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exploit the forest commercially is baseless and motivated.

35. That with reference to statements made in para 49, the same are denied and disputed except the statement to the effect that the territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is one of the richest reservoirs of tropical timber in the South-East Asia. I say that the timber is harvested in these groups of islands by practising a time tested silvicultural system known as Andaman Canopy Lifting Shelter Wood System. Under this system, no clear felling is resorted to and only mature and over mature trees are selectively harvested and therefore, question of deforestation, which means to clear the land of forests, does not arise. Under this system only silviculturally available trees above 180 cm G.B.H (girth at breast height) in the case of hardwoods and 150 cm G.B.H for softwood are harvested by marking only small percentage of trees for felling retaining mother trees judiciously distributed to ensure availability of seeds for facilitating natural regeneration. All trees below 180 cm in girth in case of hardwoods and 150 cm in case of softwood are considered as advance growth and retained as part of the future crop. This apart, the trees which are on steep slopes and which are on the banks of streams and