

STRATIGRAPHIC POSITION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF *PROTOTAXOXYLON INTERTRAPPEUM* (PRAKASH & SRIVASTAVA) AND OTHER FOSSIL WOODS FROM MAN RIVER SECTION, DHAR DISTRICT, MADHYA PRADESH

Prakash and Srivastava (1959, 1961) recorded the occurrence of a gymnospermous wood, *Prototaxoxylon intertrappeum*, from near Sitapuri (22° 22' 11" : 75° 5' 24"), District Dhar, Madhya Pradesh. These authors were in doubt as regards the stratigraphic position of the bed from which this wood was collected. It was suggested to them by B. S. Tewari that the fossil wood might have come from Deccan Intertrappean beds exposed there. Tewari, as mentioned by Prakash and Srivastava," was to publish a paper giving his field observations about the area around Sitapuri, better known as Man River Section.

The basaltic lava flows immediately above the Bagh Bed in this district which is known to be intercalated with the intertrappean beds. Hence, the present author carefully searched for an Intertrappean, containing fossil woods, in the vicinity of Sitapuri but failed to recover any fossil wood.

It may be mentioned that the occurrence of pieces of fossil wood in this area has been known for quite sometime. However, earlier workers who noticed them were divided about the stratigraphic position of the sediment containing them.

Blanford (1869) observed that the pieces of fossil wood strewn all over the area are derived from a horizon much above the Bagh beds. However, he was in a dilemma regarding whether this horizon was the topmost member of the Bagh Bed or belonged to the Deccan Trap. Bose (1984) thought that the fossil woods were derived from the Coral-line Limestone, the topmost member of the Bagh beds. Rode (1935) had correctly judged the subtrappean position of the bed containing fossil woods, but he held it to be a flow characterized by fossil wood and breccia.

Roy Chowdhury and Sastri (1962) realized for the first time that the bed containing fossil wood is in reality a conglomerate belonging to the Lametas. It is evident that *Prototaxoxylon Intertrappeum* belongs to the Lameta Formation and not to any intertrappean. The specific epithet '*intertrappeum*' thus becomes a misnomer. It may be mentioned here that the anatomical features of this fossil wood do not show any affinity with any of the living or Tertiary woods. On the contrary, they resemble more to older woods (Prakash & Srivastava, 1959, 1961). This indicates that the Man Valley flora is definitely older than the well-known intertrappean flora from Mohgaonkalan, Mahurazari and other localities, and supports Lameta age.

The state of preservation of fossil woods from this horizon is far from satisfactory, rendering their identification extremely difficult. This fact has also noticed by earlier workers (Bose, 1984; Rode, 1935).

These fossil woods appeared to be dicotyledonous to Rode (1935). Roy Chowdhury and Sastri (1962). reported that specimens collected by them were identified by Jacob to be gymnospermous. A large number of fossil woods in the collection of the department of the present author is also gymnospermous, indicating scarcity of angiosperms. This is very significant *vis-a-vis* large proportion of angiosperms in the Deccan Intertrappean

flora from localities like Mohgaonkalan, Saugor, Nawagaon, etc. and leads to following two conclusions.

1. Any possibility of the fossil wood horizon being infratrappean in position but intertrappean in age is ruled out.

2. Lametas were deposited before angiosperms became the major constituent of the regional flora in this region.

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