



Community Forestry



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FDA or Forest Development Agency has been a major channel of support to VSS areas. Understanding the issue of JFMization would be incomplete without understanding the role of FDAs.

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RCDC has shifted to its new address at HIG-26, K-6 Housing Scheme, Phase-II, Kalinga Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751019, Odisha. Our office telephone numbers have also been changed accordingly. Readers are therefore requested to contact us at this new address and phone number, though e-mail address remains the same.

Front cover photo :

Development projects implemented by the Forest Department normally prioritize VSS areas, as these two boards depict.

Back cover photo :

A good rapport with the Forest Department, alongwith some good work at ground level can help the VSS get many kinds of recognition and support, like the Naranpur VSS which received two awards alongwith a cash prize of Rs.1 lakh .

Editorial

Joint Forest Management (JFM) has been a contentious issue since its inception. Interestingly, many NGOs took part in the initial phase of the JFMization process as they thought JFM was the first step on the part of the government to recognize community forestry. It was then a crucial juncture of time when opposing JFM blindly was not supposed to be the right approach. That however did not mean that JFM was accepted wholeheartedly. The NGOs did maintain a cautious approach as they knew the points of apprehension.



And this is why it was very spontaneous for them to question this programme even while helping the government in training and other purposes for the implementation of JFM. Very soon their apprehensions assumed practical importance and they reiterated their preference to CFM over JFM. At the same time also they started advocating for necessary revisions in the JFM policy. It is because of their continuous efforts that the Odisha government decided to review the JFM policy in 2010-11, and thanks to the pro-people approach of the then Secretary of the Forest & Environment Department a progressive amendment was made in the resolution in 2011 in the light of Forest Rights Act and PESA Act. Although this new resolution still remained conservative in certain aspects than its draft version it opened a scope for greater say of the community in JFM.

While RCDC has been a part of this process, it has also believed in a principle that be it JFM or CFM, community forestry should be the key to our focus; and hence it would not be fair to ignore or disregard any community forestry initiative just because it is under the JFM mode. It is for this reason that RCDC has preferred rather to advocate for a JFM policy that can put JFM at par with CFM, i.e. where the forest-protecting communities do not face an undesired interference of the Department, and comfortably exercise their rights over the forest resources. For, be it JFM or CFM; after all it is the question of the community and the forest.

However, what is strange about JFM is that this programme has been running in the country, that too with huge investments, without any legal basis. Still stranger is the fact that instead of rectifying this basic error, the authorities have been trying to adjust legal provisions (such as FRA) with JFM. We hope that the blow received by the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs will be an eye opener for such bureaucrats.

Last but not the list, the sanctity (if any) of JFM has also been questionable due to a lack of sincerity and honesty in the programme implementation. A number of VSSs are actually running virtually on CFM mode with hardly any active relationship with the Forest Department, because the latter formed a VSS (most probably to meet the target) and then ignored the village. Can the Department declare the number of such VSSs? In fact, an RTI application filed in the office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Odisha asking for information on the number of VSS committees that have been reconstituted as per the JFM resolution of 2011, and also on the total amount of financial support granted to VSSs by 31st March, 2013 could not be complied with even after 40 days of filing the same.

We hope that the concerned authorities would make a critical review of the JFM programme and take measures for the best possible contribution of the same for ecological, socio-economic, and tenurial security of the forest protecting communities.



Bikash Rath
Sr. Programme Manager
Regional Centre for Development Cooperation

Community-based wildlife conservation initiatives under JFM: A case of Sloth Bear protection in Terebeda

Introduction

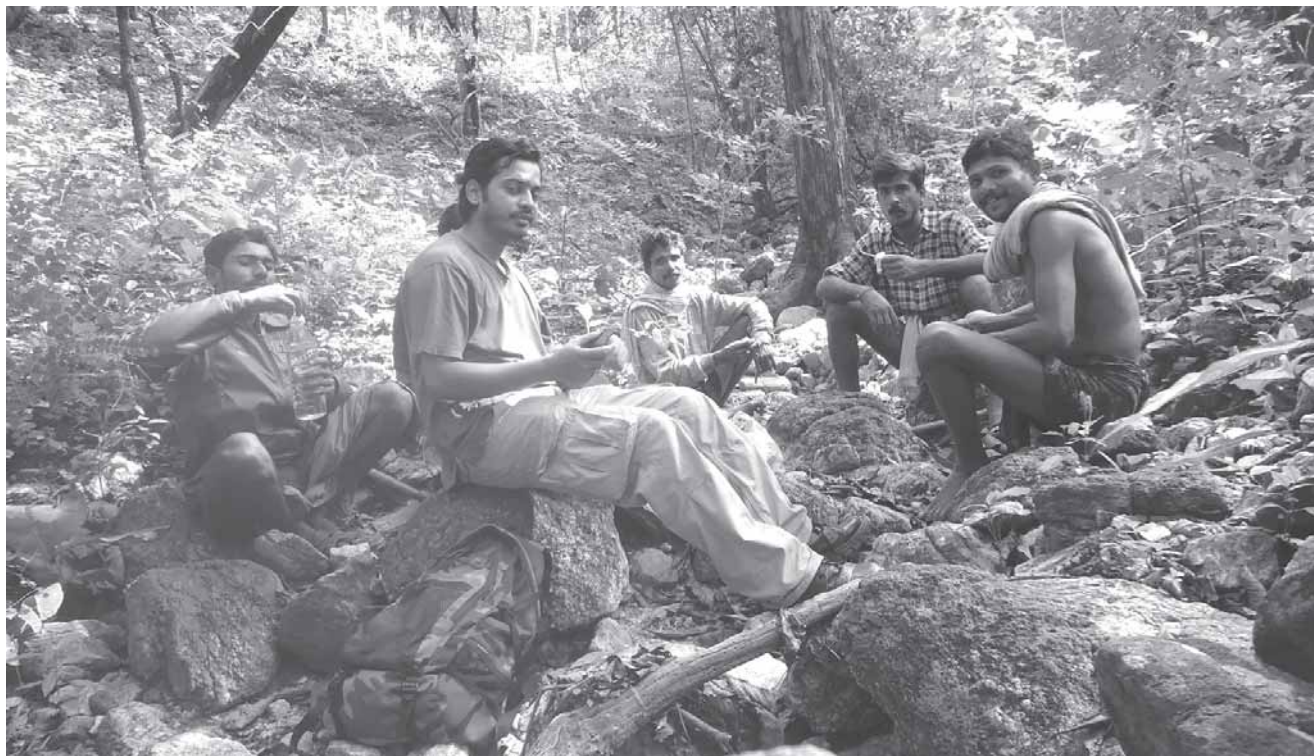
India, with its diverse habitat and climatic conditions, is home to four of the eight known species of bears in the world. These are the Asiatic (Himalayan) black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), the sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*), the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*).

The sloth bear, found only in the Indian subcontinent (India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh), is listed under Schedule -I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The species is threatened by various factors. Poaching for gall bladders is one of the

main threats, but almost all parts (meat, fat, bone, genitals, and skin) of the sloth bear are used either for medicinal purposes or religious rituals; and are traded in different regions of the country and abroad. Live bear cubs are trapped by Kalandars, a community which makes a living by performing bears for entertainment. Habitat shrinkage and fragmentation outside Protected Areas are creating small and non-viable bear populations inside these areas. Added to this, over harvesting of forest resources, expansion of agricultural areas, encroachment and expansion of settlements into forests have reduced quality food for the bears forcing the animals to seek food in croplands on

the fringes of forests. This has resulted in increased conflict with humans and retaliatory killings.

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) had taken this issue seriously and acted on it soon with its field project where it can work directly with the people to save the sloth bears and their habitat. Objective of the project is to end the dancing bear tradition through policy advocacy, public awareness campaigns and lobbying with the government, to stop sloth bear trade and to provide alternative livelihoods to Kalandars traditionally dependent on dancing bears for livelihoods and to ensure they do not divert back to their traditional livelihoods.



Terebeda VSS members monitoring the area with WTI staff



Activities in Odisha

A national-wide survey conducted by WTI and WSPA (World Society for the Protection of Animals) found no Kalandar (traditionally dependent on dancing bears for livelihoods) settlement in Odisha. However, the threat for sloth bears in Odisha arises due to poaching and trade in live bear cubs and bear parts. Thus, the main thrust of WTI-WSPA's work in Odisha has been to stop trade in bears by working with enforcement agencies, developing a network of informers (mostly ex-poachers) and creating public awareness in the Sambalpur district, identified as one of the main source areas of sloth bear cubs for the illegal market in India.



Seizures from a poacher

WTI focused on source from where these bear cubs are being poached and traded out to Nepal and eastern states namely Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in India. It is a fact that Sambalpur and surrounding areas (Baripada, Angul) in Odisha are one of the key forest areas from where bear cubs are sourced for this bear trade. These areas of Odisha are now being targeted by WTI to stop illegal poaching and trading of bear cubs. Towards this effort, a campaign has been conceived by WTI. The major achievement of the project in 2009 was that there was no sloth bear cub seizure across the country by any enforcement agency.

Conservation by Terebeda villagers

Terebeda village falls under the Daincha Gram Panchayat of Redhakhol block of Sambalpur district of Odisha. This village is close to Redhakhol market. Once upon a time it was called as poacher's village, and



Burning a poacher's shed

whenever the villagers saw the forest and police they used to run to the forest to save themselves from an arrest. This village was famous for trading of wildlife such as bear cub, bear meat, skin, leopard skin, elephant tusk and other bird & wildlife meat. However, a focused awareness campaign which began in January 2009 in the Terebeda

village, had changed the mindset of the villagers and converted themselves from poachers to protectors. For the first time the Terebeda villagers formed a village protection committee to protect the bear dens around the village from poachers. From the primary surveys and field visits potential bear den sites were selected but it

was still a challenge to protect them as this is a Naxal prone area and the Forest Department's enforcement team can hardly operate in it. So it was decided to form a village protection committee in each village that would be responsible for protection of the bear dens around the village.

Dens with cubs were found with the help of cattle grazers of the village and other jungle dwellers by the sound of the new born cubs. When a positive den was found, a team started guarding the den for 24 hrs by building a machan (platform on a tree) at a safe distance and people going to forest were made aware about the presence of them to avoid encounters. More than nine dens were identified, and being protected by the villagers themselves there is no news of poaching of bear cubs from this area. Apart from the cubing season now the VSS members are patrolling the jungle during summer to prevent hunting of other animals and work as regular informers for Forest Department.

The campaign aimed at sensitizing local people to the cruelty and dangers of bear cub poaching while also alerting them to the illegalities of wildlife trade, and was expected to influence the attitude of the local people against capture of sloth bear cubs and wildlife trade in general. As part of the campaign, local street play artists dressed in bear costumes enacted the story of 'bear cubs being separated from their family for entertainment of humans'. The campaign also incorporated local elements including folk songs and dances on environment subjects to effectively reach out to the people of the area and help spread awareness. The performances were advertised through posters, personal invitation and word-of-mouth. Movement of artists in bear costumes through the respective villages and song/dance performances also helped attract the viewers. Performances held on weekly bazaar days drew crowds of over a hundred people. Apart from street plays, group meetings and workshops were conducted both for the villagers and the

school children in villages. This is to bring about an inclusive and participatory approach to the campaign.

The Terebeda VSS got very good success after involving itself in forest and bear conservation. On 13th May 2011 in a joint patrolling with Forest Department the Terebeda VSS members caught three poachers with 3 guns (1 licensed and 2 without license), and burnt several hides made by poachers near water holes. On 16th May 2 persons with bear meat were arrested in Charmal range under the Redhakhol division. This was the first ever documentary evidence of poaching of bears for meat consumption in Odisha.

Now with the protection of the VSS the forest has become more green and dense, with wildlife protection. Evidence and sighting of the presence of elephant and hundreds of spotted deer and other carnivores in the forest, has increased. They are enjoying the bear with her cubs playing near their village and eating Jambul (*Syzygium cumini*) fruits, mahua flower and jack-fruit. However, no conflicts have been reported. Neither the villagers drove away the bear nor the bear attacked the villagers. This way, a poachers' village has transformed itself into a protectors' village, and the Terebeda villagers have set a remarkable example of working in harmony with the government as well as non-government agencies for the cause of wildlife.

●

Rudra Prassana Mahapatra,
Wildlife Trust of India
with Sabyasachi Rath,
Programme Officer, RCDC



A bear protector of Terebeda

Photo credits: Rudra Prassana Mahapatra



Policy versus practice in JFM

The Government of India, in its Ministry of Environment & Forest, issued a letter dated 1st June 1990 to all Forest Secretaries of the states/ Union Territories with a subject line 'Involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies for regeneration of degraded forest lands'. This letter, which prompted the states for a community involvement in forest management (without using the term Joint Forest Management) started with the following reference to the National Forest Policy, 1988:

"The National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages people's involvement in the development and protection of forests. The requirements of fuelwood, fodder and small timber such as house-building material, of the tribals and other villagers living in and near the forests, are to be treated as first charge on forest produce. The Policy document envisages it as one of the essentials of forest management that the forest communities should be motivated to identify themselves with the development and protection of forests from which they derive benefits."

This statement suggests an orthodox approach that recognizes the community rights to some extent, but as if with a pity. It reads as if community involvement in forest management is neither essential nor inevitable though because of a policy decision the Forest Department has to do something in this direction. Such an orthodoxy in approach prevailed in the JFM policies that followed this letter, and the communities, although officially treated as

partners in forest management, were actually recognized as somebody who can't protect & manage the forests properly unless the Forest Department guides them technically, supports them financially, and protects them legally. That means to say, the local communities were assumed to be a kind of unskilled but consolidated labour force that could be used in forest protection in lieu of certain benefits.

The 1988 circular of Odisha Forest Department however was a bit honest than its Central counterpart. The Odisha circular clearly said that "the task of protecting forests is so urgent and so enormous that the rural community should be fully and actively involved in it." In other words, it admitted the fact that the Forest Department was in urgent need of the support from local communities for forest conservation. So it was not a case of policy-level compliance or mercy for the villagers though it is another matter that it retained orthodoxy in respect of sharing the benefits with the communities.

So, when the JFM resolution of 1993 was implemented the orthodoxy in approach was reflected in the practice. The Forester was made the Secretary of VSS, through which the Department controlled the VSS activities. The area over which the VSS's jurisdiction was recognized was mandated to be a standard one (maximum 200 hectares) even if the local community protected a still larger area. The choice of the species to be planted was often decided by the Department. For communities who were innocent and immature such

impositions did not matter much as for them it was a beginning in community forest management though under the control of the Department. However, for those who were mature enough these norms did not feel comfortable for obvious reasons. As such there are cases where the local communities ignored the VSS part of the forest and put sincere efforts in that part which they considered to be theirs. On the other hand, inter- and intra-village conflicts have led to weakening of institutional strength in some cases like that of Aonlapal in Baleswar district where a stronger VSS of 9 villages was later split into 3 groups (Vasundhara, 2000 quoted in Singh, 2000).

It was a common practice in many VSS areas that the registers and other documents were often kept under the custody of the forest officials. This resulted in a lack of transparency, particularly in financial matters. The emerging women's forest protection in Baghamunda (Deogarh Forest Division) lost its strength when the villagers detected financial irregularities by the forest officials. The VSS was kept in dark in the matter of financial transactions which led to a breach of faith between the villagers and the Department. In Lanjijhari VSS under the same forest division the financial irregularity was quite open to the villagers who found high misappropriation in the expenditure for development activities (*per. comm.* Hiradhar Sahu).

Benefit sharing has been another contentious issue under JFM. Mature communities find it difficult to accept the Department's orthodox view to see

the forest as a commercial crop, and hence are not comfortable with the norm of 50% share in the major harvest of timber. They do not see themselves as share-croppers.

Some of these limitations were overcome in the latest policy resolution of 2011 which recognized a greater role of the village communities in the light of PESA Act and Forest Rights Act, and hence provided for an elected person from among the community for the position of the Secretary. Thus, decision making now became almost fully under community control, at least in principle. Further, a scope was provided to record the area of forest customarily protected, and to modify the VSS area.

However, some of the basic issues still remain unresolved. 50% sharing in the major harvest is among these. Like the old provision, the 2011 resolution also maintains 50% share of VSS in the final harvest of timber and if the trees are uprooted in any natural calamity then also this principle is to be followed. This has left the community of a famous VSS (Dhani Panchmouza) in utter disappointment as a lot of the mature trees in their protection area, which they have been protecting since many decades, were uprooted in the recent cyclone Phailin; and they can't take it easily that they would be entitled for only 50% share over this timber.

The notification of May 2006, that clarified that VSS would have 100% share in the final harvest of bamboo, has not been uniformly or sincerely followed in the state. There are cases like Siarimalia where this provision has been intentionally ignored by the authorities.

Choice of species for plantation has been more or less under the control of the Forest Department. In Royalghati (Rayagada Forest Division), for example, the Department wanted to plant exotic species like Eucalyptus in the forest area; but the villagers opposed the plan and emphasised on useful indigenous species. Finally, the Eucalyptus plantation was carried out, but to a very small extent whereas useful species were planted as per the villagers' requirement.

What is however most important is that many VSSs are yet to be reconstituted as per the 2011 resolution. This is obviously because the Departmental authorities have not cared to honor the mandate of this new resolution. Our field experience shows that the VSSs have even not been informed about the new provision. Why is this so? Is the Department apprehensive of losing its control if the new resolution is implemented?

Despite many such negative experiences, JFM has played a constructive role in community forestry in some cases too. For immature communities it has come as an inspiration and honour, along with some special benefits. For some like the villagers of Bhuska, it has come as a legal security. Conflict resolution has been possible in a few cases with the intervention of the Forest Department, and income generation activities have been promoted.

The most important contribution of JFM in community forestry is making forest management systematic and scientific. What is known as CFM is more a protection activity than management, not to speak of forest development. JFM has introduced the concept

of silviculture in community forestry, and has also paid attention to development of the forests under protection of the VSS. Economic plantations and other plantation activities have been carried out for this purpose in the VSS areas.

For the forest protecting communities, entitlement for community forest resources (CFR) rights under the Forest Rights Act has been quite difficult to get chiefly because of the apathy of the Forest Department. However, some VSS villages have been fortunate to get it being under JFM as the Department did not object to the claim of the community so far the size of the claimed area was within the limit specified for the VSS.

Unlike CFM which evolved itself with a focus basically on protection of forests for timber and fuelwood, JFM expects the VSS to not violate the wildlife protection regime. While it is not unlikely that some of the JFM villages may not actually be keen and/or active in wildlife protection, they at least do not dare to cause any harm to wildlife except but minor exceptions or deviations.

It however unfortunately appears that under the influence of globalization, which attracts people to external money than self-reliance, JFM assumes more relevance for many communities. Such relevance is of course not a very sustainable one because of obvious reasons. Time has come however to sincerely make JFM a powerful tool in sustaining community forestry initiatives for the benefit of ecosystem and humanity.



Bikash Rath

Reference:

- Singh, N.M.(2000). Community Forest Management Vs. Joint Forest Management in Orissa: Need to Look Beyond JFM. <http://vasundharaodisha.org/download22/CFMVsJFM.pdf>

The legal sanctity of JFM

Against the fact the Forest Department has remained assertive to recognize community forestry only under the JFM mode, a basic question that has been often asked is: what is the legal basis of such assertion? Which law gives the Department the power and right to promote JFM ?

And the answer has been quite embarrassing for the Forest Department, as in fact no law in the country has actually recognized JFM. What has actually been done is the issue of administrative orders to effect this scheme or mode of operation in the country.

Under this primary flaw flourish some secondary ones, pointed out by Ahuja as under:

- ✦ MOU questionable legal sanctity
- ✦ Inequality of duties and responsibilities between State and Community
- ✦ No legal recourses available to communities
- ✦ JFMCs registration by DFO
- ✦ Incremental benefits
- ✦ Institutional overlapping between PRIs and JFMCs
- ✦ Potential valid claims from outside JFM area (latent conflicts). (Ahuja, N. undated)

Various government schemes and programmes have promoted various village-level organizations, each being independent. VSS is one of them. Social scientists are concerned about the continuous diversification of the vil-

lage institution as that leads to power politics, weakening of the village unity, and other implications. It has therefore been thought that the forest protection committee (like VSS) should be but a standing committee of the Gram sabha, i.e. while the Gram sabha upholds the village unity, the specialized village institutions work under it with full accountability to the same. This is particularly important in view of the spirit of PESA Act and Forest Rights Act.

The Planning Commission's Working Group on Forestry and Sustainable Natural Resource Management for the 12th 5-year Plan (2012-17) has paid attention to these issues in the Report of Sub- Group - I on Forestry, in the following lines:

- ✦ JFM approach of "Care & Share" draws its strength from National Forest Policy 1988 and subsequent guidelines of MoEF in 1990, 2000 and 2002, which lay emphasis on the involvement of local communities in protection, afforestation and sharing of benefits with the communities, making their gradual empowerment possible. While JFM committees in the existing system are constituted from the Gram Sabha members for management of forest resources, an emphasis on making them as permanent technical committees under the guidance and supervision of Gram Sabha during 12th five year plan period.¹ (Section 2.3)

- ✦ Local level institutions like JFM in various styles and forms in different parts of the country should be promoted for forest management in the country and JFM Committees should be formed as standing committees of the Gram Sabha. (Section 9)
- ✦ The Joint Forest Management Committees should be formalized and given legal status under the Indian Forest Act and the Panchayat / PESA Act. The state implementing agencies should be strengthened by providing funds for staff/ officials required for implementation of activities. (Section J-32)

The JFM resolution of 2011 in Odisha also mentions VSS as the standing committee of Gram sabha. However, this seems to be a mere superficial compliance under compulsion because what is practised still sticks to a mindset that reflects the orthodoxy and dominance of the Forest Department. When such a mindset was revealed before the Ministry of Tribal Affairs while analysing a government order in Andhra Pradesh to give CFR titles to JFM committees (VSS), the Ministry wrote to the PCCF of that state with the following clarification:

"I am x x x to say that the JFM (VSS) committees formed in the state of Andhra Pradesh pursuant to the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme of the Ministry of Environment & Forests and the Government of Andhra Pradesh are not cov-

¹ This incomplete sentence has been quoted as it was, in the original document-Ed.

ered by the definition of the terms "forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes" and "other traditional forest dweller", as given in Sections 2(c) and 2(o) of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Hence, these Committees can also not be considered as "claimant" given in Rule 2(c) of the Forest Rights Rules, 2008. These Committees are, therefore, not eligible for recognition and vesting of forest rights under the said Act xxx.

xxxxxxx

In view of the above, the CFR titles given to JFM(VSS) Committees may be withdrawn. The rejection of the individual claims on the ground that such claims were filed within the JFM areas was also, therefore, incorrect." (Letter of Mr. Gopal Sadhwani, Deputy Secretary; dated 6th August 2013).

Down to Earth has quoted Sagari Ramdas, Director of the Hyderabad-based NGO Anthra, explaining why making JFMCs eligible for CFR title is in fact an injustice to the traditional forest dwellers:

"xxx many of forest communities had painstakingly mapped the traditional boundaries of the common areas they have been enjoying for grazing cattle or collecting forest produce or for other purposes. This area is much bigger in size compared to the area managed by the JFMCs. Many forest villages had submitted claims for their common land but the claims were rejected.

For instance, in Adilabad, there were 1,132 claims from the community for an extent of 8,238 acres (one acre equals 0.4 hectare) of land. The Vana Samrakshana Samithies submitted 341 claims for 266,689.63 acres. Interestingly, as per the records, gram sabhas have recommended only 67 claims of the community for 3,628 acres while accepting all the claims by VSS.

Besides, in the name of joint forest management, the forest department had taken away many stretches of traditional tribal land, points out Sagari. When FRA came into existence, many individuals had submitted their claims to get back their land. All these claims were rejected in the wake of the state government's decision not to accept individual claims for land managed by JFMCs". (Suchitra M. 2013)

The Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD) has analysed, in context of FRA, how JFM is illegal. Their conclusion is obvious because JFM norms and approaches are against or not consistent with the letter & spirit of FRA in many respects. For instance, JFM considers the VSS to be the authorised village organization for collection of minor forest produce, and doesn't vest the ownership right over such produce with the VSS; whereas FRA considers the Gram sabha to be the owner of such produce if collected traditionally. It is not surprising if the Forest Department is comfortable with the VSS and not the Gram sabha because the VSS

in fact serves as the community face of the Department and works under its control, unlike the Gram sabha. And this is the reason why many forest development projects, such as the Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project, have been essentially linked with JFM.

In an interesting development, the Forest Rights Amendment Rules, 2012 has provided for a clear scope that recognizes, without any reference to JFM or the Forest Department, community forestry practices. Communities protecting village forests can now make their claim with a form exclusively meant for them, i.e. Form 'C'. It is therefore very clear that FRA does not promote JFM.

However, given the fact that the CFR title doesn't give full ownership over the forest land and resource (it only gives the right to manage and use the resources under certain obligations), there seems a hidden or unspoken scope for a collaboration between the Forest Department and the communities which may assume a form similar to that of JFM (but modified as per the mandate of FRA) particularly in case of Reserved Forests and Protected Areas. This aspect is yet to be analysed deeply by both sides though activists must understand the strategic importance of this silent scope.

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Bikash Rath

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Goramba : Where forest unites the village

Goramba is a heterogeneous village in the Ekamba Gram Panchayat (Jharigaon block) of Nabarangpur district. It comes under the jurisdiction of Nabarangpur Forest Division.

The village has a population of 1204 with the Kolars(OBC) as the dominating community. There are few scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households too.

There is a sal forest in the village over about 48 acres which in fact is a remnant of the original one. Part of it has mature standing trees without any undergrowth whereas the central part is a forest that is not so dense. This central part has the regenerating young stuff, alongwith various undergrowths



A part of the forest with old trees



A part of the regenerated forest

that include medicinal plants. Species next to sal include sahada, char, amla, harida, bahada, mahul, and gambhari, etc..

When the forest suffered from degradation under anthropogenic pressure, the villagers initiated protection activity several decades ago. Gradually the effort became consolidated, and the forest became a means of unity among the villagers. This is because whenever a conflict arises among different communities of this village, the accused party is threatened of no access to the forest. Since no community can afford this because of a regular dependency on the forest, hence it has to negotiate or comply with the justice.



An open area chosen for plantation

Under the initiative of the Forest Department the village forest protection has been converted into a VSS known as Maa Mangala VSS, but there is hardly any active relationship between the villagers and the Department. In fact, they claim not to have received any financial support unlike the neighbouring VSS of Dhanpur. As such, the VSS has almost no existence practically; and the villagers manage things on their own.

A watcher has been appointed with an annual honorarium of Rs.14,000/-. The villagers send a palia (patrolling person) every day to keep further vigil on the forest.

They carry out cleaning operations and distribute the harvest equally among themselves. For special occasions like marriage timber cutting is allowed on application.

Their management is self-financed, i.e. each household contributes Rs.300 to Rs.400 annually to the community fund. Penalty on forest violations varies according to the produce harvested, like Rs.150 in case of collecting brushing sticks and Rs.120 onwards on timber felling.

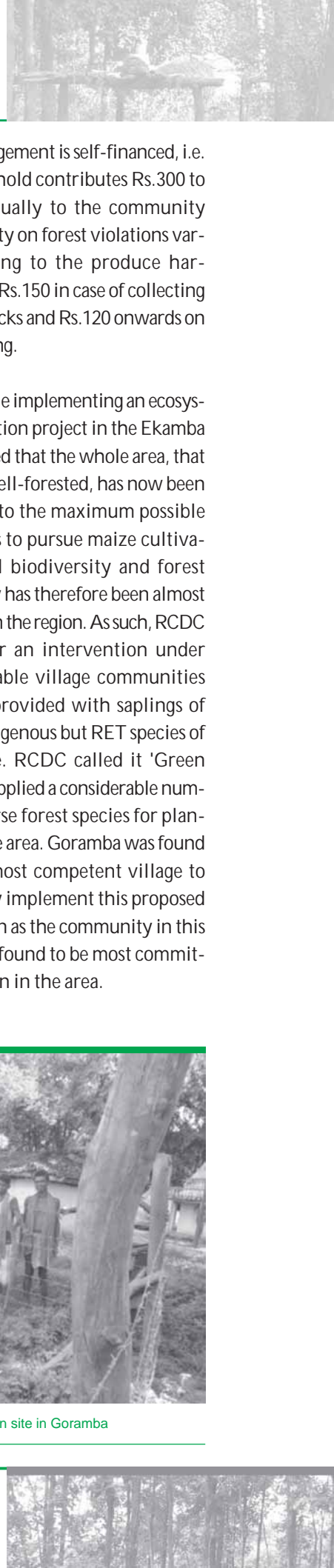
RCDC, while implementing an ecosystem restoration project in the Ekamba GP, observed that the whole area, that was once well-forested, has now been deforested to the maximum possible extent so as to pursue maize cultivation. Floral biodiversity and forest biodiversity has therefore been almost totally lost in the region. As such, RCDC planned for an intervention under which capable village communities would be provided with saplings of various indigenous but RET species of importance. RCDC called it 'Green Aid', and supplied a considerable number of diverse forest species for plantation in the area. Goramba was found to be the most competent village to successfully implement this proposed intervention as the community in this village was found to be most committed and keen in the area.



Enclosing with barbed wire



Fencing around a plantation site in Goramba





Jagannath Vana Prakalpa

Two religious car festivals are famous in Odisha: the Sri Gundicha Yatra of Lord Jagannath of Puri, which is the foremost having even international appeal; and the next is the Rukuna Ratha Yatra of Lord Lingaraj at Bhubaneswar. The first one requires 1162 poles of timber annually whereas the second one only 34. The species required are according to their use in making specific parts of the wooden chariots, which in fact reflects a sound indigenous knowledge system on the timber quality of various tree species. The temples of Lord Jagannath and Lord Lingaraj are under the management of

the state government, and the state Forest Department is supposed to provide the necessary logs each year. However, due to deforestation and overexploitation the Department has not been able to do it smoothly in the recent decades. During 2008 to 2010, for instance, it could meet only about 73% of the requirement due to insufficient availability of the specified timber in the potential and neighbouring forest divisions of Nayagarh, Khurdha, and Boudh. As the future of the supply is going to be more gloomy, hence the Department launched in 2000 an intensive plantation programme known as Jagannath Vana Prakalpa or JVP (Jagannath Vana

Prakalpa, Odisha Reference Annual, 2011, <http://orissa.gov.in/e-magazine/orissaannualreference/ORA-2011/pdf/62-63.pdf> .

This programme has been implemented in 10 forest divisions of the state in about 2500 acre land with a plantation of about 42.62 lakh seedlings belonging to more than 10 different species. Phasi (*Anogeissus acuminata*) was one of them. This timber forms a vital part(wheels) of the chariot, but was scarcely available in wild which is why it was sought even from private lands. Although in 2007 the administrator of Sri Jagannath temple reported the discovery of large phasi forests in some parts of the Nayagarh Forest Division alongside the Mahanadi river(as available at <http://news.oneindia.in/2007/02/25/dense-natural-phasi-forest-traced-in-orissa.html>), sustainability was still a concern. Hence, the plantation had its own relevance. Unfortunately, information provided by the government against an application filed under the Right to Information Act revealed in 2012 that most of the local projects under JVP are in a precarious state with only about 30% of the planted stock in them(vide the media report published in the Samaj, dated 8 December 2013, Bhubaneswar edition). And this happened despite the Departmental claim of engaging local communities through VSS for the protection of such plantations.

The villagers planted the saplings free of cost in the open areas. They also got the credit of raising the first community-based phasi plantation in the state for the purpose of supplying the scarcely available phasi timber for the chariot of Lord Jaganath of Puri.

However, the most remarkable part of the story was the villagers' keenness

to make the plantation a success. As the site was an open access area, and regular trespassing was a threat, they decided quickly to go for barbed wire fencing. Within few days of the plantation work they purchased the fencing materials at their own cost(from community fund) and immediately implemented it. And they spent a good sum for that.

That the people of Goramba did not see RCDC's intervention merely as a supply-driven programme, was inspiring. They were affiliated to JFM, but by spirit and practice they operated almost independent of JFM. They also successfully used the forest for maintaining village unity. This is how they serve as a role model in community forestry.

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Bikash Rath
with *Sai Prasad Pattnaik*,
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The author hereby acknowledges the information provided by the villagers of Goramba.

Dhani South forest protection committee : A united effort for forest management

Background:

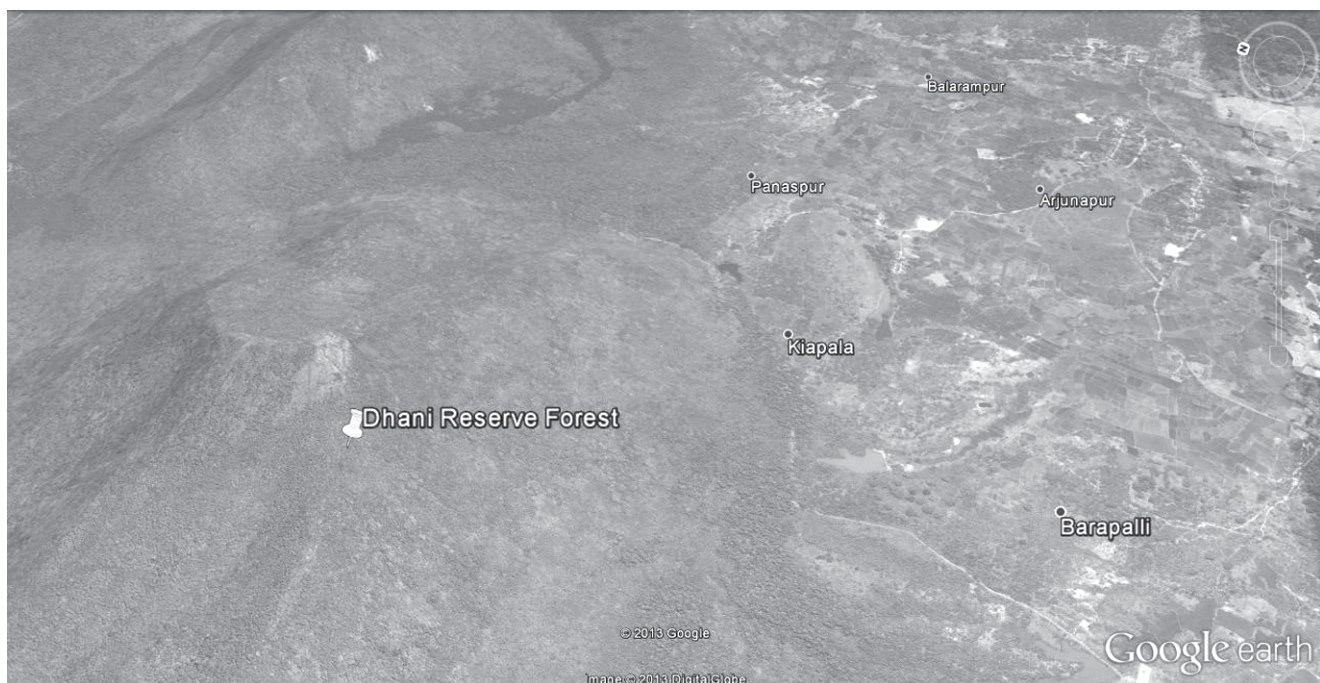
Dhani South Forest Protection Committee is one of the brightest examples of community forest protection initiative in Odisha working under the JFM mode. The word 'panch' means five and 'mouza' means village. The five villages are Barapalli, Arjunpur, Kiyapalla, Balarampur and Panasdihi. Villagers of these five villages have come forward to jointly protect the nearby Dhani Reserve Forest. This forest is located in the Ranpur block of Nayagarh district in Odisha. It is accessible from Tangi Chowk of Khurdha district on the Bhubaneswar-Vishakhapatnam national highway. The forest is about 2200 hectares in size, but the five villages have been protecting about 839 hectares since 1987.

How it all started

People say that the Forest Department had given timber leases to many private parties to harvest the timber from the Dhani reserve forest in late 1950s. During this period the local people including the villagers were also involved in the tree felling process. After the harvesting of timber of sal and other indigenous tree species, the Forest Department carried out a teak plantation in the same harvested area. During 1978-81 the state Forest Development Corporation had taken initiative to cut more trees from the same forest. A lease for bamboo was also permitted. That's why the whole Dhani forest was degraded. However, the slash and burn cultivation, locally known as toila, also was a factor degrading the forest. The

augmenting factors included rapid urbanization in the nearby areas, and smuggling of timber. What was remarkable was that the Forest Department did not show any effective interest to protect the forest.

When the entire Dhani forest was degraded, the local villagers faced extreme scarcity of fuel wood, timber and other forest products causing them to travel long distance to collect the fuel and to purchase bamboo for repairing their houses. The situation was so worse that people even looked for the roots underground in absence of fuelwood. More affected were the Kiyapalla and Panashadihi villagers who are tribal communities (Kondh and Saura or Sabar) who depend on



The Dhani community forest area as depicted on GoogleEarth



forest collection more intimately than their non-tribal counterparts. Few varieties of fruits and tubers, etc. also disappeared gradually. Further, the villagers felt the scarcity of ground water leading to the crop failure and drought. Soil erosion was accelerated which is why many agricultural lands lost their fertility due to land sliding from the hill.

People now realized that there was a critical need of a forest. Two respected community leaders Sri Kanduri Pradhan and Sri Brahmachari Das played the important role to mobilize the villagers to protect the degraded Dhani forest. However, this was not possible if the other 4 villages did not agree to it. So they talked with other 4 villages after which a consensus was developed for joint protection effort. A committee called Dhani South Forest Protection Committee was constituted which started protecting the degraded Dhani forest. Their first duty was to stop the uprooting of the sal stump. In 1995 the panchmaouza decided to join hands with the Forest Department and merged their committee with Vana Samrakshana Samiti (VSS) under the JFM resolution.

Methods of forest protection

A set of rules and regulations were formulated to ensure an effective forest protection. The entire Dhani forest area was declared as a restricted area and nothing was allowed for collection from the forest. Initially lots of hurdle came while implementing these rules but the villagers faced it with patience and bravery. When the sal stumps regenerated, their happiness knew no bounds. Rules were the same to protect the forest. During the initial period 10 villagers from 5 villages (2

people from each village) started thengapali (barefoot patrolling with sticks). Later on they recruited few forest watchers. To pay their wages they collected 'muthi chaula' (a handful of rice) from each villager. They stopped all slash and burn cultivation, and restricted grazing of cattle and other livestock in the forest. The committee also caught offenders and imposed fines as per the loss assessed. In the initial days of protection, conflicts were more frequent. Sometimes the offenders were identified to be their co-villagers who wanted to collect bamboo and leaves from the forest. By this time some greenery had been restored in the forest and there were signs of further improvement. So few revisions in the previous rules were made and people were allowed to collect the bamboo and the leaves, though to a limited extent. The concession was particularly in view of the vulnerability of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people. Other villagers were also allowed to collect the fallen leaf, and twigs for fuel wood. Live trees were not allowed to cut. Till now, green felling is restricted in the forest.

Relationship with the Forest Department

The panch mouza villagers maintain a good relationship with the Forest Department. They acknowledge to have received from the Department 10 sewing machines in 2002-03, and 210 smokeless chullahs in 2000. A forest road was constructed to Dhani forest in 2011-12, and two watcher rest houses were constructed in 2004-05. The Department also helped them in many legal issues related to forest protection (such as checking forest offences).

However, the 50% share norm for the final harvest in timber has been a contentious issue between the two sides particularly after the Phailin cyclone severely affected their forest and uprooted/damaged many of the mature trees which had grown under their sincere protection. The population pressure in the panch mouza has increased during the last 26 years, and 50% share no more looks comfortable.

Impact of forest protection

The impact of forest protection in Dhani can be seen even from a distance. Greenery is well-established with big/mature trees every where. Due to strong forest protection, even wildlife started returning to the forest. In November 2013 there were 22 elephants inside the forest. Bison, spotted deer, barking deer and hundreds of bird species are now living there and feeling safe. Villagers are however worried about the elephants because they are destroying the crops during winter. The other example of the impact of forest protection is the natural recharge of ground water as a result of which one can see few streams on the hill itself.

Awards

Due to efficient and jointly managed forest protection, the name of Dhani South Forest Protection Committee is internationally recognized. Many forest conservationists and activists including research institutions have visited the area to have an exposure to the initiative. The committee also received the Prakruti Mitra award twice (in 2002-03 and 2007-08). However, the villagers say that the good forest itself is the best prize for them.

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Sabyasachi Rath

The author hereby acknowledges the information kindly provided by the Dhani Panchmouza forest protection committee.

Economic returns from forests under JFM

JFM committees have been confronted with the dilemma of their rights and share when it comes to commercial use of the forest resources under their protection. This is because the state JFM policy upholds certain limitations in the sharing mechanism between the Forest Department and the VSS. The foremost of these limitations is the 50% share in the major harvest of timber. However, the problem started with bamboo about which the JFM resolution of 1993 was completely silent vis-a-vis the sharing mechanism. Taking advantage thereof, local forest authorities often concluded that bamboo being considered at par with timber in the Indian Forest Act, 1927 the principle adopted for timber should also be applicable for bamboo; i.e. the VSS should have only 50% share in the major harvest of bamboo.

This led to uncomfortable situation in many JFM areas of the state. The difficulty increased with thorny bamboo (*Bambusa bambos*) as that is more inconvenient to harvest. The VSSs are required to follow the harvesting rules prescribed by the Department, and going by that meant bamboo harvesting more costlier ultimately making the bamboo business not so feasible or profitable commercially, if the Department shares 50%. In 2006, a strategic application was filed by this author under the RTI Act asking the Forest Department to clear

its stand on sharing mechanism on bamboo in the JFM policy. Few months later, the Department issued a notification clarifying that VSS members would be entitled for 100% share in the bamboo. While this was a welcome move, effective sensitization on the same at field level was lacking which is why even the Departmental staff remained ignorant about the same in some areas.

In Siarimalia of Deogarh district the local communities felt that the Department did not take them into confidence while deciding for opening bamboo coupe there for the paper mill. Last time, when the Department opened a coupe there the villagers got to know from RCDC that they were entitled for 100% right over their bamboo, and hence asked the concerned authorities for their dues. This was however ignored initially, and at last Rs.4000/- was given to them as if as a consolation. This year they want a formal and proper negotiation of the Department/OFDC/paper mill with their VSS so that they can clearly know the actual cost of the bamboo and also the dues against the same.

The issue of 50% share in the final harvest of timber still remains to be contentious:

"To the local communities this appears to be a 'share cropping system', which is unreasonable since forest is not a

crop. This system of benefit sharing reflects the 'timber/revenue oriented' attitude of forest department." (Sarangi, 2007)

The Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC) is usually the authorized agent to harvest bamboo and timber from government forests, so the VSS share is often routed through it. RCDC received information from the Corporation that during 2008-11, it paid total Rs. 385016/- towards VSS share in 3 forest divisions of the state. Maa Andhara Bauti VSS, Banthapur was one of the recipients of this share (from bamboo working) in 2008-09 in the Nayagarh division. A field study by RCDC revealed that the VSS was duly informed about its share by the authorities though the money was yet to be fully accessible to the committee due to some technical reasons (and this in fact has created some misunderstanding and internal conflicts among the members apprehending misappropriation). Interestingly, the village people reportedly have low dependency on the nearby reserved forest as they have their needs satisfied from the village forest. Moreover, they have raised guava and lemon orchards in the village forest area which they auction each year and receive a good income therefrom. The forests are well protected, and they have also planted teak in the village forest.

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Bikash Rath
with *Sabyasachi Rath*

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The author hereby acknowledges the information kindly provided by the villagers of Banthapur.

Livelihood promotion under JFM

The JFM and its linked programmes have been focusing on the livelihood security of the concerned communities, though the approach thereof may be controversial in some cases. The JFM policy is formulated on the basis of a clear understanding that ignoring the livelihood needs of the people would not make community involvement in forest management feasible. However, the policy has evolved through many stages so far honouring this need is concerned. For instance, initially minor forest produce was not included in the concessions allowed to the forest protecting committees, but in a later stage this was allowed though on certain terms & conditions.

A major step in linking livelihood with JFM/VSS was taken while formulating the policy for sal leaf collection, in Odisha. The NTFP policy of March 2000 had put sal leaf under the restricted category, but practically thousands of poor in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, and Keonjhar, who have been critically dependent on sal leaf collection and processing, were not ready to accept this restriction. This led to some unpleasant situations following which the Government of Odisha decided in October 2000 that the primary collectors could collect and sell sal leaves, but only to the authorised state agency and also through the local VSS. The VSS was assigned an important role here to ensure the sustainable harvesting of these leaves as per the quantity and time specified by the Forest Department.

The concerned DFOs assess the ground potential and on the basis of that recommend the PCCF's office for the quantity to be allowed for collection. The PCCF's office then takes a decision on this. However, practically it is very difficult to ensure the strict implementation of this provision even after involving VSS because after all it is a question of the livelihood of the whole village!

A contentious issue under JFM has been the livelihood security in the Protected Areas. In these areas, the EDCs are formed as counterparts of VSS, but because of PA regulations are not entitled for many of the concessions allowed to the VSS. For instance, the 2008 JFM policy in Odisha clearly distinguishes between the EDC and the VSS as per the following norm:

"The Micro plan shall prescribe various, soil and moisture conservation measures, silvicultural operations, afforestation measures and steps to be taken for livelihood support of the forest dependent communities. It shall also incorporate formation of SHGs and micro-enterprise that may be feasibly undertaken based on locally available resources by them. In case of EDC, the Eco- development Plan may include activities such as:- ecotourism, farm forestry, Agro forestry, Silvi-pasture development, promotion of fuel-efficient device, veterinary care to the village cattle population, development of pisciculture, poultry etc., mushroom cultivation, tassar cultivation, micro-

credit facility and mobile health care facility etc."(Section 10-iii).

There was no provision for EDC for usufruct benefits. This created a discontent among the EDC villages for obvious reasons. Although the Department tried to support them with some alternative arrangements such as fuel-efficient stoves, but the support was not adequate enough to gain trust of the affected villages. The 2011 policy thankfully discarded this cornering of EDCs, and placed them at par with VSS thereby making them entitled for usufruct sharing in the same way as the VSS.

Plantation of NTFP species, and promotion of microenterprises, etc. have also been a part of the JFM-linked activities. For instance, more than 7000 SHGs have been claimed to have been linked with loan linkages from VSS revolving fund, and 273 village educated youth received training to work as 'para teachers' in non-formal education centres run in the VSS areas, under OFSDP, vide their project status report for December 2013(<http://www.ofsdp.org/Publication/PSR%20%20DECEMBER-13.PDF>). It is however felt that the potential of JFM-linked programmes in livelihood-promotion should be better and sincerely harnessed for more concrete results.



Bikash Rath

Is JFM taking over CFM ?

The concept of involving local communities in forest management goes back to the pre-independence period when the British administrators in Odisha made an understanding with some local tribal communities that in lieu of certain services (like, helping in extinguishing forest fire) they (communities) would be entitled for certain concessions such as free collection of minor forest products. The feudal rulers made a similar arrangement with the local communities in many areas. In this case however the Forest Department clearly posed as the 'owner' while the communities were regarded as mere subjects. There were few exceptional attempts to place the communities in a more dignified role, but these had mixed results which is why the Forest Enquiry Committee made a cautious stand, in their report of 1959, on community role in forest management.

Almost parallel to this process however was a slowly building community regime in forest management under various circumstances. The Koraput Gazetteer (1939) as well as the report of the Partially Excluded Areas Committee (1940) officially acknowledged the success of community initiatives in forest management in the undivided Koraput district. These initiatives were based on one key thing: ownership of the communities over their forest or a strong sense of belongingness of the local forest to the concerned communities. It was this particular feeling that

helped sustain and strengthen the effort though there were cases of failure or abandoned attempt also. Gradually, this sense of belongingness or ownership, even if not legalized, took over the forest protection and management in other parts of the state and by 1980s community forest management (CFM) was well established in Odisha. Needless to say, the key to CFM was the sense of ownership by the local communities over the forests of their traditional access which they started protecting to check further degradation, and this sense did not recognize any stake of the Forest Department as the people felt that the Department had actually failed in protecting and conserving the forest.

Towards the end of 1980s, the Forest Department officially changed its strategy and expressed interest to involve the local communities for protection of the forests. In lieu of this protection it offered certain though limited concessions. Although appearing similar to the arrangement during the British period, this new initiative actually had a significant difference, i.e. community involvement was not compulsory. The arrangement during the British period was in fact a form of *bethi* and *begari*, i.e. forced labour and forced rendering of services. This was more true for the feudal regimes. The princely rulers allowed certain concessions in forests in lieu of certain free services to be rendered by the local communities. In fact, the services were

often mandatory. After independence the system of *bethi* & *begari* was abolished by the government following which the concessions allowed were also withdrawn. The resolution dated 1st August 1988 however clearly stated that "the Government is of the view that the task of protecting forests is so urgent and so enormous that the rural community should be fully and actively involved in it." This sense of relying upon and respecting the community potential was normally absent in the feudal regime with but few exceptions. Further, it did not think of a community involvement by force or compulsion. The resolution allowed a concession for removal of small timber and firewood for household consumption only, and confined itself to the Reserved Forests adjoining the village areas. A modified version of this resolution was published on 11 December 1990 which extended the scope of community involvement to Protected Forests too. However, both these resolutions never recognized the communities as equal partners in forest management. There was no mention of any community stake in timber as well as non-timber forest products. Such flaws in the approach were overcome to some extent through the 1st formal Joint Forest Management resolution of 3rd July 1993 which regarded the communities as equal partners in forest management by using the term 'joint forest management' and also recognizing 50% stake of the forest protecting communities in the final har-

vest of timber. To quote the relevant statements of the resolution:

"xxx Forest management has to be re-oriented to forge an effective partnership between the government department and the concerned village communities.

In Orissa the tradition of community initiative to protect degraded forests goes back to the early 1950s. In August 1988 the state government has passed a resolution to formally introduce a scheme of protection of peripheral reserved forest areas with participation of the adjoining villages. The scope of this resolution was enlarged in December 1990 to include the protected forests, and it was also laid down that village level forest protection committee should be constituted by convening a meeting of the concerned villages. In return for helping the forest department in protection of the earmarked forest areas the villagers would be entitled to get small timber and fire-

wood as may be available from these forests for meeting their bona fide requirement, free of royalty. For a variety of reasons, however, this scheme has not made the desired impact in generating people's participation in protection of forests. After careful consideration, government have decided to implement the following scheme of Joint Forest Management in the state in which the forest department and the villagers of the adjacent village(s) will be equal partners in the task of regeneration and restoration of the degraded forests."

The progressive version of this resolution was notified in 1996 which gave a scope for treating Reserved Forest areas under JFM as village forests with 100% stake of the local communities. However, this was never implemented. Instead, the 1993 version was followed in practice till the resolution of 2008 which extended the scope of JFM to the Protected Areas(National Parks and sanctuaries) by recognizing

the PA counterpart of VSS, i.e. the Eco-development Committee(EDC). Unfortunately, the EDCs were not put at par with the VSS so far the benefit sharing was concerned. In fact, the EDCs were to be the losers than the VSSs primarily because of the restricted regime of PAs. Moreover, the Forester still being the Secretary of the JFM committee at village level, decision making was still under the Departmental control. Hence, when the resolution of 2011 replaced the Forester with an elected representative of the villagers themselves it became a praiseworthy decision. In fact, the 2011 resolution maximized the authority of the local communities in decision making.

This trend of evolution of a pro-people JFM policy may suggest that it would attract the local communities to work with the Forest Department on a collaborative mode with better scope created, like in the 2011 resolution. However, it is the understanding of the present author that the process has been quite otherwise actually.

For, JFMization of community forestry had started even in 1990s. The Department had certain targets to promote JFM, and hence found it convenient to convert CFM groups into VSSs. This was particularly possible where the CFM networks(local federations) were not strong enough or the concerned CFM village had some internal issues and/or vulnerabilities that made it accept the offer of the Department. Koduanpalli is a good example of this. Bhuska(Athagarh Forest Division) offers a more interesting story. Although the local communities here had been protecting the forest since many years, they decided to approach the Forest Department to be



Supporting activities of community interest such as the construction of this community hall have helped the Forest Department win the trust of JFM villages to some extent.

under JFM as they felt that without the support of the Department it would not be possible for them any more to properly protect the forest against the increasing threat from the timber smugglers. They also wanted a kind of legal document that would help them assert their claim over the local forest. And this is how the process of JFMization got accelerated:

“Even though the Joint Forest Management (JFM) scheme started in 1993, the progress made under it was very slow up to 1998. There were about 1,105 VSS covering 104,454 ha of forest area. The average area protected per VSS was 95 hectares. The real growth of VSS numbers started during the years 1998-99 and 1999-2000. The number of VSSs increased from 1105 to 6685 in between the period 1998 to 1999. Further, it has increased to 6912 by December 2002. By the end of 2003 there were 7002 VSSs in the State. However, in order to achieve the target of formation of VSSs, the Forest Department has simply persuaded the already existing self-initiated groups to convert into VSS. For instance, in Balangir Forest Division out of 526 VSSs formed by the end of 2003, 182 of these (34.6 per cent) were converted VSSs. Clearly the number of VSSs has increased during the last

four years, and an average 800 VSSs have been formed per year during the period April 1999 to December 2002, but about one third of these have been formed by converting the indigenous groups existing in the forest fringe villages.”(Sarangi, 2007)

The Forest Department claims to have more than 12000 VSSs in the state by the end of 2011. Some relevant details pertaining to this have been furnished in Table-1.

A major strength of JFM has been the financial support it can provide to the communities. Particularly constitution of the Forest Development Agencies accelerated the pumping of money to JFM areas. Plantation and other activities under different schemes such as NREGS provided some wage employment to the villagers, which increased their trust on the Department. One more factor, though not so official, was the personal rapport of the local forest authority(ies) with the local communities. There are examples(such as in the Bonai Forest Division) where this rapport worked like a magic as people understood less from the resolution or the document than from the reliability of the concerned authorities. These authorities took care to respect the genuine rights

and feelings of the communities in the possible ways(some of which were likely to be unofficial). The Bonal VSS Mandal is a good example of the rapport between the communities and the Forest Department.

During the last few years, with the weakening of community forestry federations in many areas and the growing interest of the village communities in external aid, JFM seems to have become more appealing to many of the CFM groups, particularly where they are less mature. Failure of the NGOs, who used to promote CFM activities, to successfully address the issues of changing times should not be ignored as a factor in this context. This may seem to be an irony of fate, but if JFM makes community forestry stronger, effective, and systematic in specific cases then that potential has also to be respected. However, this potential seems to be more an artificial one as money looks like the central power behind it. Once this power is gone, the appeal of JFM is likely to lose itself drastically though a mass understanding of the same is yet to come, unfortunately.



Bikash Rath

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Table-1
VSS statistics in Odisha
(Quarter ending Decemember - 2011)

Sl No.	Name of the Division	Name of the District	No of VSS Formed		Total Revenue Village	Forest area brought under JFM through VSS		Total in Ha.	Break up old cumulative forest area under JFM as shown in Col.10			No of families covered under JFM			No of EDC formed in Sanctuary/ National Park area	
			Till Previous quarter	During the Quarter		Till Previous Quarter	During the Quarter		RF (in Ha.)	PRF/DPF (in Ha.)	Other Forest land (in Ha.)	SC (in no.)	ST (in no.)	Gen. (in no.)		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Angul	Angul	340	0	340	340	47405.166	0	47405.166	30132.66	11310.89	5961.616	9982	7144	32550	0
2	Athamallik	Angul	170	0	170	168	14086.1	0	14086.100	3654.68	407.82	10023.6	1165	2816	8015	0
3	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	302	0	302	237	37212.088	0	37212.088	32487.74	280	4444.348	9133	7589	26341	0
4	Athagarh	Cuttack	147	0	147	158	14571.92	0	14571.920	10721.95	997	2852.97	2129	2021	10183	0
5	Cuttack	Cuttack	12	0	12	12	865	0	865.000	150	715	0	101	1416	363	0
		Jajpur	57	0	57	57	5647	0	5647.000	410	4873.05	363.91	2380	4435	4379	0
		Jagatsinghpur	3	0	3	3	100	0	100.000	0	100	0	280	10	810	0
		Kendrapara	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Satkoshia WL	Angul	23	0	23	20	653	0	653.000	0	0	653	1584	1398	1156	27
		Cuttack-EDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
7	Khurda	Khurda	48	0	48	71	7618	0	7618.000	3098.48	4071.09	448.43	4072	3710	41773	0
		Nayagarh	36	0	36	70	6295	0	6295.000	5875	0	420	2702	2483	19005	0
		Puri	4	0	4	4	217	0	217.000	0	216.511	0	709	0	4443	0
		Cuttack	5	0	5	5	405	0	405.000	0	405	0	128	1017	1812	0
8	Nayagarh	Nayagarh	319	0	319	327	32332.28	0	32332.280	27309.47	2360.06	2662.75	7379	9784	45404	0
9	Chandaka WL	Khurda	10	0	10	9	308	0	308.000	0	0	308	175	270	304	28
		Cuttack	20	0	20	10	1180	0	1180.000	0	1180	0	373	746	429	0
10	Chilika WL	Khurda	19	0	19	19	1238.39	0	1238.390	0	1238.39	0	25	11	1520	0
11	Puri WL	Puri	38	0	38	38	4085.034	0	4085.034	0	3848.264	236.77	3026	0	27092	28
12	Rajnagar WL	Kendrapara	23	0	23	17	657	0	657.000	0	13	644	1009	172	1954	34
13	Mahanadi WL	Nayagarh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
14	City Forest	khurda	2	0	2	2	80	0	80.000	80	0	0	10	123	0	0
		Cuttack	7	0	7	7	138	0	138.000	0	82	56	449	35	1089	0
15	Bhadrak WL	Bhadrak	46	0	46	46	5162.29	0	5162.290	0	0	5612.29	17316	2714	57366	18
16	Ghumsur North	Ganjam	216	0	216	213	30468.28	0	30468.280	30131.28	0	337	6585	4316	21005	0
17	Ghumsur South	Ganjam	170	0	170	170	20300	0	20300.000	8500	6770	5030	2334	1603	12173	0
18	Phulbani	Kandhamal	599	2	601	601	48953.35	64.72	49018.070	24750.02	5594.02	18674.03	2556	5518	825	0
19	Boudh	Boudh	130	0	130	134	11612.16	0	11612.160	6971	3025	1616.16	1118	1879	5927	0
20	Baliguda	Kandhamal	442	0	442	442	37488.17	0	37488.170	12417.58	15779.29	9291.298	7479	12642	6861	77
21	Paralakhemundi	Gajapati	418	0	418	418	29156.3	0	29156.300	9630	18336.3	1190	1040	9452	900	4

Sl No.	Name of the Division	Name of the District	No of VSS Formed		Total Village	Forest area brought under JFM through VSS		Total in Ha.	Break up old cumulative forest area under JFM as shown in Col.10				No of families covered under JFM			No of EDC formed in Sanctuary/ National Park area
			Till Previous quarter	During the Quarter		Till Previous Quarter	During the Quarter		RF (in Ha.)	PRF/DPF (in Ha.)	Other Forest land (in Ha.)	SC (in no.)	ST (in no.)	Gen. (in no.)		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
22	Berhampur	Ganjam	149	0	149	149	12585	0	12585.000	3190	6937	2458	12569	6169	20895	0
23	Kalahandi North	Kalahandi	517	0	517	481	38990.52	0	38990.520	27432.16	7262.59	4295.77	12564	25695	23511	0
24	Kalahandi South	Kalahandi	377	0	377	377	25226	0	25226.000	12548	9244	3434	14192	32131	21174	12
25	Khariar	Nuapada	458	0	458	346	34320.85	0	34320.850	99.88	29817.95	4403.02	2844	10095	8804	0
26	Sunabeda WL	Nuapada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
27	Subarnapur	Subarnapur	227	0	227	227	27171	0	27171.000	14944	8518.02	3708.48	11487	8811	27230	0
28	Bolangir	Bolangir	524	0	524	524	52592.5	0	52592.500	50238	0	2354.5	6661	8293	19875	0
29	Rayagada	Rayagada	780	0	780	780	55409	0	55409.000	20527.982	22197.2	12683.564	5141	20515	9105	0
30	Koraput	Koraput	699	3	702	702	51635.68	270.003	51905.683	15028.0302	21869.3	15008.3567	6731	27007	9553	0
31	Jeyapore	Koraput	491	3	494	494	32001.67	140	32141.670	10280.48	11828.71	10032.48	9195	51692	12335	0
32	Malkangiri	Malkangiri	267	0	267	267	21472.6	0	21472.600	5199.8	8300.8	7972	3164	19378	2573	0
33	Navarangapur	Navarangapur	321	0	321	321	41861.63	0	41861.630	21307.3	20286.33	288	7437	39547	11401	0
34	Sambalpur(N)	Jharsuguda	107	0	107	107	9907.67	0	9907.670	458.42	413.9684	9035.2816	15320	32830	26845	0
35	Sambalpur(S)	Sambalpur	210	0	210	199	24613	0	24613.000	12774	2007	9832	3802	8926	6626	0
36	Rairakhol	Sambalpur	135	0	135	136	12116.29	0	12116.290	2919	1688.96	7508.33	5330	7770	20540	0
37	Baragarh	Baragarh	248	0	248	245	32674	0	32674.000	12195.08	17553.15	2925.59	10033	15194	24561	0
38	Bamra WI	Sambalpur	210	0	210	224	23635	0	23635.000	2184.15	13470.41	7980.21	2493	8609	5428	24
39	Hirakud WL	Baragarh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
40	Sundargarh	Sundargarh	330	0	330	296	38228	0	38228.000	24660	4390	9178	4599	28903	10751	0
41	Bonai	Sundargarh	222	0	222	227	16446.7	0	16446.700	5891.48	3640.659	6914.565	3396	15154	3943	0
42	Deogarh	Deogarh	314	0	314	314	33790.8249	0	33790.825	24636.4352	5482.581	3671.8087	2973	8448	13230	0
43	Rourkela	Angul	133	0	133	133	25579.836	0	25579.836	22505.996	703	2370.84	2123	4234	5657	0
44	Keonjhar	Sundargarh	349	0	349	336	32269	0	32269.000	25298.48	1164	5806.52	2938	13937	2477	0
45	Keonjhar WL	Keonjhar	402	0	402	405	41831.698	0	41831.698	25371.491	6774.175	9686.032	9838	29416	20731	0
46	Baripada	Mayurbhanj\VSS	349	0	349	349	33661.85	0	33661.850	29686.85	1560.7	2414.3	5689	27757	20825	43
		VFPC	63	0	63	63	7484	0	7484.000	6702.53	781	0	0	0	0	0
47	Karanija	M.BH.VSS	193	0	193	193	15923	0	15923.000	13153	2770	0	11921	52248	20851	55
48	Rairangpur	M.BH.VSS	184	0	184	215	22348.28	0	22348.280	14722.28	5672	1954	812	6930	2579	57
		VFPC	53	0	53	74	6933	0	6933.000	4676	985.99	1271	352	2221	287	0
49	Balasore WL	Balasore	145	0	145	246	11013.62	0	11013.620	4730.96	1710	4572.66	5539	7216	16428	9
			12158	8	12166	12123	1153794.15	474.723	1154268.87	630085.0444	299425.2	225206.48	271521	645771	726708	463

Courtesy : Office of the PCCF, Odisha

VSSs beyond their conventional role

Vana Samrakshana Samithi to submit report (on Eco-tourism)

By Express News Service

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KOZHICODE :

In a move to boost tourism prospects in Kakkad near Puthupady here, Vana Samrakshana Samithi (VSS) will submit a project report on Kakkad eco-tourism to Forest Minister Benoy Viswom.

The project report will be submitted within 15 days, said VSS president M Gopalakrishnan. At present, the tourists coming to Kakkad forest are managed by the VSS members who are residing near the forest. On an average, about 200 persons are coming to the forest per week for trekking and enjoying the scenic beauty. "The 'Kumban Mala' in the forest could be

made a good trekking spot. Besides, there are several streams flowing through the forest, which could also be made a tourist hot spot," he pointed out.

"The main problem we face is the lack of awareness about the place among people. The place lacks basic infrastructure for tourism. The Forest Minister had asked us to prepare a project report in his last visit," he said. The report envisages the chances of putting up huts, tree houses and other facilities inside the forest. The forest path will be stone paved. Apart from these, there will be scope for adventure tourism, he said. The construction will be eco-

friendly and without hampering the eco-system of the forest, he explained. "About '1 crore is the project cost. The project, if approved, will be implemented jointly with the Forest Department. The tourists coming to the place will be accompanied by a guide and allowed to visit the forest with an admission charge of ` 10. Food will also be arranged as per the request," he said. The project, he says, would be helpful for about 700 families, including three tribal people colonies, near the 300-hectares forest.

(Source: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/article170627.ece>)

Vana Samrakshana Samiti to protect wildlife in Ganjam

*TNN Apr 6, 2011,
11.31pm IST*

BERHAMPUR: The forest department will seek help from the Vana Samrakshana Samiti (VSS) to protect wildlife in Ganjam, in the wake of a spurt in poaching in the district. On a number of occasions, the wild animals have been electrocuted by laying livewires in the forest.

"We will sensitize the members of the VSS in the district and seek their cooperation to detect the livewires laid by poachers," said chief conservator of forest (wildlife) S S Srivastav. He visited Buduli village in Muzagada forest range on Tuesday, where two tuskers had died coming in contact with livewires on March 23.

The livewires were hooked from the KV line. The forest officials had arrested two persons of the village on

charge of killing the elephants. Srivastav has spoke to the villagers and advised not to indulge in such activities. Senior engineers of Southco, the private distribution company were also present during the discussion.

It's not an isolated incident in the district where poachers killed the wild animals by electrocuting them. Several such incidents were reported from Kabisurya Nagar, Buguda, Polasara, Jagannath Prasad forest ranges in the past, where animals like wild boars, bears and even pet animals were killed.

"Since poaching has been rampant in Ganjam, we have to engage the members of the VSS to ensure safety of the animals," chief conservator of forest (wildlife) said. "We will ask the divisional forest officers in the district to

engage the members of the VSS to protect the wildlife," he added.

He, however, ruled out the possibility that the elephants were killed for ivory. "I don't think so," he said, adding, "During my discussion with the villagers some of them said the livewires were laid in the field to protect crops from wild boars." Population of the wild boar has increased many folds in the district. The ivory recovered from the elephants which died recently, has been kept in the custody of forest department, sources said.

(Source: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-04-06/bhubaneswar/29393087_1_boars-forest-officials-vss)



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