

Social Forestry

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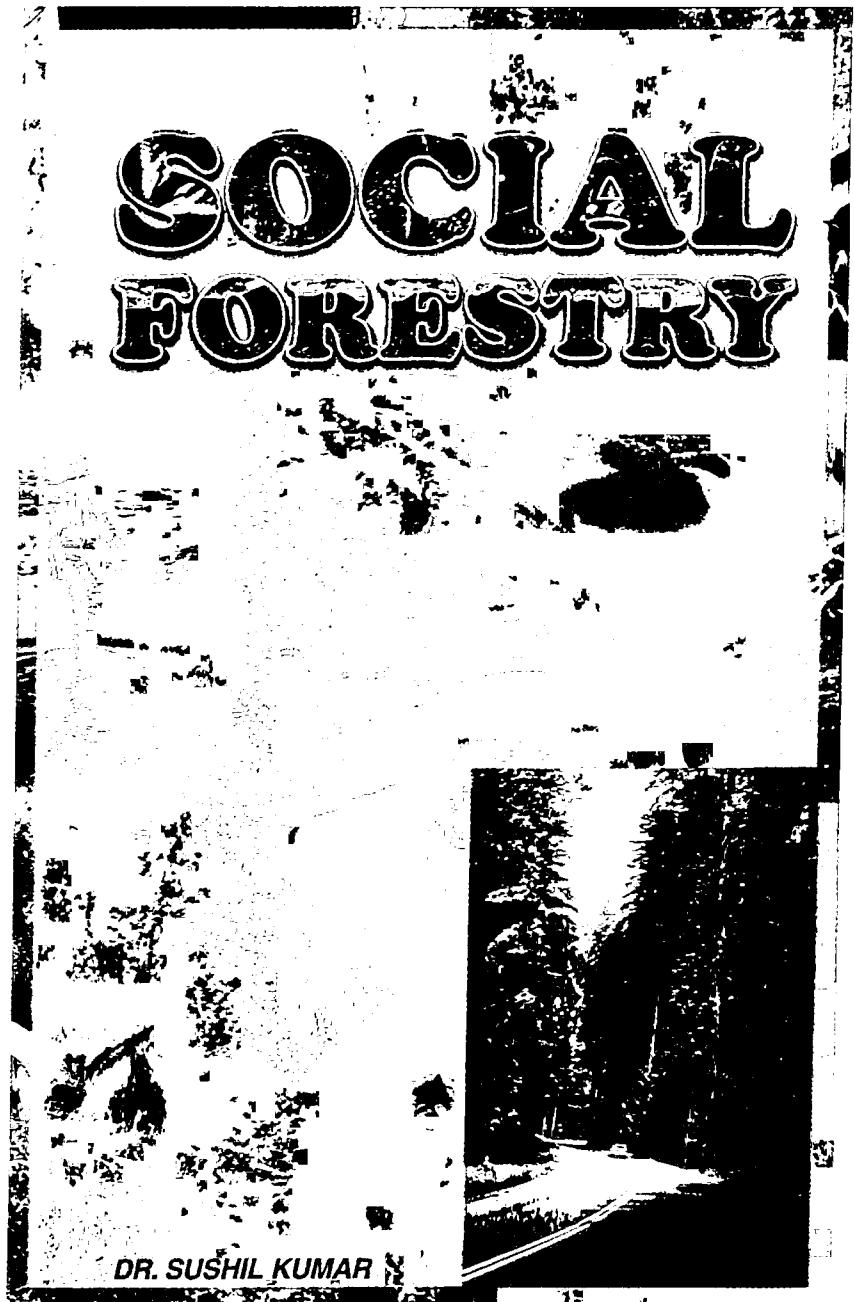
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The word 'forest' comes from Latin '*foris*' which means outside. It was used to mention all vegetation on cultivated and uncultivated lands. Forests are important for the life and property of man and nations. They provide food and shelter not only to human beings but for various animals. Besides human requirements it is a wealth and source of raw materials for industries. However, the forests are being used and exploited without any planned efforts and management. This has resulted in depletion of important raw materials for industries, and consequently unbalancing the natural ecology. Therefore, it has become essential to check such decline. And, for this purpose, the local people should come forward with commitment.

Since the past three decades people (in India as well as in the region) are becoming aware about the importance of forests through the activation of different institutions, and personalities like Mr. Sundar Lal Bahuguna, an environment activist and the leader of a famous 'Chipko' movement. Such movement substantially helped to increase the status of forests. It has also increased the level of knowledge of common people that for sustaining agriculture and maintaining the quality of environment, at least one third of the country's land must be under forest cover. This concept of awareness and understanding has helped government, NGOs, INGOs and other voluntary



organisations support the cause of environment protection. To protect the quality of environment, one of the major measures is the social forestry programme which was introduced some 15 years ago. Since then, this programme has been taken up seriously. Social forestry programme has two main objectives:

- 1) Use of public and common land to produce, in decentralised way, firewood, fodder and small timber for local population and manage soil and water conservation, and
- 2) To relieve pressure on existing forests needed for social and water conservation.

To support such objectives, the book "Social Forestry" by Dr. Sushil Kumar has come into existence, in which detail description of social forestry programme has been discussed.

The book has seven chapters including introduction, objective and research methodology, forest policy formulation, forest organization with reference to social forestry, forester's perceptions about implementation of social forestry project, people's perception about effectiveness of social forestry project; and summary, conclusion and suggestions respectively.

The first chapter "introduction" provides to reader about the historical accounts, concept, need of study, literature review, objective and strategies, people's participation and benefits to the people.

The second chapter "Objective and research methodology" encompasses the objectives, hypothesis, methodology, sampling technique, tools like questionnaire and interviews, and data analysis.

The third chapter "Forest policy formulation and planning process with reference to social forestry" offers the international scenario and national forest policies at different fiscal year. Special emphasis has been given for Himanchal Pradesh about the

development of forest policies, natural vegetation, role of forests in rural economy, national social forestry project, VDCs and integrated resource management.

The fourth chapter "Forest organization with reference to social forestry in Himanchal Pradesh" describes about the forest organization, social forestry circles, and achievements under national social forestry project.

The fifth chapter "Forester's perception about implementation of social forestry project" constitutes foresters' profile, their involvement in social forestry project, perception about people's participation and importance of social forestry, and foresters' perception about monitoring and evaluation.

The sixth chapter "Peoples' perception about effectiveness of social forestry project" includes people's (respondents) profile i.e. their education and education and economic status, awareness, participation in social forestry project, perception about foresters' involvement, and impact of social forestry project.

The seventh chapter "Summary, conclusion and suggestions" illustrates about the objective, hypothesis, methodology, analysis and interpretation, testing of hypothesis, conclusions suggestions about

implementation and further research.

Besides these chapters, the book is included with list of tables, figures, list of abbreviations and 14 lucid photographs of different districts related to social forestry with illustrations. Relevant references are also included at the end of each chapter. These inclusions made the book more readable and attractive. The author has described the subject matters orderly and attractively with special emphasis on Himanchal Pradesh (HP). Emphasising only on HP could be considered as the limitation of the book. The book also provides the details on those subject matters through which the development of vegetation and forest can be accelerated.

Lastly, the author must be congratulated for his hard effort to shape the book in its present form. The publisher should also be thanked for its keen interest in publishing the book. It is commendable that the book should reach to students and teachers of forest science who are destined for the cause of developing forestry sector in this part of the world.

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