

Inform

Information Bulletin on Participatory Forest Management
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Viewpoint

We are pleased to present the eighth issue of *Inform* to you. In the **Headlines** section we carry news of the release of the eighth biennial *State of Forest Report* published by the Forest Survey of India. According to this report, India's forest and tree cover is a healthy 23.03 per cent of the geographical area.

Considering that over 18 per cent of recorded forestland is officially termed to be under JFM, we explore in our **In Focus** section the pros and cons of commercial production from JFM forests.

There is a growing realisation of the importance of services being provided by forests, such as in carbon sequestration, landscape beauty, watershed protection, and biodiversity conservation. There is considerable discussion on issues related to Clean Development Mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the potential of carbon markets in forestry. In our **Profile** section, we describe activities being undertaken by the NATCOM Unit, which has been created to fulfil the country's commitments under UNFCCC.

In our **Special Article**, we focus on the progress of JFM in Gujarat, one of the pioneering states. We hope you will enjoy reading this issue.

We welcome your feedback for improving future issues of *Inform*.



Sushil Saigal
Coordinator - RUPFOR

Mamta Borgoyary
Editor - INFORM

RUPFOR is based at



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INDIA

Country's forest cover increases by six per cent

THE COUNTRY'S forest cover has increased by six per cent in the past two years – from 637,293 sq km to 675,538 sq km – taking the country closer to the goal of bringing 25 per cent of the geographical area under forest by 2007. The *State of Forest Report 2001*, prepared by the Forest Survey of India and released by Union Environment Minister T.R. Baalu, has assessed the forest cover and

tree cover to be about 757,010 sq km constituting 23.03 per cent of the country's geographical area. The report provides forest cover information on 589 of the 593 districts in India. Among the states, Madhya Pradesh has the maximum forest area of 77,265 sq km followed by Arunachal Pradesh (68,045 sq km) and Chhattisgarh (56,448 sq km).

Source: Forest Survey of India

JBIC support to the Punjab afforestation project (II)

THE ONGOING Punjab afforestation project will further receive ¥5,054 million as the second tranche of time-sliced loan assistance from the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). The project seeks to promote afforestation activities at the grassroots level to protect natural environment. The project is being implemented by the Department of Forests and Wildlife, Government of Punjab.

Source: Embassy of Japan

Rajasthan to get Japanese aid for forestry project

THE much awaited Japanese assistance for the forestry and biodiversity project in Rajasthan has finally materialised with the signing of a memorandum in Delhi in March 2003 between the concerned parties – the state government, the Centre, and the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

Source: The Hindu

Report on the secretive and exploitative nature of Minor Forest Produce market in India

A DOWN to Earth study reveals the secretive and exploitative nature of the MFP (Minor Forest Produce) market in India. India has 16,000 recorded plant species of which around 3,000 yield non-timber forest produce (NTFPs) categorized as

MFP). Nearly 500 million people living in and around forests in India depend on MFP for sustenance and as a supplement to their income. The study indicates that the people who roam the forests to collect MFP are the most neglected hub in

the web as they live in poorly connected villages close to the forest. The unorganized nature of the NTFP market further makes it unprofitable for NTFP collectors.

Source: Down to Earth, 28 February 2003

JFM Nodal Officers meeting held

RUPFOR organised the second JFM Nodal Officers meeting on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forests on April 29, 2003, in New Delhi. Detailed discussions were held on the status of JFM in the states. The concerns over

FDAs (Forest Development Agencies) were also discussed with representatives of NAEB (the National Afforestation and Eco-development Board).

For more details, write to rupfor@rupforindia.org

TN to amend Marine Regulation Act 1983

THE TAMIL Nadu government has proposed the amendment of the Tamil Nadu Marine Regulation Act 1983 to deal with the devastation that has been wreaked by large mechanised trawlers along the coast here. The proposed amendments would bring in regulations regarding the size of the fishing nets and

the dimensions of the holes apart from making turtle excluder devices (TEDS) mandatory for all deep sea fishing vessels. It will also prohibit the indiscriminate dumping of juvenile fish on the shore by the trawlers when they dispose off the day's catch.

Source: The New Indian Express

Commercial Production from Subsistence Forests: An Oxymoron?

(Summary of the paper written by Mamta Borgoyary and Sushil Saigal, and presented at the 9th Biennial Conference, IASCP, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, June, 17-21, 2002). Contributed by Mamta Borgoyary

INTRODUCTION

The Indian forestry sector has undergone many changes since the forest policy of 1988 and the economic liberalisation programme initiated in 1991. The 1988 policy reversed the earlier commercial orientation of forest management to conservation and meeting subsistence needs of forest-dependent communities.

Economic liberalisation brought in competition, forcing forest-based industries to meet their own raw material needs. But being unable to raise large-scale plantations on account of statutory land ceilings and partnership difficulties with individual farmers, the industry has to face raw material shortage. It is, therefore, demanding degraded forestlands on lease for raising plantations.

However, the Indian government's strategy is to regenerate degraded forests through the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme, under which the Forest Department (FD) and the village community enter into an agreement to jointly protect and manage forestland adjoining villages and share responsibilities and benefits. Over the past decade, JFM has spread to about 14 million hectares or over 18 per cent of forestland.

While JFM has generally improved forest condition, there are concerns regarding its long-term sustainability after initial support from externally assisted projects ends. There have been difficulties in marketing JFM produce resulting in loss of income for several JFM groups. Hence, for the programme to succeed, livelihood demands must be well addressed.

It has also been suggested that the

forest-based industry should be linked to JFM to ensure long-term sustainability. However, this might defeat the very purpose of JFM viz meeting subsistence needs of the community.

This article analyses the relevance, nature and scope of commercial production from JFM forests, the potential role of the industrial sector in terms of providing a market for JFM produce, and likely impacts on the existing forest structure and subsistence needs of the community. Experience in two states, Haryana and West Bengal, have been used.

The article is based on the findings of a study on "Potential of commercial production from forests under Joint Forest Management" by Arora *et al* (2001) and the book *New Foresters: Role of private enterprise in the Indian Forestry Sector* (2002), by Sushil Saigal.

DEMAND-SUPPLY GAP IN FOREST PRODUCTS

There is a huge gap between the demand and sustainable supply of various forest products in the country. The annual import bill of the forestry sector is severely taxing the government revenue. For example, the average demand for industrial wood in 1996 ranged between 50 and 65 million m³, which was met through supplies from government forests and non-forest sources such as farmlands and home-stead gardens. According to the Forest Survey of India, the sustainable annual cut of industrial wood from forests is only about 12 million m³. Another 14-15 million m³ can be sustainably harvested from private plantations. Thus, only 26-27 million m³ of industrial wood is available in the

country. Even assuming a demand for only 50 million m³, there is a shortfall of 23-24 million m³, which is largely being met from unrecorded removal from forests and plantations, and some through imports.

The import of forest products has increased sharply in recent years. For instance, the total import of industrial roundwood, which was 0.89 million m³ (or 7.2 per cent of the country's roundwood demand) in 1996, increased by nearly two-and-a-half-times to 2.1 million m³ in 1999, putting considerable burden on the country's foreign exchange reserves. In 1999, the total import bill for forest products was Rs 37.1 billion, of which industrial roundwood was Rs 9.3 billion (FAO 2001). Similar such gaps exist in pulpwood and bamboo.

This drain of precious resources can be effectively contained through efficient commercial production in JFM forests. Moreover, following economic liberalisation, Indian wood-based industries have started facing stiff competition from overseas. Therefore, if there is guaranteed supply from the domestic sector, the industries could risk increasing the scale of production to face the competition.

EXISTING COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION FROM JFM FORESTS

West Bengal and Haryana have witnessed the evolution of JFM from a mere experiment to a successful venture, soon replicated in rest of the country. In both these states, efforts at commercial production has been underway in the JFM forests, albeit in a small scale. But the existing potential is more. This is outlined below.

HARYANA

The main products extracted from forest areas under JFM include



While JFM has generally improved forest condition, there are concerns regarding its long-term sustainability after initial support from externally assisted projects ends.

bhabbar (*Eulaliopsis binata*) grass, fodder, and bamboo. Among these, *bhabbar* is the only commercial raw material from the JFM areas and used in the paper industry. It is an excellent material for pulp and also used by the local villagers to make ropes. A study done on the commercial aspect of *bhabbar* showed the following trends:

- Indicates a declining trend in yields, increasing costs of extraction and declining market prices, with no corresponding decline in lease price.
- Under the existing benefit sharing arrangements between the FD and HRMS, there is no short-run incentive for HRMS to continue protection efforts or increase yield.
- The growing canopy in the area is an important reason for the decline in the yield of *bhabbar*.
- A safeguard has been provided through the JFM notification of 1988

issued by the state to ensure that the commercial needs do not subsume the subsistence needs of the communities.

- The market demand for *bhabbar* has undergone several fluctuations due to the following developments:
 - Changes in the government's import and export policies, which adversely affected the domestic market for *bhabbar*.
 - Changes in technology in the associated industry (switchover to wood-based pulp manufacturing) created a total slump in the market for *bhabbar*, because, one, there were no alternative markets; second, being a perennial grass, *bhabbar* regenerates on its own.

WEST BENGAL

The main woody products from this state are poles, posts, clogging sleepers, fuelwood, pulpwood and

timber, while the major NTFPs include sal leaves, sal seeds, cashew nuts, *tendu* leaves, etc. Based on the studies conducted in this region, the following observations can be pointed out:

- Total area harvested (for woody produce) is less than one-fifth of the full potential of annual harvesting.
- There lies immense potential in these forests in meeting both subsistence and cash needs of the communities dependent on forests.
- NTFPs contribute about 22 per cent and 16 per cent of the income of the tribal and caste families, respectively. The potential earning from NTFPs from one hectare of regenerated sal forests over 10 years is about Rs 16,000.
- NTFPs from naturally regenerating forests usually yield more income to community members than mono-culture plantations.



There lies immense potential in JFM forests in meeting both subsistence and cash needs of the communities dependent on forests.

SWOT Analysis for Commercial Output from JFM Areas

STRENGTHS

- It will lead to increase in income of the communities. This will act as an incentive for the community and will result in better protection and utilisation of forests.
- There will be less dependence of the local communities on government funds for forest and village development.
- The revenue of the government will increase.
- There will be additional industrial raw material available thus decreasing the demand-supply gap in forest products.

WEAKNESSES

- The objective of income generation may subsume the primary objective of meeting subsistence needs from the forests. This could be detrimental for the forest-dependent communities.

- The sale of forest produce to meet commercial needs might bring in vested interests and further marginalise the poor and disadvantaged sections of society.

- The focus on commercially valuable species may lead to neglect of other species, adversely affecting the ecology of the area.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Supportive JFM resolutions that enable harvest of forest produce for meeting both subsistence and commercial needs.
- Availability of funds through externally assisted JFM projects to take up market feasibility studies and implement strategies to overcome the present marketing problems.
- Increasing NGO strength to involve them in awareness raising and protecting the rights and needs of the poor and other disadvantaged groups.

- Interest in the private sector to source some of their raw materials from JFM areas.

THREATS

- Change in FD policy or failure to keep the promises made to the communities may lead to regressive effects not only on the forest areas but also on the future relationship between the people and the FD.
- The success of the endeavour is largely dependent on the interest and capability of the FPC to handle forest management issues. The present low level of management capacity at the FPC level is a serious threat to the system.
- Poor skills and infrastructure in government to handle marketing issues.
- Competition from private sources as well as imports.

Source: *The New Foresters*, Saigal et al, 2002

- The benefits from NTFPs tend to flow disproportionately more to the low income families in general, and children and women in particular.
- Market-linked problems create obstacles in efficient use of resources.
- State level organisations like LAMPS have not been able to market the nationalised NTFPs.
- NTFPs are traded illegally through informal market channels, leading to exploitation of the primary collectors.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION ON FOREST PROTECTION COMMITTEES

While it is possible to use part of the produce for commercial sale and to enhance the income of the local community, there are concerns about linking commercial interests and the JFM programme. Some of these advantages and concerns are outlined under “SWOT Analysis for Commercial Output from JFM Areas” (box, page 4).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is growing concern over the decreasing forest cover and declining productivity from the forests in India. Simultaneously, the annual demand-supply gap in the forestry sector is also on the rise. As per MoEF estimates, an annual budget of Rs 52.85 billion is needed to fulfil the objective of improving forest cover, against the present availability of Rs 8.16 billion for the forestry and wildlife sectors.

Looking at the trend of government investments into the forestry sector, it is evident that this sector does not appear high on the funding priority list. The share of forestry in the Five-Year Plans has mostly been under 1 per cent of the total plan outlay. Though there have been significant contributions by external agencies towards the JFM programme *per se*, the sustainability of the programme is still being debated.

A review of most donor-supported programmes shows that the entire

institutional set-up breaks down especially due to lack of funds when the project ends. In this case, entering into commercial ventures will enable continuity and, therefore, ensure sustainability of the programme.

Moreover, such initiatives would most importantly be able to address the livelihood needs of the forest-dependent community, as well as help in reducing the dependence on external funds for the continuance of the institution.

However, to realise and sustain the potential meaningfully in the long run, the local community, especially the poor and forest-dependent groups, must be fully involved and be supportive of this venture. Besides, some specific strengthening at the policy level is required to ensure that this venture is not misutilised. The following recommendations are made to help in this direction:


- Meeting the subsistence needs of the forest-dependent community should remain the primary objective

of JFM forests. Only surplus production should be used for commercial needs.

- Detailed demand analysis is necessary before venturing into production. Special attention should be given on assessing the market credibility and effectiveness.

- Market infrastructure (like LAMPS, GCC, etc) needs to be further strengthened, and strong and sustainable marketing links established.

- Policies constraining commercial production from JFM areas should be reviewed. For instance, the ban on export of eucalyptus poles from West Bengal to other states should be revoked.

- State support in terms of Acts and legal notifications should be enacted to not only support commercial ventures but also to ensure that the commercial objective does not subsume the subsistence needs, and that the poor and forest-dependent communities are not further marginalised in this process. 



Meeting the subsistence needs of the forest-dependent community should remain the primary objective of JFM forests. Only surplus production should be used for commercial needs.

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Books and Articles	
Richards, M., J. Davies, and G. Yaron. (2003)	“Stakeholder incentives in participatory forest management: a manual for economic analysis.” ITDG Publishing Group, UK
Borrini-Feyerabend, G., T. Banuri, T. Farvar, K. Miller, A. Phillips, M. Dupar, and N. Bandenoch. (2002)	<i>Indigenous and local communities and protected areas: rethinking the relationship.</i> International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
World Rainforest Movement. (2002)	<i>Mangroves: local livelihoods vs corporate profits.</i> World Rainforest Management, Uruguay
Articles	
Sarin, M., Neera Singh, Nandini Sundar, Ranu K. Bhogal. (2003)	“Devolution as a threat to democratic decision-making in forestry?” Findings from three states in India. Working paper 197, ODI, UK
Kaushal, K. (2003)	“Incorporation of sustainable livelihood into the Tamil Nadu Afforestation project, India.” Tamil Nadu Forest Department, India

India's Initial National Communication (NATCOM)

Towards taking positive steps to combat climate change, various governments around the world adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. The mandate of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would mitigate human induced interference with the climate system. Central to the Convention is the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”, underlined by the notion of equity.

Parties to the Convention are enjoined to communicate the following information to the Secretariat of the Conference of Parties (COP):

- A national inventory of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removal by sinks of all GHGs not controlled by the Montreal protocol, to the extent its capacities permit, using comparable methodologies to be promoted and agreed upon by COP.
- A general description of steps taken or envisaged by a Party to implement the Convention.
- Any other information relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention and suitable for inclusion in its communication, including, if feasible, material relevant for calculation of global emission trends.

India is a Party to the UNFCCC. Towards fulfillment of its obligations pertaining to furnishing of information under this multilateral treaty, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), in November 2001, commenced various activities under the project “Enabling Activities for the Preparation of India’s Initial National Communication to UNFCCC”. Winrock International India (WII) is



facilitating this project for MoEF.

Given the guidelines for reporting laid down by UNFCCC (10/CP.2) for non-Annex1 countries, the activities that are being taken up in this project include:

- A description of the “National Circumstances” in terms of its climate, geography, population, socio-economic profiles, etc, on the basis of which India will address its needs and constraints arising from the perceived adverse impacts of climate change.
- Development of a comprehensive inventory for the base year 1994 and improvement of its reliability vis-à-vis earlier estimates. This would entail reducing uncertainties of GHG emission coefficients in some key source categories.
- Vulnerability and adaptation assessment for presentation of information on specific needs and concerns arising from the adverse impacts of climate change.
- Identification of national policies and programmes, including programmes leading towards sustainable development and implementation of the Convention.
- Identification of financial and

technological capacity needs and constraints for climate change research and communication of information to UNFCCC on a regular basis.

- Creation of a website for dissemination of relevant information and archival of reliable and comprehensive database for all the outputs produced.
- Capacity enhancement through training, thematic and awareness workshops.
- Preparation of a “Targeted Research Proposal” for developing a medium- to long-term action plan for climate change research in the country.

In pursuing these tasks, a broad-based participatory approach has been undertaken. About 95 institutions including different universities, government departments and their research institutes, autonomous institutes of repute, and NGOs engaged in multi-disciplinary activities all over the country have been involved.

Given the special national circumstances, India visualises this project as an opportunity to enrich and enhance its experience in responding to the likely adverse

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India visualizes this project as an opportunity to enrich and enhance its experience in responding to the likely adverse impacts of climate change.

impacts of climate change and improving the quality of future National Communications to UNFCCC.

While a number of activities encompassing different sectors are being provided under NATCOM, some of the forestry related activities are listed here.

CO₂ EMISSION/REMOVAL ESTIMATES FROM THE LULUCF SECTOR

The LULUCF sector contributes about 1.6±1Gt of carbon emission, accounting for about 20 per cent of global CO₂ emissions. Extensive forest inventory data has been used to estimate CO₂ emitted or removed from the LULUCF sector. Institutes, which have been involved in the estimates, are the Indian Institute of Science, the Forest Research Institute, and the Forest Survey of India. The land use changes and soil parameters that have been considered for making the estimates are:

- Changes in forest and other woody biomass stocks;
- Forest and grassland conversion;
- On-site and off-site burning of forests (for trace gas emissions);
- Abandonment of managed lands (carbon uptake);
- Change in soil carbon from mineral soils.

VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT OF THE FORESTRY SECTOR

The Vulnerability Assessment component of NATCOM has a multiprong approach. The work involves assimilation of existing research work, identification of vulnerable areas, and specific case studies. Details of studies being carried out by different research institutes are given below:

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, is synthesizing studies carried out to assess the vulnerability of eco-systems to climate change and the potential adaptation strategies suggested therein. It is making a preliminary assessment of impacts of climate change on forests in India, biodiversity, forest regeneration, biomass growth rates, forest production, and migration of species. IISc is also doing a case study to assess the vulnerability of the Western Ghats. IISc is making a preliminary assessment of forest conservation, management and afforestation practices in India, and developing adaptation strategies for combating the likely climate change.
- The Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) is focusing on impacts of climate change on vegetation structure and composition of wet evergreen and *shola* forest patches located across an altitude gradient



along the Western Ghats in Kerala. This involves phyto-sociological analysis of angiosperm flora of *shola* and wet evergreen forest patches at different heights with regard to the mean sea level vis-à-vis climate, soil and land use parameters.

- The Energy Research Institute (TERI) is making an assessment of vulnerability of tree species composition in the Uttaranchal region, which represents a high altitude ecosystem. This study involves examination of historic changes in tree composition vis-à-vis change in climate (precipitation and temperature), examination of the changes in vegetation composition vis-à-vis change and assessment of the impacts of these changes on the livelihood of local inhabitants.

- The National Institute of Oceanography is conducting a survey of mangroves along the coast of Kasargood district of Kerala and studying the distribution, composition, structure and area extent of mangroves. It is also doing an assessment of mangrove dependant *benthic* fauna and developing scenarios for the likely impacts of increased temperature and sea level rise in the future on mangrove ecosystem along this coast.

- The WildLife Institute of India is looking into the structural and functional traits of dominant species along a climatic gradient in the Garhwal Himalayas. It is also looking at the impacts of climate change on shift in the boundaries of forest formation, rate of change of biomass, functional productivity, and in nutritional dynamics.

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The Vulnerability Assessment component of NATCOM has a multiprong approach. The work involves assimilation of existing research work, identification of vulnerable areas, and specific case studies.



Approaches to Sustainable Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation, with Pivotal Role of Non-timber Forest Products

Authors: Dr M.P. Shiva & S.K. Verma

Published by: M S International Book Distributors, Dehradun

Price: Rs 1,750

Reviewed by C.P. Oberai, Former Director General of Forests, and Special Secretary to the Government of India

Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs) have an important role to play in the welfare society, where poverty alleviation, rural development, and nature conservation hold high priority. Most importantly, NTFPs play a pivotal role in biodiversity conservation.

The era of chemicals and synthetics is rapidly giving way to one of bio and organic products. NTFPs and their sustainable trade are no more confined to restricted political boundaries. Instead, they have assumed a regional and even international status, possessing the potential of providing direct/indirect employment to several million people. NTFPs help establish closer linkages and better networking among different countries.

Approaches to Sustainable Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation, with Pivotal Role of Non-timber Forest Products deals with the key issues concerning NTFPs. The eight chapters walk the reader through the growth, development, value addition, trade, and international status of NTFPs. At the national level, the book deals with NTFP policies and practices in the various states of India.

The role of NTFPs in biodiversity conservation and gene pool emerges strongly throughout the initial chapters, acting as a curtain raiser to the main theme. As interest in biodiversity conservation increases worldwide, NTFPs are proving as

facilitators in nature conservation. The new concept is not NTFP *or* timber, but NTFP *and* timber. NTFPs are shown to be a friend and benefactor of the poor, and an instrument of poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. Highlights of the international status of NTFPs in the book is not only educative for students of forestry, natural history and NTFP, but will also benefit policy-makers, senior executives, trade



entrepreneurs, and naturalists. The chapter concludes with an assessment of global NTFP resources.


Issues of NTFP collection rights, utilization and value addition are also discussed elaborately in the book. The concept of Joint Forest Management (JFM), under which the government solicits support of the local people, rural poor, and tribal communities for whom conservation is an essential part of the social ethos, is discussed in the second chapter. This chapter also contains information on NTFP-based industries and future prospects, current marketing practices in NTFPs,

and needed reforms that would have a salutary effect on the national and international trade in such products.

The concept of sustainable forest management vis-à-vis NTFPs is explained using the applicability of global sustainable approach to India and various criteria and indicators. Management practices in sustainable harvesting and trade/utilization of NTFPs, problems, and likely solutions are discussed, too. The book touches upon issues of bio-prospecting, biotechnology, and IPR, recommending appropriate agro-forestry models for different zones, creation of a reliable NTFP database, and GIS in the context of good extension and PR for granting the due place to NTFPs.

The authors bring their arguments to a close by suggesting a futuristic policy framework and initiatives at both the national and international level. The new millennium has high expectations from NTFP-oriented biodiversity, especially in the light of rapidly changing socio-economic scenario and value system. Forests, as a life support system, and sustenance for millions of rural poor, forest dwellers, and tribal communities, must be given their due

importance. The annexures that reflect the regional and international thinking on NTFPs enrich the book. The authors also cite recommendations made at important workshops and interactions, which provide an extremely useful update on some key issues regarding NTFPs.

The clear evidence of serious research and dedicated study, strengthened by rich field experience, gives the book the shape of a treatise on NTFPs, presented in a down-to-earth style. But this is not the end, as the book encourages further research on the subject. 

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The new concept is not NTFP *or* timber, but NTFP *and* timber. NTFPs are shown to be a friend and benefactor of the poor, and an instrument of poverty alleviation and socio-economic development.

Status of the JFM Programme in Gujarat State

Contributed by

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(Based on the study on "Biodiversity in commerce: an assessment of current knowledge on the biological sustainability of forest product extraction in West Bengal and proposed research strategies", prepared under Winrock International India's Small Grants project)

INTRODUCTION

About 9.9 per cent (19,393 sq km) of the total geographical area of Gujarat state (196,024 sq km) is under forests, of which one-third is degraded, while two-third forest area is under different degrees of vegetative cover as per the vegetation mapping by the Forest Survey of India (FSI). The forests are largely confined to the eastern hilly parts of the state, which support most of the (14.5%) tribal population of the state. This tract forms a significant part of the catchment of practically all major rivers and drainage systems in the state.

JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT IN GUJARAT

Involving people in forestry programmes is not new for the Gujarat Forest Department (GFD). In the past, GFD elicited people's participation in tree planting and NTFP harvesting through Forest Labour Cooperative Societies and social forestry programmes, drawing appreciation from across the country.

In response to the Centre's notification of 1990, asking all states to develop appropriate arrangements between people and the state Forest Department, progressive forest officials and leading NGOs initiated Joint Forest Management (JFM) in Gujarat. The state government issued formal orders on March 13, 1991, accepting JFM as a major policy behind managing degraded forests of the state. These orders have since undergone a few modifications to facilitate greater flexibility and participation from village institutions

(VIs). The salient features of JFM as institutionalized in Gujarat are given in box 1 below.

PRESENT STATUS OF JFM IN GUJARAT

The state has 4,732 villages, which have forest areas. Of this, an estimated 1,542 villages in six districts have the potential of initiating the JFM process.

The JFM programme in the state



Table 1: Cumulative progress of JFM

Up to (Year)	Villages Covered	Forest Area Under JFM (ha)
1998	541	69,194
1999	706	91,071
2000	1,021	121,409
2001	1,237	138,015
2002	1,340	175,083

Source: Progress Report on JFM in Gujarat, March 2002.

has continuously progressed. The 1998-2002 cumulative progress detailing the coverage of forestland and number of villages are shown in table 1.

JFM DISTRICTS IN GUJARAT

The districts where the JFM programme is being implemented over the last 12 years are shown on the map above. The experience has

Box 1: Salient Features of JFM in Gujarat

- State government JFM Resolution issued in 1991.
- Formation of a State Level Working Group (SLWG), represented by officials/NGOs and academic institutions, for policy level inputs.
- Formation of District Level Committees, represented by officials, NGOs and Village Level Organisations (VLOs), for solving operational problems and resolving local conflicts.
- Community participation at the village level.
- Implementation through a specially created VLO, the Gram Panchayat acting as a VLO in some cases.
- VLOs to be registered under the Societies Act.
- Minimum 60% of families from the village must join a VLO to make it eligible.
- Involvement of NGOs (wherever possible) for HRD support and organising VLOs.
- In the absence of NGOs, the role of HRD support to be played by GFD.
- No monetary benefit to be given to NGOs.



The Gujarat Forest Department has elicited people's participation in tree planting and NTFP harvesting through Forest Labour Cooperative Societies and Social Forestry Programmes.

Table 2: Division-wise Coverage of JFM Programme of the State

Forest Division	No of VFPCs Formed	No of Adhikar-patra Issued	No of VFPCs Registered	JFM Area Allotted	No of DLWG Meetings Held
Rajpipla (E)	138	138	25	10,165.00	3
Rajpipla (W)	153	96	11	12,525.00	3
Vyara	109	60	3	15,295.10	3
Valsad (N)	52	17	22	1,803.90	0
Valsad (S)	57	32	0	10,329.00	0
Baria	192	90	58	34,831.40	4
Godhra	121	91	35	20,808.75	13
Chhotaudepur	255	137	58	48,356.35	7
Sabarkantha (N)	96	96	3	8,592.31	12
Sabarkantha (S)	122	122	23	9,292.88	8
Banaskantha	35	35	0	2,548.08	6
Gandhinagar	10	10	10	536.20	4
Total	1,340	924	248	175,083.97	63

Source: Quarterly Progress Report on JFM in Gujarat State as on March 31, 2002.

RUPFOR

Since the initiation of JFM in the state, about 1,340 VLOs have been registered. Micro and village plans have been prepared in 924 villages. Training programmes on JFM have been organized in all JFM villages.

been overwhelming in the eastern tribal belt of the state, expanding into more districts than the six high-potential JFM areas. At present, 12 forest divisions are implementing JFM. The division-wise coverage of the JFM programme is given in table 2.

The GFD and a state level working group (SLWG) – consisting of top forest officials and representatives from leading NGOs – have, from time to time, given directions and valuable inputs towards enhancing JFM programmes in quality and coverage. The JFM processes have significantly drawn the attention and excitement not only of JFM partners, but also of various research, educational and management institutions.

RECENT INITIATIVES

The important initiatives of the GFD regarding the JFM programme are listed below:

- Expansion of JFM programme from two- to five-fold since 1999
- Inclusion of three new districts, Banaskantha, Gandhinagar and Kutch
- Emphasis on entry point programmes – funds mobilised from IFDP, TASP, WFP and DRDA

- People's share in thinning enhanced from 25 to 50 per cent
- District level working committees activated – meets bi-monthly, 63 meetings held
- Training inputs enhanced for staff and VIs
- Documentation and monitoring of JFM programmes
- Forest Development Agencies (FDAs) formed in four districts – Valsad, Vadodara, Panchmahal, and Narmada districts
- An independent JFM Cell starts functioning at the Gujarat Ecological Education and Research (GEER) Foundation

IMPACT OF JFM

The implementation of JFM in the state has led to a number of significant organizational impacts at the village level and on the state Forest Department. Since the initiation of JFM in the state, about 1,340 VLOs have been registered. Micro and village plans have been prepared in 924 villages. Training programmes on JFM have been organized in all JFM villages. At the district level, 63 meetings have been held since 1998.

NGOs have played an active role in promoting JFM in the state, helping in capacity building of both the Forest Department and village level institutions.

Three village committees (Pingot-1990, Babda-1995 and Balethi-1998) have been awarded the prestigious Indira Priyadarshini Award for successful JFM programmes.

JFM has also led to improvement in vegetation cover in the state. For example, 10 JFM villages in the Sabarkantha district studied using remote sensing data, reveal increase in dense forests in eight villages. Several such studies indicate improved vegetation in other parts of the state, where JFM has been implemented.

Improved vegetation cover has led to better groundwater recharging from rain water. Besides, soil and moisture conservation activities undertaken under the JFM projects further helped in the conservation activities. These areas are now considered ecologically upgraded measured by enhanced grassland productivity, other vegetation, and better natural regeneration.

The JFM programme has also sensitized the village community about damages from grazing and fire, which has motivated the villagers to protect the forest area and adopt stall-feeding as an alternative to grazing.

Economic benefits from the programme include increased production of fodder and firewood, availability of minor forest produce, and introduction of secondary economic activities such as dairy farming, vegetable selling, etc, in more than 20 per cent of the JFM villages.

EMERGING CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensuring regular and sustained yield of forest products to the community:** Introduce selection of

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LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONFERENCES AND TRAINING COURSES

CONFERENCE/WORKSHOPS

Congress with Innovation Fair: Sustainable Management in Action

September 4-6, 2003, University of Geneva, University Centre for Human Ecology and Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva. For details, see <www.ecolu-info.unige.ch/colloques/SMIA03>

TRAINING/COURSES

Masters of Applied Science Course with Social Science Emphasis

University of Sydney, Australia. For further information, refer to website <www.usyd.edu.au/envsci> or contact the Administrative Coordinator for Environmental

Science, Dr Craig Barnes at craiqb@mail.ussyd.edu.au

Novel Approaches of Integrative Science for the Future

2003 Competition Announcement of Ralf Yorque Memorial Prize for Conservation Ecology. Deadline for submissions is June 30, 2003. For details, see <www.consecol.org/submit/rysubmit.html>


Training Seminars on 'Forest Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)' and training course on 'Current Methods in Tropical Forestry'

For details, see <www.tfrg.co.uk>

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site-specific and appropriate combination of grasses, bamboos, tree crops (fruit and timber trees), etc, and the selection of appropriate silviculture.

■ **Integrated village development:** Re-route funds from various sectors for forestry as well as other development works for JFM villages through the Forest Department only.

■ **Improvement of individual community and forestry land for enhancing productivity:** Create minor irrigation facility and drinking water facility; and need-based planning at the regional as well as village level; develop JFM models for grassland (*Savannahs*); evolve appropriate agro-silvi-pastoral practices on private farmlands and backyards for product diversification and enhanced economic support. 

In-site

LIST OF PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY RELATED WEBSITES

www.profor.info

PROFOR is a multi-donor partnership that provides knowledge and capacity building to strengthen national forest programmes in the pursuit of sustainable forest management. Initially established in 1997 at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PROFOR relocated to the World Bank in 2002. Hosted at the World Bank, PROFOR is an independent programme, governed by a management board comprising international donors, UN agencies, partner organizations and country representatives. The website provides comprehensive information on PROFOR's activities.

www.livelihoods.org

This site is DFID's (the British Government's Department for International Development) learning platform for creating sustainable livelihoods (SL) to eliminate poverty. It offers access to a wide range of materials concerning sustainable livelihoods, such as case studies and project summaries, key documents, learning and training materials, an SL toolbox, organizational links and events, and a post-it board.

www.tfrg.co.uk

The Tropical Forest Resource Group (TFRG) is a voluntary association of institutions and organisations based in the UK that has a demonstrated capacity in tropical forestry research, project management and consultancy. The consortium was established in 1992 and exists to foster collaboration and to mobilise the resources of member organisations towards forestry research, management, and education. The website provides details on TFRG's activities.

FEEDBACK

We welcome you to send us relevant articles/news/events/announcements to disseminate widely.

For any further inquiries/suggestions, please contact:

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