry system. Most of the tree species serve more than one purpose and the basic needs of timber, firewood, fodder, fruit, shade, soil amelioration and environment protection are met from the trees. Also, many trees possess the capability to fix atmospheric nitrogen through their microbial association.

**Multiple benefits of multipurpose tree species**

The trees having many uses are preferred to those with single use and many of the trees have the triple roles of protective, productive and economic benefits as given below:

**a. Protective or environmental benefits**

1. Moderation in micro/ macro climatic parameters

2. Check in soil erosion and surface run off

3. Build up soil fertility and water conservation

4. Wild life habitat

5. Pest and weed control

6. Rehabilitation of degraded lands

7. Protection of watershed

**b. Productive benefits**

1. Wood for timber, building material, pulp and paper

2. Bark for fuel, dyes, tannins and chemical extraction

3. Energy from firewood, charcoal, chemical extraction, resins, oils etc.

4. Leaf for thatches, fodder, silk, medicines, dyes and food

5. Root for fiber, fuel wood, dyes and chemical extraction

6. Other uses like paints and pharmaceuticals

**c. Socio economic benefits**

1. Employment generation

2. Income generation

3. Recreation and tourism

4. Risk reduction in dry land farming

5. Labour saving

6. Improvement in human and animal health

7. Rehabilitation of degraded lands