

13

POSITION PAPER
FOREST EDUCATION IN THE PUNJAB.

INTRODUCTION.

Both the professional (M.Sc. Forestry) course and technician (B.Sc. Forestry) Course, operate under the Director Forest Education who is responsible to the Director General at Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar which is under the administrative control of the Federal Government of Pakistan. Responsibility for training the technical field staff is vested in the provincial Forest Departments. Since M.Sc. Forestry (S.D.P.O.s) and B.Sc. Forestry (Forest Rangers) Courses are conducted at Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar and is the responsibility of the Federal Government, these will not be discussed here.

The training of the technical field staff consists of formal curricula offered in two forestry training schools operated by the Government of the Punjab at Ghoragali and Bahawalpur. The trainees who receive a 12 month course are passed out to posts as Foresters and those who receive a 6-month course are passed out to posts as Forest Guards.

PAST ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES.

The Punjab Forest School, Ghoragali was established in 1881 and has been operated continuously since then. Majority of the technical field staff that have formal training were passed out from Ghoragali-being the oldest forestry School in Pakistan.

Training started in Punjab Forest School in Bahawalpur 27 years ago (1959) and is being continued. These two Schools, till recently, have been training Foresters and Forest Guards for the other provinces also.

PRESENT STATUS.

1. Physical Plants: The schools are not in good condition. There are no audio-visual materials nor adequate equipment. The hostel blocks have no landscaping amenities, lawns or paved pathways. The rooms are spartan. Maintenance of the training facility is poor which is due to inadequate maintenance budget and lack of due attention to forestry schools.

ii. The Syllabi: The syllabi follow the classic line of forestry education: Silviculture and Forest Management, Utilisation, Engineering and Surveying, Botany, Soil Conservation, Range Management, Forest Accounts and Procedures, Forest Law, Forest Protection, Forest Mensuration, and First Aid and Hygiene. It is very hard to tell from the language of the syllabus exactly how much material- and in what depth- is covered in any one unit or module. Topics appropriate to social forestry are found only in one module of soil Conservation-cum-~~Water~~ Management unit for forests. In no unit of any of the syllabi for Forest Guards is there mention of the need to work with people in order to successfully manage forest resources.

iii. Staffs: Generally the Forest Officers are reluctant to be posted as Principals or Instructors in the Forest Schools with the result that either the posts remain vacant or they are filled with unwilling teaching staff.

NEED FOR TECHNICAL FIELD STAFF TRAINING:

There is a wrong prevailing view that once passed out of a six or twelve month training course no further training is required. This conclusion is translated into either no or very few students attending the Forest School Choragali and Behawalpur. With such a large capital investment lying idle, it would seem good public policy for the Department to seek out persons now on post that have received no formal training, bring them to the schools, and train them and to further use the facilities to transmit new knowledge and skills to the trained technical field staff by conducting short courses in the schools.

FUTURE STRATEGY.

Forestry, in common with most other sectors, has been strongly influenced in recent years by the impact of science and technology and the changing requirements of society, and there has been increasing concern as to the adequacy of traditional forestry education and training programmes to qualify professional and technical staff to meet the challenges ahead. Such concern has been expressed by the reorganization of curricula, adjustments in the scope and emphasis of degree and diploma courses and increasing the duration of courses. In

many cases the problem has been to create a meaningful programme and maintain high academic standards when there is a public unaware of the need for trained forestry personnel and limited resources to devote to forestry education. Within the means available decisions must be made as to the emphasis that should be given to professional, technical and vocational programmes, and what provision, if any, can be made for public education and extension.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. The duration of courses for Foresters and Forest Guards should be increased to two years and one year respectively.
- ii. The curricula of the Forester and the Forest Guard courses should be immediately reviewed with a view to revising them. The first objective would be the introduction of modules and units dealing with those elements important to farm forestry.
- iii. Reorganization of the curricula into modular formats would facilitate the introduction of new technical, policy, and administrative material to the existing technical field staff on a regular schedule.
- iv. Preparation of texts and other appropriate materials for use in instruction in forest resources development and utilization should be given more attention.
- v. Government should constitute a National or Provincial Advisory Committee on Forestry Education to maintain a measure of continuous national/provincial coordination between forestry education and training institutions. This committee will hold periodic consultation and assessment of educational problems on both national and regional bases.
- vi. There should be exchange of information especially on present curricula and on innovations intended to adapt education and training to forestry's changing needs.
- vii. Forestry education centres of all levels should include social and economic subjects.
- viii. Forest workers education and training requirements should be assessed and appropriate action implemented.

- ix. Courses in communication and public relations should be initiated by all forestry educational institutions.
- x. Evaluation of forestry education and training should receive increasing attention in every education and training centre.
- xi. Appropriate forest areas should be earmarked to facilitate the execution of practical field work.
- xii. Fellowships should be provided for forestry educators and instructors for study tours, specially arranged short-term courses and advanced training.
- viii. Greater availability and more effective use of modern educational equipment and materials including audio-visual aids in forestry education and training should be ensured; and increased attention be paid to training forestry teachers and students in these methods.
- xiv. Modern teaching techniques for forestry education and training should be developed and applied.
- xv. Forestry educational institutions should be improved physically and properly maintained.
- xvi. Well-qualified and willing staff should be posted for forestry education.
- xvii. Putting both the Forestry Schools under the administrative control of the Director Punjab Forestry Research Institute will be helpful in the overall improvement of the standard of forestry education and training.

MOHAMMAD HAFEEZ,
Director,