

## FOREST LAWS AND POLICIES

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### INTRODUCTION :

Large scale deforestation has brought India on the brink of ecological collapse. Heavy damages caused by floods have become an order of the day. Scarcity of fuel/wood has reached an alarming proportion. There is a steep fall in the supply of essential forest produce. Forests are destroyed at an alarming rate.

On the other hand demand for forest produce has increased considerably. Consumption of paper is increasing in geometric proportion. Increased consumption of man-made fibres is resulting in a large scale destruction of trees for pulp. Ever-rising prices and growing scarcity of kerosene are compelling the rural and urban poor to use charcoal and wood as fuel. Cowdung is used as fuel and can no more be used as fertiliser.

How to bridge this everwidening gap between the decrease in supply and increase in demand for forest based products? The Government is trying to do so by initiating social forestry projects, restricting forest dwellers' rights over forest land and forest produce and raising para-military forces to protect forests and tightening its control. It can be easily realised that these measures have only a very limited chance of success. Forests can never be protected without the active support of forest dwellers which will come forth only when the forest dwellers have a stake in protecting forests. What we really need is a genuine social forest policy that increases people's participation in the development and conservation of forests. Forests can be and will be protected only by the people and they will do this only when they are protected for the people and not for augmenting Government revenue. It is necessary to take a brief review of

the forest policy and legislation from this point of view.

### Before British Rule :

Before the advent of the British Rule in India, there were customary restrictions on the uses of forests. Certain type of trees were regarded as sacred and never cut. Certain areas were regarded as 'Deveraya' (God's groves) and not a living leaf was allowed to be taken from these areas. Even today, we find such Devaraya's in natural condition though their condition is rapidly worsening<sup>1</sup>.

### British Rule :

British realised the commercial value of forests and for the first time tried to establish a rigid control over the uses of forests. A Memorandum providing guidelines restricting the forests dwellers' rights over forests was issued in August 1855 and was later modified in 1894. The guidelines advocated strict restrictions on people's rights over forests.

### Forest Act 1865 :

The first Act to give effect to rules for the management and preservation of forests was passed in 1865. The Act empowered the Government to declare any land covered with trees or brush-wood as Government forests and to make rules regarding the management of the same. The Act came into effect on May 1st, 1865.

### Indian Forest Act 1878 :

The Indian Forest Act of 1878 repealed the 1865 Act. It was more comprehensive than the earlier one. Forests were divided into (1) reserve forests (2) protected forests and (3) village forests. Several restrictions were put on the people's rights over forest land and produce in the protected and

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the reserved forests. Thus the 1878 Act continued and extended the Government policy of establishing control over forests. It also made several provisions for the imposition of duty on timber. This duty later became one of the major sources of Government revenue.

#### **National Forest Policy - 1884 :**

The British Government declared its forest policy by a resolution on the 19th October 1884. The Policy emphasised the need for State Control over forests and the need to exploit forests for the purposes of augmenting the State revenue. It paved the way for the regulation of rights and privileges of forest dwellers over forest land and produce.

#### **Indian Forest Act 1927 :**

b The Government of India enacted a very comprehensive Act in 1927 which contained all the major provisions of the earlier Act and the Amendments made thereto including those relating to the duty on timber. This Act is still in force, together with several amendments made by the State Governments.

#### **Main provisions in this Act are discussed below :-**

It is stated in the very beginning that, '(it is), an Act to consolidate the law relating to forests, the transit of forest produce and the duty leviable on timber and other forest produce.' Thus, there is a clear emphasis on revenue yielding aspect of forests.

Forests are divided into three categories viz. reserved forests, protected forests and village rests.

#### **Reserved Forests :**

The Government was given right to declare any forest land or wasteland which was the property of the Government as reserved forests. To constitute a reserve forest, the Government was to issue a notification and appoint a forest settlement officer who was to record and scrutinise the rights of persons over forest land and forest produce. The persons claiming any right was to appear before the forest settlement officer and get this claims recorded. Rights in respect of which no claim was made were to be extinguished. A provision was

made to appeal against the order of the Forest Settlement Officer by a petition in writing. After the procedure laid down was over, the forest was deemed to be a reserved forest. The rights acquired and granted by the Forest Settlement Officer could be alienated only by succession or by way of grant, sale, lease etc. only with the sanction of the Local Government. Timber or other forest produce obtained in exercise of such rights was to be sold or bartered only in a way as laid down in the Act and the rules.

#### **Protected Forests :**

The Government was given right to declare any forest land or wasteland which was the property of government and which was not included in reserved forests as Protected Forests. The Local Governments were authorised to record and admit or reject claims of rights of private persons over forest land and produce. The Government was authorised to declare any class of trees in a protected forest as reserved. It was also empowered to close a portion of such forest to private person for a term not exceeding twenty years. It could also prohibit quarrying of stones, burning of lime or charcoal, collection of forest produce and grazing. The Government was authorised to make rules regulating the cutting, sawing, conversion and removal of trees and timber and the collection, manufacture and removal of forest produce, to lay down charges for permission to cut trees and to collect and remove timber or other forest produce, the clearing and breaking of land for cultivation or other purposes. The cutting of grass and pasturing of cattle, hunting, shooting and fishing in protected forests.

#### **Forest Offences :**

Cutting of trees, grazing of cattle and many such acts in reserved and protected forests were declared as forest offences and were punishable with imprisonment for a term upto six months or with fine upto Rs. 500/- or with both.

#### **Village Forests :**

Local Governments were empowered to declare any land as Village Forest to be assigned to the village community. They were empowered to make rules regulating the management of Village Forests.

### Control Over Private Forests and Land :

The Governments were empowered to regulate or prohibit in any forest land or wasteland :

- a) the breaking up or clearing of land for cultivation
- b) the pasturing of cattle and
- c) the firing and clearing of vegetation for the specified purposes.

The purposes specified were :

- 1) protection against storms, winds, rolling stones, floods and avalanches.
- 2) preservation of soil on the ridges and slopes.
- 3) maintenance of water supply in springs, rivers and tanks.
- 4) protection of roads, bridges, railway and other lines of communication.
- 5) the preservation of public health.

The Local Governments were empowered to assume the management of Private forests where the regulation was neglected or willfully disobeyed.

### Duty on Timber :

The Local Governments were empowered to levy a duty on timber produced in British India or brought from any place beyond the frontier of British India. The Local Governments were also empowered to make rules for the transport, sale and purchase of timber and other forest produce. All timber found adrift, beached, stranded or sunk was deemed to be the property of the Government until otherwise proved.

### Shifting Cultivation :

Special provisions were made to record the claims of shifting cultivation. No such provisions were there in the earlier act of 1878. The forest settlement officer was to record claims relating to the practice of shifting cultivation and was to recommend to the State Government whether the practice should be permitted or prohibited wholly or in part. The State Government was empowered to make an order permitting or prohibiting the practice wholly or in part.

### Penalties :

It has already been mentioned that certain acts were declared as forest offences and made punishable. It was also laid down that all produce in respect of which an offence is committed, together with all tools, boats, carts and cattles used in committing, were liable to be seized by the forest officers or police officers. Cattle trespassing in reserved forest or portions of protected forest lawfully closed to grazing were also liable to be seized and impounded.

### Comments :

The Act of 1927 tightened the grip of the Government over forests. The control was more strict in case of reserved forests that protected forests. Village communities were mainly to depend on village forests for the satisfaction of their needs.

Both, the Act of 1878 and the act of 1927 suffered from one serious deficiency. Provisions were made to record the rights of individuals over forest land and produce. However, a number of such rights were exercised by persons as member of a community or tribe rather than as distinct individuals. The Government in its typical British law-oriented frame ignored the basic fact that people's rights over forests were a sort of community or social rights. It also ignored the fact that the majority of the members of tribal communities were illiterate and ignorant of the legal procedures of the British oriented legal procedures and practice. As a result, majority of such rights went unrecorded and tensions developed between forest officials and forest dwellers, that sometimes led to violent clashes.

One of the programmes in the satyagraha in 1930-1934 was taken as a protest against the encroachment of the Government over people's rights over forests.

### Constitutional Changes :

Till 1935, the Forest Acts were enacted by the Government of India. In 1935 the British Parliament, through the Government of India Act of 1935, created provincial legislatures and what is known as the dual system of Government came

into operation. The subject of forest was included in the provincial legislative list under the Act (item 22). Thereafter, several provinces made their own laws to regulate forests. Most of these laws were within the framework laid down in the 1927 Act.

After independence, the same policy continued and in the Constitution of India, the subject of forest was included in the State List in the VII Schedule (item 19). In 1976, a major change took place. The subject of forest was transferred from the State List to the Concurrent List through the 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of India. This resulted in the diminution of states' powers and enhancement of the Central's powers over forests. The Government of India used these powers and by the promulgation of the Forest Conservation ordinance issued on October 25, 1980 prohibited the State Governments from allowing the use of any forest lands for any other purposes without the prior approval of the Central Government. The Ordinance was later converted into an Act. (No.69 of 1980).

#### **National Forest Policy 1952 :**

After independence, the Government of India formulated a new National Forest Policy which found expression in the National Forest Policy Resolution of 1952. It was declared that the Forest Policy should be based on paramount National needs which were listed as follows :

1. The need for evolving a system of balances and complementary land-use, under which each type of land is allotted to that form of use under which it would produce most and deteriorate least.
2. The need for checking
  - denudation in mountainous regions, on which depends the perennial water supply of the river systems whose basins constitute the fertile core of the country.
  - the erosion progressing space along the treeless banks of the great rivers leading to ravine formation, and on vast stretches of undulating waste lands, depriving the adjoining fields of their fertility and

- the invasion of sea-sands on coastal tracts, and the shifting of sand dunes, more particularly in the Rajputana desert.

3. The need for establishing tree-lands. Wherever possible, for the amelioration of physical and climatic conditions promoting the general well-being of the people.
4. The need for ensuring progressively increasing supplies of grazing, small wood for agricultural implements and in particular of firewood to release the cattle dung for manure to step up food production.
5. The need for sustained supply of timber and other forest produce required for defence, communication and industry.
6. The need for the realisation of the maximum annual revenue in perpetuity consistent with the fulfilment of the needs enumerated above.

Thus the 1952 Policy Resolution emphasised ecological and social aspects of forestry and gave only secondary importance to the needs of commerce and industry as also for revenue. However, in actual practice the concept of national interest and paramount needs was interpreted in a very narrow sense. The destruction of forests for the construction of roads even in the ecologically very sensitive areas like the Himalayan region, building up of irrigation and hydro-electricity projects and big factories were all justified in the name of national interest while forest dwellers were discouraged from using forest, where-ever and whenever possible.

#### **National Commission On Agriculture :**

The National Commission on Agriculture was the first to advocate commercialisation of forests at all costs and with disregard to the sustenance of Adivasis derived from the forests. The Commission's report on forestry is published as Part IX of the Multi-Volume report. It is full of contradictions and inconsistencies.

The commercial and anti-poor bias of the commission is evident everywhere in the report. According to the commission, 'Free supply of forest produce to the rural population and the rights and

The amendment prohibits state governments to assign by way of lease or otherwise any forest land or any portion thereof to any private person or to any authority, corporation, agency or any other organisation not owned, managed or controlled by government, without previous sanction of the Central Government. Thus forest land cannot be assigned to any private individual or organisation even for the purpose of afforestation.

#### National Forest Policy, 1988 :

In December 1988, the Parliament passed a new forest policy resolution replacing the earlier one in 1952. The Resolution stated the basic objectives of forest policy as follows.

It categorically states that 'The principal aim of Forest Policy must be to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium which are vital for sustenance of all lifeforms, human, animal and plant. The derivation of direct economic benefit must be sub-ordinated to this principal aim.'

The policy statement asserts that the existing forests and forest lands should be fully protected and their productivity improved. Minor forest produce should be protected and improved, so as to continue to provide sustenance to tribal population.

The national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of the total area in the country under forest or tree cover. A massive need based and timebound programme of afforestation and tree planting should be undertaken.

It is stated that the life of tribals and other poor living within and near forests revolves around forests and the rights and concessions enjoyed by them should be fully protected.

The Resolution has special article on tribal people and forests. It is stated that having regard to the symbiotic relationship between the tribal people and forests, all agencies responsible for forest management should see that the tribal people are closely associated in the protection, regeneration and development of forests so as to provide them

gainful employment. Efforts should be made to contain shifting cultivation. The practice of providing forest produced at subsidised prices to industries should be discouraged.

Thus the new Forest Policy Resolution is a very welcome step and makes a departure from the commercially oriented bureaucratic forest management practice.

However, the contradiction between law and practice in respect of forest that existed all the time has become even more glaring by the enactment of amendment to the Forest Conservation Act and the new policy adopted in 1988.

However, it appears that the new policy has made some impact on the official practices. On 1st June, 1990 the Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests addressed a letter to the Secretaries of the Forest Departments in all the States emphasising greater involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies for regeneration of degraded forest lands. Following this, some state governments have issued orders to explore the possibilities of constituting Forest Protection Societies on the lines of those set up in West Bengal.

This is a small change. The need is to enact a new forest act based on the new forest policy resolution of 1988.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For more information see Gadgil Madhav and Vartak V.D. 'sacred groves in Maharashtra' in Jain S.K. (ed). *Glimpses of Indian Ethnobotany*, Oxford Univ. Press, Bombay, 1981.
2. For details see Kulkarni Sharad, 'Forests Law Versus Policy', *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol.24 No.16 April 22, 1989 pp.859-862.
3. As above.

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privileges have brought destruction to the forests and so it is necessary to reverse the process. The rural people have not contributed much towards the maintenance or regeneration of the forests. Having over-exploited the resources, they cannot in all fairness expect that somebody else will take the trouble of providing them with forest produce free of charge.

The Commission recommended that the revised national forest policy of India should be based on important needs of the country.

It further recommended that functionally all forest lands should be classified into (i) protection forests, (ii) production forests and (iii) social forests. Protection forests include forests on hill-slopes, watersheds or rivers, riverbanks, seashores and other localities vulnerable to erosion and degradation. Production forests which are essentially commercial forests should comprise valuable or potentially valuable timber bearing stands occurring in favourable regions which are indispensable for the development of the country and for meeting the diverse requirement of the national economy. The social forests would cover waste lands, panchayat lands, village commons and lands on the sides of road, canal banks and railwaylines which may be brought under forest plantations, shelter belts and mixed forestry, comprising raising of grass and leaf fodder, fruit-trees and fuel-wood trees. It is clear from the above that the Commission gave highest priority to production forests and the lowest priority to the social forests.

The Commission recommended strengthening legislation on forestry for effective implementation of forest policy and enactment of a revised All India Forest Act. The Draft Bill of the Indian Forest Act was mainly based on these recommendations of the National Commission on Agriculture.

#### **Indian Forest Bill 1980 :**

The provisions of the Indian Forest Bill were clearly designed to discourage the use of forest land and produce by the poor. Terms like forest and cattle were defined widely. Forest officers were given very wide powers of arrest and of seizure of property to deal with the offences suspected to

be committed in respect of forests'. Luckily, the public awakening initiated by the discussions on the draft Forest Policy Bill resulted in the shelving of the Bill. The discussion also created a new awareness about the need for a proper forest policy. In the reorganisation of departments at the Centre made in 1985, the Forest Department has become a part of the Department of Environment. The Government has also constituted a National Wasteland Development Board with an ambitious plan to bring about 5 million acres of land under tree cover every year.

#### **Guidelines For A Proper Forest Policy :**

A number of activists working among the tribal communities and forest dwellers in India recently met to discuss the guide-lines for a genuine national forest policy. They advocated a radical reconstruction of the entire pro-commercial revenue-based forest policy.

#### **Forest Conservation Act, 1980 .**

This was the first act relating to forests after the subject of forest was transferred to the Concurrent List. This short act prohibits state governments from declaring any reserve forest or any portion thereof, as non-reserved without a prior approval of the Central Government. It also prohibits the state governments from allotting any forest land or any portion thereof, for any non-forest purpose. The provision is defective as the restriction on the state government to declare any forest land as non-forest land applies only to reserve forests, whereas the restriction on allotting any forest land for a non-forest purpose applies to all forest lands in the reserved, protected and village forests. This made it possible for some State Governments to declare protected forest lands as non-forest lands and later to allocate them to industries or other agencies.

#### **The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 1988 :**

Restrictions on the powers of the state governments in the regulation of forests were made more rigorous by the amendment to the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980.

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# Decentralised Management of Natural Resources in the UP Hills

Sri Madhava Ashish

*Over-population in relation to poor land productivity has resulted in land degradation and deforestation in the UP hills. If any new management system for revival of the common property resources is to succeed, the locals should be actively involved in every phase of the programme.*

WITH all the government's development efforts in the UP hills, and with all the money coming in from migrants, degradation of the hill environment still continues under the pressure of the people's needs for fuel, fodder, and all that derives from fodder. All classes of land, including the reserved forests, fully contribute to the people's subsistence, but their sustainable yields are less than the human demands: hence the continuing degradation.

Provided that population numbers stabilise, improved management of land and livestock raises sustainable yields of fodder and forest produce above present needs. The linked problems of resource poverty and environmental degradation are therefore a problem in land management. But the people lack legal powers of management over any of the land except the relatively small areas under cultivation and panchayat forest. Lack of power and lack of relevant education accounts for the people's failure to handle the problem themselves.

In the context of some 13,000 small hill villages, general schemes for improved land management have to be adapted to each village's specific conditions. This cannot be done by a centralised administration, it has to be done by the villagers themselves. For this purpose, legal obstructions must be removed and the village communities appropriately empowered to manage all the lands on whose products they subsist. Forest panchayats provide an example of decentralised power, and they could perhaps be expanded to cover the requirements of many villages, but they are not given the necessary administrative support, nor are they suited to all villages. Some alternatives are discussed.

Sufficient studies have been made in the UP hills to show that unless the fragmented ownership pattern of cultivated land is changed; livestock numbers, their quality and their management are rationalised; the legal status of uncultivated land, including forests, together with user rights and management systems are changed; and the population growth rate is checked, then land degradation and soil erosion will accelerate, with the predictable consequences of in-

creased flooding in the Gangetic plains, increased silting of reservoirs and river beds, and permanent migration of more and more hill people into the already crowded plains. One can only guess what might happen to the people who remained in the hills.

In short, the UP hills are over-populated in relation to land productivity under existing management. Migrant earnings permit resident families to purchase their shortfall in foodgrains, together with clothing, etc, plus an increasing amount of kerosene, bottled gas and electricity as substitutes for fuelwood, all of these items being imported from outside the hills and paid for with money from outside the hills. Even fodder is being trucked in from the Terai.

If there were total dependence on imported food, fuel and other necessities, all paid for by migrant earnings and the salaries of government employees, the hills would be a dormitory area with minimal demands on the products of the local land, so there need be no cultivation, no bullocks and other grazing livestock, and the land would quickly revert to forest. But that is not the case, nor is it ever likely to be the case.

We are dealing with a population of five millions (perhaps one million families) in 13,000 villages, all of whom are trying both to get as much out of their land as they can for direct consumption, and to obtain as much money as they can, either by growing cash crops or by taking employment away from home, plus earnings on transport and tourism. The contribution from the land is vital to the people's subsistence, yet it is now a fact that the poverty of the hills is predominantly a poverty of the materials of direct consumption produced by the land, and no longer a poverty of money.

The substitution of high value cash crops for foodgrains may allow people to buy relatively low priced grain, and so to subsist on and even to make a profit out of a plot of land that is too small to yield sufficient grain for subsistence. But this hardly touches the problem of the shortage of other materials for which substitutes cannot be purchased. The most important of these other materials are fodder, milk, meat, wool, organic manure and bullock energy that derive from

fodder, and water. Fuelwood is an irreplaceable essential for the majority, but substitutes are used by those who can afford only because wood is obtained with difficulty. Cowdung is not burned in the hills because hill agriculture needs large inputs of organic manure for which chemical fertiliser is not a substitute.

As numbers increase and per capita crop yields decrease, there is constant pressure to extend the cultivated area for grain crops (even though such extension has been officially forbidden). Any such extension correspondingly decreases the area of pasture and forest which supplies the fodder, fuelwood and water, plus the essential organic manure. For every hectare of cultivated land about five hectares of uncultivated land is needed to maintain supplies of organic inputs which maintain crop yields. In many villages this proportion has been lost, and to restore it some land may need to be taken out of cultivation.

This rather dismal picture of shortages and land degradation can be transformed by improved land and livestock management. Freed from grazing, grassland recovers in from one to three years to yield four to six times the weight of grass by hand cutting over its yield under grazing. If fodder trees are planted, the long-term yield increases by a factor of eight over grazed grass, and the trees give green fodder in the cold winters and dry summers. Provided the human population growth rate is checked, such increases in yields of fodder, etc, raise the real income of the villages and improve the standard of living.

There is no easy answer as to how such improvements can be brought about. Any one can propose enclosures, plantations, stall-feeding of cattle, the rationalisation of bullock numbers by introducing service ploughing, and other such seemingly straightforward and practical changes, but very few people, other than the villagers themselves, are aware of the intricate relationships between every activity on the land, such that any change in one is likely to have repercussions on all the others. For example, for the women to have the time and energy for cutting and carrying all the fodder required for stall-feeding, they would need fuelwood supplies close at hand, water for the households and livestock piped to their houses, and, if possible, a power-driven flour mill in the village, and a 'balwari' to care for their children while they are at work.

Furthermore, the enormous variations in topography, soil types, altitude belts, and human communities which characterise the UP hills, make it impractical to think in terms of uniform programmes and administrative processes. Village communities must be free to discover what particular approach to new land management will suit their specific conditions.

We have also to contend with the mind of the villager who lives so close to the survival line, that he seldom dares to experiment with changes because he cannot afford a failure. So he is distrustful of change, and he prefers the methods of his forefathers, even when they are proving themselves destructive under the new conditions of increased population density. His instinctive distrust of others' motives has also grown along with the competitive struggle for ever more scarce resources. Even the younger men who have been out into the world and have adopted modern life styles, when they return to their villages tend to slip back into the village way of thinking.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to development in the villages is the ruthless power-grabbing by the 'big' village men. Such men typically hold the crude view that holding power is not enough; it must be displayed and used for personal advantage. They will grab land, and bully and bribe their way into becoming 'sarpanch' or 'sabhapati' where they can lay their hands on village funds. Often, such a man is so jealous of his power that he will try to prevent anyone else from doing anything to improve village conditions, and nothing is done that does not put money into his pocket. He commonly acts as a political party agent, exchanging vote banks for programme funds channelled to his area. In consequence, the villages of his area are often the poorest in terms of fodder, fuelwood and water, even though they may get handouts of money, a road, electric power lines that sometimes carry electricity, pipe lines that may or may not carry water, and an irrigation channel which, if it works at all, may serve only the big man's land. In this area, therefore, the work of NGOs may be restricted to those villages where the influential people are not so jealous of their power. However, there are some village leaders, trusted by everyone because they are free of self-interest. Where they lead, the village will follow. But they lead slowly and never drive.

These, very roughly, are the circumstances within which we must operate, circumstances which forbid us from imposing our own ideas on people who do not fully understand the reasons why a change is necessary. We therefore have to begin by presenting the logic of their situation, which is that the limited area of the village is capable of producing a limited amount of material, sufficient to sustain the needs of a finite number of people. Within limits, the better the land is managed, the more materials there will be, either to support more people, or to raise the living standard. Simple though this may sound, it is a fact that it is not understood—and not only by village people. An educational input is required.

As presently managed, the land's total yields are dropping, even as the number of

migrants is increasing because their land is not supporting them. Better land management will first stabilise yields and then increase them so that the people who stay in the villages will have a better life, while the same steps required to raise yields will simultaneously restore the environment.

We can discuss how these improvements might be achieved, and we can take some of the villagers to see examples of such improvements, but the actual decision of what each particular village will do must be taken by the people themselves. Only then will they believe that the necessary changes are truly in their own interests, and that they are not being tricked into subserving someone else's interests. Only under these conditions can we be assured that any funds required for their programmes will be honestly utilised.

As things stand, we cannot expect the average administrator to adopt such an approach to rural development; it is contrary to his training and his career-oriented motivation. But after more than 40 years is which the government has succeeded in building up an infrastructure of roads, schools, hospitals, telephones and electric power lines, all of which can be done without involving the local people, but has failed to check either the population growth rate or the degradation of the land, which intimately affect the local people, we might expect the government to accept that its methods are unsuited to the sort of development whose success depends on the autonomous decisions of rural communities by which they plan and execute the programmes of their choice. We have ample evidence of the success of this approach from the programmes of many local NGOs and other village bodies.

Here it may be necessary to remind the government that, since the time officials stopped touring the villages, camping there and holding their courts there, they have largely stopped meeting the typical village resident. The people they mostly meet are the politically motivated 'netas', Sabhapatris or Pradhans who regularly visit district and block headquarters with a view to getting programme funds allocated to their areas of influence. What then happens to those funds is part of the story of political corruption which thrives on the failure of programmes and the diversion of their funds. It is to these people's advantage to present failure as success and so attract more funds.

We are therefore not concerned with the decentralisation of power within the existing politico-administrative system, for that would merely transfer power into the hands of the lower and most corrupt echelons of a thoroughly corrupt hierarchy. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that any of these people would be interested in using their power to raise the economic status of the villagers to the point where they might

become independent of politicians' patronage.

We suggest that when a village community is encouraged to make its own decisions about the management of the land on whose yields the people subsist, then the typically small hill village community has the capacity to manage its land as efficiently as the owner of a private estate will manage his land when it constitutes the main source of his livelihood.

The government certainly has a role to play. Firstly, villages should be given legal ownership of the common lands, namely, the civil and soyam 'forest' (often without trees), which is now legally government property, mal-administered by the land revenue department. One of the government's main reasons for not doing this is that, as it stands, village agreement is not required for road construction, power lines, and mineral exploitation, even though natural justice would require that people whose basic subsistence derives from the land should have legal rights to its management and to compensation for its alienation.

Secondly, private management of cultivated land, which is the most important land in village life, would be immensely improved by an appropriate form of consolidation of landholdings, which would remove the obstruction to individual initiative caused by the extreme fragmentation characteristic of hill landholdings in the present day. Indian inheritance laws lie at the root of this problem, but it is too much to expect of populist governments that they would touch these roots of social stability.

It is doubtful whether an unimaginative imposition of the Land Consolidation Act would be either acceptable or workable in the hills. But if intelligent and well-motivated officials were given the freedom to adapt the Act to local conditions, perhaps in co-operation with a local NGO, so that, for instance, irrigated areas were consolidated separately from unirrigated land, and distinct village areas with distinct soil types and aspects were consolidated separately, then a system might be evolved which would be generally acceptable throughout the hills.

Thirdly, the government must give serious thought to the problem of the hill people's rights in the reserved forests. Violent demonstrations against British government expropriations of forests around 1920, and against rules that forbade grazing and lopping in those forests, led to rights of grazing and lopping being given to all residents in the Kumaon and Garhwal in all reserved forests. The importance of these rights has grown with the increase in human and cattle populations. Indeed, stabilisation of the cattle population over the last two censuses indicates that the total land area open to grazing under present management can carry no more. But this is stabilisation at the lowest level of livestock maintenance.

Yet these rights of user carry absolutely no rights of management, nor can any one village exclude others from the area of reserved forest it habitually uses. In addition to this, there is a law which prevents the forest department from enclosing more than a predetermined total area at any one time. Taken together, these two laws stop the forest department from allotting specific, walled off areas of reserved forest to specific villages, even if it wanted to.

Only if the general right of grazing and lopping in all reserved forests could be exchanged for rights in demarcated and walled areas, with rights of management added, would the village people find it in their interests to manage these areas along with the civil and soyam and panchayat forests so that total fodder yields could be increased. However, it must be noted that those villages with smaller per capita fodder availability tend to rely more on reserved forest rights, if they are within reach. Such villages might need larger allocations.

Another advantage gained by the villagers from their agitations was the decentralisation of power by which forest panchayats were established with legal powers of management over considerable areas of forest released from the 'new reserves'. Some areas were also released for addition to the civil and soyam of one or more villages where representations were made that villages lacked sufficient pasture. Village administration of these early forest panchayats appears to have been generally good, and it received the statutory support of the land revenue department which guaranteed the enforcement of fines and so upheld the prestige of the panchayats.

Later panchayat forests were formed out of civil and soyam forest, where there was enough of it. However, after independence, although more forest panchayats were established, the administrative back-up became weaker and weaker. The result has been that well run panchayats which required minimal support survived, while others went moribund.

Forest panchayats are a particularly interesting phenomenon because they represent the delegation of legal powers for the management of common resources to peasant communities with the provision of administrative support. They merit particular attention because they exemplify the decentralisation of power we now need for the management of all village lands.

For as long as the community's major interest lay in supplies of fodder, fuelwood and timber for home use, the panchayats generally worked well. But with the coming of motorable roads and trucks, which roughly coincided with the time when population pressure led to massive male migration for employment, the interests of the male community turned to money-making. But there was no transfer of panchayat power to the

women whose interests still lay in fodder and fuel. The result has been that the women destroyed the now loosely guarded fodder forests, while the men exploited the money-making opportunities of the pine forests. It is still reported that panchayat forests lying distant from motorable roads are better managed than the ones close to roads.

Thus, by virtue of excessive increase in work for the senior district administrators, the abandonment of regular touring, weakening of the administrative back-up, the nexus of local politician, minor official, office staff and corrupt sarpanch, and the insupportable pressure of fodder demands on scarce resources, an institution that had all the basic qualities for expansion into the sort of village land management organisation we now require to meet present circumstances has so deteriorated that it cannot be trusted to perform even its limited duties in panchayat forests, let alone manage the whole civil and soyam with all its ramifications into livestock management and such vital changes as the ploughing pattern. However, the forest panchayat remains an institution that could continue to manage its forests wherever it is working well.

It is for reasons of this sort that the problem of the hill environment cannot be solved by such obvious steps as massive, government-run, reforestation programmes. Nor can the imposition of forest panchayats on all villages (as proposed by a recent new draft of forest panchayat rules) persuade the villagers to make them work. The official attitude towards the sustainable management of natural resources is not very different from that of the village neta. Power is jealously guarded, preventing decentralisation in terms of village autonomy which is required if the hill village economy is to be revitalised by restoring the productivity of the uncultivated lands. Short-sighted, selfish political interests prefer the existing centralised system through which the politician, bureaucrat, block pramukh and sabhapati can exploit the official funding line of state, district and block. In many instances, villagers do not even get to know that programme funds have been allotted to them. Punitive laws designed to enforce accountability are in general applied only to individuals outside the corrupt nexus.

Direct central government funding of rural NGOs was developed as a means of ensuring that funds actually reached the rural areas, and did not get used to pay departmental staff, as happened when funds were routed through the state government. What started as an excellent system based on trust and accountability has now become so bureaucratized that rural NGO leaders find themselves painfully harassed by the detailed regulations with which officials seek to replace honesty and trust, and to substitute for the cost and effort of physical inspection. The simple fact is that trustwor-

thiness will never be developed unless people are trusted and accountability is enforced.

One of the consequences of the population increase is that more and more people are realising that the social tensions produced by crowded living conditions demand resolution in terms of community agreement to share scarce resources equitably, as against the current selfish competition to grab as much as possible for oneself. Similarly, it is at last being recognised that a person who has many children is not only irresponsible, but also extremely selfish, for he expects and even demands that an already resource short community will provide for all of them. Such changes in outlook, embryonic though they may be, indicate that the people are more ready than before to take part in responsible self-government. Correspondingly, there are an increasing number of government officials who are aware that a centralised government cannot administer the internal affairs of thousands of remote and scattered village communities with the necessary flexibility and attention to detail which can come only from strictly local knowledge of both places and persons. Nor can money- and career-oriented minor officials be expected to motivate the people and obtain the trust and confidence given to non-government workers—a trust that has been the basis of the few truly successful rural development programmes.

We are therefore looking for greater political and administrative maturity to match the growing maturity of the people and their changing expectations of what a government should be and do.

Plainly, a community should have at least as much power to manage its land for its long-term benefits as an individual must have over his. One difference is that a community's decisions must be taken by the community as a whole, or by a majority vote, or by a representative group. There is also a more obvious need for the backing of state power to check individuals from harming the interests of the community. Such powers of management have to be delegated by the state, and the state must provide the support which upholds the authority of a duly established village organisation.

This is precisely the legal position of the forest panchayats. We must therefore ask why so many of them have not worked.

- (1) Due to lack of administrative interest, regular elections were not held. Lacking opportunity to throw out a corrupt or unpopular sarpanch, the communities felt themselves powerless and so lost interest.
- (2) In multi-village panchayats, the sarpanch is inevitably from one village and tends to favour the members of his village. This adds to the social tensions associated with the competition for scarce resources. Single village panchayats

have relatively less trouble.

- (3) With more and more men migrating to the plains for employment (some villages are reported to hold not a single male of working age) and with the male population's attention turning almost exclusively to money-making activities, many forest panchayats ceased to be active.
- (4) Very few panchayat forests were large enough to sustain the growing demands for fodder and fuel, and the panchayats were unable to hold out against them, so the forests deteriorated.
- (5) The district administration did not provide adequate support. Fines were either not collected by patwaris, or they were collected after so much delay that there was no punitive effect. This undermined the panchayat's authority.
- (6) There were not enough inspectors to visit every panchayat even once in three years. It was also alleged that SDMs used the inspectors for their other work.
- (7) At no level of government did there appear to be any awareness of or interest in the deteriorating state of the hill economy. The panchayats appeared to be nobody's concern, and none seemed to appreciate that delegated powers cannot survive without support from the state. Like everyone else, the government had succumbed to the illusion that money could solve all problems, so emphasis fell on employment opportunities and business ventures. The land from which all the materials of direct consumption are obtained was ignored.
- (8) Forest panchayat incomes from resin and timber often amount to quite large sums. Particularly after roads were built, significant amounts of material were siphoned off to local turpentine factories and saw mills, many of them owned by local netas, and the benefits went to the sarpanch and his friends. What was left after deductions by the forest department was lodged with the district magistrate. It was difficult for a panchayat to discover what it had on account. Funds were released from time to time for the construction of schools, 'panchayat ghars' and, more recently, for walling the panchayat forests, all providing profitable contracts for the sarpanch and his family. There were also disturbing reports of forest panchayat funds being used by district officials for programmes in which they were interested.
- (9) On top of all this must be added the continuing degradation of civil and soyam lands under the pressure of livestock numbers and increasing demands for fuelwood. Pressure on the panchayat forests therefore increased, even as the panchayat itself lost interest.

So we return to the point that regeneration

of the panchayat forests alone through re-vivification of the panchayats will not solve the fodder problem; fodder shortages might even be aggravated because degenerated forests would have to be closed for recovery.

The present need is for village organisations empowered to manage all the fodder and fuel producing village lands, including panchayat forests and those sections of the reserves which should be allotted to specific villages. Any such organisation will require administrative support and technical advice. All villages will need funds, but only a few have sufficient panchayat forest income for the purpose. A form of supervision is required to ensure the proper utilisation of funds, without falling into the bureaucratic trap of trying to administer rural affairs by remote control, and of substituting complicated paperwork for honest inspection of work done. In the rural setting, complicated paperwork tends to put power into the hands of the smart people who can handle it, as against the people of better character, particularly women, who find it difficult.

The dead weight of the centralised administration inhibits (and corrupts) the creative abilities in the mass of the non-government public. Since the numerically largest part of that public is in the rural areas, anyone might suppose that this huge human potential would be best employed in managing its affairs to its own and the national advantage. Unfortunately, our politicians seem capable of viewing this human potential only in terms of votes. A mature government would aim to provide the necessary legislation and hold a watching brief over the people's activities, intervening only where the land was being damaged, funds were misused, or panchas were abusing their positions. We must consider what sorts of village organisations could handle the management of village lands for the aims outlined above.

The first point is that we should not think in terms of a uniform type of administrative organ to be imposed on all villages by government order. Empowerment is necessary, but the methods by which the power is to be exercised need not be rigidly confined within a single predetermined system. It would be better to have a number of alternatives from which villages could choose one that suits their particular needs.

There are two main reasons for taking this view. Firstly, no one yet knows what system would work, so we need to experiment. Secondly, village experience of the existing systems has varied greatly. For example, where a forest panchayat has been well run, that village might like to extend the panchayat's power to cover the whole of the civil and soyam land; where a forest panchayat has been badly run by a group of scoundrels, the village might flatly refuse to allow it to have extended powers, and might prefer to have it abolished in favour of an

alternative. Some suggested alternatives are:

- (1) Panchayat raj sabha: This might be the first official choice, but it would be wrong. It is a highly politicised body and it covers a group of several villages, whereas each village has to be managed by its own residents. In effect, we should be dealing with village welfare and not with party politics, with all that the latter term implies in the diversion of development funds.
  - (2) Forest panchayat: As noted above, in principle this organisation has all that is required for the work. In practice it has largely failed for lack of administrative support and proper inspection. However, it remains as one alternative which many villages might accept, particularly if it were to be reconstituted under a distinct wing of the forest department. Multi-village panchayats would not work.
  - (3) In some instances, an existing forest panchayat might continue to run the panchayat forest, while another organisation handled the civil and soyam.
  - (4) The civil and soyam, in whole or in part, could be divided among all the families of a village on the same terms that the UP government leases it to individuals for tree planting. Factually, the UP government terms favour the wealthy who have funds to fence and plant the area. Where all families in the village are to have plots, funds for development would have to be provided.
  - (5) The civil and soyam can be leased to a village land management committee, either on its own or in association with an NGO.
  - (6) A local NGO could be constituted as a nodal agency for the distribution of government funds in a defined area. It would work through village management committees, funding appropriate projects, educating the people in the principles of sustainable land management, and ensuring accountability.
- Although there are examples of villages where much has been achieved on the basis of unanimous agreement, it is too much to expect that all villages would resolve their internal problems and work in this way. As things stand, any number of village projects for the management of enclosed areas of civil and soyam have failed on account of one cantankerous individual who asserted his individual right to graze his cattle. The law supports such action because the land belongs to the government, the community has no rights, and only individual rights are recognised. This is why village communities must have the power to enforce majority decisions. But this should not mean that in avoiding the obstructive actions of cantankerous right holders we find ourselves burdened with the even worse obstructionism of government officials.

MSK F9

# From State Regulation to People's Participation

## Case of Forest Management in India

Dolly Arora

*Recent years have witnessed an increasing accent on people's participation in both official policy discourse at national and international levels and non-official political discourse at the level of NGOs and local voluntary agencies/organisations. Quite in line with this, the introduction of joint forest management systems (JFMS) in 11 states of India is easily promoted and readily interpreted as a major shift from state regulation towards people's participation in forest management. It is important, however, to not only examine this issue in terms of its claims but also carefully perceive and interpret these claims as well as their underlying limitations. There is a need to relate the discussions on JFMS and people's participation to wider theoretical questions about the very essence of people's participation.*

TWENTY-THREE per cent of India's geographical area (329 million hectares) has been declared as forest area. Satellite imagery pictures, however, show the actual forest cover to be as low as 19 per cent as against the stipulated requirement of 33 per cent of the total geographical area for better stability of the environment.<sup>1</sup> People have been living in a very large part of India's forests either traditionally or because they were brought in by the forest department itself to meet its labour requirements. Although over the years many of the forest villages have been given the status of revenue villages, there are still around 5,000 forest villages. There are about 48 million forest dwellers living within or in the vicinity of forests. For them forests have been the basis of their livelihood and survival—they are dependent on forests for meeting their day-to-day requirements of food, fruit, fuel wood, fodder and fibres. Forests, however, are also an important source of what is termed as 'minor forest produce' (leaves, seeds, gums, waxes, dyes, resins, bamboo, canes, bhabbar grass, etc), which not only has immense commercial value<sup>2</sup> but which, since it is collected by the poor and marginalised, plays an important role in providing them support under difficult economic conditions.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, forests are an important source of meeting the needs of urban-industrial interests and have thereby become the subject of contending claims of poor and rich.

Apart from the economic and social value of forests, the ecological worth of forests is beyond doubt. These are crucial to the production of oxygen, holding of rain water, enrichment of soil and checking of soil erosion, control of wind and atmospheric temperature—in fact these are critical to the very survival of human beings on earth.<sup>4</sup> Over the years, however, wastelands or degraded forest lands in India have shown a sharp expansion—at present nearly 175 million hectares of India's land area is seriously degraded. And the implications of this can be seen not only in the worsening state of

people dependent on forests but also in the increasing damage on account of floods (costing the exchequer about Rs 2,000 crore annually); water erosion (taking away 6,000 m tonnes of top soil and with it about 6 m tonnes of nutrients, more than the total value of fertiliser imports), siltation (reducing the life of irrigation dams and thereby the worth of money spent on these).<sup>5</sup>

While the blame for the increase in forest degradation has for long been laid on the increasing population pressure,<sup>6</sup> it has now been admitted that the orientation and direction of state policy on forest management has itself been the primary reason for the worsening state of both forests and forest-dependent people.<sup>7</sup> How state policy has till recently evolved in the direction of alienation of people even while it was highly accommodative of powerful economic interests, and, more importantly, how far do the recent efforts in the direction of joint forest management (JFM) reflect any major shift from state regulation to people's participation in forest management forms the focus of this paper.

In an endeavour to relate the discussion of JFMs and people's participation to wider theoretical questions about the very essence of people's participation, this paper raises some questions about the real meanings of JFMs as embedded in its context and as evident in the actual experiences of its operation. Briefly tracing the evolution of state policy towards forest management through Section I, Section II discusses the politico-economic context which informed the recent changes and outlines the likely scenario which may emerge because of the constraining capacity of this context. Using a four-fold criteria for evaluation, Section III interprets the actual experiences and underlying possibilities in terms of (a) people's empowerment; (b) autonomy; (c) utilisation of local knowledge and skills; and (d) implementation and expansion without being captured by vested interests, and further indicates the steps needed to realise the objective of a genuine and

effective role of people in forest management in India.

### I

Till about the end of 18th century, forests were treated by the Indian state as an open access resource.<sup>8</sup> This does not imply that these were simply open access resources which could be used or misused by one and all without any restraints. Rather these were quite effectively managed with the help of a complex range of rules and regulations woven around the socio-cultural features as well as the economic activities of local communities.<sup>9</sup> The process of state empowerment *vis-a-vis* people on the question of control over forests started in 1800 when a commission was appointed to inquire into the availability of teak in Malabar forests. More systematic interventions, however, began in 1864 with the appointment of the first inspector general of forests. The enactment of the Forest Act in 1865 facilitated the acquisition of forests by the state; and in 1878 the customary rights of rural communities to manage forests were also curtailed. The Forest Act of 1878 expanded the powers of state by providing for 'reserved forests' which were closed to the people and by empowering the forest administration to impose penalties for any transgression of the act. The forest policy statement of 1894 further consolidated the position of state by enabling it to forcibly take over all forests, including private and community forests. The policy denied recognition to the legitimacy of conventional conservation practices of local communities and favoured regulation of the rights and privileges of people living in and around forests—this was done in the name of 'public benefit' itself. Providing teeth to these provisions, the Forest Act of 1927 specifically denied people any rights over forest produce 'simply because they were domiciled there'.

Independence made little difference to the position of people in relation to forests. The forest policy of 1952 retained the con-

cept of 'reserved forests', now justified in the name of 'national needs', and placed them under the exclusive control of state. Although the policy accepted the category of 'village forests' to serve the needs of people in surrounding villages, it did not grant them the right to manage these. As during the British rule, the approach of state continued to reflect a lack of faith in the capacity of people to manage or protect their forest resources without state intervention and support. People were in fact seen as a major threat to forests.

It is noteworthy here that the process of expansion of state control over forests in India started about the same time that major transformations characterised the wider politico-economic scene. While the fast-spreading industrial revolution and with that the expansion of markets for several forest products made Indian forest resources economically attractive,<sup>10</sup> the consolidation of British political power in India after the defeat of the East India Company paved the way for their excessive exploitation. Forests soon became a major source of state revenue. And forest management was closely linked up with the needs of commercial interests.

Even after independence, the 'need for the realisation of maximum annual revenue from forests' was considered a 'vital national need'<sup>11</sup> and the relevance of forests to meet the needs of defence, reconstruction schemes such as river valley projects, development of industries and communication was asserted by the national forest policy of 1952.<sup>12</sup> Maintaining a "sustained supply of wood for industry" was considered a vital concern of the state. Ironically enough, the state went to the point of subsidising the industrial consumers of forest products in the name of national interest, though actually contributing to the very opposite effects. For, subsidies encouraged them to not only maximise their exploitation of forest resources but also pay little attention to avoiding waste and thereby led to their fast depletion and degradation. This policy was also doubly discriminatory against the general public, which not only prohibited them from using forest resources even to meet their needs from the areas reserved to serve the needs of commercial interests but also paid higher prices in the market when compared to the highly subsidised prices for the commercial interests.<sup>13</sup> This also had the effect of alienating people who were traditionally involved in protecting the forests, sometimes (though not always) even to the extent that they turned hostile to the cause of conservation and joined hands with forces destroying these.<sup>14</sup>

There was yet another outcome of the expanding powers of state, the weakening control of community and the increasing commercial interest in respect of forests:

the growth of relations of exchange between commercial interests and corrupt state elites—politicians as well as forest administration personnel. Their growing alignment, often at the cost of the poor and marginalised forest dwellers, had adverse implications for the state of forests not only because policies devalued in implementation spaces but also because policies were shaped and reshaped to accommodate and promote these interests. Thus, when resource use policies resulted in fast depletion of forest resources, afforestation work did pick up. But priority was given to planting a few commercial tree species like teak, pine, eucalyptus, etc, rather than numerous other non-commercial though ecologically and socially useful varieties of usufruct-based trees such as a sal, mahua, arjun and neem, etc, or fruit and oil bearing trees like karanj and kusum. While the former served the interests of industry and contractors, the latter were capable of providing support to the lives of poor. Yet, plantation work reflected little concern for the latter.<sup>15</sup>

The almost negligible efforts made to improve the availability of fuel wood and fodder to forest dwellers, however, intensified social conflicts on forest resource-use and increased pressures on the state for a reorientation of policies.<sup>16</sup> The growing availability of complex environmental data and increasing insights into the intricate relationship of human survival to the protection of environment, including forests, also led to international pressures as well as resource commitments to the protection of forests in the third world.<sup>17</sup> This led to the adoption of a massive social forestry programme towards the end of 1970s. By 1988, over 60 million rupees had already been spent on it, yet the programme failed to make any dent on the worsening fuel wood and fodder crisis of India.<sup>18</sup> As the shortcomings of social forestry programme were highlighted by numerous field evaluations,<sup>19</sup> the state came under increasing pressure to involve people in the protection and management of forest resources.

In 1988, for the first time since independence, it was declared by the state that forests were not to be commercially exploited for industries but must contribute to the conservation of soil and environment and meet the subsistence needs of the local people. The revised policy also advocated the role of local people's participation in the protection and development of forests from which they derived benefits like fuel wood, fodder and small timber. To give their formal support to this policy, state after state promoted facilitative rules or orders specifying the institutional mechanisms of their execution.

Orissa took the lead and issued the order promoting joint forest management in Au-

gust 1988; it was followed closely by West Bengal which passed a resolution to support people's participation in forest management. This was even before the central ministry of environment and forests sent out its circular to the states and union territories setting out the new policy on "involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies in the regeneration of degraded forest lands". This circular, issued in June 1990, suggested to the states that voluntary agencies/NGOs may be associated as interface between state forest department and the local village communities for revival, restoration and development of degraded forests. Access to forest land and usufructory benefits (grasses, lops and tops of branches and minor forest produce), it was proposed, should be provided to those who got organised into a village institution (such as panchayat, cooperative of the village, or Village Forest Protection Committee), specifically for forest regeneration and protection. And if they were successful, a portion of proceeds from the sale of trees when they matured could also be offered to them. The forest department, however, was to closely supervise the work and usufructory benefits could be withdrawn if it was not satisfied with the protection work.

Since the circular of central government, 11 other states—Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tripura—have facilitated the implementation of this policy in their respective territories by issuing enabling orders providing details of the arrangement.<sup>20</sup> Other states are still considering it. The nature of agreements arrived at in various states has not been the same. There are important differences regarding the extent of power retained by the forest department or that delegated or given back to the people. The common feature, however, is the provision of benefits to those (and only those) involved in protection of forests covered by the rules.

The Joint Forest Management Regulations have, in that sense, attempted to 'induce' people's participation in forest protection by making protection an economically rewarding activity from the viewpoint of the people. This, it was realised, could also be the most cost-effective method of forest management from the viewpoint of the state. Its implications for the overall state of development could be very far-reaching too. For, besides improving the overall state of environment, this could enable people to integrate the local forest management practices with their own development needs. It could thereby provide some relief to the poor and marginalised without increasing their dependence on the state, already over-bur-

dened with the failure of numerous development and assistance programmes.

## II

The question which arises at this point is: Does the adoption of this new policy on joint forest management (JFM) suggest any major change in the prevailing state of relations between the state and people in forest areas? Or, does the new policy suggest of the end of the era of state domination and the beginning of a new era of people's power? While it is too early to answer that, one can still look for some indicators not only in the experiences of different regions but also in the very contexts which led to the adoption of JFM systems in the first instance.

Even though the successful experiments carried out in several local settings increased the openness of the state in adopting participatory approaches to forest management,<sup>21</sup> as can be seen from the discussion in preceding pages, it is not possible to attribute policy change to this factor alone.

It is important to underline the relevance of four other factors in inducing the policy on JFM: (1) With the worsening state of forests and the growing hardships inflicted on the poor and marginalised even for meeting their subsistence needs, confrontations between state and people on the question of people's rights increased manifold. In several regions, local people challenged the rights of state officials to interfere with their forests and launched mass agitations for protecting local forests—the Chipko movement in Uttar Pradesh hills and Appikko in Andhra Pradesh are two of the most powerful agitations of this kind.<sup>22</sup> The collaboration of state officials with commercial interests came in for serious criticism at the hands of people as a consequence of these and several other similar local struggles for forest protection. These agitations asserted people's right to manage forests and demanded a change in the existing forest policy to facilitate that.<sup>4</sup>

(2) With powerful national or international NGOs entering the scene and extending support to local organisations of people to assert their rights on forest resources,<sup>23</sup> the capacity of state to overlook the claims of people without worsening the crisis of its own legitimacy weakened considerably—it seemed better to relate to the programme of these organisations than to alienate them.

(3) With growing international concern for saving the forests which were now seen as precious carbon sinks, pressures to introduce institutional and policy reforms to involve local people in the task of forest conservation, and conditioning of substantial foreign assistance on that,<sup>24</sup> it was not easy for a state so short of resources to

undermine the relevance of people's participation anymore—not at least at the level of policy; and

(4) With a long history of distorted implementation of policies in India—community development, land reforms, IRDP, social forestry, to mention only few—promoting a new policy did not seem to involve much risk; it could still be transformed or redefined, and thereby evaded at the level of implementation if such a need was felt by the policy elites.

### IMPLICATIONS OF POLICY

What kind of a scenario is likely to emerge as a result of the relevance of these factors in defining the nature of policy? And what can happen if either of these undergoes a change? Let us examine these factors and their possible implications one by one and spell out the questions which are thrown up because of their role in policy promotion and which need to be addressed if policy changes are to have any real meaning.

(1) Since people's claims to the management of forests reached the policy agenda only when people started confronting the claims of the state itself and since these confrontations became intense with the increasing intensity of people's sufferings which in turn were linked to the worsening state of forests, this is likely to pose two challenges: (a) In those regions where people have not suffered so much, they may also take less interest in participatory management; and (b) the chances of people losing interest in participation once the worst features of crisis are managed from their point of view are quite high even where people do resort to participatory activities. The question under the circumstances is: Does the new policy framework address these situations? Or, does it succeed in offering not only avenues for participation (forest protection committees, resource management societies, etc) or even incentives to participation (usufructory rights, share of minor forest produce, etc) but participation as a process of empowerment and self-realisation which is valued as both a right and a responsibility. The significance of policy change can be defined only in the context of its implications for the real empowerment and activation of people, and not simply as a short-term step towards management.<sup>25</sup>

(2) Since people's participation became a policy issue in the context of increased interest shown by non-governmental organisations in organising people to assert their rights on forests, a change in the understanding or concern of NGOs may imply an end of interest taken by the state and people too. People may become indifferent as before and the state may revert back to its earlier position in case of NGOs

leaving the scene. And the chances of NGOs moving out are not remote, not only after people's empowerment becomes a reality but even before that. Since many of these NGOs depend on exogenous support, often coming from foreign donors, a change in the policy of donors can also change their capacity to support people's organisation and thereby result in their sudden withdrawal from the field. The question then is: Does the policy framework provide sufficient room for the survival of people's capacity and interest in participatory processes? Or can people's empowerment take place despite the non-existence of non-governmental organisations—either because they withdraw or because they never emerge, as indeed is the case in several regions.

Yet another implication of the relevance of NGO support to people's participation relates to the motives of their involvement. Some NGOs may be interested only in using people's participation as a strategy to weaken the power of the state, and once that happens, or if that does not happen, they may tend to withdraw. If NGOs were just banking on people's participation to enhance their own power rather than that of the people, how far they succeed in limiting the power of state to promote their own position will define the chances of their continuing to do so. And if these NGOs are floated or supported by foreign forces, this may only result in increasing hold of outside forces on the lives and decisions of people, a situation that will be the very opposite of what is professed by these to be their objective, viz, people's empowerment.

There can be a third implication of NGO relevance in promoting people's participation. This can be a challenge even if the former two possibilities—NGO withdrawal and NGO concern for power—were not to emerge and NGOs were quite seriously interested in the empowerment of people. Being outsiders, NGOs may be so conditioned in their thinking and so limited in their perceptions that they may not truly understand people's needs, problems and suggestions and instead continue to offer them 'knowledge' and skills which may be misleading, even harmful, from the point of view of people. The presence and support of NGOs in that case can be as dangerous as their sudden withdrawal when seen from the viewpoint of people's empowerment. Unless policy framework enables people to participate despite the non-existence of exogenous organisational support, unless people can organise and empower themselves on their own, and unless there is scope for the reassertion of local knowledges and traditional skills of people, NGO continuance will give the illusion of people's empowerment whereas in effect the latter would merely be carrying out 'given' plans

and programmes, and NGO withdrawal will leave a vacuum which can add to the powerlessness rather than empowerment of the people.

(3) Since international interest in forest management and in people's participation as a strategy of management has given rise to programmes and projects with people's participation as a component of these, this too is likely to have implications for the nature of empowerment likely to follow. The promotion of programmes and projects drawn at the top with or without the involvement of local people and the policy of executing these with the help of people's participation can have the implication of reducing people to the tools of these agencies. Not only are these likely to create dependence-producing conditions by encouraging people to depend on them for capital, technical resources and skills rather than explore and develop local resources and skills, and thereby expose them to a state of helplessness in case of withdrawal, there is also the possibility of people further losing faith in themselves and their traditional skills or local knowledge base if such programmes continue to be the key instruments of promoting people's participation. Foreign supported local participation, despite all claims to that effect, is not likely to promote local knowledge as a tool of management. If management plans are offered from above, and various information dissemination strategies systematically used to influence the people, this will further shatter people's faith in themselves to the advantage of project promoters. How policy changes can then contribute towards people's empowerment in such remote-controlled settings is an important challenge. For else, participation is likely to be permitted or promoted only up to the point it does not challenge these centrally-planned programmes and projects.

(4) Since policy proclamation on people's involvement in forest management has come in a context marked by a long history of policy-making which remains far short of implementation, there are reasons to be cautious about its intents and potential too. What if policy promoters were not really committed to the goals of people's participation? Could the policy still succeed? Or could empowerment of people result despite limited commitments of policy elites simply because policy framework makes some room for that? Could the policy itself be turned by the people into an effective instrument of their empowerment and thereby not only preventing its reversal but also ensuring its realisation? Or can symbolic policy be turned into effective policy by the likely beneficiaries by tapping its own inner potential and changing the balance of

forces and alignment of interests within and across the state and society.

### III

In the light of the issues which have been raised above, the joint forest management policy must be assessed in terms of its capacity to (a) lead towards the empowerment of people so that they can participate genuinely and effectively, (b) increase the autonomy of people by reducing the scope for the interference of exogenous forces; (c) facilitate greater utilisation of the traditional and time-tested skills and knowledge of the local people; and (d) ensure implementation and further expansion without being captured and redefined by vested interests to the disadvantage of the poor and marginalised.

What does the experience of joint management system suggest in these respects? How does it reflect on the issues of empowerment; autonomy; local knowledge; and effectivity? It is time to take an account of these experiences—successes, failures, shortcomings as these have appeared and disappeared and grounds for hopes and challenges these leave us with.

#### EMPOWERMENT

A glance at the JFM resolutions of various states suggests that the main feature of these is the sharing of economic 'gains' with the people. While this undoubtedly strengthens the hands of the poor and marginalised who suffered under the earlier system of state control, the extent, nature and limits of power so obtained by the people are worth taking note of. In most states the formation of forest protection committees by the people has been facilitated by the forest department with the help of voluntary agencies only in respect of degraded forest. Besides, the powers given to these committees under the agreements are generally very little. These committees, for instance, are expected to 'assist' the forest department in preventing trespass, encroachment, grazing, fire, poaching, theft or damage but hardly enjoy the power to 'punish' or to decide the nature of punishment for those caught indulging in any of these prohibited activities—only Bihar and Haryana are an exception to this. Likewise, these committees are expected to assist the forest department in the "timely execution of all forestry work" and in some cases also "selection of species to be planted in their area" and 'distribution of proceeds', but they do not enjoy the 'right' to decide these. Nor do they set rules for their own functioning (except in Haryana and Bihar) or exercise any power in respect of cancellation of membership (except in Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir). West Bengal, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Maharashtra and

Jammu and Kashmir, the forest department has been authorised to even dissolve these protection committees or to cancel the membership of particular individual without having to account for that. People are thus made dependent on the state even for their right to organise the protection committees or to remain as members, not to speak of the limits on their rights in decision-making or to challenge the decisions of the forest department.

How, then, can one expect these committees to be created under the joint forest management regulations to empower the people to any meaningful extent? When one compares the situation of people under the present policy to that accepted previously, some gains indeed do seem to have been made, at least in the sense of admitting them some rights over forests if they protected these. Yet, if one looks for the actual increase in people's participation and power in the wake of new JFM resolutions, there is little ground for celebration.

In fact, much before the formal provisions for participation were incorporated in the forest policy, particularly in the JFM regulations, people in several regions were already organised and involved in protection of forests adjoining their villages. In Orissa, for instance, a survey sponsored by the social forestry project revealed that as many as 1,181 blocks of forest patches ranging from about 9 to 1,000 hectares and of different legal status were already under the protection of adjoining villages at the time of the promotion of new JFM regulations in 1988. Likewise, in West Bengal also a very large number of villages were already engaged in protection work when the JFM rules were promoted in 1989. People's participation and people's power preceded rather than resulted from this policy change in these areas.

The number of forest protection committees in various states has no doubt registered an increase in these as well as several other states, but it has also been noticed that in many areas, the excessive inclination of forest department to achieve targets has resulted in the formation of a very large number of people's committees which hardly reflect anything like people's participation and which are effectively under the control of a few dominating individuals in the area.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to see them as a source of people's empowerment; these are not even truly participatory.

There is yet another dimension of JFM systems which reflects poorly on the issue of people's empowerment. This is evident in the gender bias, so characteristic of the system as operating in most states. Empowerment of women has not even been aimed at except in some states, such as West Bengal. States like Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir which clearly provide member-

ship rights for purposes of forest protection committees to only one person from each family in effect deprive the women of their rights to participate in the proceedings of FPCs, on the one hand, to exercise rights over the benefits of protection, on the other. In certain other states, even when formal rights to membership are available to both men and women, women are hardly visible because of the attitudes of both forest department officials and the male members of the community. West Bengal, after it experienced lack of co-operation from women in matters of protection because they were deprived of benefits, tried to rectify this situation by amending the rules in 1991, and providing for the joint membership of both men and women, and making provision of joint bank accounts where shares can be deposited by the department after harvesting. Even then, however, women participation and empowerment is not secured in several committees in the state.<sup>26a</sup> In several states, ineffectiveness in terms of empowerment is also evident in the inability of the JFMs to rectify the existing inequalities and make room for the voice of weaker castes and tribes when conflicts of interest emerge. Addressing these issues in a manner which empowers the weakest sections of society is a major challenge for most states at present.

Contrary to increasing the power and participatory potential of people, the JFM regulations may actually turn out to limit these. Already, the rules seem to have managed to redefine the very framework as well as the direction and nature of participation. People must participate to protect their forests; this will involve co-operation with the state; this will help them improve their own status also; therefore, it is in their own interest to not only resort to participation but do so in close co-operation with the state: these are the messages offered by the new policy. The very framework of policy thus rules out the right to challenge the state. If they challenge the state they may also stand to lose their rights offered by these rules. How far people can go once they find themselves involved in the situation, however, is not easy to predict at this early stage of the new policy. Grounds for hope can certainly improve if the legal status of rules is improved—at this stage, fear are being raised about their being in contravention to the Forest Conservation Act which will imply that a judicial challenge will undo whatever gains might have been made as a result of their being in existence.<sup>27</sup> More important, however, there is a need to increase the powers of the committees and to empower people by introducing changes in other spheres—land tenure laws, resource control policies, etc, on the one hand, and to clearly define their relationship to the existing panchayats

and other formal organisations in the area, on the other.

#### AUTONOMY

Does the joint forest management system increase the scope for the autonomy of people by reducing the scope for outside interference? Despite the claims that the JFM resolutions intend to increase people's participation, there is little by way of ensuring the autonomy of such participatory activities. Quite to the contrary, the resolutions themselves create grounds for reducing such autonomy. For not only is the power of the forest department to supervise and monitor such participation and to permit or restrict the rights of people to participate and acquire certain benefits as a consequence enormous in most states, there is also another possible source of reducing people's autonomy.

The JFM resolutions of various states clearly accept and support the role of non-governmental organisations in mobilising people in various local situations. But that is not all. These also reflect the tendency of state to trust the 'technical knowledge' of voluntary agencies in matters of forest protection.<sup>28</sup> While voluntary agencies can be of some help in making room for people's autonomy where these are actually grounded in local reality and are sensitive to people's needs as well as their capabilities, this is not always the case. A very large number of voluntary agencies can be seen to be operating programmes supported by outside agencies. Even when these programmes are drawn with the help of or by involving the local people, the capacity of their funding agencies to influence them is significant enough to raise doubts about their autonomy.<sup>29</sup>

In assessing the scope for the autonomy of people's organisations in forest management as provided by the JFM regulations of various states, it is important to refer to the likely implications which international programmes such as the Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP) of FAO may have in this regard. The TFAP was adopted by the FAO with the active support of other international organisations like World Bank, UNDP and World Resources Institute in direct pursuance of their interest in saving tropical forests. This programme which was launched in 1985 and revised in 1990, to among other things, make room for the involvement of forest-dependent people, is sought to be implemented by involving national governments and non-governmental organisations of the countries of concern. Despite talking of local people's participation as an important input, relevant not only to the drawing up of local micro-plans but also to their execution, the TFAP is still very clearly a top-down initiative with a strong emphasis on centralised training, technical

and other forms of support, campaigning for information dissemination, etc.<sup>30</sup> People's participation is seen by it only as an instrument of making the programme a success. Yet it is very easy for programmes like the TFAP to absorb and reshape national or local—governmental as well as non-governmental—initiatives in respect of people's participation. Unless the autonomy of people's participation from such interventions from above is ensured, the JFM regulations are not likely to make much difference to the state of the people.

There are strong grounds to be cautious about the role of non-governmental organisations limiting the autonomy of people's participation not only through their strategies but even more importantly through their training and monitoring programmes. Such training programmes are very characteristic of several non-governmental organisations which assist local voluntary agencies in 'promoting' people's participation, and which very regularly organise training programme for the personnel working with these agencies. Of late, some NGOs have extended training facilities to cover even state personnel—forest department personnel are being trained by them in various states, apparently to enable them carry out their new responsibilities under the Joint Forest Management policy.<sup>31</sup> Where this leads to remains to be seen, but there is little ground to believe that this is likely to increase the autonomy of people's organisations, or that this will not undermine the autonomy of the state *vis-a-vis* some other exogenous interests, without in effect strengthening the hands of the people. Or this may just end up by replacing the centralised control of state by organised interferences and top-down interventions of exogenous non-governmental organisations.

This, of course, is not to suggest that non-governmental organisations cannot or will never support the cause of people's participation and that their involvement will necessarily undermine the autonomy of local people's organisations and participation. In fact, there have been some very successful experiences in participatory management initiated or supported by non-governmental organisations; but there is a need to be cautious while deriving meanings from these successes. Not only have these limited number of fondly nurtured local experiments been liberally supported in all possible respects, a fact which itself accounts for the limits of similar results flowing from all other areas; they have also actually evolved as 'experiments' from their specific local contexts themselves,<sup>32</sup> thereby limiting the possibility of their being replicated in other contexts, a fact which often makes NGOs very selective in their support and thus introduces new basis for inequality across regions. NGOs usually prefer to work or

support work in areas where the chances of success are more than those where these are relatively poor, thus making the struggles of autonomous people relatively more difficult than those supported by them. There have also been instances of withdrawal of support where success (as defined by the NGO) was too slow to come either because of the non-compliance of people or because of some other difficulties which characterised the local context and which could not be handled under the scheme of action which was a part of the wider plans of the NGO.<sup>33</sup> Experience suggests that the heavy reliance placed on outside NGO support is likely to limit not only the coverage of programmes but also the capacity of specific programmes continuing even after NGOs withdraw from the scene, not to speak of the disruptions which result from such outside interferences in local settings and the subordination and dependence of people these perpetuate. Any concern for the real empowerment of people must, therefore, ensure the autonomy of local people's organisations and struggles from direct or indirect interferences of outside forces. JFM must not be reduced to being a mere component of the plans of foreign donors or their agents at national or local levels.

#### LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The success of any policy on people's participation will depend on the scope it provides to the people to innovate, experiment or effectively utilise their traditional heritage and local knowledge base. There is an increasing realisation of the immense wealth of traditional knowledge and skills inherited by the people in the form of numerous customary laws, rules and forest management practices, which not only reflect a deep understanding of the local ecosystem but also offer the best ways of handling several local problems.<sup>34</sup>

The extreme faith placed by the colonial as well as post-colonial Indian state in modern science and technology, and adoption of policies based on these led to a rapid decline and disuse of traditional wisdom and technologies. Negligible attention was paid to the local value-systems and local skills as possible ways of dealing with the problems of people in their specific local contexts. The perception of traditional values of people as irrational and non-conducive to efficient management and the adoption of policies and opinion management strategies in the name of raising the consciousness of people to give up these values and thereby serve the cause of national development resulted in the fast depletion and loss of not only forest resources but also traditional knowledge and local skills evolved over ages to manage the specific local contexts. The value of local management techniques was further

overlooked under the influence of commercial interests and the maximising concerns of the emerging capitalist ethos of the system. All this resulted in the loss of people's power over their environment on the one hand and poverty of the environment on the other.<sup>35</sup>

In this context the obvious question is: Does the policy on joint forest management provide sufficient scope for the revival of relevant traditional skills and the development of local knowledge bases which can be more adapt at addressing the local needs and problems? So far as there is scope for people's effective participation in results after these findings are put into practice: all give us enough reasons to be cautious while relying on modern science and technology research and rejecting the time-tested local methods of managing the system. The human element of research is also overlooked in the researches carried out in lab while those experimented in local settings by the local people over long periods of time are closely linked to this question of the social and human implications of what is suggested or rejected.<sup>36</sup> The JFM system must make room for the real involvement of people not only in management activities but in the very definition of what should constitute management in a given local context.

#### EFFECTIVENESS

Is joint management of forests likely to become a reality? What are the chances of the rules being put into effect, especially in areas where people's participation is still very low and in areas where people's committees have been given rights to shape their rules or to determine the distribution of benefits? Or can the people's committees function in areas where panchayats or some other formal organisations are already exercising rights in the management of forests? The legal position of people's committees has already been questioned in some areas. The success of JFM is linked to the manner in which these issues are resolved. Past experiences with government programmes have not been very promising in this regard. In most regions, development programmes have in effect been captured by vested interests, either in active collusion with state elites or because state elites opted to remain quiet over distortions in implementation spaces. In both situations, lack of people's organisation and active participation was invariably a major contributory factor to the reality of policy/programme capture by powerful interests. Community Development Programme, Land Reforms Programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme as well as the Social Forestry Programme stand testimony to the extent to which policy can deviate from its declared goals in the

process of execution in different politico-economic or socio-cultural contexts. While differences in the extent of policy effectiveness are noteworthy across states, and this is often attributed to the party which governs the state, two observations may be essential in order to place the relationship of people and policies in context. One, it is not difficult to find variations in policy effectiveness within the states too—people themselves are the most significant explanatory variable for this. Two, party in power is not insignificant to the state of policy effectiveness in any region, yet the choice of party itself reflects on the state and concerns of people themselves.

The success or failure of JFMS too cannot, therefore, be read without being linked to the capacity of people to take active interest in the programme on the one hand and the support offered by state through other policies on the other. If JFMS has been far more effective in West Bengal than in several other states, it is noteworthy that participation there preceded the adoption of JFM rules, and that too in a big way. There were no less than 1,200 protection committees already in operation in various parts of the state. The existence of participatory institutions at local levels did make way for such initiatives in respect of forest protection.<sup>37</sup> The policy on land reforms was also more successfully implemented before taking action in the sphere of forest management. All this made the evasion of rules meant to promote people's participation relatively more difficult in West Bengal than was the case in other states. The significance of the fact that the West Bengal situation is also characterised by a relatively longer period of experience with joint management than other states must, however, not be overlooked when a comparison is made on the point of actual performance. For even in West Bengal, studies point out that some FPCs were not functioning while others did not have broad-based support.<sup>38</sup> There is also little to derive consolation from in respect of effectiveness of people in matters of micro-planning and plan execution in most cases under the existing arrangements for participation.<sup>39</sup>

As regards the experience of other states, already there are indications of bureaucratisation of the programme of participation itself. The concern of forest officials for attaining high targets in respect of forming forest protection committees has resulted in the formation of a large number of 'people's committees' which are actually non-existent. These are either formed only on paper and do not suggest of any effective participation by the people, or these have been formed and captured by a few powerful persons in the area, who thereby corner all benefits in the name of people. In Haryana, for instance, soon after the pro-

motion of JFM rules many such committees were formed but, in effect, in many areas people neither participated in the management of forests nor acquired any benefits—contractors took up the role of leaders of new resource management societies and continue to serve their own interests in the name of people's participation and people's rights over forest resources.<sup>40</sup> And Haryana has not been an exceptional case in this regard. Even states like Orissa, which experienced participatory management of forests by the local people in several areas quite early, have been reported to have such paper committees. Officials reflect a greater concern for the expansion of the programme than for its effectiveness.

Regional variations in the effectiveness of participatory management practices are also closely related to the extent and nature of conflicts which characterise social relations in specific settings. At times, conflicts are rooted in the forest ecology itself and assume specific forms or intensity because of factors which interfere with the traditional ways of managing these resources; often policy interventions themselves also intensify or resolve—fairly or unfairly—some of these conflicts in certain settings. People's empowerment does become a tricky question in many such contexts. For clash of interests over the use and protection of resources as well as those on the protection or regeneration of specific resources—those between graziers and artisans or those between specific categories of artisans—often crystallised in many regions along traditional caste lines, impede the execution of participatory systems in the absence of alternate ways of dealing with these situations.<sup>41</sup> Without creating space for resolving these conflicts, as through increasing the scope for dealing with the existing forms of dependence, the possibilities of securing effective participatory management systems wherein conflicts can be resolved without increasing the exploitation of the weak and marginalised is very remote.

The creation of such conditions, however, is itself dependent on the participation and pressurisation of state by concerned interests themselves, which implies that the effectiveness of JFMS is not simply a matter of promoting rules for participation; it requires a far more comprehensive programme of policy support; even more, it requires a strong participatory spirit. Where history has been harsh on these counts, present must attempt to compensate. Every effort should be made to create participatory spaces; every effort should also be made to prevent their capture by vested interests; but final outcomes in terms of the effectiveness of participatory processes in forest management will depend on the inclination and organising capacities of people themselves. Evidence suggests that it is not realistic to

assume that people's participation can automatically follow some rules, even if these rules provide incentives in the form of benefits, especially so, in a context where people have been deprived of their rights because of structures of exploitation and subjugation rather than lack of political proclamations or policy statements. To prevent the capturing of participatory spaces by the already entrenched interests, it is essential to simultaneously address the issue of other avenues of exploitation and deprivation.

#### CONCLUSION

While JFMS has been readily promoted and easily interpreted in both official policy discourse at national and international levels and non-official political discourse, especially at the level of NGOs, as a major shift from state regulation towards people's participation, this paper has argued that it is important to carefully perceive and interpret these claims. Emphasising the need to relate the discussions on JFMS and people's participation to wider theoretical questions about the very essence of participation, the paper utilises a four-fold criteria of evaluation, incorporating the principles of empowerment; autonomy; self-realisation through actualisation of local knowledge and skills; and effective escape from being transformed into mere symbolic gestures. The real meanings, possibilities and constraints of JFMS have been analysed in terms of these principles both in the light of the constraints embedded in the contexts which informed its promotion and in terms of actual experiences in respect of these.

The foregoing discussion brings home the point that the present framework of JFMS, conceived as it is without any effective mechanisms for people's empowerment, autonomy, self-realisation and secure implementation, is unlikely to accomplish much even in terms of its own proclaimed objectives. Policy changes introduced through JFM rules will not imply anything significant unless participatory spaces are strengthened through state policy as well as people's own actions. It is imperative indeed to strengthen people's spaces through policy support from all sides (not confined to some issues alone), and enable them to empower themselves against exploitative forces in society, assert their autonomy against the colonising forces operating from within or from outside the local contexts and put into effect their own collective knowledge systems. Where colonising and centralising practices have introduced or strengthened exploitative relations, policy support must be aimed at introducing correctives rather than strengthening such forces which dominate these relations. But the real question is: Can policy escape capture and transformation at the hands of vested interests?

#### Notes

- 1 The country's forest cover had in fact depleted to an abysmal low of 14 per cent in 1989. After that the situation has marginally improved, though it is still far from the required 33 per cent. A part of the recorded increase is also due to technical factors rather than any actual improvement in forest cover.
- 2 In Madhya Pradesh alone, for instance, the value of MFP or non-wood forest produce was estimated to exceed \$ 700 million annually in the late 1980s. Mark Poffenberger, *Joint Management of Forest Lands: Experiences from South Asia*, Ford Foundation, New Delhi, 1990, p 5.
- 3 MFP collection is estimated to create no less than two million person years of employment. Tirath Gupta and Amar Guleria, *Non-Wood Forest Products in India*. Oxford and IBH, New Delhi, 1982, p 133.
- 4 Annual rent from forests in the form of environmental services and goods is calculated by J B Lal to be Rs 795.5 billion, which is more than a quarter of the GDP. This includes rent from timber and firewood (Rs 128.8 billion), minor forest produce (Rs 109 billion), grazing (Rs 22 billion), biodiversity (Rs 66 billion), recreation (Rs 1 billion) and other environmental services (RS 566.8 billion). On the basis of this the net present worth of Indian forests is placed at Rs 15,910 billion. J B Lal, 'Economic Value of India's Forest Stock' in Anil Agarwal (ed), *The Price of Forests*, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, p 47. One still wonders, however, if all that is implied in environment can be reduced to its economic worth alone.
- 5 S Palit, 'Do Our Forests Have Barren Future', *Statesman*, April 4, 1992.
- 6 The National Commission on Agriculture, for instance, stated, 'Free supply of forest produce to the rural population and their rights and privileges have brought destruction to the forest and so it is necessary to reverse the process,' Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operation, National Commission on Agriculture, Part IX, *Forestry*, New Delhi, 1976, p 25.
- 7 Excessive concerns for revenue, a disregard for forest people's needs, and lack of initiatives in involving people in forest protection work in the past were admitted in the forest policy statement of 1988 as needing to be corrected.
- 8 One estimate is that "at least 80 per cent of India's natural resources were common property" before the state intervened in the name of scientific management. Chatrapati Singh, *Common Property and Common Poverty: India's Forests, Forest Dwellers and the Law*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, p 10.
- 9 Singh, op cit; Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods—Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989. M Gadgil, 'Social Restraint on Resource Utilisation: The Indian Experience' in J A McNeely and D Pitt (eds), *Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension in Environmental Planning*, Croom Helm, 1985.
- 10 British shipping industry turned towards Indian forests to meet their need for wood; later, the expansion of railways in India

this does not exist.

In any case, they told us, the President, who is a Scheduled Caste man - one of the formerly nomadic people - is not here. We assumed that we had, perhaps, been misinformed, and we should go elsewhere. We remained to chat a little; they spoke of the lack of rain 'It is because the Janata Dal has come to power' said one man; 'the same thing happened last time.' Many of those we spoke to had three or four acres of land; with four acres, a family can live; but if the rain does not come, we shall be ruined. Those who are landless work on other people's fields. Vasant, a young man of twenty, who is studying in college, and is at home for the holidays, says that we should perhaps go and speak to Mr Thomas and his brother. They are committee members. They may know something more. You will find them about two kilometres further down the road. Two of the villagers come with us, to show the way.

We came to a substantial house. Mr Thomas came out from the yard where he was working. Sure, there is a plantation, he tells us proudly. It is quite near. He accompanies us another half-kilometre or so; and there, behind barbed wire strung between poles, was indeed last year's planting: 1,200 acres of mixed trees. We walk a little into the trees; there is dindal, used chiefly for firewood; some tamarind seedlings; the sour-fruit amla trees with their thorny branches; local matti, black and white-barked, used for construction and firewood, honne, as well as teak, acacia and mango. This is rich land. Where plantation has not been carried out, spontaneous regeneration is already promising a rich renewal of the forest. Mr Thomas says his family came originally from Kerala. He is a Christian, an Evangelical Protestant. He tells me he has 35 - 40 acres of land, where he grows sugarcane, jowar, paddy.

Mr Thomas speaks excellent English. He asks me what is my religion. When I say Protestant, he is pleased. I ask him about the Village Forest Committee. Yes, it exists. There are 12 members. In fact, there are 200 who belong to the committee, but these are ignorant ill-educated people. They know nothing, he assures me, and so this is why they are not interested in taking part in the real work of the committee. This year, the committee is to plant another 1,000 acres. We had already started, but we decided that, until the rain comes, there is no point, so work has been suspended for the moment. He says the Forest Range Officer comes to see me and my brother if there is any problem. We have a good plantation here. After 15 - 20 years, we will get 50% of the income for the village; 25% will come to the committee, and 25% will be ploughed back into the project. The Forest Department will get the rest.

The two villagers who had accompanied us say nothing. They look on, impassively. It soon becomes clear that it is impossible for the people to be unaware of so vast a plantation - part of it covers the whole hillside - less than two kilometres from where they are living.

It seems that, not for the first time, powerful local interests have entered into collusion with the Forest Officers. This, which was to have been a showpiece of the ODA undertaking, turns out to contain all the traditional flaws of developmental policy through the years. The silence of the people is not the silence of dumb ignorance; it is the silence of fear.

The ODA project makes great play of the inadequacy of the 'traditional methods and techniques of forest management' for the satisfactory execution of this scheme. There is a considerable programme of training for senior forest officers in the United Kingdom - about 170 in all - where they have received instruction in participatory forest management. For lower-ranking officers, there is an extensive training programme being carried out by MYRADA, a Karnataka NGO, which was established about 25 years ago, and worked with the large number of Tibetan refugees settled around

the town of Mungod at that time. These officers trained locally receive a four-day programme in participatory management. They are learning about the necessity for more enlightened ways in dealing with people who live in and around the forest, and perhaps, even, something about the malignancy of the culture of extortion, confiscation and fines which have been part of forest management in India since British times. We should not be too sanguine about the outcome of this training. One VFC President who had been on a session with half a dozen VFC Presidents and an equal number of Range Forest Officers said that the experience had been very good. The cultural fear between villagers and officials had been openly expressed. Then, when they returned to their respective villages in the Forest Department vehicle, as he descended from the jeep, the Forest Officer said 'Look, whatever training you got was good. But you should forget that now that you have reached this place.'

And here is another great irony. By its insistence upon a change in the culture of the Forest Department, the Overseas Development Administration is striking precisely at the heart of the legacy of a frozen imperial tradition. Most of the forest laws in India were enacted during the British time, and the governments of independent India have rarely seen fit to interfere with such satisfactory arrangements. The Overseas Development Agency sees quite clearly that these ossified archaic institutions no longer serve their purpose; and accordingly, part of the expensive expertise (no less than five million pounds is to be spent on this project on consultancies, advice and expertise within Britain). A more evolved and sophisticated imperial power confronts the consequences of its own long baleful reign, does not like what it sees, and sets about changing a forest department culture which is both deeply entrenched and scarcely tractable to mere 'training'. It exhibits a disdainful misunderstanding, both of the nature of institutions, and of the reality of the ground relationship between the Forest department and the people.

The very notion of 'joint management' between unequals is a contradiction, as many Indian industrial houses who have gone into joint ventures with multinationals are discovering to their chagrin. In a joint venture of unequal partners, the subordinate is usually swallowed up: if Coca Cola sets up a joint venture with the Hubli Soft Drink Production Centre, it is not difficult to foresee the fate of the indigenous company.

And so it remains with the Forest Department and people. Such 'traditions' as forest officers conniving and taking part in smuggling rackets, extortion of money from people who take from the forest produce for their own use, the naked assertion of power over those they employ, is not going to be wished away in training sessions, now matter how intensive and professionally accomplished these may be. And even if some shifts occur during the training period, it is unlikely that these will be sustained, when people return to the context in which the realities of power and privilege confront the marginal and dispossessed. As one senior forest officer said to me 'You are not going to change policemen into social reformers.'

People often feign a functional ignorance because they are frightened. The experts of the ODA cannot be unaware of these relationships; and neither can they declare that it is a matter for the government of India; their choice to modify, modernise and update the traditions of the Forest Department already represents a considerable involvement in the social policy of India; selective and partial no doubt; for it is scarcely to be expected that foreign governments whose policies celebrate the exacerbation of inequality are going to exhibit any tenderness for the poor of Uttara Kannada, whatever may appear on the prospectus of their projects.

In some places, where Chairmen of Village Forest Committees have been trained at the same time as Range Forest Officers, there has been some evidence that a certain mutual understanding has been achieved. This is sometimes favourably reflected in the workings of the committee, but in some

villages, the Chairman keeps the knowledge he has for himself and a few associates. In all cases, a Forest Officer remains secretary of the VFC, and there is no openness in the accounts, the officials remain in control of the minutes of the meetings, and on more than one occasion, people were required to register their assent to minutes that were written subsequent to their signature or mark.

We went to Bellankeri Village on a day when the monsoon had churned the road to an all but impassable mud. The plantation assigned to this village is some way from the settlement; 46 hectares of multi-purpose trees. On this site, the KFD had felled natural forest to plant eucalyptus 20 years ago. These trees had been harvested before the area was designated for Bellankeri. There were amla bushes, there was honne, matti, casuarina; but the most interesting element is the extraordinary capacity for natural regeneration, independently of the project planting.

Indeed, the growth of the extensively planted acacia will kill off many of the matti saplings. The still-open ground is covered with tiny yellow zeddu flowers, koli, the tender leaves of which are eaten as a vegetable, and the ubiquitous touch-me-not leaves, which close up rapidly under the slightest stimulus. In order to set up this plantation, several families who had been cultivating - some of them for many years - had been evicted. Yet not all so-called 'encroachers' have been removed: the shape of the plantation has been adjusted to accommodate some of the richer and more influential farmers who are cultivating here.

The village itself is difficult to reach because of the rain: the red laterite soil in the standing water looks like a strange mixture of milk and blood. We visit the Chairman of the Village Committee. He has gone to Sunday market in a neighbouring town. We sit on wooden chairs on the verandah of his substantial house; heavy wooden pillars, the intricate carving on which is scarcely visible in the dim light. The house is painted bright blue and silver; on the threshold is an arrangement of the white and purple stars of nityapushpa, everlasting flowers, an expression of the soul of the house. On the verandah, a wooden bed, and some sacks of paddy; the floor is tiled; the windows have wooden bars to keep birds out; incongruously, paper streamers still hang from the roof, evidence of a recent festival; there is a vase of plastic flowers on the tv set in the corner.

An old man, Bulund Sab, joins us; he is 75, his sight dimmed by untreated cataracts, but his mind is sharp and his memory undimmed. A Muslim, his family migrated here when he was a child 'in search of prosperity' as he says, a prosperity which escaped them. He tells how the area was pure jungle when they came; there were tigers and bears here then. 25 years ago, they clear-felled the natural forest for a plantation of nilgiri (eucalyptus). Other parts of the forest they planted with teak. They were clearing the forest at a rate of more than 250 acres a year. Some people who had no land - about 30 families - then encroached upon the nilgiri plantation to begin cultivation. He says that they were doing less harm than the monocultures; but over the years, they have all been evicted, part from three powerful families. The most recent evictions came during the JFTM project, within the past two years. In fact, they came and dug trenches while the paddy plants were growing. Bulund Sab has no land. He has four children, all living separately with their families, but one of them takes care of him now that he is too old to work. His son had been cultivating two acres of land, but it was taken from him for the Bellankeri plantation. He had wanted to be allowed to intercrop in the spaces between indigenous tree species, but this was not allowed.

Bulund Sab is thin and his body shrunken by more than 60 years of landless labour. He wears a green headcover, a faded shirt and old lungli. When he began work, he was paid two annas a day; in this village, he was paid three; that was why they came here. In some places at that time payment was still in rice.

The Chairman of the Village Forest Committee arrives, Ganpati Gowde. He tells how all the 96 families in the village paid two rupees to join the Committee. They were told that if they co-operated with the stopping of encroachments, they would receive 50% of the produce from the plantations.

The forest officials came after the membership had been constituted. Ganpati was elected unanimously. 'They asked for our co-operation in planting trees, with the promise of income that could be earned by doing so. But they never consulted us about which trees should be planted. After planting, they came and said 'This is good, na?' Ganpati says that one-third of the village are Muslims. He feels that the people here were duped. He does not believe that any of the promised income will ever materialise. We met the KFD in good faith. The enthusiasm was there in the beginning, but they destroyed it, because their idea of joint management was to gain our acceptance of whatever they wanted to do. There was no other consultation. Ganpati says that everyone knows that the natural regeneration is best, and that the lakhs of rupees spent on planting have been wasted. Regeneration is God-gifted, and is sustainable; man-made plantations do not last.

He is adamant that participation was a ploy to get consent to do what they - the KFD or the ODA or whoever is behind the scheme - intended to do anyway. All 96 families, if they really participated, they could see to it that the forest regenerates. He is not proud of being Chairman of VFC, but would have been so if true popular involvement had happened. The Committee was formed in March 1994. 'Four meetings have occurred', he says, 'but they treat us as if we were stupid. The KFD says 'We have our scientific recipes for reforestation, these are well attested.' We said 'We have our own recipes, we will show you.' They did not want to know. Then they only show some interest when the ODA people come.'

Ganpati Gowde says that if each family in the village had been given one acre to take care of, they would have tended it, and this would have given benefits to everyone, free of cost. The forest should be entrusted to the people. Ganpati himself is privileged; he has 50 acres of land and 5 acres of forest. He is a young man, in his mid-twenties, unmarried, and because among the well-to-do in the village, a potential target for the training of the ODA. But he does not wish to compromise. He calls two men who have been displaced from their land. Bashya Sab is 55. He had been cultivating two acres of paddy for eight years. He had to leave because of the plantation. He says you cannot fight the government. Before he took the land, he had been share-cropping. Now, he says, in his old age, he is forced to return to being a coolie. He has ten children; two boys and eight girls. Two girls are married; two go to school. The others work as labourers for Rs 20 a day. He left the land he was occupying because he 'was afraid of being put behind bars for going against the government.'

Anandapa is 70. He had been harvesting two acres of land on the plantation site for the past five years. They came and dug pits while he was cultivating. He has no other access to land, but must return to being a coolie. His ten children, of whom four are married, work as agricultural labourers.

The complaint of many villagers is that the forest, which has provided a buffer of support against total impoverishment of the people, by its capacity for supplementing necessities - medicines, fruits like amla rich in vitamin C, nuts, herbs, honey, shikakai (a kind of soap-berry) - is increasingly being closed to them. The prospect of monetary rewards from enhanced productivity of forests is a distant promise, and does not help the impoverishment which comes from exclusion of people from the use-value of forest products. In this way, the intensifying market penetration of their lives actually displaces an older economy, and intensifies a process set up during the colonial period. This may give some clue as to why the participation of women - to which the original ODA proposal gave some prominence - has been unsuccessful. Women are essentially conservers, for they, more than men,

The court heard the claim. That was a year ago. The case remains to be heard. He was

understand the use value of what comes from the forest, and they are less likely to trade off access to items and products that are valuable in daily life against uncertain future economic benefits. It remains true that, wherever we went, women did not figure significantly in the VFCs.

The Bangalore-based Centre for Ecological Sciences field centre is in Sirsi town itself. When the ODA project was announced, the Centre had submitted an application for some research, work, but were turned down. Over five million pounds sterling is to be spent on research and consultancies, most of it within the United Kingdom itself. Prabhaker Bhatt and his colleagues at C.E.S. are critical of such expertise that has not merely failed to benefit Indian institutions, but has by-passed indigenous researchers. C.E.S. accept that the underlying impulse - popular participation - is essential, but question the methods that have been employed to assure it. In any case, the amount of forest land that falls under JFPM, following a questionable zonation process, covers only 8,500 hectares out of the 42,000 which falls under the designated area. (In fact 5% of the forest land of the Uttara Kannada Circle).

Certain aspects of micro-level planning have in any case, been sketchy and in some cases non-existent. In order to reduce pressure on fuelwood, Prabhaker Bhatt says that improved chullas should have been introduced; insufficient attention has been given to the role of livestock in the existing farming system, and the production of fodder. Bhatt says that because forest plantations become closed to cattle, many people, especially the poorest landless labourers, have had to sell their beasts - one of the groups the project is specifically designed to help. Some marginal village lands could have been used more productively and systematically; fodder could have been grown on non-arable land. Instead, we see funds for research going into the creation of a herbarium, housed in a costly building. Ground level research should have been carried out before anything started.

Local people are not looking for high-value species. They want the forest to yield a practicable, renewable harvest. They stress multi-purpose trees, not those of commercial value. They want trees such as terminalia chebula, which provides good green manure, and fruits that can be sold for tanning, and then ultimately may provide good timber. Bhatt and his colleagues are scornful of 'people who think they can come and describe an eco-system in three months. You have to live through all the seasons, and because these vary from year to year, you have to remain in the place for a long time before you can make these judgments.'

In fairness to the scheme, the original intention of involving the people only in the zones which were badly degraded, with canopy cover of less than 0.25, has been modified, to include participation in all inhabited zones, excluding only the central core zone of pristine forest.

Prabhaker Bhatt says he sees little difference between the present project and the earlier, unsuccessful so-called Social Forestry schemes. He says that the rhetoric of the ODA is fine, but it is at odds with reality. 'They could have shown to the people that they understand that the people are not the enemies of the forest, that they are the true foresters. There is a problem: the people have needs and the forests must be saved, everyone agrees. But to restrict the people's answering of need to land which is degraded, that with less than 0.25 canopy cover is not going to succeed; nothing in this scheme does anything to address the mis-match between the needs of the people and the available land.'

'Furthermore, how can people trained in London consult people here? It will be higher officers who are trained, but it is the lower cadre people who must deal with the villagers. The people have their own criteria of conservation, and this may not coincide with the ODA or FDK version of conservation. We had some workshops here in August 94, and people said they found it sad to see

not only that the FDK were making such small effort at natural regeneration, but that they were actually removing species that had come back by natural regeneration. There is one bush, carissacarandas, which is a thorny bush, fruits of which are used for making pickles. There is a small industrial unit making pickles, and many women were dependent on picking these fruits and selling them to the factory. These bushes they have systematically removed from the plantation area. In some places they have actually fired the natural forest to prepare it for plantation. There is also a flowering shrub, ghattikai, which flowers only once every seven years, strovilanthus, and they destroyed it when it was in flower, thus destroying an important source of honey, and also preventing the seeding of the plant. We feel sad and disappointed that we who have contact with the people were not consulted. Even the encroachers could have been brought into the process of regeneration instead of being simply evicted. There should be a proper audit of this project. The OIDA people should come and travel extensively in the interior. For the money and manpower expended, the local people should see more results rather than a procession of people from the funding agency and foreign experts. Bore they even think of coming here, they should travel extensively, see and understand the lifestyle of the people, fully appreciate the relationship of the villagers to the resource-base. If they depend on FD officials to interpret this, it is useless. Poverty has forced people to encroach; if there were any other livelihood, they would never have done so. Now this project is moving on to Shimoga Circle, because it is a success; their chief success has been in spending money.

We visited the poor but extensive village of Bashi, several kilometres from the main road along a rough track churned to mud by the rain. The village has several narrow streets, with houses raised on platforms of mitti or, in a few cases, concrete; the walls mainly of earth, but with red Mangalore roof-tiles. The village is shaded by palms and jackfruit trees; cattle were sheltering in thatched sheds, and here and there, little enclosures where landless people were growing a few vegetables. Some women were washing, poor ragged quilts and faded clothing. Bullock-carts stand outside some houses. People were eating jackfruit in the pouring rain, breaking out the yellow segments and passing them round. Many wear the brown goat-hair hooded cloaks which provide protection against the rain, while some workers in the fields wore hats of areca-palm leaves.

Here, we heard what was by now becoming a familiar story. The Forest Officers had come and told the people how they would benefit from the scheme, and that 50% of the benefit would go to the village and its people. They agreed to form the committee to develop the forest jointly with the KFD. It has not happened like that.

The President was unanimously elected, but conflict began almost immediately. The Committee invited a chief guest to come to the inaugural meeting, but the Forest Department objected and refused to take part.

A politically powerful group remained outside the committee, and when the VFC insisted that all encroachers be evicted from the land designated for planting, this group said that only some encroachers should go, meaning that the powerful should remain.

One man in his late twenties - who later made the journey all the way to Sirsi to beg me not to print his name for fear of reprisals - told us that he had been farming three acres of forest land for 20 years. The forest workers came and uprooted his house, broke down his banana trees and dug trenches for the planting. When he protested that all encroachers should be removed, the Forest Department took him to Court, saying that he was creating problems for forest development. He had little choice but to make a counter-charge that the Department had destroyed his growing crops.

The Court upheld the state's case. That was a year ago. The case remains to be heard. He was

growing bananas, paddy and pineapples, and has spent 15,000 rupees on fees. Many more powerful encroachers are still there. He is angry and bitter that he should have had to spend so much of his own money to defend his livelihood against a foreign power that comes to evict him from land his family has been cultivating for 20 years. He wears a white shirt and green check lungi. He is clearly enraged by the injustice of what has happened. He insists he does not want to go to the town to become a labourer. Farming is the best life for him and his family. He says that the people who come from outside always underestimate farmers, assume that they are stupid and know nothing. He says farming requires a great deal of energy and a keen intelligence. While waiting for the Court case, he is in a kind of limbo. He cannot put his heart into cultivating the land when he knows it may be taken from him.

Yerippa is an elderly Scheduled Caste man, also a member of the committee. He does not care who knows his name. He says that the stated objective of the project is good, but there has been no joint decision-taking. People were initially enthusiastic, but the Forest Department simply went ahead and did what they wanted. It was not the people who were unco-operative. Because of the people's resistance, it was too late to plant the saplings, and the Forest Department simply dumped them in the river. Yerippa says that when people are not interested, how can the FD expect the plantations to survive? No one will protect the plants, as happened earlier. Yerippa has been cultivating three acres of forest land for 35 years; he will be given the title to his land because of the time he has spent there.

At Bashi, they are sceptical about seeing any benefits from the project. The Chairman of the VFC has gone for a wedding. They will tell him we came, and he will come to see us in Sirsi within the next few days.

In the rain, the forest is extraordinarily beautiful. An eagle swoops down from the sky, picks up a snake in its talons and sits triumphantly high on a tamarind. Some rays of sunshine through the thinning cloud shine through the new leaves of plantain, so that these are almost yellow. The drip of the rain from the leaves of forest trees falls gently to the ground, a delayed rainshower after the storm has passed. Here, it is easy to understand the fierce pride and protectiveness of the people towards their forests. In these places, you can see how the word 'sustainability' becomes cant - the interaction between true conservers and those whose business is basically with conserving wealth and power where these are already concentrated.

We pass through Banavasi, the old Maurya capital of the kingdom of Karnataka. There, a wide street, with low red-roofed houses, and, at one end, the chariot of Shiva which is drawn once a year - a little like a much smaller version of the Jagannat chariot in Puri in Orissa. Here stands the splendid Madhukeshwara Temple of Shiva, its antique carved splendour now stranded in this strange 'backward' area; the broad carved pillars of the temple create a sense of the depth of time in which this has been a holy place. The temple itself mimics the forest; and sadly, this human-made inspiration of the forests, with the light glowing dimly inside the sanctuary at its core, has outlasted the trees that have been desacralised and turned into timber.

Next day, Jayasheel Gowda, President of the VFC came, with three others from Bashi to see us in Sirsi. He is a man in middle age, totally without fear. He was one of the few people to have dared speak out when the ODA mid-term assessment panel came on its brief two-day stopover in Sirsi, and found time to meet some NGOs, and some dissenters in their hectic schedule of perpetual movement.

He says that there is no accountability to the village committee for the money spent in the name of the VFC. There is no transparency. There are 200 hectares in which they have invested, but

one informs the people of what is being done or why. We said what we wanted, and then they planted 50% acacia. They are preventing natural regeneration.

'Three times we asked the Forester Secretary of the VCF to call a meeting. He said 'You call it.' 'But you have the minute book.' Our decisions were never implemented. We have written to all the higher officials, telling them that we want to preserve the forests. they have not replied. This is a rural area, the people are not educated. If we say there is mismanagement, no one cares. People are afraid of officials. For every small thing, if someone builds a house, makes an implement, a plough, he must go to the forest for it. The officials can make it difficult to pursue any aspect of your life.

'When the election took place, I was elected. The defeated candidate is a powerful. They started raiding our houses after that, to see what timber we had. Everybody has something from the forest in their house. The group that lost has links with the M.L.A, so they wanted to show their strength to us.

'There is no micro-planning. The 50% guarantee is an attempt to buy people's co-operation. There won't be any development, so what is there to share?' Initially, the forest officers said that all encroachments would be settled amicably. There are more than 500 acres for planting. 60 acres have been encroached. Why not leave them?

'There is a story in the villages about a fox that comes wearing a tiger's coat, to terrify the people. Now the real tiger has come, wearing a fox's skin, and its true colour is coming out. The people are poor. If they oppose, they are opposing the Forest Department. Why get involved in such a thing. The people cannot say the reality.

'The ODA people write good reports, but they don't go to the villages. Let them come. We will take them. To make true participation, the responsibility for spending the money should also be with the people as well as the Department. Whatever trees, let US decide; let the Forest Department be there also, make it real participation. The VFC has no power. All they want from us is free watchmen, free labour. If I had money and could speak the language, I would go to the ODA.

'We also have the panchayat, of which I am also a member. Why do we need another committee. For the Forest Department to use the gram panchayat it would be difficult, because then, they would have to tell everything about the expenses.

'The VFCs, it is as though everyone is chasing a horse. They are told 'it has horns'. 'Yes, yes', they say, 'it has horns.' The people have to say yes. The forest official will get the benefits, and he'll go up in the Department.

'To bring fuelwood from the forest for one year, we have to give 10 kg of rice. To build a house, bringing wood from the forest, you must pay 100, 200 rupees.

The smugglers are not village people. A lorry of timber is coming. The FD catches them, and they say 'Come, we will confiscate what you have taken.' The smuggler then goes to his political boss. He telephones a higher official, and then they'll go on their way. Next time, instead of catching he smuggles, they will ask them for so much, and not go to the trouble of making all the officials and politicians telephone each other.

'It is the same with the encroachers. The small cultivators, those using one or two acres will be evicted; the 100-acre encroachers will get off free. The powerful who encroach, they too will say

they are poor. There is so little land, the poor are forced to look for it. The rich know how to manipulate, get everything in their name.

The ODA is testing the medicine on us, and we, the patient, are dying. Giving money to India is wrong. They do not know what is India. The FD is getting so much money for this project, they have no further need to work. We have felt so much pain through it, we have suffered mentally, economically; eight people from the village have gone to Court because of it.

Higher officials never visit our village, because no cars go; only the lower officials, therefore they do not know what goes on. They depend on the reports of the lower officials. What we know is that the better the forests, the better it is for the people. Forests must be preserved.

In areas of thick forest, the Government allowed mango and soft wood to be cut. To remove the timber, other trees were cut, and this provided the space for the encroachers. This was thirty years ago.

As we travelled around the area, we saw a number of small wooden carts on the road at the entrance to various villages; on each, the painted wooden figure of a woman, dressed in pieces of coloured fabric. Her face is painted red, and in her outstretched hand she carries a sword. This is Maramma, an incarnation of Durga. The cart is wheeled from village to village at this time of year, early in the rainy season. When she arrives at the village, the people are expected to clean out their houses, and to pray that no harm will befall the community. When this has been done, the people wheel the cart to the entrance of the next village, and the process of cleaning and warding off evil will begin there.

Some people in Karnataka marvel at the survival of this practice; others expressed a feeling of some shame at what they regard as a superstitious custom. But its roots lie, as so often, in practical activity. At the beginning of the monsoon, drains are blocked by dry kachera that has accumulated in the dry season, and this begins to rot; water readily becomes contaminated. It is the proper time to start cleaning, and to take precautions against so of the unwholesome consequences of the onset of the precious, vital rains.

The ODA has not been content to rely solely on the Forest Department for the smooth running of the VFCs. In those areas where NGOs are already active, they have participated in the committees, and in many cases have acted as mediators between forest officials and people.

Sudarshan is working with VIKAS, an NGO supported by Oxfam. He says that Vikas became involved in the VFC at Gotgodi village only after the plantation had already been established. Consultation took place with the villagers only after that. Vikas has since then helped to ensure that the meetings are held in good order. A teak nursery has been established, and a women's group - in response to the neglected area of 'gender' element referred to in the original proposal. In Gotgodi, the villagers actually caught some timber-smugglers, but, says Sudarshan, the response of the Forest Department was poor.

Vidyahadhar Gadgil is Oxfam's worker in Sirsi. Oxfam has been given the task of working with some of the poorest village communities in enhancing and establishing village committees. Vidyahadhar says that Oxfam's work is around a range of forest-related issues which affect people in the area; some of them connected with JFPM and some not. He feels that the project has created an enabling environment, in which Oxfam can work, but is adamant that Oxfam is in no way an alibi or a justification of the ODA project. 'We are not a certificate of goodness', is his comment. When

people are asked whether they want plantations or control of the forest, they almost invariably respond that it is control they seek. Vidyahadhar tells that in areas where there is a committed Forest Officer, where NGOs are participating, and the work is truly collaborative, as in some of the coastal villages around Karwar, the fundamental intention of the project comes closer to realisation than anywhere else.

Vidyahadhar makes the general point that forest revenue is no longer of such primary importance to the Government of India as it was in colonial times; in revenue terms, it has been overtaken by the industrial and commercial sectors. But the generation of revenue is still of vital importance to the Forest Department itself, because this is the basis of its power; and this only reinforces a conservative bureaucratic structure supporting a culture of extraction and self-enrichment. The concept of the ODA project cannot be separated from this context. 'The bureaucracy exists to regulate, not to promote or to encourage. It is, to say the least, to be over-hopeful to believe this is going to be seriously challenged, even by air-lifting officials to Britain for training purposes.

As to the large expenditure on British consultancies, activists in the Uttara Kannada Circle (the five divisions in which the ODA is established), see it as a form of employment generation for British academics. They observe that during the Thatcher years, the higher education policy starved the universities of funds. These now have to generate their own income, and in this instance, they are finding some welcome out-relief through the Aid budget of the ODA.

Pandurang Hegde, one of the guiding spirits of the Appiko movement in the Uttara Kannada movement (the Karnataka equivalent of Chipko in the late seventies and eighties) says that you cannot just mark out degraded forest areas for the people, and keep the rest in the hands of the ODA and Forest Department. In any case, the baggage of 'benefit-sharing' should be shed. This inducement to offer monetary rewards as an incentive to go along with commercial plantations is both contrary to the villagers' reliance on the use-value of forest products, and actually encourages further over-exploitation of the forests. What is more, it is of a piece with discredited colonial policies of extraction. After all, people have lived in the forests for ever. Even bureaucrats are slowly coming to see you cannot preserve forests by excluding the people; to give the people a stake in forest preservation, rather than regarding them as both an enemy to and a burden upon the forest is a quite proper development. But the manner in which this has been pursued in practice and on the ground in this project is harmful to the interests of both people and forests.

We visited the office of VIKAS in Malagi, a small town about 30 kilometres from Sirsi on the road to Hubli. Here, Vikas, with the help of Oxfam, has set up a bamboo training workshop, in order to enhance the skills and marketability of items crated by the medars, a caste traditionally working with bamboo for local markets. Traditionally, the people made sieves, the mara, used for rice-winning, and baskets for storage purposes. We met Parashuram Patil, a young man of 21, who has attended one of the two-month courses at the workshop.

Parashuram says that he learned bamboo work from a child, and by the age of fourteen was already making traditional objects. He has had no problem in acquiring the skill to make a whole new range of objects. The workshop is in a brick barn in the village, and there, we could see many of the items that have been crafted for the urban markets - table lamps, baskets, containers, a baby's cradle, tables, chairs of a variety of designs. Parashuram says that he now earns up to Rs 100 a day, whereas previously, he was lucky to make Rs 25. He buys two 20-foot lengths of bamboo for Rs 50 as his raw material. Most of the people sell their products individually, but occasionally, if someone has the money, he may buy up the products of a number of people from the village and sell them in town. Before the scheme was set up, many had their doubts; now they are very happy. Parashuram has two

brothers, both married, and his mother at home. He has taught other members of the family what he has learned, and all work on making the same articles. Some days the whole family can earn up to Rs 200. This is not the good season. After Divali, when the rains have finished, is the best time for business. His family has two and a half acres of land, where they grow paddy. They are fortunate. Of the 46 families of Medars, 26 have land, 20 have none. The landless work for Rs 20 a day on the lands of others. The medars are the majority population in the village. Twenty have been trained at the workshop. Now they will have to market more widely. Parashuram is now hopeful of the future.

One senior Forest official told us openly that in spite of the good intentions of the project, Forest Officials routinely override the wishes of the people in the VFC's, presenting them with a fait accompli. Sullen acquiescence has little to do with joint decisions, and should not be taken as such. The fate of the project once the ODA, having disbursed the allotted funds, has departed, is far from clear. Everything reverts to its own tendency - the forest officials return to their culture, and the ODA consultants go on to further lucrative contracts, some of them doubtless based on the expertise they have acquired in the course of this successful experience.

This official said that pressure on forests has multiple causes. Biotic pressures have, in some places even in his region, led to such severe over-grazing that some species have become almost extinct. Fuelwood headloaders, especially near the towns have been a considerable factor; encroachers have equally been destructive. But organised smugglers, with the connivance of Forest Department, police and politicians has been yet more damaging. But by far the most intensive pressure on the forest has been, and remains, industrial society, with its insatiable and growing appetite for timber, wood-pulp, timber for construction, furniture, housebuilding, paper, plywood, cardboard. Industrial machinery has reached parts of the forest which the sun has never reached even in a thousand years.

The intensifying industrialisation of India is at odds with the conservation of diversity, variety and natural forest regeneration. The objective of reconciliation between these two warring needs is reflected in the cultural clash between Forest Department and people; and this is scarcely going to be addressed by the ODA project, no matter what money, expertise, prestige and public relations it may command.

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7th July 1995.

*(This is a brief report after visiting Sinsri, the project Area. This is for private circulation only, not to be*

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REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER  
AND  
AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1999

No. 3  
(CIVIL)

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

REPORT OF THE  
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For the year ended 31 March 1999

(NO.3)  
(CIVIL)

Monitoring was deficient at all levels of Government leading to unchecked diversion and unjustified increase in cost of operation of Public Distribution System.

(Paragraph 3.1)

#### 4. Western Ghats Forestry and Environmental Project

The Western Ghats Forestry and Environmental Project which aimed at conserving the Western ghats forests and to maintain ecological balance was implemented in Karnataka from 1992 with the assistance from Overseas Development Administration. The project was mismanaged by the Forest Department as evident from the huge excess expenditure on plantation and neglect of other components of the project including joint forest planning and management through participation of beneficiaries. Department failed to ensure compliance of operational and financial controls. Expenditure decisions were taken at junior levels while the senior management took no steps to analyse the expenditure and ensure implementation of approved project decisions. Requirement of biodiversity and natural re-generation was sacrificed in favour of monoculture practice and plantation of fast growing Acacia plantation. There was possibility of huge unauthorised and fictitious expenditure in plantation and operating expenses.

Target for covering areas of plantations were not achieved to the extent of 21 per cent to 98 per cent in Kanara and Shimoga circles during 1996-99. In some divisions, there was huge shortfall though expenditure exceeded provisions.

Rupees 14.66 crore was spent on raising plantations in excess of the provisions under the project (61 per cent as against 46 per cent provided in Project document).

Excess planting of seedlings to the extent of 1.21 crore resulted in avoidable expenditure of Rs 3.62 crore. Unjustified excess expenditure of Rs.25.75 lakh was made on refilling of pits.

Intensive plantation over a limit of area was doubtful as no survey was conducted to locate whether there was enough open space for intensive plantation.

There was unjustified preference for plantation of the exotic variety of Acacia, which was suitable for coastal and lateritic soils and was recommended for lower ghat areas of some divisions of Kanara Circle. Choice of twelve suitable species of plantation was not followed by the field units. Biodiversity and natural re-generation was neglected.

Plantation journals were required to contain full details of plantation and the details of expenditure on various activities. However, no entries were made in the plantation journals and hence status of plantation and reasonableness of expenditure could not be verified in audit.

Plantations were raised in 70 villages by Range Forest Officer/Divisional Forest Officers before formation of Village Forest Committees and their members were not adequately involved in forestry operations or preparation of micro plans which were to form the basis of plantation activities.

Out of 92 officers trained in United Kingdom only 16 were employed in the project and the rest were posted outside project area immediately after the training.

(Paragraph 3.2)

#### 5. Upper Krishna Project - Phase II of Stage I

Phase II of Upper Krishna Project was started with World Bank assistance in 1989 at an estimated cost of Rs.791.67 crore and was targeted for completion by December 1996 with an intention of irrigating 1.5 lakh hectares of land. While work on raising of dam and major canals were completed far ahead of requirements, failure on the part of Government in synchronising the distributary system and completion of on-farm development works resulted in actual irrigation of only one third of the target. Delay in execution of the Project led to abnormal increase in cost per hectare and a steep decline in the economic benefits. Even three years after the stipulated date of completion, the Project is still incomplete.

On account of poor implementation of rehabilitation and resettlement programme, World Bank closed the assistance to Phase II of the Project in June 1997 and Rs 111.86 crore of assistance was lost.

Pace of construction of various components were persistently low in Phase II. Even against modified targets, achievements were 30 to 70 per cent during 1995-97.

Area actually irrigated was as low as 33 per cent of the potential area of 1.48 lakh hectare targeted under Phase II.

Work of raising dam height was injudiciously withdrawn from contractor on ground of increase in quantity resulting in avoidable liability of Rs.1.61 crore at award stage.

Failure to establish Management Information System Centre due to inherent deficiency in system management resulted in wasteful expenditure of Rs.1.27crore. The computers were being used as typewriters. Modules were defective and not compatible with present day requirement.

Instability and weakness of Narayanpur Left Bank Canal led to failure of the canal to carry the required flow and was carrying a discharge of only 23 per cent of its capacity.

3.2 Western Ghats Forestry and Environmental Project

Highlights

The Western Ghats Forestry and Environmental Project which aimed at conserving the Western ghats forests and to maintain ecological balance was implemented in Karnataka from 1992 with the assistance from Overseas Development Administration (ODA). The project was mismanaged by the Forest Department as evident from the huge excess expenditure on plantation and neglect of other components of the project including joint forest planning and management through participation of beneficiaries. Department failed to monitor compliance of operational and financial controls. Expenditure decisions were taken at junior levels while the senior management took no steps to analyse the expenditure and ensure implementation of approved project decisions. Requirement of biodiversity and natural re-generation was sacrificed in favour of monoculture practice and plantation of fast growing Acacia plantation. There was possibility of huge unauthorised and fictitious expenditure in plantation and operating expenses.

Savings under the project during the period from 1992-93 to 1998-99 was Rs. 15.21 crore constituting 13.8 per cent of the total Budget provision. The department had not analysed the reasons for savings.

(Paragraph 3.2.6.1)

Target for covering areas of plantations were not achieved to the extent of 21 per cent to 98 per cent in Kanara and Shimoga circles during 1996-99. In some divisions, there was huge shortfall though expenditure exceeded provisions.

(Paragraph 3.2.6.2)

Rs. 14.66 crore was spent on raising plantations in excess of the provisions under the project (61 per cent as against 46 per cent provided in Project document). Expenditure on training and consultancy was negligible.

(Paragraph 3.2.7)

Excess planting of seedlings to the extent of 1.21 crore resulted in avoidable expenditure of Rs. 3.62 crore.

(Paragraph 3.2.8.2)

Unjustified excess expenditure of Rs. 25.46 lakh was made on refilling of pits.

(Paragraph 3.2.8.3)

Intensive plantation over a limited area was doubtful as no survey was conducted to locate whether there was enough open space for

intensive plantation. As the plantation journals were not maintained, there was no control over the cost per plantation. The RFO / DCF decided the plantation density with huge financial implications without approval of competent authorities. The Project Director failed to exercise any check on excess plantation beyond the approved norm.

(Paragraph 3.2.8.4)

There was unjustified preference for plantation of the exotic variety of Acacia, which was suitable for coastal and lateritic soils and was recommended for lower ghat areas of some divisions of Kanara Circle. Choice of twelve suitable species of plantation was not followed by the field units. Biodiversity and natural regeneration was neglected.

Though the project area had a large livestock population, plantation of fodder species was neglected.

(Paragraph 3.2.8.5)

Plantation journals were required to contain full details of plantation and the details of expenditure on various activities. However no entries were made in the plantation journals and hence status of plantation and reasonableness of expenditure could not be verified in audit. In view of the reported huge excess expenditure on plantation and failure in maintenance of plantation journals possibility of doubtful expenditure can not be ruled out.

(Paragraph 3.2.8.6)

Plantations were raised in 70 villages by RFO/DFOs even before formation of Village Forest Committees (VFC) and their members were not adequately involved in forestry operations or preparation of micro plans which were to form the basis of plantation activities. Most of the VFC members were not given any training.

No community facilitators (Second RFO) were posted in the JFPM teams and no women RFOs recruited. Thus community participation in the project was neglected.

(Paragraph 3.2.8.7)

Adequate number of watch towers were not constructed and were not equipped with wireless or radio equipment. Fire engines / equipment were not procured though funds were provided for this purpose.

(Paragraph 3.2.8.8)

Out of 92 officers trained in U.K, only 16 were employed in the project and the rest were posted outside project area immediately after the training.

(Paragraph 3.2.10.1)

Actual expenditure on research was negligible compared to project provision. Out of Rs. 81 lakh spent during 1996-99 only 19 percent was

spent on research activity and the balance on buildings, vehicles, salaries etc.

(Paragraph 3.2.10.3)

The quality of construction of Regional Training Centre building at Gungaragatti taken up at a cost of Rs. 1.30 crore by KSCC was reported to be poor and required investigation.

(Paragraph 3.2.10.4)

Aerial photos and maps procured at a cost of Rs. 1.05 crore were not used in the implementation of the project.

(Paragraph 3.2.11)

Guest House and houses for SCs/STs not contemplated under the project were constructed at a cost of Rs. 1.03 crore during 1996-98.

(Paragraph 3.2.12.2 and 3.2.12.3)

### 3.2.1 Introduction

The Western ghats forests spread over 11561 sq.km include a unique variety of forest types which are categorised into ever green and semi-evergreen, moist deciduous forest and scrub jungle etc. While the evergreen and semi-evergreen forest are rich in softwood and packing timber yielding trees, the moist deciduous forest are rich in teak, rosewood, honne and other timber. The scrub jungle contains sandalwood and other species. The forest area was over exploited commercially for timber, as well as firewood. Further, the forests suffered severely due to mining activities, hydro-electric projects, rehabilitation of affected people and heavy exploitation by the farmers. As a result, over 75 per cent of the forest had no seedling or sapling regeneration and there was deficiency of large stems of most valuable species.

In recognition of this situation, Forest Department prepared a Project Report in 1989 for conservation of Western Ghats Forests. The Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom now renamed as Department for International Development (DFID) agreed (October 1991) and financed the project. The project was to be implemented during six years beginning April 1992. The project period has been extended up to March 2000.

### 3.2.2 Project objectives

As per the project document, following objectives were identified:

- To maintain the ecological balance and the environment of the western ghats, to preserve their flora and fauna and to increase understanding them.
- To rehabilitate and protect the major environmental resources represented by the western ghats forests

To assure the sustainability of the living standards of those people who derive their livelihood from forests, and

To secure the sustained yield of all categories of produce proper to the natural forest so as to ensure sound economic welfare for future generations etc.

These objectives were to be achieved through Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) involving the local forest dwellers and users in planning and management processes, planting, promotion of indigenous species and improved silvicultural practices.

### 3.2.3 Organisational set up

The overall control of the project implementation vested with a Chief Conservator of Forests cum Project Director (CCF). The Project Director was in charge of management of project funds. The project was implemented over a period of six years in two circles viz., Kanara circle (1992-93 to 1998-99) and Shimoga circle (1996-97 to 1998-99) headed by Conservators of Forests (CF). For the work of Joint Forest Planning and Management, 10 DCF posts were created in addition to the 10 regular DCFs. To monitor the progress, there was a Planning and Monitoring Cell (PMC) headed by a DCF in the two circles. In the head-quarters a Planning and Monitoring Unit (PMU) headed by a CF was responsible for effective implementation of the project. The project implementation and monitoring were vested with steering committee and specially empowered committee.

### 3.2.4 Project funding

The Project was funded by ODA through GOI. Out of the total funds provided, 30 per cent was treated as grant and 70 per cent as loan to Karnataka State repayable over 15 years with interest at the rate of 9.8 per cent. The project cost was 23,296 million pounds (equivalent to Rs.83.86 crore) at the exchange rate of Rs.36 to one pound. The expenditure on implementation of project in India was estimated at Rs.65.07 crore (18.074 million pounds) and expenditure in UK was Rs.18.79 crore (5.22 million pounds). As against this, the actual expenditure was Rs.96.94 crore till 1998-99.

### 3.2.5 Audit coverage

Implementation of the project was reviewed for the period from 1992-93 to 1998-99 through test-check (January 1999 to April 1999) in six divisions<sup>\*</sup> out of ten divisions in two circles<sup>\*</sup> besides scrutiny of records of the CCF cum Project Director.

<sup>\*</sup> Bhadravathy, Hallyal, Sisi, Shimoga, Sagar and Yellapur.

<sup>\*</sup> Kanara and Shimoga circles.

### 3.2.6 Financial and physical progress

#### 3.2.6.1 Financial out lay and expenditure

Financial progress achieved on the project since 1992-93 vis-a-vis funds provided was as follows :

Budget provisions totalling from Rs. 17.70 lakh to Rs. 2.89 crore were not spent during 1992-99

Year	Budget Provision (Rs. in lakh)	Actual expenditure (Rs. in lakh) as per AG(A&E)	Savings/Excess (Rs. in lakh) (Percent)
1992-93	729	439.81	(-289.19) (39.7)
1993-01	1124	937.46	(-186.54) (17)
1994-95	1500	1229.32	(-270.68) (18)
1995-96	1500	1482.30	(-17.70) (1.2)
1996-97	2250	1531.14	(-718.86) (32)
1997-98	1800	1841.73	(+41.73) (2.3)
1998-99	2086	2003.17	(-82.83) (4)
Total	10989	9167.93	(-1821.07) (16.6)

The CCF stated (October 1999) that the savings during all the years were due to savings in salaries as only half of the posts sanctioned were filled up. However, this is not correct as savings under establishment accounted only for 2 per cent (Rs. 1.32 lakh) during the entire period. The reason for excess in 1997-98 was not furnished by the CCF.

The discrepancy between expenditure booked by AG (A&E) and departmental figures to an extent of Rs.2.57 crore was not reconciled by the department (November 1999).

#### 3.2.6.2 Physical targets and achievement

The Project document prescribed eight models<sup>a</sup> of plantations to be taken up for enrichment of the natural forest. While the Project document specified the pattern of plantations to be raised in Kanara Circle, no such pattern was prescribed for Shimoga Circle. It was observed that the actual pattern of plantations did not follow the approved pattern as detailed below:

##### Kanara Circle (Planting area)

(Figures in hectares)

	1993-94		1994-95		1995-96		1996-97		1997-98		1998-99	
	Target	Ach.	Target	Ach.	Target	Ach.	Target	Ach.	Target	Ach.	Target	Ach.
Gap planting	4400	4568	3500	8631	4500	6723	4500	4584	2500	3316	6000	6111
Bamboo plantation	500	521	1000	932	1500	1383	1500	1018	1500	107	1500	1111
Multipurpose plantation	1500	1623	1500	1564	1500	1384	2000	1031	2000	1989	2000	1999
Total	7500	7722	6000	8130	7500	9490	8000	6633	6000	5492	9500	9221

Ach: Achievement

##### Shimoga Circle (Planting area)

(Figures in hectares)

1996-97		1997-98		1998-99	
Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
6000	121	6400	1982	6800	1571

<sup>a</sup> Gap A, Gap B, Enrichment models, Bamboo model, Fuel wood model, Fodder model, Green manure model and Fruit and Non-wood Forest Product (Fruit/NWFP) model

As against the target of 61300 ha of plantations to be developed, plantations done was only in 45507 ha (excluding 2910 ha regeneration) up to March 1999.

Shortfall in target for areas in plantations ranged from 21 to 98 per cent during the years 1996-97 to 1998-99

There was shortfall of 21 and 90 per cent in respect of gap plantations in Kanara circle during the year 1996-97 and 1997-98, respectively. In respect of bamboo plantations, shortfall was highest in 1997-98 (73 per cent). In Shimoga circle the shortfall in planting area ranged from 69 to 98 per cent. The CCF did not assign any reason for huge shortfall. As per the project document no target was fixed for the extended period 1998-99 in Kanara circle. Thus, while there is a overall shortfall in areas of Gap planting and artisanal/bamboo plantations, there is an excess in multipurpose plantations. This over achievement in so called multipurpose plantations resulted in additional expenditure (Rs.2.41 crore). During 1997-98 there was huge shortfall (67per cent) in plantations though the funds utilised exceeded the budget provision. As against Rs.44 lakh excess incurred, Haliyal and Yellapur divisions alone incurred excess of Rs.33 lakh on advance works and raising of plantations. The Project Director replied that the shortfall would be made good in 1998 plantations.

### 3.2.7 Activity-wise expenditure

The activity-wise expenditure incurred on the project from 1992-93 to 1998-99 and excess/savings as against the funds proposed were as follows:

Head	Proposed as per project document in percent	Actual expenditure (Departmental figure) (Rupees in lakh)	Percentage against total expenditure	Percentage (+)Excess/ (-)savings
Civil works, equipment and transport	12	1057	10.9	(-11.1)
Training	9	125	1.29	(-17.7)
Consultancy	10	2	0.02	(-19.98)
Planting	46	5925	61.12	(+15.12)
Establishment	9	741	7.64	(-1.36)
Operating expenses	12	1744	18	(+16)
Repairs and maintenance	2	100	1.03	(-0.97)
TOTAL	100	9501	100	

Huge excess expenditure was noticed under the plantation activities (Rs 14.66 crore) and operating expenses (Rs 5.76 crore) while there was considerable savings in components of salary, training and consultancy.

As seen from the above data, reason for excess expenditure under planting was mainly due to excess planting per hectare than prescribed and in the absence of properly maintained plantation journals in many ranges justification and correctness of this expenditure could not be verified in audit as detailed in succeeding paragraphs.

Amount spent on raising plantations in excess to the tune of Rs 14.66 crore (15 per cent)

### 3.2.8 Implementation of the project

#### 3.2.8.1 Raising of plantations

The project provided for raising plantations in 61200 ha in six years with about 5.7 crore seedlings (@750 plants per hectare) consisting of 8 models\* keeping in view the need to maintain ecological balance, bio-diversity and needs of people depending on forests for fodder and fuel-wood, green manure. About 46 per cent of the project funds were earmarked for this activity. Against this 61 per cent of the funds were spent on planting alone.

#### 3.2.8.2 Excess planting resulting in avoidable expenditure

The project document prescribed planting of 750 seedlings per ha in mostly open area and 500 plants per ha in other areas. The total area planted during the period from 1992-93 to 1998-99 was 45507 ha (excluding regeneration plantations of 2910 ha) in the project area of Kanara and Shimoga circles and the seedlings reportedly planted was 4.84 crore. At the rate of 750 plants per ha excluding fuelwood model where 1600 plants per ha as recommended in the workshop conducted at Tattihalla in 1994, the total number of plants that could be planted in 43232 ha (excluding fuel wood) was 3.24 crore, whereas, the implementing officers reportedly planted 4.45 crore seedlings. This resulted in planting of seedlings in excess to an extent of 1.21 crore. Expenditure incurred on excess planting based on SSR of 1993-94 of Kanara circle works out to Rs 3.62 crore#.

#### 3.2.8.3 Unjustified excess payment on re-filling of pits

The forest department prescribes refilling to the extent of 75 per cent of the volume of pits in all plantations whereas in Kanara circle it was shown as 100 per cent of the pits dug. Since the plant also occupies some space and water has to be retained by all such plants, filling up to 75 per cent seems justified. On this being pointed out, the CCF justified that the payment included various activities such as breaking the clods etc vide the sanctioned schedule of rates (SSR) which is not tenable as the rates provided in all other circles' SSRs is only 75 per cent. The excess expenditure was therefore unjustified. The excess expenditure incurred on additional 25 per cent volume for 4.22 crore pits in Kanara circle works out to Rs.25.46 lakh<sup>c</sup> at Rs.2.65 per cum based on SSR 1995-96.

Avoidable expenditure of Rs 3.62 crore on excessive plantings

Excess payment of Rs 25.46 lakh on refilling of pits

\* Gap A, Gap B, enrichment, bamboo, fuel wood, fodder, green manure and fruits/NWFP model

# Cost of seedlings at Rs.600 per 1000 seedlings (5"×8" polythene bagged seedlings)	Rs 72.6 lakh
Excavation and refilling of 1.21 crore pits of size 45m×45m×45 m (0.91125 cum/pit) at Rs.25.15/cum	Rs 277.31 lakh
Planting cost at Rs. 101.5/1000 seedlings	Rs 12.28 lakh
Total -	Rs 362.19 lakh (based on SSR 1993-94 of Kanara Circle).

<sup>c</sup> Total pits - 42176800 Volume of pits @ 0.45 m X 0.45 x 0.45m = 0.091125 cu. M. Total quantity for 42176800 pits = 3843364 cu. M. 25% thereof = 960840 cu. M. Refilling @ Rs 2.65 per cu. M = Rs 25.46 lakh

### 3.2.8.4 Unjustified excess plantation and unauthorised excess expenditure.

Audit scrutiny revealed the following points raising doubt regarding the reasonableness of the huge excess plantation reportedly done:

- (i) No survey was done to decide the total fully open area and other areas. As a result, it was not verifiable whether there was enough area to accommodate 4.84 crore seedlings.
- (ii) The project document indicated plantation in 61200 ha with a maximum of 5.7 crore plants. As per the information furnished by the department 4.84 crore seedlings were planted in only 45507 ha. Thus the intensity of planting works out to 1064 per ha as against the approved norm of 750 plants (maximum).
- (iii) As no plantation registers were maintained as discussed in para 8.6 below, it was not verifiable as to how much cost was incurred per plantation. Further, no control over the cost per plantation was also possible.
- (iv) In the absence of clear directions from the project authorities, the RFO/DCF decided the planting density reportedly based on the site requirement involving huge excess expenditure. Thus budget provision and norms of plantation lost all relevance. While the junior functionaries incurred unauthorised excess expenditure, the Project Director and the PMC failed to exercise any control on the excessive plantings and consequent excess expenditure. As a result, the most crucial area of the project management was essentially left to the care of the RFOs. Absence of entries in the plantation registers further diluted the control over the plantation expenditure incurred mainly through the RFOs.
- (v) In test checked 4 divisions where an amount of Rs.21.81 crore was incurred on raising plantations, out of a total area of 22260 ha planted, in 12806 ha, the plantation density was above the norm of 750 per ha (57.53 per cent). Again, out of these areas in 6419 ha plantation done was between 751-999 per ha, in 4999.5 ha it was 1001-1599 per ha and in 1387.5 ha it was above 1600 per ha. In Haliyal division it was 2172 per ha in 270 ha. Thus, in large areas the planting carried was above the norm.

Since there was no clear system of authorization of such plantation and no VFCs had been formed for most of the project area, the officers responsible for the activities committed huge amounts of project funds, without any control from the Project Director or VFCs.

The DFID expressed concern (May 1998) about the expensive plantation approaches and prohibited further plantations except in JFPM areas.

In Sirsi and Yellapur divisions, planting was done in 12003 ha during 1993-94 to 1996-97. The percentage of survival of seedlings was below 60 per cent in 302 ha while it ranged between 61 to 70 per cent in 1201 ha and 71 to 80 in 3707 ha.

Government replied (Nov 1999) that the workshop held in 1994 at Tattihalla recommended planting of 1600 seedlings per ha in full open area and the planting density was decided based on site requirement and site specification plans. The reply was not tenable as it was not in accordance with the project document and department had not conducted survey to identify areas which were suitable for gap planting.

Though periodical reports of plantations were sent by the DCF to CF and PD no action was taken by them to check the excess expenditure on plantations.

#### 3.2.8.5 Biodiversity and natural regeneration ignored

The project document envisaged maintenance of biodiversity and promoting natural regeneration of indigenous species. However the implementation neglected these objectives.

The areas where afforestation took place viz., Kanara and Shimoga circle are known for teak, rosewood and other miscellaneous species. In the project implementation, there was an unjustified preference for planting the exotic *Acacia* over large areas as evidenced from the records.

(i) The Tattihalla work shop identified *Acacia Auriculiformis* suitable for only coastal and lateritic soils. Further, *Acacia* was recommended only for the lower ghat divisions of Karwar and Honnavar in Kanara circle. However, the department planted *Acacia* in almost all types of soils which accounted for 37.8 per cent of total plantations in Kanara circle, and 48 per cent in Sirsi division which is in the Upper ghat. (*Acacia* accounted for 67 per cent of total plantation in Kyadgi range of Sirsi division).

Government replied (November 1999) that the areas which are highly open and degraded with lateritic soil were planted with *Acacia* to meet the requirement of VFC members. This reply is not tenable in view of the recommendations of Tattihalla workshop and in the absence of survey maps and Zonation maps detailing extent of degradation in each area.

The mid-term appraisal made by independent study team in 1997 also reported that the share of VFCs (Rs 1756 and Rs 2210 per ha) from the *Acacia* plantations in two villages in Honnavar Division did not appear to be sufficient to cover the present cost of planting (Rs.15620 per ha) and that such plantation did not therefore appear to be economically sustainable. The review team also recommended planting of fuel wood, fodder including grazing, leaf manure and small timber/bamboo models. The review team further observed that, though the choice of twelve suitable species were identified for planting by the workshop in 1994, the same was not being followed in the field.

(ii) Though the project area (Uttara Kannada) has vast livestock population, (there was 5.09 lakh livestock population in 1989 as per Ashely 1993 report) there was not enough planning in terms of providing fodder. The fodder species were planted only in 10 ha. The consultant's report on fodder and livestock management received in 1993 was not made use of as on date.

### 3.2.8.6 Failure in maintaining Plantation Journals

Due to non-maintenance of plantation journals in Range Offices CCF failed to ensure compliance of basic control procedure

According to para 29(a) of Karnataka Forest Code, plantation journals have to be opened and maintained by the RFO in which full details of each plantation such as map of the area, survey number, extent of area up to which plantation is developed, nature and number of seedlings planted, protection work carried out, date of commencement and completion of various cultural operations, expenditure incurred on different activities such as advance work, planting, soil working and protection work, the yield obtained and revenue realised therefrom etc. are recorded and DCF has to ensure that these journals are opened as and when new plantations are taken up and maintained and posted up-to-date. According to para 150 of the forest code, the DCF must inspect all the Range Forest Offices once in a year, inspection chiefly concerning the books and registers, and the inspecting officer should pay attention to 'Departure from rules and orders' and also 'Defects in the system of working, rendering possible among other things, defalcations and loss of public money, etc' (para 155). Officers from ACF level and above are expected to inspect the plantations and record their findings. Test check of plantation journals in seven Range offices (Ayanur, Barchi, Gund, Katur, Mandagadde, Tarikere and Tinnaighat) (3580 ha plantations) revealed that no entries as prescribed were made in the journals and consequently, the status of plantations and reasonableness of expenditure on plantations could not be verified in audit. CCF during his inspection remarked in November 1995 that no one had cared to record observations and insisted on ACF/DCF to record useful technical observations.

However these observations were not followed up and hence the non-compliance of these provisions continued as seen in audit. The omissions commonly noticed in the plantation journals in all the Ranges were absence of recording of species planted, expenditure on cattle proof trenches, details of cultural operations, weeding, soil working activities etc. and survival percentage.

Due to the failure in maintaining the plantation journals, evidently, the ACF/DCFs failed to ensure operation of basic controls in respect of technical, operational and financial parameters of plantation. In view of excess expenditure on plantation and failure in maintenance of the control records like plantation journals possibility of huge fictitious expenditure on plantation also could not be ruled out. The CCF and the other officers thus failed to ensure that plantations are done as per approved norms and within the budget. Consequently huge extra expenditure was allowed to be incurred by the RFOs without maintaining the basic records.

### 3.2.8.7 Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) activities neglected

The project emphasized the need for sustainability in the face of numerous pressures on the forest resources. This was purported to be achieved through Participatory planning and management approaches. The concept of Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) was devised as an instrument to enhance the management capabilities of the KFD in achieving the project objectives by involving the local people in all the crucial areas such as identification of forest lands for joint management, selection of species, conservation, protection, and benefit-sharing etc. The JFPM activity started with formation of Village Forest Committee (VFC) covering one village or cluster of small villages. Each VFC was to prepare micro-plans (consisting of village map, JFPM process, village profile, socio-economic data, resource analysis, opportunities and need assessment and forestry problems) and execute memorandum of understanding with the Department specifying the area entrusted, activity to be undertaken, responsibilities and benefits to be shared with the Department. The micro-plan so prepared was to form the basis for plantation activities also. VFC members were to have access to non-timber forest produce and share of the net revenue in the JFPM forest area. KFD and VFC were to ensure preparation of management plan detailing the objectives, zonation map, programs, bio diversity, conservation and action plan for next five years and were responsible for budgeting and implementation.

Audit scrutiny revealed the following short comings in JFPM process.

- (i) Though the success of JFPM was directly linked to the extent of involvement of the local people and forest users, the department failed to even identify the number of villages in the project area and total number of people dependant on the forests in the two circles where the project was implemented. No target was fixed for formation of VFCs and members to be enrolled.
- (ii) During the years 1993-94 to 1998-99, 485 VFCs were formed and 43751 members were enrolled. The department is unaware of the number of villages in which VFCs are yet to be formed. Out of 485 VFCs, 415 committees (85.5 per cent) prepared micro plans and 372 committees therefrom executed the memorandum of understanding (MOU). In the absence of MOU, committee would not derive legal status to undertake any activity in JFPM area.
- (iii) Though the RFOs were responsible for formation of VFCs, preparation of micro-plans, signing of MOU and DCF were responsible for execution of works according to micro plans, in 70 villages out of 485 villages where VFCs were formed, the RFOs and the Department carried out plantations on their own much before formation of VFCs. The project director's reply that the VFC formation is time taking process and people have to be trained and motivated, is not tenable as actually there was a decline in the number of VFCs formed after 1995-96.

Plantations  
raised in 70  
villages  
before  
formation  
of VFCs

Community  
facilitator/  
woman RFO  
not  
appointed

- (iv) As per the project document, each JFPM team should have a second Range Forest Officer (Community facilitator) exclusively for focussing on identification and development of community institutions and groups. But, in all the divisions test checked in audit, the second RFO post in the JFPM teams was left unfilled which affected the promotion of JFPM concepts.
- (v) The project envisages adequate representation of women in the implementation and provides for 50 per cent of RFO posts to be filled with women. However, not a single woman RFO was appointed during the entire period.
- (vi) It was found that in 7 out of 11 villages of Siddapur Range in Sirsi Division and 39 out of 246 villages in Haliyal Division the advance work in respect of 22 compartments of plantation were entrusted by the DCF to 41 Forest contractors instead of to VFCs. As a result, the members of VFCs were deprived of wages to the extent of Rs.11.21 lakh. DCFs were responsible for failure to involve the VFC members. The VFCs were not given substantial responsibility in the conservation, preservation and plantation activities as proposed.
- (vii) As an entry point incentive, the members of VFCs were eligible to receive fuel efficient chulhas and subsidy on biogas units installed. It was observed that in 80 VFCs Chulhas were neither supplied nor subsidy given. In 15 VFCs 1354 Chulhas were supplied for 926 households. Cost of 428 excess Chulhas supplied was Rs.1.28 lakh. In 9 VFCs 225 Chulhas costing Rs.0.68 lakh were supplied to non-members also.
- (viii) The project provided for extensive training of the JFPM staff as well as the user groups to facilitate success of the project. However, in the training imparted by MYRADA, the non-governmental organisation contracted to design and run training programmes for the staff, user groups and local NGOs, only 15 per cent of the total enrolled VFC members were trained.
- (ix) The benefit accruing to villagers from JFPM activity was limited to collection of fallen branches, twigs etc., as the other benefits like fruits, income out of sale of fuel wood and small timbers etc., could be derived only later and not in the early stages of plantation.

Non-involvement of VFCs to the extent required under the Project document defeated the very purpose of widening the management capabilities of the KFD as contemplated in the Project.

### 3.2.8.8 Inadequate construction of watch towers and non-procurement of fire equipment

To have an effective watch over breakout of fire, the project document proposed to build two big towers of 15 metres height and 10 small towers of 10 m height in each division. Total number of watch towers in Kanara circle would have been 10 big and 50 small towers at an estimated cost of Rs.55 lakh.

As against this, the Department constructed 10 big towers and 20 small towers at a total cost of Rs.39.66 lakh resulting in both shortfall of 30 small towers and extra cost of Rs.11.16 lakh. The department replied that there was revision in rates of the watch towers and the work was done by a public enterprise.

These towers were not provided with wireless or radio equipment for faster communication, thereby the very purpose of having watch towers was defeated. Further, the project document provided procurement of fire engine/equipment at a cost of Rs.86.25 lakh but no equipment was procured.

### 3.2.9 Consultancy

Though the Project document provided Rs.0.69 crore for this purpose, actual expenditure was only Rs.2 lakh. The MIS consultant's report could not be utilized as it was not suitable while the report of the consultants appointed for Geographical Information System (GIS) could not be used due to change in computer technology and Project Process Team gave their recommendations after the end of the Project period and was thus of little use.

### 3.2.10 Training

76 Officers trained abroad were posted outside project area immediately after training

3.2.10.1 As per the approved Project Report, 187 officers of different cadres were required to be trained in UK at a projected cost of Rs.6.49 crore (18,02,000 pounds). As against this, 92 officers were trained in UK till 1996-97. Out of these, 16 officers were deployed on project work and remaining 76 were posted immediately after training, outside the project area. Thus, the training imparted to these 76 officers were of no use for project work.

#### 3.2.10.2 Payments to MYRADA

MYRADA a voluntary agency was entrusted with training departmental staff and members of village forest committees in Joint Forest Planning and Management methods. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests entered into an agreement with MYRADA during February 1993 to conduct 150 training programmes from the year 1992-93 onwards over a period of five years.

The agreement did not indicate the number of persons to be trained, duration of each training programme, amount payable to MYRADA etc. As

against Rs.61.33 lakh to be released to the end of June 1998, Rs.62.77 lakh was released. As per the audited statement ended March 1999, expenditure of Rs.54.77 lakh included payments of Rs.6.87 lakh towards staff salary and furniture even though such payments were not contemplated in the agreement.

The agency charged (June 1997) expenditure of Rs.3.33 lakh towards the cost of vehicles even though these were procured (June 1993) and supplied (September 1993) by the Department.

Only 15 per cent of VFC members were trained. The effectiveness of these training programmes is not known in the absence of inclusion of adequate number of VFC members.

### 3.2.10.3 Research

The project intended the research activity in the fields of Forestry, Ecology, Hydrology, Herbarium and Socio-economics.

As against the amount of Rs.4.17 crore provided for research activity from 1993-94, amount spent was Rs.3.59 crore. Out of this, expenditure on salary was Rs 1.1 crore (26.48 per cent) buildings Rs.77.86 lakh (18.7 per cent) and Rs.1.05 crore on tree improvement and seeds production (25.11 per cent) expenditure on actual research was Rs.15.23 lakh (4 per cent) only.

Only  
Rs 15.23  
lakh (4 per  
cent) spent  
on research  
activity

Component wise expenditure was as follows:

Office	Salary	Field operation	Building	Total
Forest Research Institute(FORTI)	24.79	15.23	41	81.02
Tree improvement	49.03	104.73	36.86	190.62
Ecology	36.61	51		87.61
Total	110.43	170.96	77.86	359.25

In spite of payment of advance of Rs.34.89 lakh to Karnataka State Construction Corporation Limited (KSCC) (March 1995) and Rs 13 lakh to Karnataka Land Army Corporation Limited (KLAC) (March 1998) for construction of staff quarters and Research Institute building respectively, the works remained incomplete (June 1999).

Even though Principal Chief Conservator of Forest has overall control of the FORTI, there was little research activity during the project period.

### 3.2.10.4 Construction of Regional Training Centre (RTC) at Gungaragatti, Dharwad

The training institute at Gungaragatti, Dharwad was to provide training for staff, members of VFC and NGOs. Construction of the training centre, staff quarters, hostel etc., estimated to cost Rs 1.30 crore was entrusted to KSCC by Government and Rs.1.25 crore was paid as advance to them. The agency had claimed Rs.1.71 crore as on October 1997. The quality of hostel building constructed at a cost of Rs.61.20 lakh was reported to be poor and

called for investigation. Painting and flooring work of main building was also reported to be of poor quality.

During the period from 1996-97 to 1998-99, the Centre imparted training to staff/NGOs for 116 days and 1317 persons were trained. Considering 300 working days in a year, the extent of working of the Institute ranged from 2 to 29 per cent.

### 3.2.11 Geographic Information System (GIS)

Aerial photos  
and maps  
costing  
Rs 1.05 crore  
not put to use

The work of preparation of aerial survey map was entrusted to National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) in March 1993. The agency in turn supplied maps to the scale of 1:25000 (1997). It was noticed that 44 aerial photos at 1:25000 scale were taken covering both Kanara (1993) and Shimoga (1997) circles at a cost of Rs 1.05 crore. However, the maps as well as the aerial photos were not made use of. GIS software was not installed even at the end of the Project period and as a result no benefit accrued from this expenditure.

### 3.2.12 Other points

Diversion of funds for activities not covered under Project

#### 3.2.12.1 Diversion of vehicles

Out of the 75 vehicles purchased at a cost of Rs 2.16 crore, three cars valued at Rs 7.72 lakh were placed at the disposal of the Divisional Officers (Mysore, Davanagere and Bidar) who were not involved in the project work.

#### 3.2.12.2 Construction of guest house at Alkola

Rs 1.03  
crore spent  
on items not  
covered in  
the Project

Department spent Rs 11 lakh (December 1996) on construction of guest house at Alkola, Shimoga under the scheme. Since construction of guest house for stay of officers of Forest Department at Shimoga did not constitute approved activity under the scheme, entire expenditure met out of project funds on this building was not in order.

#### 3.2.12.3 Expenditure on construction of houses for SCs/STs

It was observed that in Shimoga circle the Department incurred expenditure of Rs 92 lakh towards construction of houses for scheduled caste/scheduled tribe beneficiaries during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 which was debited to the funds of the project. This expenditure was covered under centrally sponsored scheme (Special component plan/Tribal sub plan) and as such debiting the expenditure to the project funds was not in order.

### 3.2.13 Monitoring

Monitoring the crucial areas of the project was neglected by the Project Director and the CCF even though there were field units and a headquarter unit for this purpose. No action was taken on the periodical reports on plantation sent by DCF to Project Director, to intervene in the deviations from project decisions. Consequently various component of the project remained mostly unachieved.

### 3.2.14 Recommendations

The indispread deviation from approved project decisions and failure in observing financial and operational controls and possibility of fictitious expenditure on plantation and operating expenses call for detailed investigation by Government. Necessary steps be taken to build up the control documents to prevent misuse of external aid funds.

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ಅರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಗಿರಿಜನರಿಗೆ ಕಿರು ಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿ ಸಂಗ್ರಹ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾರಾಟಕ್ಕೆ

ಒದಗಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯದ ರೂಪರೇಷೆ:

ಶ್ರೀ ಶಿವಪ್ಪ ಪೂಜಾರಿ  
ಮೊಂಡಿ ಕೆರೆ:-ಅರ್ಜಿ ನಂ: 1  
ಸಿದ್ದಿ ಮೊಂಡಿ ಕೆರೆ ಯಲ್ಲಾಪುರ.

ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ ಘಟ್ಟ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ಅನೇಕ ಬಡ ಅರಣ್ಯವಾಸಿ ಗಿರಿಜನಾಂಗಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿದೆ. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿದ್ದಿ ಜನಾಂಗ ಗೌಳಗರು, ಕುಣಿಗರು, ಹಾಲಕಿ ಒಕ್ಕಲು, ಗೊಂಡರು ಶಾದ್ರಮರಾಠಿ, ದೇಡರು, ಕರಿ ಒಕ್ಕಲಗರು ಹಾಗೂ ಅನುಸೂಚಿತ ಜಾತಿಯವರು ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅನಾಥ ಕಾಲದಿಂದಲೂ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ ಘಟ್ಟ ಅರಣ್ಯವನ್ನು ಅವಲಂಬಿಸಿರುವ ಈ ಜನಾಂಗದವರು, ಪ್ರಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ದೊಡ್ಡದೊಡ್ಡ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಗೆಡ್ಡೆ ಗೊಣುಗಳನ್ನು ತಂದೇ ಬದುಕುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಎಂದರೆ ಅತಿಶಯೋಕ್ತಿಯಾಗಲಾರದು. ಕ್ರಮೇಣ ಕಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿಗುವ ಈ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳಿಗೆ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯ ದೊಡ್ಡಕೆಯುಂಟಾದಾಗ ಅವುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲವನ್ನು ಮಾರಾಟಮಾಡಿ ತಮ್ಮ ಜೀವನಾವಶ್ಯಕ ಸಾಮಗ್ರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕೊಂಡುಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದರು.

ಆದರೆ 1972ರ ನಂತರದ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಕಾಯ್ದೆಗಳು, ಜನರ ಈ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳನ್ನು ಕಸಿದುಕೊಂಡು ಅವರು ನಿರ್ಗತಿಕರಾಗುವಂತೆಯೂ, ಮದ್ಯವರ್ತಿಗಳು ಅರ್ಥಿಕ ಸದೃಢತೆಯನ್ನು ಮೂಲ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಕರ ಶೋಷಣೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ ಮಾಡಿತು. ಅರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಗಿರಿಜನರು ತಮ್ಮ ಅರ್ಥಿಕ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಪ್ರತಿಪಾದಿಸುತ್ತಾ ಬರುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ ಸಹ ಮಾರು ಕಟ್ಟಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉತ್ತಮ ಬೆರೆ ಸಿಗುತ್ತದೆಯೆಂದು ಅನು ಅದಾಯ ಮೂಲವಿರುವ ಕೃಷಿಕರು, ಅಡಿಕೆ, ತೋಟದಿರುವವರು ಸಹ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳ ಸಂಗ್ರಹ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾರಾಟಕ್ಕೆ ಲಗ್ನಿ ಹಾಕಿ ಮೂಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಅದರಿಂದಲೇ ಬಹುಕಮ್ಮ ಸಾಧಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಗಿರಿಜನರ ಪಾಲಿಗೆ ಕಂಟ್ರಾಕ್ಟುಯರಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆಯು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನೀಡಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಕಂಟ್ರಾಕ್ಟುಗಳ ಕುಮ್ಮಕ್ಕು ವಿಶೇಷ ಪೋಷಣೆಯನ್ನು ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದೆ.

1988ರ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಅರಣ್ಯ ನೀತಿಯಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರಗಳು ಅರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಗಿರಿಜನರಿಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಬದುಕನ್ನು ಹದಿನೆಂಟನೆಯ ಯಾವುದೇ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅವಕಾಶ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಡುವ ತತ್ವವನ್ನು ಆಳವಡಿಸಿದ್ದರೂ ಸಹ, ಇನ್ನೂ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರಗಳು ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಆದಾಯ ಮೂಲವೆಂದು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಿ ಅರಣ್ಯವಾಸಿಗಳನ್ನು ಅರ್ಥಿಕ ಶೋಷಣೆಯತ್ತ ಮುಳುಗಿಸಿದೆ. ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಹುಲಿಕೆರೆ ಲೇಔಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಭವಿಸಿದ ಶ್ರಮಂತ ಅಡಿಕೆ ದೇವಗಾರಲೊಬ್ಬರು ಉಪ್ಪಿಗೆ ಕಂಟ್ರಾಕ್ಟುರೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಶಾಮಿಲಾಗಿ, ಆ ಕಾಡು ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಸಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಸಿದ್ದಿಗಳು ಕರಿ ಒಕ್ಕಲು ಗೌಡರು ಪಕ್ಕವಾಟ ಉಪ್ಪಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸುವ ವರೆಗೆ

ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಕೊಡದೇ ತಮ್ಮ ತೋರಟದ ಅಳವಡಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಕಳುಹಿಸಿ  
ವಿಲ್ಲದ ಉಪಯೋಗವನ್ನು ಪಕ್ಕವಾಗಿರುವ ಮೊದಲೇ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದ ಉದಾರಣೆಗಳನ್ನು  
ನೋಡುವಾಗ ಈ ಅರಣ್ಯವಾಸಿಗಳ ಬದುಕಿನ ಬರ್ಬರತೆಯನ್ನು ಅರಿವುಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಪರಿಹಾರವೆಂದೇ ಕಾಡನ್ನು ಜೀವನೋಪಾಯಕ್ಕೆ ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸಿ  
ಬದುಕನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಿಕೊಂಡು ತಲೆ ತಲಾಂತರಗಳಿಂದ ಒಳಗೊಂಡು ಅರಣ್ಯ ವಾಸಿಗಳಿಗೆ  
ಉಪಯೋಗ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮೂರಾಟದ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು  
ನೀಡುವುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರವು 12-4-93ರಂದು ನಯವಾಗಿ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಯೋಜನೆ  
ಮತ್ತು ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆಯ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಜಾರಿ ತಂದು ಗ್ರಾಮ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿಗಳ  
ಮೂಲಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜನರ ಸಹಭಾಗಿತ್ವವನ್ನು ಪ್ರತಿಪಾದಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.  
ಈ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿಯ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು  
ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳ ಸಂಗ್ರಹವನ್ನು ಸಂಭವಿಸುವ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತ ತೀರ್ಮಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೈಗೊಂಡು  
ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆಯು ಪಾಲನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯುವುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೊರತು  
ಅರಣ್ಯವಾಸಿ ಬಡವರ ಅರ್ಥಿಕ ಅವಲಂಬನೆಗೆ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯರೇ ನಿರ್ಧರಿಸಿ ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲ  
ಪಡೆದು ತಮ್ಮ ಪರಂಪರಾಗತ ಜೀವನೋಪಾಯವನ್ನು ಕೈಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಯಾವುದೇ  
ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸಿಲ್ಲ. ಹಾಗೂ ಈ ರೀತಿ ಅವಕಾಶ ಒದಗಿಸುವುದು ಆತ್ಮಂತ  
ಮಹತ್ವದಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಪ್ರಜಾ ಪ್ರಭುತ್ವದ ನಮ್ಮ ಅಡಳಿತದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂವಿಧಾನದ 4ನೇ ಭಾಗದ ಅನುಧೇಯ  
46ರಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಳಿದಂತೆ ಪ್ರಜಾಪ್ರತಿನಿಧಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಶಾಹಿಗಳು ಬಡಜನರ  
ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಪರಸ್ಪರ ಪಾಲಕವಾದ ತತ್ವ ರೂಪಿಸುವುದು ಶ್ರಿಯವೆನಿಸಿ  
ವಿಚಾರವಾದರೂ, ನಿಜವಾಗಿಯೂ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಶಾಹಿಗಳು ಜನರ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಕ್ಕಾಗಿ  
ನೇರವಾಗಿ ದೊರೆಯಬೇಕಾದ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸಲು ದೃಢವಾದ ಶಿಫಾರಸ್ಸನ್ನು  
ಮಾಡುವುದು ವಿಷಯ, ಮಹಾತ್ಮಿಯ ಮೇಲೆಂದು ಮಹಡಿ ಕಟ್ಟುವ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ  
ಆದಾಯ ತತ್ವವನ್ನೇ ಮುಂದೆ ಮುಡಿ ತಮ್ಮ ನುಡಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾತ್ರ ಸರಳಗೊಳಿಸುವ  
ಚಿಂತನೆಂಥವಾಗಿರುವುದು ಅನಿವಾರ್ಯವೆನಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.

ಸದ್ಯದ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮತ್ತು ಲಭ್ಯವಿರುವ ಅರಣ್ಯ ನೀತಿಯ ಅಧಾರದ  
ಮೇಲೆ ತಾತ್ಕಾಲಿಕವಾಗಿ ( ಉಚಿತವಾಗಿ ಹಕ್ಕು ಸಿಗುವದಾಗಿ) ಅರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ  
ಗಿರಿಜನರ ಬದುಕನ್ನು ಹಸನಗೊಳಿಸಲು ಅರಣ್ಯ ಕಿರು ಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳ ಸಂಗ್ರಹ  
ಮತ್ತು ಮೂರಾಟದ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಮೀಸಲಿಡುವ ಅದಕ್ಕನುಸಾರ ರೂಪರೇಷೆಯನ್ನು  
ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನಂತೆ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಹತ್ತಿಮ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಾಗಬಹುದು.

ಮೊತ್ತ ಮೊದಲು ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳು ದೊರೆಯುವ ( ಜಿತ್ತ ಮತ್ತೂ ದಿದಿರು ದಿಟ್ಟು) ಪಾಲಿಸ್ ದೀಟಿ ಅಥವಾ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕುಗಳನ್ನು ಆಯಾ ಆರಣ್ಯ ವಲಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಗುರುತಿಸಿ ಆರಿಸುವ ಒಟ್ಟು ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳ ವೆಚ್ಚ ಶೇಕಡಾ 5 ಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಮೇಲ್ಪಟ್ಟು ಆರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಗುಣನರಿದ್ದರೆ ಅಂತಹ ಪ್ರತಿ ಪಾಲಿಸ್ ದೀಟಿ ಅಥವಾ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕಿಗೆ ಒಂದರಂತೆ ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳ ಸಮೂಹದ ( ಯುಂಜರೂ ಗ್ರಾಮ) ಅಥವಾ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿಯನ್ನು ರಚನೆ ಮಾಡಬೇಕು. ಈ ದೀಟಿನೆನ:ಬ್ಯಾಂಕಿನ ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳೆಂದು ಆ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕವಾಗಿ ಬರುವ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳನ್ನು ಸದಸ್ಯರನ್ನಾಗಿ ನೇರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಆರಣ್ಯ ರಕ್ಷಣೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ವಂಶಪರಂಪರಾಗತವಾಗಿ ಜೀವನೋಪಾಯಕ್ಕೆ ಅವಲಂಬಿತರಾಗಿ ಬಂದವರು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ ನೇರವಾಗಿ ಅವಕ್ಕೆ ಒದಗಿಸುವ ಜರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ದಿಟ್ಟು ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಿಂದ ಆ ಸಮಿತಿಯ ಎಲ್ಲರಲ್ಲೂ ಪರ್ಜಿಸಬೇಕು. ಈ ರೀತಿ ಬಹು ಸುಪಾಗ ಅರ್ಥಿಕವಾಗಿ ಸಬಲರಾದವರು ಮತ್ತು ವಂಶ ಪರಂಪರಾಗತವಾಗಿ ಆ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಆದಾಯ ಮೂಲವಾಗಿ ಇಟ್ಟುಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಗೂ ತೀರ ಬಡ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತರು ಮತ್ತು ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ತಮ್ಮ ಜೀವನ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆಗಾಗಿ ನಂದಿಶುವ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳ ಪ್ರತೀಕ ಪಟ್ಟಿ ಮಾಡಬೇಕು. ಹಾಗೂ ಆ ದೀಟಿ:ಬ್ಯಾಂಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಕಿರು ಆರಣ್ಯ ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಲು ಮತ್ತು ನೇರವಾಗಿ ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಲು ತೀರ ಬಡ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತರಿಗೆ ಅವಕಾಶವಾಗುವಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲರನ್ನು ಮನ ಒರಿಸುವ ತಿಳುವಳಿಕೆ ತೀರ್ಮಾನಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಪ್ರಾಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಂತೆಯೇ ಈ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯುವ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳಿಗೆ ಪ್ರತಿ ಕುಟುಂಬಕ್ಕೆ ಒಂದರಂತೆ (ಗಂಡ ಮತ್ತು ಹೆಂಡತಿಯ ಜಂಟಿ ಹೆಸರಿನಲ್ಲಿ) ಆರಣ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಮತ್ತು ಗ್ರಾಮ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿ ನೇರಿಸಿ ದೀಟಿನಿಂದ:ಬ್ಯಾಂಕಿನಿಂದ ಯಾವ ಯಾವ ಕಿರು ಆರಣ್ಯ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ಆ ಕುಟುಂಬವು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ ನೇರವಾಗಿ ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಬಹುದೆನ್ನುವ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ದಿಂದು ಪಾಸನ್ನು 2 ವರ್ಷದ ಅಧಿಗಿ ನೀಡಬೇಕು. ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳ ಸಮೂಹದಲ್ಲಿ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾನುಕೊಂಡು ತೀರ್ಮಾನ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವಾಗ ಇವರು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಕ್ಕೆ ಯಾವ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ( ಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳು ಪಕ್ಕವಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆಯುವ ವರೆಗೆ ಕಾದು) ಹೊರಡಬೇಕು. ಇಂತಹ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಿರ್ದಿಷ್ಟ ತೀರ್ಮಾನ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವ ಸಮಯ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆಯು ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳ ಸಮೂಹದ ಜೊತೆ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಜೀಕು. ಆ ರೀತಿ ಪಾನನ್ನು ಕಿರು ಆರಣ್ಯ ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗೆ ಮೂತ್ರ ಮಾರಾಟಕರ ಮತ್ತು ಆದಾಯ ಕರವನ್ನು ಹೊರತುಪಡಿಸಿ ನಿಗದಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಮೊತ್ತವನ್ನು ಆಯಾ ವಲಯದ ಆರಣ್ಯ ವೇತ್ರದ ಪಾನುಗಳಿಗೆ ಆಯಾ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿಯ ( ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳ ಸಮೂಹದ) ತೀರ್ಮಾನದಂತೆ, ವಿಂಗಡಿಸಿ ಪ್ರತಿ ಕುಟುಂಬದಿಂದ ಪಾನು ನೀಡುವಾಗ ವನೋರಿ ಮೂಡಿಕೊಂಡು ತಮ್ಮ ಆದಾಯವನ್ನು ಗಣಿಸಬಹುದು.

ಅರಣ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆಯು ಈ ರೀತಿಗಳಿಂದ ಆದಾಯದಲ್ಲೂ ಪ್ರತಿ ದೀಪನ: ಬಾಕಿನ  
 (ಗ್ರಾಮ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿಯು) ಆದಾಯದ ಶೇಕಡಾ 50 ನೇರವಾಗಿ ಆಯಾ  
 ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳ ಸಮೂಹಕ್ಕೆ ( ವಿ.ಎಫ್.ಸಿ ಗಳಿಗೆ) ಕೊಟ್ಟು ಅರಣ್ಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ  
 ರಕ್ಷಣೆ ಮತ್ತು ಅದರಲ್ಲೂ ವಿಶೇಷವಾಗಿ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳ ಮತ್ತು ಗಡಮುರಕೆ  
 ಜಿಪದಿಗಳ ಹೆಚ್ಚಳಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಕಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ವ್ಯಯಿಸುವಂತೆ ಕ್ರಮ  
 ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಹೊರಗಿನ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಿಂದರೂ ಅಥವಾ ಬಾಕಿನರೂ  
 ಸಮೀಪದ ದೀಪನ: ಬಾಕಿನರೂ ರಜನೆಯಿಂದ ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳ ಸಮೂಹ ( ( ವೀಣೆ ಗ್ರಾಮ )  
 ಅಥವಾ ವಿ.ಎವೆ.ಸಿ. ನವರೇ ಪಾಸಿನ ರಕಂಕೊಟ್ಟು ವಹಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

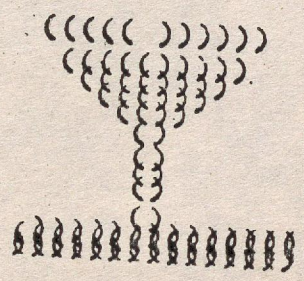
ಈ ರೀತಿ ನಂಗ್ರಹ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾರಾಟದ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಪಡೆದ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳು  
 ತಾವು ನಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದ ಕಿರು ಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ತಾವೇ ಸಂಸ್ಕರಣೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಅದಾಯ  
 ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಮತ್ತು ಈ ಅರಣ್ಯ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಯಗಳಿಗೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ನಿರ್ಬಂಧವಿಲ್ಲದೇ  
 ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಬಹುದು. ಈ ಅರಣ್ಯ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಯದಿಂದ ಕಟ್ಟಾ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿ  
 ಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊರಗೆ ಮಾರಾಟಮಾಡಲು ಮುಂದಾಗುವ ಪಾಸು ಪಡೆದ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳಾಗರಿ  
 ಖಾಸಗಿ ವ್ಯವಹಾರವನ್ನು ಮಾಡುವ ಕಂಪ್ರಾಕ್ಟರುಗಳಾಗರಿ, ವಿ.ಎಫ್.ಸಿಯಾಗರಿ ಅಥವಾ  
 ಸ್ವಕಾರ ಸಂಘಗಳಾಗರಿ ಮಾರಾಟ ಕರವನ್ನು ಪ್ರತಿ ಕಿಂಟರಿಗೆ ರೆಕ್ಕೆದರಿ ( ಶೇಕಡಾ  
 5 ರಿಂದ 10ರ ಒಳಗೆ ) ಕೊಡುವಂತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕೇವಲ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಕಂಪ್ರಾಕ್ಟರುಗಳು  
 ಮಾತ್ರ ಆದಾಯಕರವನ್ನು ನೀಡುವಂತೆ ಕ್ರಮಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವ ನಿಯಮಗಳನ್ನು  
 ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತರಬೇಕು.

ಕುಟುಂಬಕ್ಕೆ ಕೊಡುವ ಪಾಸುಗಳನ್ನು ವಿ.ಎವೆ ಸಿಯು ತೀರ್ಮಾನದರಿಂದ  
 ಪ್ರತಿ 2 ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೊಮ್ಮೆ ಪರಿಷ್ಕರಿಸುವುದು, ಅಥವಾ ಈ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಗುಮೇ  
 ಮಾಡುವ ಯಾ ಅಕ್ರಮವನಗುವ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಮಿತಿ  
 ಅಥವಾ ಫಲಾನುಭವಿಗಳ ಸಮೂಹದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಾಮೂಹಿಕ ತೀರ್ಮಾನಕೊಳಪಡಿಸಿ  
 ಕ್ರಮಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಆದ ತೀರ್ಮಾನದಂತೆ ಪಾಸು ಪಡೆದ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ  
 ಗಳಲ್ಲದೇ ಒಂದು ನಿರ್ದಿಷ್ಟ ಅರಣ್ಯ ದೀಪನ:ಬಾಕಿನಿಂದ ಇತರರು ಅಕ್ರಮವಾಗಿ  
 ನಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದರೆ ಅವರನ್ನು ಹಿಡಿದು ಇಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ( ವಿ.ಎವೆ ಸಿ ಅಥವಾ ಯಾಜರ  
 ಗ್ರಾಮನಲ್ಲಿ ) ತೀರ್ಮಾನಿಸಿ ದಂಡ ಹಾಕುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಅಕ್ರಮವಾಗಿ  
 ನಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದ ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು 3 ವೇತ್ರದರಿ ನಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಲು ಪಾಸು ಪಡೆದವರಿಗೆ  
 ಸಮಾನವಾಗಿ ಹಂಚಿಕೊಡುವ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಜಾರಿ ಮಾಡಬೇಕು.

ಈ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಿಂದ ಅರಣ್ಯದೊಳಗೆ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳು ಪಕ್ವವಾಗುವ  
 ವರೆಗೆ ಕಾಯದೇ ಕಿತ್ತಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಪ್ರವೃತ್ತಿ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗಿ ಸ್ವಾಭಾವಿಕವಾಗಿ  
 ಅರಣ್ಯದೊಳಗೆ ಕಿರುಕಾಡು ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳ ಮರಗಳು ಜೀವಿಯಲು ಅವಕಾಶವಾಗಿ

ಇದರ ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಗಳನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸಿ. ಉತ್ತಮವಾಗಿ ಗುರುತಿಸಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮುಂದುವರಿದು ಸಂಸ್ಕರಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಗುರುತಿಸಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮೂಲಭೂತವನ್ನು ಕಾಯ್ದುಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಅವಕಾಶವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಆದಾಗಲೇ ರಚನೆಯಾಗುವ ವಿವಿಧ ಸಿ ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಹ ಈ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿ ತಿಳಿಸಲು ಸೂಕ್ತವಾಗಿದೆ. ಈಗಿನವು ನುಭವಗಳಿಂದ ವಿವಿಧ ಸಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕಿರುಕೂಟ ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ನಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ ಮೂರನೇ ಮೂಡುವಲ್ಲಿ ಅನೇಕ ತೊಂದರೆಗಳಾಗುತ್ತವೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನಲ್ಲಿ, ಕಳೆದ ಮೂರನೇ ಮೂಡುವಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಂದರೆಗಳಿಂದ ವಿವಿಧ ಸಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಡಕು ಮತ್ತು ಶ್ರಮದ ವ್ಯರ್ಥ ಹರಣವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದನ್ನು ತಪ್ಪಿಸುವುದು ಕ್ರಮಬದ್ಧ ಮತ್ತು ಪತ್ತಿ ವಿವಿಧ ಸಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ವಯಸ್ತಿಕವಾಗಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಕುಟುಂಬ ತಮಗಿಷ್ಟ ಬಂದ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಸ್ಕರಣೆ ಮೂರನೇ ಮೂಲಕ ಅವಾಯು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುತ್ತದೆಯಲ್ಲದೇ ಬಡ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಗಿರಿಜನ ಜೀವನೋಪಾಯದ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಶಕ್ತಿ ವಂತರು ಕಿತ್ತುಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿರುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ತಿಳುವಳಿಕೆಯು ಕಡಿಮೆಯನ್ನು ಸಂಭವವಾಗಿ ಹುಕುತ್ತು ದೋಲಿ ಭವಿಷ್ಯತ್ತಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಬಡ ಆರಣ್ಯ ಅವಲಂಬಿತ ಗಿರಿಜನರ ಜೀವನ ಇನ್ನೂ ಬರ್ಬರವಾಗುವುದನ್ನು ತಪ್ಪಿಸಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿದೆ.



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## POLITICAL ECONOMY OF UTTARA KANNADA

- Geographically the district has 80% of area as forest and is known as forest district
- The farming is done on less than 10% of the land
- More number of people have to depend on less land. population has increased to 14 lakhs (1991).
- 80% of people live below poverty line

### HISTORY

- Parashurama creation
  - Oldest mountain ranges
  - Ruled by Mauryas
  - Vijayanagar Kingdom
  - Trade with Arab + Europe in 2nd century
  - 17th century trade pepper- Dutch + British
  - Tippu defeated in 1798-79 British Rule
  - Written History- Buchanas Report 1802 Travelled widely in Kanara-records the details of forest, agriculture and people.
- Basically interest in Forest Resources- Teak for Ship building upcoming Bombay as industrial city.

### OWNERSHIP OF FORESTS?

Community	)	People felt forest was theirs
Village	)	as they controlled
Village forest God	)	No extra pressure.

- 1860's Shifting of ownership to Government control
- 1881 Raita Koota - Agitation to regain community control
- U.Kannada as hinterland for Bombay - to supply raw materials
- It was essential to nationalise forests.
- Classification- Protected Forest, Reserved Forest, Minor Forest
- 1924- Settlements- by Britishers
  - Areca garden owners fought for privileges
  - Canara privilege Act.
- 1940- Discontent over forest resources was used by Independence Movement to organise people. Who felled forests as a symbol of protest.
- 1945- World War - supply railway sleepers
- 1947- Independence
  - But colonial attitude of forest as source of revenue pervades the forest Management/officials
  - U.K.- as perennial source of forest resource for State + Nation

## Forest Cover Destroyed

### FOREST - BACKWARD DIST- DEVELOPMENT

Plywood - Timber concessions  
Pulp - Encalypts  
Paper - Bamboo  
Power - Dams  
Policy - Forest/- =monoculture

- Increase in population + demand destruction of forest
- A socio- political problem ODA - providing technical answer  
JFPM/ commercial objective

Who will take care of ecological objective?

- People see destruction of forests by Govt., on large scale  
and politicians supporting smuggling.
- But when people have to fell trees on their own land or for  
agriculture Forest Dept., comes in
- If this is the situation how can they believe ODA funded  
JFPM - will provide income to village forest committee?
- TRUST Betrayed - Need to create trust
- People should feel that forest is their resource

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Hulemalgi Bldg  
Chowkimath  
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## MAPPING BIO-DIVERSITY

In this region bio diversity can be mapped in three major areas. They are :-

- FOREST ( Forest Diversity )
- Garden Land ( Cultivated Bio-diversity )
- Paddy ( Diversity in Paddy Land)

### FOREST OR NATURAL DIVERSITY :

As the region represents tropical forest area, it is embedded in rich forest resources. The interesting aspect of this rich diversity is the utilisation of the forest diversity by farmers. This is made use of in day to day life and also in practicing agriculture.

The task of mapping this diversity can be done as under :

#### I. UTILISATION OF FOREST RESOURCES BY PEOPLE

1. Food, wild fruits, nuts, fodder.
2. Medicinal plants.
3. Employment generation, collection of MEP(minor forest produce)
4. Agriculture implements.
5. Forest trees as natural pesticides
6. Fibre

These utilisation aspects can be documented through

- A. Herbarium
- B. A Booklet on Natural Resources and Forests
- C. Peoples conservation programme - Natural Regeneration
- D. An Artists view of this, in different use, illustration of use by part of tree, leaves, roots.

The natural regeneration plots can be measured in comparison with forest department plantations to assess species diversity in the area.

#### II. GARDEN LANDS ( CULTIVATED DIVERSITY )

The garden land with different horticultural crops represent the diversity utilised for cash income and to bring in prosperity to the farmers. The garden lands show how utilisation of bio-diversity can lead not only sustenance but also towards affluence. This affluence is created within the concept of sustainability

and ecological balance between man and nature. The documentation process would be :

- A. Details of traditional garden layout.  
Westward sun, valley, river, stream, planting technique etc.
- B. Symbiotic relationship of garden land with natural resources of the area, its survival for past 900 years as a sign of sustainability.
- C. Relationship and utilisation of sunlight, Canopy, planting multilayered crops, companion planting with economic significance.
- D. Indegeniuous crops, seeds, (pepper)(Cardamom) which are distinctive. And the relationship with introduced varieties leading to introduction of virus or disease.(eg.Banana or pepper)
- E. Eroding the sustainability of garden land, tissue culture, cardamom, introduced pepper, coca cultivation, disappearance of natural forests, leading to drying of streams.

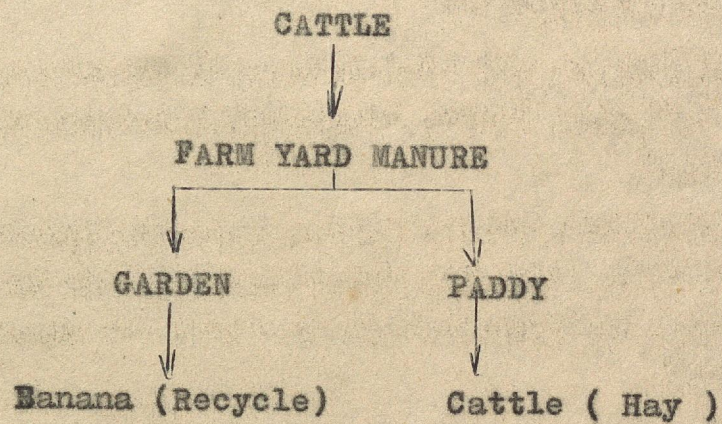
### III. PADDY FIELDS ( Diversity in staple crop)

Paddy fields in midst of hill walley in western ghat represents a highly evolved system of paddy cultivation, harvesting rain water on terraced fields. The traditional paddy varieties have evolved on the basic of water availability and pest resistance. In this region the introduction of green revolution technology has a long experience. The farmers have rejected this technology based on their experience. The documentation process will emphasise on :

- A. Recording of failure of Green Revelation Technology
- B. Shift from Green revelation to traditional seeds. The need and availability of seeds.  
( Not eccentric but general opinion of people)
- C. Shrinkage of HYV seed supply-check government records.
- D. Advantages of Traditional Paddy varieties.
- E. Traditional pest management methods.

SELF RELIANT - HOME RESOURCE ECONOMY IN TROPICAL  
REGION

- DRAW FLOW CHART

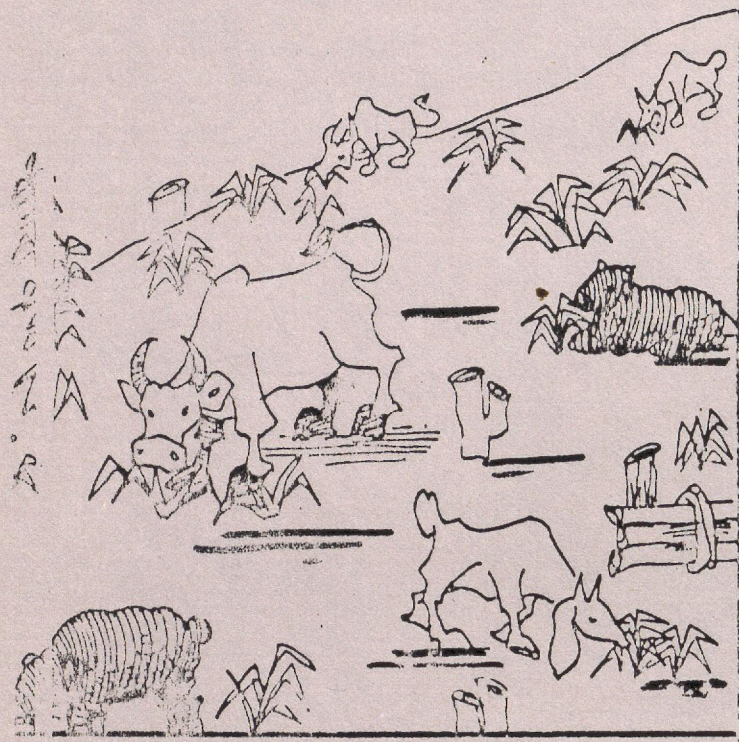


Generation of surplus for human consumption and for cash income within the limits of natural resources.

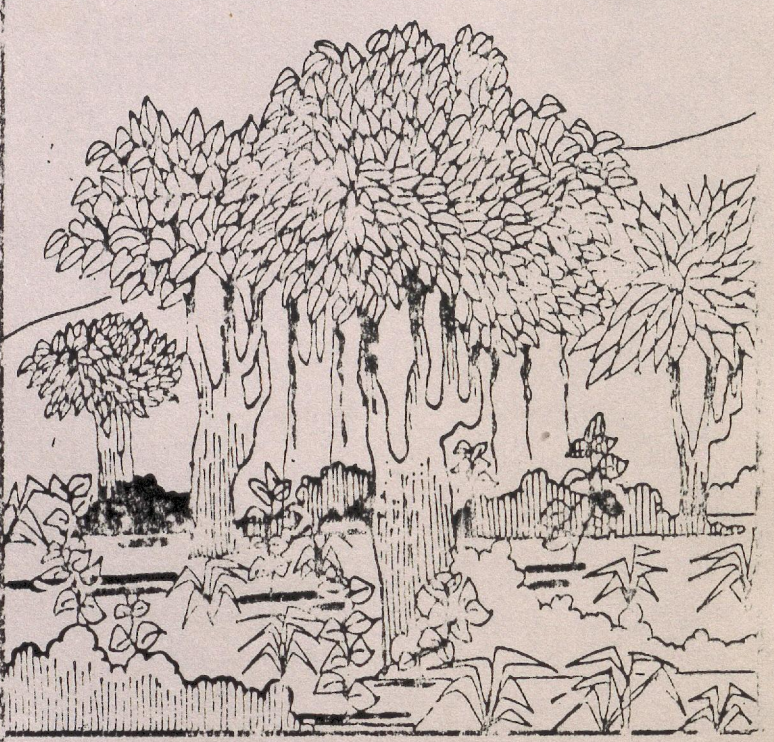
## VEGETATION ANALYSIS

- |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Species density and distribution   |
| * trees, shrubs, herbs, climbers etc. |
| * density                             |
| * protected forest and control plot   |
| 2. Distribution of size of trees      |
| * according to DBH                    |
| 3. Estimation of basal area           |
| * indicator of standing biomass       |
| * species, family per hectare         |
| * species and family importance value |

- |  |
|--|
| 4. Mode of regeneration  |
| * coppice  |
| * seedling/seeds   |
| 5. Distribution of plants according to                                   |
| * family   |
| * forest succession  |
| * end uses   |
| * basal area   |
| 6. Vegetation status of tree plantations (conventional block plantation) |
| * plant species distribution; trees, shrubs, herbs etc.                  |
| * density of trees   |
| * DBH distribution and basal area  |
| * standing biomass and productivity                                      |



CONTROL PLOT

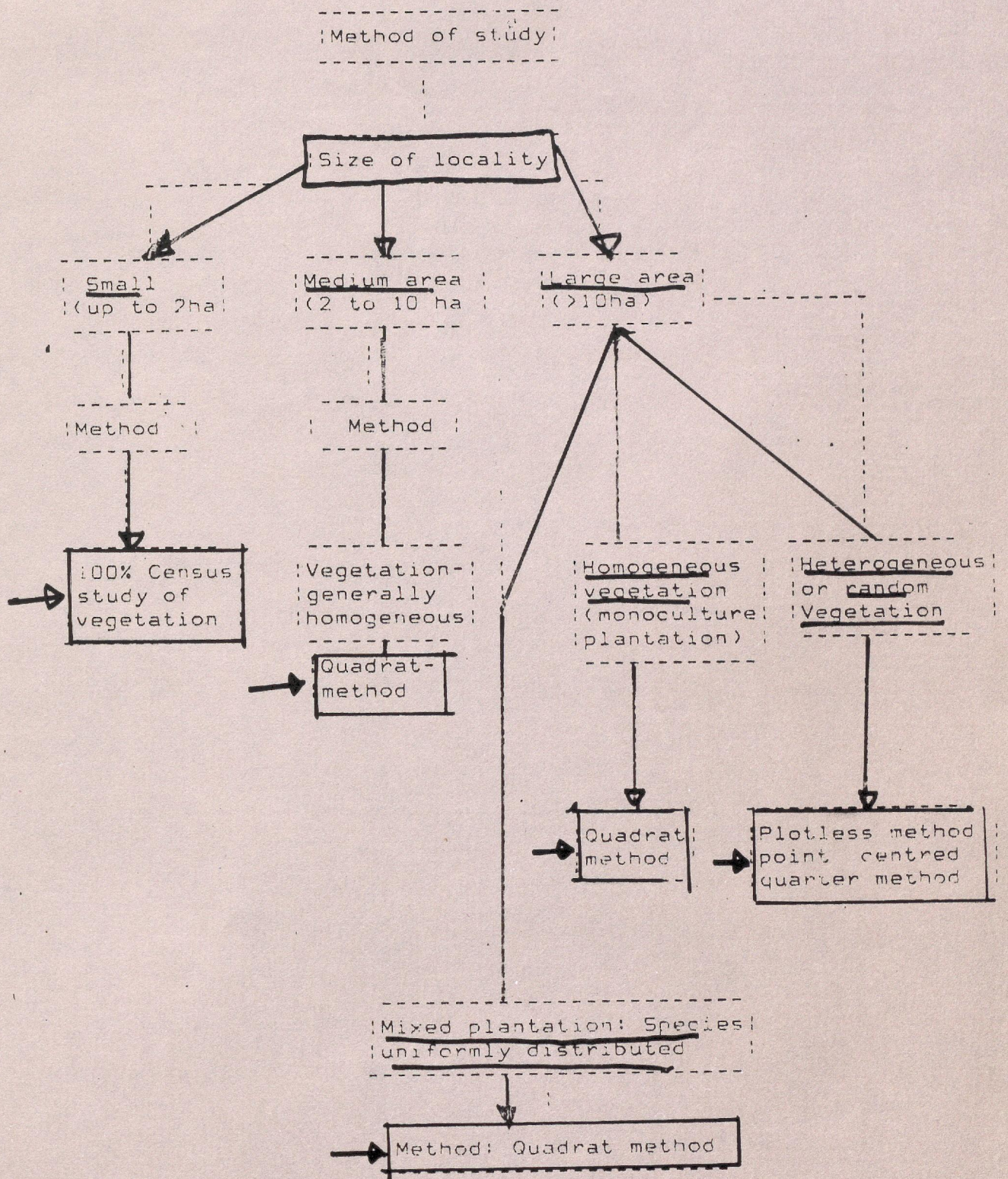


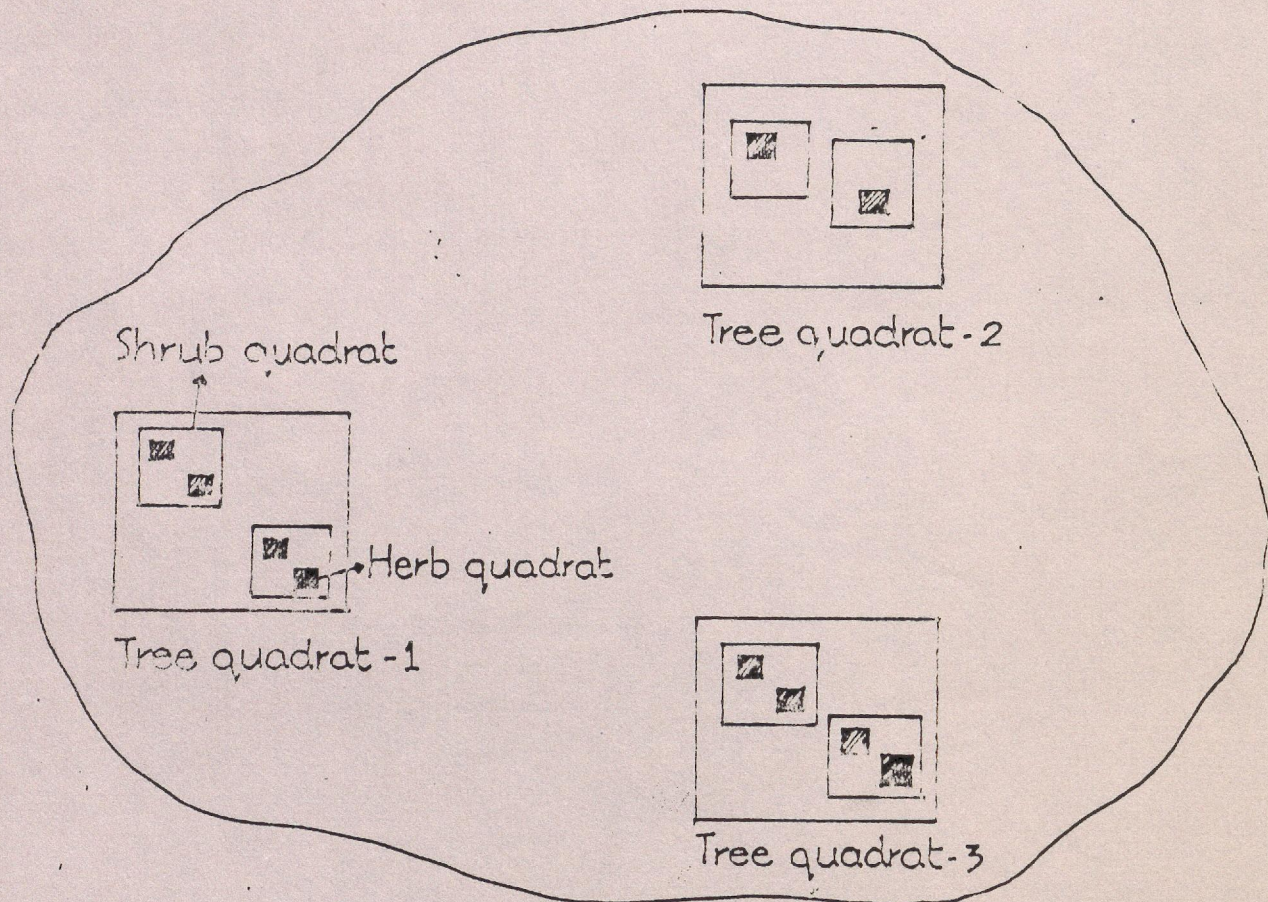
PROTECTED PATCH

# METHOD OF STUDY

- Size of research area
- Heterogeneity of Vegetation
- Variation in Soil and Water
- altitude & slope.

## 6.1. Forests and degraded forest patches:





LOCATION OF TREE, SHRUB, HERB PLOTS

# Quadrat Method

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Vegetation	Size of Quadrat	N <sup>o</sup> of quadrats / Replications	Remarks.
Trees ( > 30 cm GBH )	<del>50m x 50m</del> 50m x 40m	<del>5-8</del> 4 † 5 ✓	If the soil type or topography or vegetation is variable go for more n <sup>o</sup> of quadrats.
Shrubs	5m x 5m	8-10 ✓ ✓	For each quadrat for trees include 2 plots for shrubs and seedlings
Regenerating trees	Same - plots	Same plots.	
Herbs	1m x 1m	16-20 ✓ <del>20-32</del>	Two quadrats for each shrub quadrat
Grass lands	1m x 1m	5-10	

## B SHRUB AND REGENERATING SEEDLING.

- Size of Q : 5m x 5m

- No of Q : 2Q/Tree Q

- Location Q : Inside Tree Q

Parameters to be recorded.

Tree Q : No

Shrub Q : No

Shrub cover of ground layer	SHRUBS		Regenerating seedling/Coppice		
	Species	No	Sps.	G.BH	Ht. Class
90-100%					
75-90%					
50-75%					
<50%					

- Height class ; a = <1m, b = 1-2m

c = 2-9m, d = >5m

- Regenerating seedling, - All tree seedlings/shoot of > 1.5m ht.

- G.BH < 30 cm

Herb Layer 1 1

Size of Q : 1m x 1m

N<sup>o</sup> of Q : 2 Q / shrub Q

Location of Q : Inside shrub Q

Tree quadrat  
N<sup>o</sup> :

Shrub  
quadrat N<sup>o</sup> :

Herb Q. N<sup>o</sup> :

Ground cover by herb layer	Herb layer	
	Species	Number
> 90%		
75 - 90%		
50 - 75%		
25 - 50%		
> 25%		

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### *The International Fund to Counter Destructive Development*

In 1992, Ms Medha Patkar of India's Narmada Bachao Andolan received the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize, sponsored by the San Francisco, California-based Goldman Foundation. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement) is leading the non-violent struggle against the socially and environmentally destructive and economically unviable, World Bank-funded Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River.

As the Narmada Bachao Andolan does not accept foreign funding, Medha Patkar has donated her \$60,000 prize to set up the International Fund to Counter Destructive Development. The aim of the Fund is to help local communities and grassroots movements around the world who are opposing internationally-financed destructive development projects, especially those involving forced resettlement.

The International Fund to Counter Destructive Development will make grants of up to \$5,000 to non-profit organisations. The Fund is especially interested in making grants for

- 1) local communications and networking
- 2) equipment to help build the capacity of groups to work more effectively
- 3) local studies of alternatives to destructive projects, and 4) emergency campaign funding.

The trustees of the fund are Medha Patkar, Madhukar Deshpande of the India Development Service (IDS) in Illinois, USA; Lori Udall and Patrick McCully of International Rivers Network, based in Washington, DC, and Berkeley, California; and Yukio Tanaka of the Center for Environmental Policy and Advocacy in Tokyo. IDS is the fiscal agent for the fund. It will endorse the decisions of the trustees unless these are contrary to the basic philosophy of IDS.

#### Application Guidelines

Applications for grants should be concise, ~~P~~ no more than three pages, ~~P~~ and should describe the destructive project, the objectives of your group and the specific activities for which the money is requested. Submissions will be reviewed quarterly, although exceptions will be made if funds are required urgently. Receipt of application will be acknowledged.

Grants will not be given for: international travel, videos, video or photographic equipment, development projects or education projects; or to groups which are profit-making, which are involved in consultancy work with international financial institutions, or which are government affiliated. Grants cannot be given to individuals or for-profit organisations.

Submissions should be sent to:

Lori Udall  
Washington Director  
International Rivers Network  
1025 Vermont Ave, NW #300  
Washington, DC 20005. USA.  
Fax +1 202 879 3186



**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORKSHOP-SEMINAR  
COSTA RICA-THE NETHERLANDS  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT  
ULACIT, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA  
NOVEMBER 1-4, 1995**

**Juan Humberto Cevo G.**

**REFERENCE POINTS FOR THE DISCUSSION**

**1.- WHY A WORKSHOP-SEMINAR AND A ROUND TABLE.**

The different components of this Workshop-Seminar have certain objectives, as the seminar as a whole has them. Indeed, when the Agreement's Interinstitutional Commission approved the lectures for Costa Rican universities, this one among others, it was done in order for representatives of the different segments of both societies to get together around really important problems so that, out of each Workshop-Seminar, recommendations and conclusions of joined actions that get the work of the Agreement going were reached.

It should be clear then that this Workshop-Seminar is not just another meeting but, on the contrary, it should show the beginning of a series of plans, projects and activities to be carried out thanks to the Bilateral Agreement for Sustainable Development, in the diversified field of tourism.

Having this goal in mind, each component of this Workshop-Seminar was assigned a clearly defined main objective.

So, the discussion that we are about to begin has the purpose of being the first group effort to explicitly state the different theoretical and practical aspects proposed so far, not only in the present meetings, but also in those agreed in the three technical meetings of the binational technical commissions since March 1993.

This is why we have established this round table including participants representing a great variety of segments from both societies. We intend that the proposals formulated here constitute a considerable input for the Workshops.

Thus, I respectfully request from the participants at this table a special effort so that the proposals to be made known next, be the first concrete approach to the conclusions and recommendations that shall constitute the final product of this Workshop-Seminar.

**2.- BRIEF BACKGROUND REVIEW.**

This Workshop-Seminar is part of a Binational Agreement, whose principles- which were reminisced by the Ambassador, Mr. Frans van Haren, in his inauguration speech, should always be present as they constitute not only the guide, but also the spirit that should encourage this new experience in international cooperation.

Three consultation meetings - accounted for in the text of the agreement are added to the agreement - each one of which has yielded agreement documents and those which, regarding tourism, are reproduced next in order to have them as a mark of what has been achieved so far.

#### 2.1. THE PRINCIPLES.

Active and effective participation; reciprocation; just and equal relationships; gradual advance of the long term cooperative tasks.

From these, such criteria as: from sustainable development (environmental, social and economic dimensions); reciprocation; participation; relevance; quality; rationality and clarity come up.

#### 2.2. CONSULTATION MEETINGS.

##### 2.2.1. SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA APRIL 1st, 1993.

"Possible areas of cooperation (in tourism):

- a. Jointly elaborating policies, criteria and conditions for ecotourism based on the principles of sustainable development.
- b. Promotion of the participation of local governments, communities and small-scale local initiatives in the regional tourist development of Costa Rica.
- c. Support to scientific research guided to the design and implementation of tourist development master plans, especially, ecotourism under the sustainable development viewpoint.
- d. Development of an anticipated legislation, as well as strategies in their diverse ecological, social, cultural, and economical aspects, destined to the grounding of the country's identity in all its diversity.
- e. Experiences and research which could be useful to the Netherlands in the field of conservation, participation of the community, and the handling of natural resources as a tourist attraction, .
- f. Promotion of (eco) tourist opportunities viable for the tourism of Costa Ricans.
- g. Creation of information and education centers about sustainable development, environment and conservation for the different classes and segments of the population in both countries."

##### 2.2.2. OEGSTGEEST, SEPTEMBER 11, 1993.

"Agreement Topics

##### 5. TOURISM.

- Basic, medium and higher training.
- Promotion of environmental and cultural offering.
- Research, master plan.
- Ordering and planning of tourist investment
- Responsible tourism.
- Scientific, health Tourism.
- Support to the management of local governments.
- Development of the micro, small and medium-sized business."

##### 2.2.3. SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, FEBRUARY 17, 1995.

"TOURISM.

Territorial planning based on an appropriate legislation is considered a

fundamental condition for a balanced sustainable development of the tourism sector, from small scale tourism to massive tourism. Along with this long-term goal, immediate actions, such as awareness and training campaigns allowing to make the ethics implied by sustainable development known and understood, should start to be implemented."

#### SHORT TERM GOALS.

- a. First awareness and training activities.
- b. Workshop on sustainable tourism in San José, Costa Rica, in September, 1995.
- c. Incorporation of the private sector into the Netherlands-Costa Rica cooperation, starting from the workshop preparation stage.

#### MEDIUM RANGE GOALS (12 MONTHS).

- a. Practicability Studies on territorial ordering. the recommendations of the Sustainable Land and Agriculture Use Group, and the already carried out efforts being implemented in that field will be taken into consideration.
- b. Sustainable Tourism Workshop in Holland in March 1996.  
The workshops that will take place in September 1995 and March 1996 will be directed to developing a common regulation, as well as to programming the rest of activities, among them, the strategies and stages that the territorial ordering will have to cover (regulating plans, management plans, etc.) The first workshop already has some resources from small projects already approved.

#### LONG TERM GOALS.

- a. Joined activities of research and monitoring of the tourism phenomenon by means of the analysis of cases in both countries, as well as in education and in improvement of the quality of life of the communities. Activities such as these may be started:
  - I Follow up of the recommendations of the practicability study as for territorial ordering and legislation.
  - II Conceptualization: what is sustainable development of the tourism sector in each country?.
  - III Development of integral kinds of tourist development.
  - IV Professionalization of services: training and formation
  - V Development of clean types of tourism
  - VI Development and implementation of environmental care systems in tourist facilities.
  - VII Development of visitor centers and guides.
  - VIII Improvement in the quality of life of the communities.

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## People's Database on Land Tenure, Land Use and Land Cover in Dakshina Kannada Workshop Report

The Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) and Nagarika Seva Trust (NST), Guruvayanakere recently conducted a study to compile a database on land tenure, land use and land cover for the management of public lands resources in Dakshina Kannada district. A one-day workshop was held on 13th April 1998 at the Conference Hall in the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Mangalore to present and discuss the findings of this pilot effort. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri N Yogish Bhat, MLA, Mangalore, and the main session was co-chaired by Deputy Commissioner of Mangalore, Shri Anil Kumar and Divisional Forest Officer of Kundapur, Ms. Madhu Sharma. Thirty seven participants attended the workshop including officials from the Revenue Department, the Forest Department, the Directorate of Land Records, and people's representatives, NGO representatives and members of the press. The workshop included a special presentation by Dr Sreekumar Chattopadhyay of Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, on Kerala's experience in Panchayat-level Participatory Resource Mapping.

The main objectives of the study were to (1) understand the concept and meaning of land tenure, land use and land cover with special reference to the public lands in Dakshina Kannada; (2) to compile and analyse different datasets available with the Revenue Department, Forest Department and the Land Records offices for Dakshina Kannada district as a whole and specially for Belthangadi taluk and to put them in a publicly accessible form; (3) to estimate the area available for Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) in different villages of Belthangadi taluk using these datasets and applying the legal and physical criteria for the JFPM programme

### Main Findings of the Study

1) The land tenure system (i.e., the system of land ownership, use rights and responsibilities) in public lands in Dakshina Kannada is quite complicated. The important categories of public lands are a) those owned by the Forest Department (FD), viz., National Parks, Sanctuaries, Reserve Forests, and Protected Forests, and b) those owned by the Revenue Department, viz., Gomaal lands, Assessed Waste Lands (AWL) with Kumki privileges, AWL without Kumki privileges, and Paramboku lands. The system of Kumki privileges (in which significant harvest rights are granted to individual farmers) is a historical peculiarity of this district and its rules and administration (further complicated by High Court judgements) are often not clearly understood by many of the privilege holders as well as administrators.

2) The information on the legal status of public land is scattered across various sources and locations. The major source of information on extent of public lands in different legal categories is the Jamabandi record maintained by the Revenue Department. Village-wise Jamabandi information is available at the Taluk offices. A more detailed and useful record of the public lands in the village is Banjara Thakhta Register (BTR), which is available only with the Village Accountants (VAs). The Forest Department (FD) provides district-wise figures on land under different legal forest categories in its Annual Reports. The Directorate of Land Records (DLR) maintains village revenue maps and field map book at the Taluk level. The ISEC-NST study found that information on legal status of public lands in the district is highly contradictory, incomplete, inaccurate and inaccessible.

a) As per the Jamabandi records, the area legally classified as forest in D.K. district is 32%, but the Forest Department reports this area to be 44%!

- b) The Jamabandi records club all FD land under one category ("forest"), and also club kumki and non-kumki AWLs into a single category ("sarkari anadheena"). In the BTRs, areas reported as under Kumki are only a guesstimate, as Kumki lands have never been surveyed and demarcated. The FD has no information on non-FD lands even if they are forested; the Annual Report of the FD indicates a category of forest lands called "unclassified forests" which, however, is not a meaningful one, as it corresponds to the AWL areas that are controlled by the RD. The DLR offices do not have the maps for all the villages in their domain. Moreover, virtually all the maps are out of date. For instance, in Belthangadi taluka, village revenue maps for only 29 villages out of the taluka's total of 81 villages are available with the Assistant Director of Land Records. Moreover, none of the maps have been fully updated to reflect the changes that are even decades old (such as patta rights granted in public lands).
- c) The Jamabandhi records are also not properly maintained. The total of different columns (including area under private ownership) often does not add up to the geographical area of the village--out of 456 villages for which Jamabandhi records were obtained, in 12 villages, the extent of this discrepancy was more than 500 acres, whereas in 54 other villages the discrepancy was between 20 to 500 acres. In a number of villages, the total Geographical Area (TGA) of a village as mentioned in the Jamabandhi does not tally with the TGA as given by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics (DES) or by the Census of India (Col).
- d) The village-wise Jamabandhi records are only available in the taluka offices. Thus, no clear estimate of extent of public land in each land tenure category is available at the district level, whether village-wise or aggregated. BTR is not even available in the Tahsildar offices. FD records are not available village-wise. This is a serious obstacle both when trying to cross-check the legal status of forest land with revenue records and also when attempting village-level planning of participatory forest management.

3. In the case of information on land use and land cover, there are two distinct sources of village-wise information, viz., DES' 9-fold land use data and Census' 5-fold land use data. Another source, viz., Forest Survey of India (FSI), only provides land cover information from satellite imagery for the district as a whole. In the case of Dakshina Kannada, a special study by the Karnataka Council for Science & Technology and supported by DANIDA has also generated taluk-wise land use/land cover statistics on the basis of satellite imageries. The ISEC-NST study found that

(a) there is an amazing difference in forest cover estimates for the district: ranging from 36% (DES) and 43% (FSI) to 55% (Census) and 62% (NRDMS). These difference cannot simply be explained in terms of differences in the interpretation of the term "forest cover".

(b) DES' 9-fold land use statistics are highly unreliable, because it was observed that the Village Accountants who compile them in each village do not understand the meaning of the various categories, and also because illegal cultivation of public lands is not reflected in these statistics.

(c) Official land use statistics do not take cognisance of illegal land uses. However, such land use constitutes a significant fraction of the landscape. A field study of Mithabagilu village in Belthangadi taluka was conducted as part of this study, in which official (DES) land use records were compared with the actual situation of the ground. It was found that 202.54 acres of land is recorded as Gomaal in the DES' 9-fold land use data, whereas it is nil in the other sources. Also, out of the 97.84 acres of sarkari anadheena (non-kumki AWL) that were surveyed, virtually all (94.94 acres) has been encroached by villagers, mostly for cultivation.

This makes the landuse statistics useless for any serious forecasting of agricultural production or estimation of demand for agricultural inputs, as also in terms of assessing the availability of forest and grazing resources or understanding the patterns of landuse.

5. JFPM can officially be taken up only in lands that (a) belong to the FD and (b) have less than 25 per cent of canopy cover. Further, in practice, JFPM can only be taken up in lands that have not been encroached by individuals for cultivation. However, given the above lacunae in official land ownership and landuse records, it is not possible to come up with any meaningful estimate of land practically available for JFPM in different villages in Dakshina Kannada. Nevertheless, the study showed that the legally available area for JFPM is a very small fraction of the total forest cover in the district. This highlights the urgent need to redefine the scope and structure of the JFPM programme.

### Discussion

1. Concern was expressed over the repeated difficulties encountered by the persons conducting the study in spite of having all official permissions and in spite of the fact that all the information requested is that which should anyway be in the public domain information.
2. Government officials admitted the existence of many lacunae in official land use and land ownership statistics. They agreed that there was an urgent need to resolve the discrepancies.
3. Concern was expressed at the on-going process of computerization of land records: (a) Is it worth computerizing data which are as inaccurate as found in this study? (b) Are the computer formats comprehensive enough to indicate all types of tenure and use? (c) Will the computerization actually lead to easier access to information for the common man?
4. The experience of Kerala indicates that participatory resource mapping is a highly efficient means of generating detailed, accurate and useful information on land and other resources. However, local people will participate in information collection only when they see the possibility of being able to use that information to plan and implement various resources development activities.

### Recommendations

The Workshop participants resolved to recommend to the Government of Karnataka that it:

1. Re-examine thoroughly the manner in which land tenure and landuse categories are defined and data on these categories are collected and made available to the public;
2. Give high priority to surveying and demarcating Kumki areas in Dakshina Kannada districts;
3. Check the accuracy of the available land records before continuing with the ongoing computerization programme; specifically, reconcile the records of forest land ownership between the Revenue Department and the Forest Department;
4. Update and reprint all village maps, and make the same easily available to the public through the local offices of the Directorate of Land Records;
5. Set-up a single window record keeping system for land tenure as well as landuse records, and generally simplify the procedures for making available land records to the general public and give wide publicity to these procedures.

PSK F82

## **TURNING RIO INTO REALITY: TWO YEARS ON FROM THE EARTH SUMMIT**

The Earth Summit was an unprecedented gathering. It was the largest ever meeting of world leaders, representing more than 150 countries. Tens of thousands of businessmen, civil servants, representatives of non-governmental organisations, local government, trade unions, community groups went to Rio. And at least one or two journalists!

The aim was to tackle some of the most fundamental questions facing us all. In particular we have to decide how to ensure that increasing economic prosperity is not achieved at the expense of the planet's life support systems: systems on which, ultimately, our prosperity depends. *To put it another way: meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*

These are fine words, and laudable sentiments, but we must review the past two years and ask what progress we have really made since Rio. Achieving agreement was in itself a major task, trying to reconcile the different and at times conflicting interests of those represented at Rio. I know from my own experience, the burning of midnight oil was the one form of energy use that everyone favoured. But, having reached agreement globally on the way forward, have we practised what we preached?

\As Minister for Overseas Development,

As Minister for Overseas Development, I will focus on the international aspects of Rio, as they affect the UK aid programme. The key questions are:

- \* What are we doing to help developing countries tackle their own national priorities and plans arising from Rio?
- \* How do we help them play their part in tackling some of the global environmental issues?

### National Action

National action was at the heart of our agreement in Rio. Agenda 21 - the action plan agreed at Rio - brings together the whole gamut of elements essential for sustainable development. The natural environment is an important concern, but good government, population and economic reform, to highlight just a few are also vital. National priorities and plans were agreed as the way in which action in all these areas should be drawn together and integrated.

Alongside this, we achieved clear recognition that development was not just the business of governments. Participation was another key theme. That is why the presence of business, trades unions and NGOs - for whom Rio represented a great leap forward in involvement in events of this sort - was so important. Agenda 21 is not just about specific projects, but about changing ideas and ways of developing. The second leap forward was because without this wider participation, the process would not work.

\At Rio we also recognised

At Rio we also recognised that developing countries cannot achieve this purely using their own resources - although these will continue to be the most important. They need outside help: advice, finance, technology transfer.

### Agenda 21 and the Aid Programme

So, what impact has Agenda 21 had on the aid programme?

Sustainable development has been our main concern for many years. But Rio influenced policies and procedures right across every aid programme, in a way nothing else has.

Our job is to help developing countries devise and implement policies and actions to promote their own development on a sustainable basis, and to contribute to the sustainable development of the planet as a whole. We have made use of the thinking in Agenda 21 at three different levels: in our strategic thinking; in our processes, and in the actions we undertake in support of sustainable development.

Today we are publishing this booklet explaining how UKaid programme promotes the objectives of Agenda 21. (Copies are available here).

\Strategy

## Strategy

Following Rio we revised our key objectives for the aid programme to focus our aid on elements underlined at the UN Conference on Environment and Development as central to sustainable development. This year we have introduced a new system to help monitor our performance against these objectives. We are also involved in an environmental audit of our activities to identify our progress in ensuring that our well-established appraisal procedures are applied across all our development programmes, and to highlight any need for improvements. British systems are widely admired elsewhere: our environmental appraisal manuals, for example, are so successful that the Chinese have requested 5000 copies.

At Rio, the Prime Minister identified five priority areas for specific action and follow-up. We have subsequently developed our own detailed strategies on how best to help developing countries in each of these areas. I have advance copies of two of these strategies with me tonight; forest management and biodiversity. The strategies on the other three areas: population, sustainable agriculture and energy efficiency will be published shortly. These reappraisals of our strategy will involve some major initiatives, including a new population initiative which I shall be launching on World Population Day on 11 July.

\The evolution of our Environment Research Programme,

The evolution of our Environment Research Programme, established in 1991, provides a good example of our adaptation to the Rio agenda. We are for instance, funding research into the development of sustainability indicators, links between environment and health in developing countries and into tourism, conservation and sustainable development. We are reappraising our Renewable Natural Resource Research Strategy to ensure that this and our other natural resource research programmes are directly linked to the goals agreed at Rio. Our Environment Research Programme will focus on sustainability in relation to climate change, biodiversity, ozone depletion, pollution of international waters and urbanisation and industrialisation.

#### Process: The Importance of Participation

Now for process. Our own experience and Rio tell us that participation is at the heart of successful development. Greater participation cannot happen overnight. It also clearly cannot be imposed by Governments. Our role must be as facilitators of greater participation in the implementation of Agenda 21.

We have changed our own methods to reflect this. We are trying to increase participation both within the UK, through the NGO community and within developing countries with the communities with whom we work.

\A new network was formed in June 1993

A new network was formed in June 1993 called BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development). BOND's aim is to enhance the effectiveness of development assistance from the UK, through promoting the sharing of experience and ideas both between NGOs and ODA and among NGOs themselves. This supplements our existing relations with NGOs and NGO networks, such as the Aid and Environment Group which have also been strengthened .

Increasing amounts of our bilateral aid are channelled through NGOs through the Joint Funding Scheme. The JFS was increased by 14% over the last year in recognition of the important role NGOs play particularly in projects at the local level, where participation by local people is a key theme.

In developing countries, we are increasingly using a participatory process approach for projects. Earlier this year we approved the pilot phase of the Himachal Pradesh Forestry project in India. This promotes the sustainable management of forest lands while maintaining and improving the livelihoods of local people dependent on forests. Another example is in the Mamiraua flooded forests of Brazil. In a project which is aimed at protecting one of the country's most diverse ecosystems - fish breeding grounds upon which millions of people in the lower Amazon basin depend - the local communities and institutions play a vital role in the development of the project. Decisions are made by Assemblies of community representatives, based on technical advice provided by the combined efforts of the ODA, the Worldwide Fund for Nature and local NGOs.

\I am pleased that we are providing

I am pleased that we are providing financial support to next month's conference on community participation, organised by the International Institute for Environment and Development, on community based approaches to sustainable development.

As well as involving the local communities in the design and implementation of our own projects, we also help improve participation in local and national decision making.

At the macro level, for example, we provide assistance in support of democratisation. Since 1979 our aid for South Africans has been designed to encourage the very transition which we are now witnessing in their country. And hot on the heels of our £4 million package of support for the successful elections in April, came our announcement last month of plans to provide £100 million of British aid for South Africa over the next 3 years. This will particularly be in the form of British Know How, which the people of South Africa want to use.

At a micro level ODA is supporting the Bangladesh Rural Development Committee (BRAC) aimed at providing training and banking credit for destitute women. Sustainable development is only possible if women are enabled to contribute in full and equal partnership with men. Women's economic empowerment is crucial to reducing poverty. Barriers to women's economic participation must be removed to increase their independence.

\On the completion of phase II

On the completion of phase II of the project in December 1992, BRAC was working with 650 000 members, 74% of whom were women, through 14 000 village organisations in 6 900 villages. Savings per woman member had increased six fold between 1981 and 1991. The share of the loan funds disbursed to women increased to about two thirds. This has allowed women to play a more active role in the local economy, for example in setting up small enterprises.

#### Action to support Developing Countries implement Agenda 21

Now to the results of these changes in thinking and processes: the action. I cannot cover tonight all the things that we are doing under the bilateral programme, let alone through the multilateral organisations to which the UK belongs. I should like to pick out just two examples of how the UK aid programme is helping developing countries implement Agenda 21.

Sustainable development and Agenda 21 are not solely concerned with environmental matters. Rapidly increasing population represents a formidable obstacle to poverty reduction. In many developing countries increasing numbers of people, many poor, impose further pressures on already overstretched public sources and infrastructure. They place further stresses on the urban and rural environment, often using natural resources in an unsustainable way. Most countries now recognise the need to achieve early population stabilisation.

\Our population policy is centred

Our population policy is centred on enabling men and women to have children by choice. We reject coercive population policies. Access to high quality family planning services can have an enormous impact on health, as well as help to reduce rapid population growth. Family planning and other reproductive health programmes are therefore integral elements of wider strategies to reduce poverty through sustainable development.

I have recently approved over £35 million in UK aid for projects in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Uganda. These will make major contributions to promoting sustainable development and improving reproductive health. One example is a new £5.7 million five year family planning project in Zambia. It will use an innovative strategy involving the distribution of contraceptives by workers based in local communities to ensure that couples have better access to family planning services. This is part of a £20 million sector package in support of Zambia's national health reforms to promote the cost-effective provision of improved health and family planning services, especially for the poor and women.

In Zimbabwe I recently approved a £9 million project to establish treatment and prevention policies for sexually transmitted infections, which should in turn reduce the incidence of HIV and AIDS.

\A key in all our environment work

A key in all our environment work is forestry. Trees and forests play a vital role in the economies of many parts of the world. The benefits derived from forests in developing countries include locally used construction materials, fuel, food, medicines and other materials; timber and other products for sale locally and internationally; spiritual and cultural benefits; soil fertility replenishment; watershed protection and erosion control; and local climate regulation.

Globally forests provide an important sink for carbon dioxide and, particularly in the humid tropics, a major source of biodiversity.

The UK has been particularly energetic in taking forward the Forest Principles agreed at Rio. We now have about 200 forestry projects either under way or in preparation at a total cost to the aid programme of over £150 million. This includes £25 million committed to a major project for the Western Ghats in India, a project built on the participative approach endorsed by Rio.

The Western Ghats are no longer able to meet the demands placed by local people on the forest resources. In order to reverse this trend, new models of sustainable forest management are being introduced. This requires the Karnatakan Forest Department to change its traditional role of policing the forest to one that involves the forest rangers planning and managing the use of forest resources together with the local villagers. Through our project management team in India, ODA is assisting the Forest Department to bring about this change through planning and training sessions in participative approaches, as well as additional tree planting.

\Last September,

Last September, India's Forest and Environment Minister, Kamal Nath, and I signed the Indo-British Forestry Initiative. Kamal Nath and I met 2 weeks ago in New York to review progress. Part of the objective of the Initiative is to prepare for the review of Forestry by next year's Commission on Sustainable Development - the body set up at Rio to monitor implementation of Agenda 21. This year's session of the Commission on Sustainable Development which I attended in New York, warmly endorsed the Indo-British forestry initiative and gave its blessing to the international workshop in New Delhi we are jointly hosting next month. One of the aims of the workshop is to establish guidelines for national reports on forestry to next year's CSD. We are also ensuring that the FAO is centrally involved in this process. This is a good example of co-operation between a developing and a developed country and a UN agency, representing the kind of co-operation and integration of effort envisaged by Agenda 21.

Today in Paris, the final negotiating session for the Desertification Convention convened. We hope that it will represent international agreement on, and support, for locally-based action to combat desertification in affected countries. This includes the development of methods of popular participation in development activity, schemes of soil conservation and the whole range of activities concerned with sustainable agriculture and poverty eradication. Action in these areas is fundamental to the aid programme, especially in those countries, particularly in Africa, worst affected by desertification, and we are already committing substantial resources to them.

\Global issues

## Global issues

But Rio was also about some of the global challenges facing us all: climate change, preservation of the world's biodiversity.

What have we achieved in these areas since Rio? There are two distinct areas for action. First, there are actions that the UK must take domestically to minimise the effect we have on the world environment. In January, the Government published action plans on biodiversity and climate change which set out our domestic responsibilities. Second, we must assist developing countries make their contribution to these global issues.

Global climate change epitomises the challenge of sustainable development: how to promote development at the national level without damaging the global environment. Industrial and agricultural emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases are contributing to a warmer planet. The Climate Change Convention signed at Rio attempts to address this critical problem by establishing a policy framework to minimise the emission of greenhouse gases.

We have funded a number of general studies on the possible effects of climate change on developing countries and have continued to support developing country participation in the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change. We are currently funding research projects on methane emissions related to rice production, on the potential impacts of climate change on corals and coral reefs, and on tropical crops. Each is firmly linked to sustainable exploitation of natural resources. Each is focused sharply on problems of real concern to developing countries.

\Biodiversity

## Biodiversity

As the Prime Minister announced on Friday, we have just ratified the Biodiversity Convention, another of the Rio agreements. Biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use is central to sustainable development, for example, in maintaining the species that are the basis of our domesticated crops, and of many of our medicines and industrial products. The variety of species and ecosystems represents a source of support to human communities of inestimable value.

As I mentioned earlier, ODA has revised our strategy on biodiversity in the light of Agenda 21. For example, in one of our target countries, Mexico, we are preparing a project in the Manantlan region - a heavily forested area which is particularly rich in biodiversity. The aim of the project is to improve the livelihoods of the local farmers in ways which will not damage that biodiversity. The project will promote new approaches to the use of land and to managing the exploitation - in a sustainable way - of the natural resources of the area. We have also just completed a project preparation mission to appraise three conservation projects in selected forests of South Mexico. These directly involve communities that depend on these forests and their products for part of their livelihoods.

## GEF

Action on these issues does not come without a price tag. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is designated as the interim funding mechanism for both the Climate Change and Biodiversity Convention.

\In March

In March we reached agreement on the restructuring and replenishment of the GEF. As a result \$2 billion in new and additional resources is now available to developing countries to help meet the incremental costs they face in tackling these issues.

The UK's contribution to this replenishment brings our total commitment to the GEF to £130 million, making us the fifth largest contributor. I am very proud of the major part played by the UK in successfully concluding these difficult negotiations. The restructuring and replenishment of this new facility is a major milestone on the road from Rio. But the work is by no means completed. We must now ensure that the GEF fulfils its mandate.

Our commitment to help developing countries to protect the global environment, is also expressed through our support for the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol, which assists developing countries to phase out ozone depleting substances.

The Montreal Protocol pre-dates Rio but is nevertheless a central part of the global environmental agenda. It is, in a sense, sister to the GEF in meeting the incremental costs to developing countries of their action to protect our shared environment. Here again the UK has played its part. Our commitments to the Montreal Protocol now total £27 million.

The total additional commitments by the UK to support developing countries to protect the global environment made since Rio stand at £107 million - an effort that stands comparison with that of any other donor country.

\Conclusion

## Conclusion

This then is a brief summary of some of the actions we have taken on the international agenda in the past two short years. What is important is that they represent substantial and practical outputs from Rio.

However despite the progress we have made in terms of the UK aid programme, we must remember that the people and government of each country must take responsibility for their own activities. Each country must examine how to make best use of the resources available domestically. Countries should set priorities in the light of those resources and the recommendations set out in Agenda 21. Sustainable development is at least as much about changing old habits and ways of spending money as acquiring new ones. Indeed, reorientation of existing programmes can make by far the biggest contribution to implementing Agenda 21.

I have concentrated on Agenda 21 as a process, and on participation. Putting Agenda 21 into practice presents many challenges: we in ODA are geared up to face these challenges and will continue to do our part to help achieve the goal of sustainable development.