

INFORM

Information e-bulletin on Participatory Forest Management



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WE WOULD like to thank you all for the encouraging response to the first issue of our newsletter. It will be our constant endeavour to meet your expectations and facilitate networking and sharing of knowledge and information in the area of participatory forest management.

We begin this issue by paying homage to one of the pioneers of participatory forest management, Shri P.R. Mishra (“Mishraji” to his numerous admirers) who passed away on March 25, 2001.

The past few months have witnessed a nation-wide debate over the implementation of JFM in places such as Dewas and Harda in Madhya Pradesh. In both places, independent and NGO observers have alleged that the actual implementation of JFM is far from satisfactory, and that JFM has failed to address the fundamental questions of equity and corruption. It will, however, be pertinent to mention here that many consider Harda as one of the best examples of successful JFM in India.

While healthy debate is essential to the vibrant functioning of any democratic set-up, such a debate must ultimately lead to concrete action proposals to address any lacunae identified. Simply pointing to problems without offering solutions may actually do more harm than good. It will benefit both the country and the concept when everyone involved in the participatory forestry process tries to collectively address problems.

Another important challenge facing the JFM programme is its links with the Panchayati Raj institution. Various issues involved are discussed in a short article in this issue. In our Special Article section, we attempt to assess the role of participatory forest management in international treaties and conventions. In this context, we present a critical study on India’s commitments in these treaties, and assess the attempts taken so far to fulfil these commitments.

We look forward to your views and ideas on the discussions raised in this issue of INFORM.

Sushil Saigal, Co-ordinator, RUPFOR
Mamta Borgoyary, Editor, INFORM

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HEADLINES

(Current news on participatory forestry)

- **Brain Behind "Sukhomajri model" Passes Away**

Mr P.R. Mishra, one of the tallest visionaries of people-centred, decentralised and democratic natural resource management of the 20th century, passed away on March 25, 2001. The proponent of the famous "Sukhomarji model" of participatory forest management, he was the first to coin the now much used term of "social fencing". Founder of the *Chakriya Vikas Pranali*, in Jharkhand, Mishraji, till his last breath, dreamt and fought for promoting self-sustaining cyclical development, initiated, decided and controlled by democratic village institutions. Please see "Profile" for our homage to "Mishraji".

- **Area Under JFM Crosses 15% Mark**

The latest figures compiled by MoEF indicate that over 15 % of the country's forest lands are already under JFM. Nearly 45,000 Forest Protection Committees across 23 states are diligently carrying out the task of protecting and regenerating India's forests. **For more details please see Box A.**

- **Public Hearing on Forest Rights Held in Harda**

A Public Hearing was organised by *Shramik Adivasi Sanghatan* at forest village Indpura, Timurni Tahsil, District Harda (Madhya Pradesh), on May 26, 2001, to provide a platform to local villagers to voice their problems concerning access to forests and other forest related issues. About 400 villagers from 12 villages in Harda Forest Division attended the meeting. In addition, some villagers from Betul District, and representatives of different organisations also attended the meeting. The panel for the public hearing comprised Ms Madhu Sarin, Dr Nandini Sundar and Mr Rakesh Diwan.

To access copies of the report on public hearing go to site www.envirodebate.org

- **Forest Firing on Tribals in Dewas Creates Furore**

The recent incident of forest firing in Dewas (Madhya Pradesh) in the month of April, where four villagers were reportedly killed has created furore all over the country. The Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) sent a fact-finding mission that has submitted a report critical of the functioning of the local administration. Another fact-finding and support team went from Rajasthan to look into the matter, and a commentary on the incident was published in the *Economic and Political Weekly*

For copies of "People's Union for Democratic Rights: Report on Forest Firings in Dewas", write to the Editor, INFORM, E-mail: mamta@winrock.ernet.in

For report of the Rajasthan team, see "A Tale of Continued Oppression: Government Atrocities on Tribals in Dewas" by Srilata Swaminathan, *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 5-11, 2001

- **NBSAP Mid-term Review Held**

A three-day workshop from June 13 to 15, 2001, was held in New Delhi to carry out the mid-term review of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

The NBSAP process began in late 1999, as a MoEF project, funded by the UNDP. The broad purpose of the NBSAP process is to produce an implementable action plan that would ensure conservation of India's biodiversity, sustainable use of its biological resources, and equity and democracy in decisions regarding access to such resources and the benefits accruing from them. For more details contact: Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh, c/o Dr Vibha Ahuja, Biotech Consortium India Ltd, Kundan House, Fourth Floor, 16, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019, Tel: 91-11-6415314, Fax: 6219541, E-mail: bcil@nda.vsnl.net.in, Website: www.sdnv.delhi.nic.in/nbsap

- **HP Launches New Scheme on Participatory Forest Management**

The *Sanjhi Van Yojana*, launched by the Government of Himachal Pradesh in 1994 in the districts of Kullu and Mandi and later replicated throughout the state, has now been discontinued and replaced by a new scheme called *Apna Van, Apna Dhan*. Under this scheme, community groups will be provided tree seedlings of their choice free of cost, which they will plant on degraded forests and barren wastelands. They will also be provided support for labour involved in digging pits for the plantation. The community groups will have all usufruct rights in the plantation areas till such time as the trees reach maturity. The right to harvest timber from these plantation areas will also rest with these community groups and the income generated shall be shared between the groups and local *panchayat* in a 3:1 ratio.

- **Workshop on People's Right and Joint Forest Management, June 11-12, 2001, BIRDY, Hyderabad**

Samata, an NGO working in the scheduled area of Andhra Pradesh, and NGO networks in Hyderabad, organised a two-day workshop on "JFM and People's Rights". The summary recommendations of the workshop will be disseminated by RUPFOR once is available.

For further details contact: Samata, Plot 1249/A, Road No 62, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad - 500033, Andhra Pradesh, E-mail: samatha@satyam.net.in, Tel: 040-6505974, 3553391, Fax: 040-3542975

- **Digvijay Singh Stresses on Simplification of Forest Laws**

While speaking at the seminar on 'Ocean and Land Survey, Mineral Exploitation and Environment' organised by the Geological Survey of India in May in Bhopal, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mr Digvijay Singh, emphasised the need to bring about necessary amendments in the Forest (Conservation) Act and the Mining (Regulation) Act to combine conservation concerns with demands of livelihood.

For more details see "Forest laws need simplification", *The Hindu*, June 18, 2001, and "Digvijay for review of 1980 Forest Act", *The Hindu*, April 24, 2001.

- **MANTRA Concludes**

Man and Nature: Trust, Relationship and Action (MANTRA), a nation-wide programme on awareness generation, action and institutional networking for conservation of nature, which commenced last year concluded with functions held all over the country on June 5, 2001 (World Environment Day). The MANTRA programme was a joint collaboration of six state Forest Departments viz West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat and Maharashtra. IBRAD acted as national co-ordinator for MANTRA 2000 under the guidance of MoEF, Government of India. For more information write to: ibrad@giascl01.vsnl.net.in

- **Corporate Participation in the Joint Forest Management Programme in Tamil Nadu**

The Srinivasan Services Trust (SST), an organisation initiated by Sundaram Clayton and TVS-Suzuki, has been promoting community development programmes in Tamil Nadu. SST is endeavouring to embark on community development in a partnership mode where involvement of local people and linking with the government programmes would be prerequisites for all activities. Deeply concerned about widespread deforestation and forest degradation taking place in the Eastern Ghats, SST initiated intensive interventions to counter this process, by developing alternative livelihoods for the forest dependent communities. In 1999, SST decided to integrate its community development activities with the ongoing JFM programme in Tamil Nadu. It decided to adopt the villages where the Tamil Nadu Forest Department (TNFD) is implementing JFM, or the villages from where the TNFD is withdrawing following the completion of intervention as it would help sustain the activities already undertaken by the Forest Department. The Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi, is providing advisory and technical guidance to SST in undertaking JFM. Besides, TERI will help in documenting and disseminating the experiences to galvanize greater corporate sector participation in natural resource conservation and management.

Contributed by Ms Sumana Dutta, TERI, Darbari Seth Block, Habitat Center, New Delhi - 110003. E-mail: sdatta@teri.res.in

- **Major Changes in Nepal's Community Forestry Policy in the Offing**

The Forest (Second Amendments) Bill, 2001, will soon be placed in the Parliament of Nepal for approval, which will strip the autonomy of some 9,000 forest protecting communities known as Forest Users' Groups (FUGs) involved in the regeneration of more than 700,000 hectares of the country's forests. The proposed amendments to the 1993 Forest Act, which seceded government control over forests to FUGs, will not only limit the latter's control over forests but also bring back most of the community forests under the control of the Forest Department. Those familiar with Nepal forestry believe that the bill appears to be a "strategic legislation" to snatch control over the densely forested and highly valued *terai* (plain) forests from an aggressive community that wants to protect it from timber smugglers backed by politicians.

To read more on this issue go to www.cseindia.org/html/dte/dte20010415/dte_srep.htm

- **Panel to Review Thailand's Community Forestry Bill Criticized**

A recently appointed House *ad hoc* panel to scrutinise the Community Forest Bill has been criticised as too lopsided in favor of the "people-centered" viewpoint. The criticism is based on the fact that the majority of the panel members are those with similar ideas about community forests. There are no representatives from NGOs that think differently.

For more information visit site: www.bangkokpost.com/050601/050601_News12.html

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India's commitments to International Treaties on Sustainable Forest Management: A brief review from the perspective of Participatory Forest Management

(Contributed by Mamta Borgoyary)

The “post-Rio” period of 1992-1995 has been one of the most important phases in the history of environmental awareness and consciousness. It saw the emergence of events and activities that facilitated the extension and promotion of principals and issues that were initiated through the Forest Principles and Chapter 11 of Agenda 21: Combating Deforestation. The post-Rio period therefore saw the emergence of important international conventions and treaties on key issue related to forestry such as: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES), and the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA). The role of participatory forest management has been acknowledged in all these treaties. Recognising the importance of a holistic and rational approach to sustainable development, these treaties and conventions emphasize “incorporating participatory management techniques” as one of the most important and essential tools of management.

India has been a party to all significant international agreements that aim at promoting sustainable forestry. Table 1 below outlines the main treaties in the area of forestry (and related themes), to which India is a significant party.

Table1: India's International Agreements on Forestry and Related Themes

<i>Agreement in</i>	<i>Signed in</i>	<i>Title</i>
August 1939	August 1939	Convention related to the preservation of fauna and flora in their natural state
March 1988	May 1973	Agreed measures for the conservation of Antarctic fauna and flora
October 1976	July 1974	Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora
February 1986	February 1986	International tropical timber agreement
April 1987	April 1987	Amendment to the convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (art XI and art XX1)
March 1994	June 1992	Framework convention on climate change
May 1994	June 1992	Convention on biological diversity
January 1997	September 1996	International tropical timber agreement
December 1996	October 1994	International convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious droughts and desertification

India's policies and programmes in the area of forestry, particularly over the last decade, have been more or less in consonance with the Forest Principles adopted in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In fact, programmes and policies promoting sustainable forest management was initiated in India much in advance of the Rio Conference. The Indian Forest Act 1927 mentions a two-pronged strategy to increase forest cover, (1) to improve the canopy cover in the forest land, and (2) to undertake afforestation on non-forest and degraded land. The five-year plans in India promoted programmes and policies that aimed at controlling soil erosion, moderation of floods, recharging of ground water, etc. Recognizing the importance of conservation, management and sustainable development of forests, the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board (NAEB) was created for promoting afforestation, tree planting, ecological restoration, and Eco-development, with special focus on regeneration of degraded areas.

However, till then, the main emphasis of all policy development in the forestry sector was in general commercial. It was in 1988, given the increasing deforestation and simultaneous increase in demands on forests and the failure of conventional policies to improve matters, that the policy makers realized the need to change to people-oriented strategies for successful forest management. Therefore, the National Forest Policy was revised in 1988 to give top priority to conservation of forests and biodiversity and environmental stability, and also to ensure the livelihood security of tribals and others living in and around the forests. Moreover, the national goal of having one-third of the country's land under forests or tree cover was also advocated through the revised policy of 1988. The revised policy is also considered to be a milestone in introducing the concept of participatory forest management in India. The government's commitment to the management of forests through the participatory process is reflected in the active involvement of tribal and village communities and voluntary agencies.

Over the last two years, more than 13 percent of the country's forestland have already been brought under JFM. Increasing efforts are being made to consolidate and strengthen the programme further. The JFM programme has now been widely accepted in 26 states of the country, and as per MoEF, there are currently 44,943 JFM committees managing 1,16,29,538 ha of forests (as on April 2001). See Box A for the recent status of JFM in India.

Though the advantages of participatory management introduced so far cannot be undermined, there are emerging problems of decentralized management like equitable distribution, benefit sharing, gender issues, etc, which must be tackled. Attempts have been made though, with the Government of India issuing detailed guidelines to the state governments in 1991 to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the rural people dependent on forests for their livelihood and sustenance.

Consequent to the follow up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its subsequent forums, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) recommended the launch of the National Forestry Action Programme (NFAP) globally. Accordingly, NFAP-India was launched in 1993 and the document was published in 1999 by MoEF.

NFAP-India is a comprehensive strategy and action plan of 20 years. It has been formulated for sustained development of forests in conformity with the provisions of the National Forest

Policy 1988, to address major issues of the forestry sector. The main aim of this policy document is to maintain environmental stability and ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium, which are vital for sustenance of all life forms. The new policy gives priority to the conservation of forests and biodiversity, and the objective of direct economic benefit from forest has been subordinated to this principal aim.

Two relevant activities proposed by the NFAP-India document to foster sustainable forest management are (1) promoting people's participation for forestry development, and (2) improved forest policy and legislation. The action plan defines people's participation as a "socio-political concept related essentially to rural development". The Action Proposal on Forest Policy and Legislation suggests three imperatives for a successful forest policy: sustainability, efficiency and people's participation. The document states that with the long-term goal of enhancing the contribution of the forestry sector to the country's ecology and environment, the Forest Policy has to be holistic in nature, taking into consideration the multiple functions and uses of forests as well as the potential for development that sustainable forest management can offer.

As per the commitments made by signing the CBD, MoEF has launched a project on preparing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, with the help of Kalpavriksh (an NGO) as the technical policy core group with the Biodiversity Consortium Ltd as the administrative agency.

Besides bringing about policy changes, the government has also showed its commitments towards participatory management by bringing about changes in its own functionaries. In August 1998, MoEF extended the scope of work of the Forest Fire Division within the Ministry and renamed it the Forest Protection Division. Simultaneously, a separate JFM Monitoring Cell was created within this Division to monitor the impact of the JFM programme in the country. A 28-member JFM network representing different stakeholder groups such as MoEF, State Forest Departments, national NGOs, grassroots NGOs, donor agencies, research organizations and training institutions will advise various agencies engaged in JFM activities and help access constant feedback from stakeholders for more effective policy formulation. In February 2000, MoEF issued a fresh set of guidelines for JFM implementation, based on the experiences of the last decade. These guidelines are currently under review and will be finalized soon. The government has also undertaken major capacity building, training and awareness generation programmes on a wide scale all over the country on sustainable forestry with participation of local communities and NGOs.

Conclusions

At the policy level, it seems evident that Indian policy makers have tried to imbibe the spirit of the international commitments in the forest sector reforms that have taken place. However, the implementation status of these policy documents is very poor. For example, though India has a National Forestry Action Plan, which details not only the national level investments, programmes and policies, but also includes concrete state level action plans, none of these have been

actually implemented in any of the state. In fact, even at the national level, none of the action plans have as yet been actually implemented. This document has remained more as an academic referral than a base document for action plans. Though massive hard work and investments have gone into the making of this document, after two years of the

publication of the document, serious questions are being raised on the feasibility aspects of the action plan. In this context, it is heartening to note that serious efforts are being made to make the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan more technically implementable by involving almost the entire nation.

Moreover, most of India's forest sector reforms cater to treating forests as local resources, that is, sector reforms do not reflect the emerging international consensus on treating forests as "global commons". Recent trends in international forest agreements and conventions reflect two emerging issues: one, security of global services and other benefits from forests, and second, cross border activities and conditions which affect the provision or access to forest goods and services, whether global, regional, national or local value. The government has to prioritise and identify purely global issues from those that are of local or national in nature. The Indian stand on issues such as carbon sinks, bio-prospecting, incentives, provision for creating markets for global forest services, etc, have to be agreed upon.

Box A

Progress of the Joint Forest Management Programme in India (As on April 30, 2001)

Sl No	State	No of JFM Committees	Area under JFM (ha)	Source
1	Andhra Pradesh	6,706	16,79,084.00	SFD*
2	Arunachal Pradesh	13	5,810.00	SFD
3	Assam	101	3,060.00	SFD
4/5	Bihar and Jharkhand	1,675	9,35,065.50	SFD
6	Gujarat	1,150	1,33,460.50	SFD
7	Himachal Pradesh	203	62,000.00	SFD
8	Haryana	351	60,744.42	SFD
9	Jammu & Kashmir	1,599	79,273.00	SFD
10	Karnataka	1,212	12,800.00	SFD
11	Kerala	21	4,000.00	SFD
12	Madhya Pradesh	9,203	41,25,837.00	SFD
13	Maharashtra	502	94,727.99	SFD
14	Manipur	35	1,400.00	SFD
15	Mizoram	129	12,740.00	SFD
16	Nagaland	55	627.00	SFD
17	Orissa	3,704	4,19,306.00	SFD
18	Punjab	89	38,991.42	SFD
19	Rajasthan	2,705	2,35,634.00	SFD
20	Sikkim	98	2,191.00	SFD
21	Tamil Nadu	799	2,24,389.00	SFD
22	Tripura	160	23,476.79	SFD
23	Uttar Pradesh	498	44,278.00	SFD
24	West Bengal	3,545	4,88,095.00	SFD
25	Uttaranchal	7,435	6,06,608.00	SFD
26	Chhatisgarh	2,955	23,35,940.00	SFD
	Total	4,4943	1,16,29,538.62	

* State Forest Department

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IN FOCUS

(Interesting/emerging issues on participatory forestry)

Forest Protection Committees and Panchayati Raj Institutions: In search of Linkages

(Contributed by Naveen Kapoor and Sushil Saigal)

(Interesting/emerging issues on participatory forestry)
Forest Protection Committees and Panchayati Raj Institutions: In search of Linkages (Contributed by Naveen Kapoor and Sushil Saigal)

Introduction

If the National Forest Policy (NFP), 1988, and subsequent circular on JFM created the space for community participation in management of forest resources, then the Constitution (Seventy-third) Amendment Act (73rd CAA), 1992, further widened it. These macro policy initiatives have introduced significant changes at the field level. While the JFM programme has resulted in the constitution of nearly 45,000 Village Forest Protection Committees (VFPCs), protecting 11.63 million ha of forest lands (15 percent of the country's forests), the 73rd CAA has helped in creation of over 2.34 lakh Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) being run by 2.92 million elected representatives.

Why Linkages

Both JFM and Panchayati Raj (PR) represent major steps towards decentralisation of power and control over resources. The JFM programme is an attempt to operationalise the National Forest Policy (NFP), which clearly states that local communities should be involved in achieving the forest management goals of the country (para 2.1) and they should be motivated to identify themselves with the protection and development of forests (para 4.3.4.2). It further states that the rights and concessions enjoyed by the forest dependent communities should be the first charge (emphasis added) on the forests (para 4.3.4.3).

Under JFM, VFPCs have been constituted all over the country, which generally develop their own micro-plans in consultation with the Forest Department staff and make arrangements for implementing them. They often make their own rules and regulations related to forest protection, and access control and sharing of benefits/costs among members. Thus, the JFM programme has helped in the decentralisation of decision making and control over forests – a critical natural resource on which rural people depend for their subsistence.

The 73rd CAA also aims to promote empowerment at the grassroots level by establishing PRIs as democratically elected institutions of local self-government. Article 243G of the Constitution, which forms the crux of this amendment, entrusts responsibility upon state governments to devolve such powers and authorities upon PRIs to enable them to function as institutions of local self-government with respect to:

- (a) preparation of plans for economic development and social justice;
- (b) implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

In essence, the 73rd CAA aims at establishing *panchayats* as institutions of local self-government and *Gram Sabha* (general body) as the base of democracy. PRIs have been conceived to function not as mere implementing bodies of centrally determined development schemes but to be actively involved in the planning process at the local level.

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The overlap between these two institutions (VFPCs and PRIs) immediately becomes apparent on examining the areas common to the NFP and the 73rd CAA viz social and farm forestry; minor forest produce; fuel and fodder; welfare of the weaker sections, in particular, the SCs and

STs; and land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation. This strongly calls for making efforts for forging linkages between the two institutions.

However, though this overlap may provide an opportunity for synergy, it can also be a potential source of conflict if their individual roles are not clearly defined. While PRIs are constitutional bodies, VFPCs are usually registered with the Forest Department only and consequently have no firm legal status. The new JFM guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in February 2000 have stressed on providing legal identity to VFPCs by registering them as “Societies” under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. While the issue of legal identity of VFPCs is important, it should be examined whether it might be better to make the VFPC a committee of the *panchayat*. This will not only give VFPCs the required legal recognition but also solve the issue of coordination. This would automatically grant linkages to VFPCs with other committees of PRIs at all the three tiers (village, block and district) and thus help them in gaining greater access to decision making forums. Besides, the organic linkages between these two important institutions would further the bottom-up development process.

Establishing linkages between these two institutions will also help in developing village commons and *panchayat* lands in a relatively better manner and meeting subsistence needs of the rural populace. It also needs to be borne in mind that JFM is rarely successful if other pressing development issues at the community level are not addressed. Linkages between these two institutions will also strengthen the voices of the weaker sections of the society. *Panchayat* representatives are strong, first, because they are democratically elected; second, they have better reach both horizontally and vertically among the bureaucracy as compared to any other people's institution; and third, they have the support of other forums. It is needless to mention that these forums have a much wider say in shaping up the policies and for advocating their cause.

It must be remembered that at no point is it being advocated that PRIs replace VFPCs. It needs to be clearly understood that while *panchayats* are institutions of local self-government, VFPCs will have to function as one of their implementing organs.

Areas Needing Attention

While the need for linkages between VFPCs and PRIs is clearly established, several practical obstacles remain:

- Politicisation (and consequent ineffectiveness) of the VFPCs if they are linked to political bodies such as PRIs. This is a valid concern but actual field information regarding the functioning of both (especially in states, such as West Bengal, where *panchayats* are already playing an important role in JFM) needs to be gathered and analysed to examine the validity of this premise.
- Another concern is that while VFPCs usually cover one village, *panchayats* often have several villages under their jurisdiction. How these various VFPCs will get equal attention and importance by a *panchayat* needs to be considered.

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- The legal and social boundaries of forest use may not coincide with the *panchayat* boundaries and may lead to conflicts, which, however, can be minimised by keeping the

structure of the VFPC flexible and focusing on the ward rather than the *Gram Panchayat* level (this is being attempted in Himachal Pradesh).

- Building linkages between VFPCs and PRIs also calls for making enabling provisions in the related statutes, government orders, etc, to facilitate the process.
- It would also mean making efforts for capacity building of various actors and stakeholders involved. These may include, among others, the rural people, bureaucracy and NGOs. Efforts need to be made to enhance the social capital existing at the village level.
- Last, but not the least, is the recognition that PR also has issues of its own. Several areas demand attention for translating the mandate of the 73rd CAA into reality. These need to be solved simultaneously. One needs to be very clear that the turn-round which the 73rd CAA expects would not only require appreciable amount of resources but also a great deal of political will. But then, this does not mean that for want of solutions of these issues the exercise of building linkages between PRIs and VFPCs takes a back seat.

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PROFILE

(Profiles of organisations/institutions/individuals with innovative contributions to participatory forestry)

Homage to Shri P.R. Mishra: The architect of “Sukhomajri model”

(Contributed by Madhu Sarin)

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Mr P.R. Mishra (“Mishraji” for his large number of disciples) passed away on March 25, 2001. He was among the tallest visionaries of people-centered, decentralised and democratic natural resource management of the 20th century. Beginning with attempting technical solutions for heavy silting of Chandigarh’s Sukhna lake, he was quick to learn from Sukhomajri villagers that the problem and solution for the lake’s degraded watershed lay in the village and not in the watershed. Unlike the continuing focus on promoting closure of forests to grazing as a desirable objective in its own right even under “participatory” watershed and JFM programmes, he recognized the moral responsibility of technologists of first devising better alternative livelihoods for Sukhomajri’s grazier Gujjars. He was the first to coin the now much used term “social fencing” and scoffed at broken stone walls and cut barbed wire fences meant to keep people out of forests as “walls of distrust” which could never be effective. “Naked people and naked hills – can one be clothed without clothing the other?” used to be his question to every new expert visiting Sukhomajri in the early years.

He understood that local people dependent on local resources are inherently the best guardians of those resources, provided they are genuinely empowered to manage them for enhancing their livelihood security. After his retirement in 1986, he continued his mission of abolishing

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poverty in Jharkhand's villages by developing his *Chakriya Vikas Pranali*. Simple and humble to the core, Mishraji thought and dreamt self-sustaining cyclical development controlled by democratic village institutions till his last breath.

Equitable distribution of water from earthen dams harvesting rainwater among all households was recognized early as critical for ensuring social fencing. The original Water Users' Association formed in the village was made fully **autonomous** (no forest guard or overseer as secretary or joint account holder – a continuing hallmark of Haryana's JFM programme). Within the first two or three years, the Water Users' Association was renamed as Hill Resource Management Society (HRMS) because everybody believed that NRM must be holistic and cannot be confined to resource segments artificially cut into different legal categories. Thus, HRMSs looked after water distribution, fish raising, horticulture promotion, tree and grass production from both private and common lands, and processing of local produce for value addition.

Given the ongoing debate and discussion on JFM generated by recent developments in Dewas and Harda, it is useful to re-visit the differences between his approach in Sukhomajri from the one developed in Arabari, which unfortunately became the basis of the JFM framework in most states.

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BOOK REVIEW

(Critical reviews of books relevant to participatory forestry)

A New Moral Economy For India's Forests?: Discourses on Community and Participation

By: Roger Jeffery and Nandini Sundar (eds)

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999; pp 304, Rs 425 (cloth) / Rs 265 (paperback).

(Shortened version of the review originally written by J. Bandyopadhyay and Bidisha Mallik, Centre for Development and Environment Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata, for the journal on Review of Development and Change)

In *A New Moral Economy for India's Forests?* editors Jeffery and Sundar present a fundamental change in the context of social and institutional dimensions of India's forests. The book contains 10 papers on various aspects of community involvement with forests and an introductory chapter by the editors on the emerging "moral economy" of forests.

While sequencing the contributions, the editors chose to begin with Guha (chapter 2). The chapter allows the reader an insight into the relationship of community and forests in India from early 18th century. In chapter 3, Sivaramakrishnan presents an important historical background of forests and their management in the district of Midnapore in West Bengal, while in chapter 4, Agarwal addresses the much referred to entity of "community" and its role in conservation. In chapter 5 Baviskar examines the case of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) located in the state of Himachal Pradesh, where an 'ecodevelopment' project is on. Savyasaachi in his paper (chapter 6) makes a detailed presentation of the people-forest relationship in the forested hills of Phulbani district in Orissa, where the Kuianka people live mainly by practising shifting cultivation.

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The last few chapters of this book trace the beliefs, confusions and complexities in JFM. In chapter 7 entitled "How many committees do I belong to?" Vasavada, Mishra and Bates describe how the institutional web in rural India accompanies the return of the phrase "community participation" in development programmes. Saxena and Sarin (chapter 8) discuss and evaluate the practice of JFM in their case study of the district of Uttara Kannada, in Karnataka. They point out the major areas where JFM needs to be strengthened and focussed. Writing on the forestry project in the same district, Correa (chapter 9) advocates gender equality. Women's studies having become another abused cliché, thanks to the scores of jargon-mongering "gender experts". The author demands the need to conduct more professional research on this crucial but neglected subject. In chapter 10, Locke makes a further analysis of the gender issue. He argues that in the light of the role played by women in the gathering of forest resources, they must be empowered and imputed in natural resource management. It recommends the provision of effective participation of women within the framework of community participation. Vira's arguments in chapter 11 focus on field level interface between the forest administration and community members. Vira suggests ways by which current practices can be improved to make the forest department more in tune with the community.

The theoretical and conceptual thread that binds all the diverse topics addressed in the individual chapters actually emanates from the introduction (chapter-1) by the editors. Such a conceptual integration is clearly lacking in official literature on forests. The editors accept the absence of ecological dimension in the book, which has its own importance. However, it is also unrealistic to expect multiple dimensions of forests and forestry in a single book. The editors make plain talking while addressing the question of regional networks of power and resource use, without which JFM would remain an "elusive and illusory" programme, merely a form of co-opting poor villagers into the "agendas of the powerful".

The book, on the whole, is a significant professional contribution on forest management in India, and for a change, has been written not by foresters but by assorted experts ranging from the Secretary of the Planning Commission to academicians to grassroots activists. This diversity is the strength of the book and extends credibility to its title. For the protagonists of mechanical application of JFM, the book raises several important questions that cannot be wished away.

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(List of recent articles, papers and journals in the area of participatory forestry)

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

- Wood, Henry., Mellissa Mc Daniel and Katherine Warner (Edited) 1995. Community development and conservation of forest biodiversity through community forestry. Proceedings of seminar, October 26 to 28, 1994, Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC) Report 12, Bangkok, Thailand.
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JOURNALS

Asia-Pacific Community Forestry Newsletter

A publication of the RECOFTC. For all other details contact, Michael Victor, email: omichael@ku.ac.th or visit the website www.recoftc.org

(List of participatory forestry related websites)

Institute/Organisation And website address	Brief note on the contents of the site
Biodiversity Conservation Network www.bcnet.org	The BCN site has a wealth of information on its projects, learning and challenges. One can also find more about the various products and services offered by the enterprises in the BCN. BCN's legacy of analytic research and on-the-ground project support lives on through a collection of publications now available through BSP and the BSP website, www.bsponline.org .
Forest Tree and People Program www-trees.slu.se	This site provides networking in the area of community forestry and hosts relevant reports, publications and the FTTP newsletter. Besides, it has recently initiated list serves to facilitate wider discussions on issues such as decentralisation and devolution, marketing and conflict resolution, and forest certification.
MekongInfo www.mekonginfo.org	An interactive system for sharing information and knowledge about participatory natural resource management (NRM) in the Lower Mekong Basin. In addition to over 2,000 documents (full-text and abstract) in the library, the site also provides a Contacts database of individuals, projects and organisations, news and announcements of events, relevant web links, a gallery of useful resource materials, a forum for online discussions, and a free web hosting service.
Forest Trend www.forest-trend.org	The website provides detailed information on the working of the organisation and its program areas. The site also provides links to other forest related research and academic institutions, government and multilateral agencies, NGOs, forest products industry, certified and wood alternative products, and indigenous and local communities.
Livelihoods www.livelihoods.org	Livelihoods preselects, synthesises and organises information relevant to DFID's work on sustainable livelihoods. It provides useful information as guidance sheets and distance learning program sections where successful case studies on sustainable livelihood are discussed.
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan www.sdnip.delhi.nic.in/nbsap	This web site provides information on all activities that have been initiated under the project on preparing a major guiding document for biodiversity conservation efforts in India which is being executed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), working in close coordination with the NGO Kalpavriksha and the Biotech Consortium (administrative body). The site also houses a monthly newsletter that provides routine information and updates on the activities undertaken so far.
Indev - India Development Information Network www.indev.org	indev is the British Council's initiative to address problems faced by professionals in accessing development information on India. An electronic gateway to development information, the site is a web database, a newsmagazine, a training centre, a web-hosting site, and a discussion forum. Other important features of the website are: electronic newspaper on development issues, e-mail digest, discussion forum, training for NGOs on Internet and web publishing, and web hosting facilities in its Internet server.
Madhya Pradesh Forest Department www.mpforestchief.com	This website provides useful information on all activities of the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department. It provides information on the status of forests in Madhya Pradesh and the type of forest management activities currently in practice in the state.
Conservation and Livelihoods Network www.clnindia.tripod.com	This site provides information on the activities of the Conservation and Livelihoods Network, which is being managed by the NGO Kalpavriksha.
DNRM www.panchayats.org	This site contains information on Panchayati Raj and Natural Resource Management. The site also houses an e-mail Discussion Group on decentralised natural resource management. To subscribe write to darm@panchayats.org

LOOKOUT!

(List of upcoming events, workshops, announcements, conferences and training courses)

CONFERENCES

September 25-28, 2001

Advancing Community Forestry: Innovations and Experiences. Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Contact:

Dr Somsak Sukwong

Executive Director

Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC)

Kasetsart University PO Box 1111 Bangkok 10903, Thailand

Tel: (662) 940-5700, Fax: (662) 561-4880

E-mail: ftcss@ku.ac.th

Website: www.recoftc.org/conference2001/welcome.html

January 8-11, 2002

An International Symposium on 'Sustaining Food Security and Managing Natural Resources in Southeast Asia: Challenges for the 21st Century'. Chiang Mai, Thailand

Contact:

Symposium Secretariat

Rainer Schwarzmeier

Institute of Agricultural Economics and Social Science in the Tropics and Subtropics

University of Hohenheim (490a) 70594 Stuttgart, Germany

tel: +49-(0) 711-459-3476, Fax: +49-(0) 711-459-2582

E-Mail: symp2002@uni-hohenheim.de

Website: www.uni-hohenheim.de/symposium2002

February 25-26, 2002

Working Forests in the Tropics: Conservation Through Sustainable Management.

Gainesville, Florida, USA.

Contact:

Dr Daniel J. Zarin

University of Florida

PO Box 110760, Gainesville, FL 32611-0760, USA

Tel: +1-352-846-1247, Fax: +1-352-846-1332

E-mail: zarin@ufl.edu

Website: www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/tropics/

September 29-October 3, 2002

Forests Sustaining Communities/Communities Sustaining Forests, CIF/IFC Annual General Meeting and Conference. North Bay, Ontario, Canada.

Contact:

Fred Pinto

E-mail: fred.pinto@mnr.gov.on.ca

Website: www.cif-ifc.org/algonquin/hamco.html

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TRAINING COURSES

August 6-22, 2001

Analysis and Design of Forest and Natural Resources Policies, The University for Peace (UPEACE), Costa Rica. Find detailed information about the course at:

www.upeace.org/academic/courses/policies01.htm

For more information about short courses and degree programme at UPEACE, please contact :

Dean of Academic Administration

University for Peace

Apdo. 138-6100

Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica

Tel: +506-205-9000, Fax: +506-249-1929

E-mail: acadmin@upeace.org

October 8-19, 2001

Facilitation Skills for Community Forestry

November 5-20, 2001

Managing Conflict in Forest Resource Management

For more details contact: www.recoftc.org/courses.html

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FEEDBACK

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We welcome you to send us relevant articles/news/events/announcements that you would like to disseminate widely. We are also in the process of starting a working paper series on community forestry; we invite you to send us interesting and innovative papers for consideration for publication under this series. Should you like to unsubscribe, kindly send an empty reply mail with "unsubscribe INFORM" as the subject of the email. You will automatically be removed from our mailing list.

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