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Community Forestry

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Editorial Address

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A symbolic transfer of right from Government to the community. Details on page-4. Photo : Sudhansu Sekhar Deo

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A hilly patch cleared under departmental bamboo working (near Bhutigad, Kalahandi district. Photo : RCDC

Editorial

The concern raised in a recent meeting of the National Board for Wildlife on the forest rights versus wildlife protection doesn't seem to be a vague one. In fact, although our conservation policies much preceded our forest rights policy, the country is yet to have a well-coordinated system in which wildlife(and ecosystem) conservation is secured without any conflict of interest with the genuine stakeholders. Yes, we have made provisions in the Forest Rights Act, 2006 that the forest right holders need to ensure biodiversity/wildlife conservation, and in the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2002 that community management of wildlife is to be recognized in two new types of Protected Areas: Community Reserves and Conservation Reserves. But in spirit neither of the sides has actually been complementary to each other. The reason: they did not emerge from a common background and with a common objective. The Wildlife Protection Act, like the Indian Forest Act, emerged from an orthodox bureaucratic mindset that was inherited from the colonial administration; whereas the Forest Rights Act emerged as an outcome of the decade long struggle against the injustice caused due to such orthodoxy. On the ground however the reality was a bit otherwise. The indigenous forest dwellers and the wild animals used to lead a life that considered each other a natural part of the same ecosystem. In other words, they were natural partners and not exactly adversaries. A nomadic Mankdia would be quite at ease to see a snake and a Kandha would see the tiger as if like a relation. Hunting did not affect this relationship because it is normal even in the animal world. In fact, these people were more intimate with the wild than the world of elites. The problem started when we elites tried to expand 'civilization' to all possible corners of the world. Intimacy with the wild was something that was almost completely against our sense of being civilized, except for the sages and hermits. We wanted deforestation, we wanted gaming. And in our attempt to civilize the nomadic, we broke the very intimacy that existed between them and the wild. The complications thus started ultimately assumed three different directions: one, a growth at the cost of the disadvantaged; two, a growth at the cost of ecosystem; and three, a counter-action that tried to uphold the rights of the deprived. In practice, each such action has seen its extreme. Misuse of the Forest Rights Act by vested interest groups has been reported, though not so frequently; but the concern thereof doesn't stand much against the devastation that has been allowed in the name of development, even after so much loss to our green cover and biodiversity. It is for this reason that the formal or informal antagonism against the Forest Rights Act has lost its ground because the foresters could not strongly act when the forests were cleared for mining and other development projects, with permission from their own department. Now, circumstances have forced the opponent parties to come for a possible solution which is how the concept of participatory management emerged gradually transforming into community management or ownership without however harming the basic stake of the Forest Department. Neither PESA Act nor FRA actually gives full ownership over the forests, and indirectly creates a scope for participatory management. On the other hand, although communities have demonstrated examples of efficient conservation of resources, to be more systematic, comprehensive, holistic, and inclusive they need the technical support of the foresters; and in climate change context a mutual collaboration between science and society is much pertinent. This realization should form the basis of a new beginning of the relationship between the communities and the conservationists. In fact, the communities have a potential to be reliable conservationists; and the forest- and wildlife managers should rather focus more on those non-living factors(so called development projects) which, once allowed, can hardly be undone unlike the community spirit that can be revived for the cause of ecosystem almost anytime.

Bikash Rath
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Jamguda - A New Beginning under FRA

Introduction

After Mendha-Lekha of Maharashtra which is the first village in the country to have legally exercised its community right to harvest bamboo under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act(FRA), it is now the turn of Jamguda in Odisha to become the first village in the state to do the same. The village was in the national news when two central ministers (Mr.Jairam Ramesh, Honourable Minister for Rural Development and Mr.V. Kishor Chandra Deo, Honourable Minister for Tribal Affairs) and the revenue minister of the state, Mr.Suryanarayan Patra visited the village on 3rd March, 2013. On this day, the transit pass was handed over to Jamguda Gram sabha leader Nilambar Patra by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest(PCCF) of Odisha, Mr.P. N. Padhi. On the same day, the Jamguda Gram sabha issued the transit pass to the Member of Parliament (MP), Kalahandi Mr.Bhakta Charan Das whose parliamentary constituency Jamguda belongs to. After getting the transit pass from the Gram sabha, he transported the bamboo from the village by a tractor.

Jamguda village is located in Barabandha Gram Panchayat of M. Rampur block in the Kalahandi district. Out of 65 households in the village, 60 are tribal (Gonda tribe) and rest 5 are Scheduled Caste. Among them 6 households are landless. So, most of the villagers are totally dependent on the forest for their livelihood. They collect mushrooms, edible fruits, char, mahua flowers, siali leaves, honey, tubers, and leafy vegetables from the forest. The forest produce thus forms a major part of their diet. These NTFPs also form a source of income. The forest is dry deciduous in nature. The dominant species is bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*). The forest comes under the Norla Range of Kalahandi North Forest Division.

History of forest protection

Commercial working of the forest for timber was in practice even since the pre-independence days. The Forest Department had coupes here. This coupled with the pressure from the adjoining villages, brought the forest on the verge of extinction. The forests gave in to illegal trading of timber by the timber mafia. Understanding the importance of forests and its survival relation with the people, in 1990, the youth committee of Jamguda village started protection of this patch. This was done with the basic motive of protecting the forests against illegal timber felling. The youth committee laid down some rules for the protection. It restricted green felling and put a stop to illegal smuggling of timber. The sale of bamboo or timber was restricted but these could be harvested for personal use. Collection of NTFP was allowed for personal use as well as for sale. In 2004, the Forest Department managed to lure the villagers into joint forest management(JFM) and Vana Samrakshan Samiti (VSS) was formed. The community was entrusted with some area under JFM. Since then it has totally protected this patch and there is a ban on extraction of any forest material from here. Though attracted to

Transit pass handed over to the Gram sabha leader Nilambar Patra by PCCF, P. N. Padhi

Bamboo of MP, Kalahandi being transported after receiving the transit pass. The ministers share the occasion.

Bamboo forest of Jamguda

joint forest management provisions earlier, it took no time for the villagers to understand that they were slowly losing their grip on the hard earned and well protected forests. Even after protection of this patch they were not free to take decision independently for this forest.

Current forest management system

After the government came out with the most effective Act of FRA in 2006, the villagers decided to shift to community forest management by claiming their rights over their forests. In 2010, Jamguda village got recognition of community forest rights in the reserve forest area. After getting the photocopy of the title deed from Kalahandi Jungle Surakshya Mancha or KJSM(federation of the forest protecting villages of the Kalahandi district), VSS was dissolved by a resolution of the Gram sabha and it was decided that the community forest resources would be managed by the Gram sabha as per the FRA rules. The Gram sabha meeting is held as per the need. The entire village participates in this meeting. The Gram sabha has formed a committee for executing its decisions with regards to forest conservation and management. The committee has 5 female and 10 male members, two belonging to Schedule Caste and the rest Scheduled Tribes.

Rights assertion on bamboo

Bamboo was given the status of Minor Forest Produce for the first time in Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. Within the framework of FRA, the right holders are entitled to collect and market minor forest produces including bamboo. This right had been ensured to the Jamguda Gram Sabha.

After observing large scale flowering of bamboo in the Community Forest Resource(CFR) area the Gram sabha planned the harvesting with the technical support of a retired forest officer Mr. Biswanath Hota (advisor to KJSM). 170 numbers of bamboo clumps were marked for harvesting with prior information to the Forest Department. On 20th June 2012, bamboos were harvested from the CFR areas through collective labour. On 23rd June, Mr.Bhakta Charan Das,MP inaugurated the bamboo depot of the village and became the first buyer. He purchased 100 culms of bamboo for Rs. 3000/-. The Gram sabha requested the Forest Department to issue transit pass for the sale of bamboo, which was denied. The Forest Department also denied the request of the honourable MP for the same. This issue was highlighted by the media and Mr.K.C.Deo, Minister for Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Government of India then issued a letter to Chief Minister of Odisha requesting to arrange transit pass for Jamguda Gram sabha for selling their harvested bamboo. In spite of this, the Government of Odisha did not make any arrangement for the sale of the bamboo of Jamguda Gram sabha. Instead, Mr.Deo was given a tactful reply that only served the purpose of the state government, with no clarity on the actual issue.

Collection of harvested bamboo

Denial of transit pass leads to income loss

It was estimated that the harvest could fetch around Rs. 1,00,000/-, but due to delay in issue of the transit pass, the flowered bamboos were likely to decay. The Gram sabha feared loss of income due to degradation of the quality of bamboo. The local buyers were ready to pay Rs. 30/- per pole, but due to non-issuance of transit pass, they didn't purchase the bamboo from the Gram sabha. So, to save the village from a big loss, the Gram sabha had to reluctantly sell the bamboo at a very low price. Also due to this problem the

Flowering of bamboo in Jamguda

Harvesting of flowered bamboo

Storage of harvested bamboo

Mr. Bhakta Charan Das, MP, Kalahandi, the first person to purchase the bamboo

Gram sabha harvested only 20 clumps instead 170 clumps. These unharvested flowered bamboos started decaying inside the forest. This was a huge monetary loss to the villagers.

Issuance of transit pass

In September, 2012, the Government of India amended the Forest Right Rule, where it was mentioned that Gram Sabha had the authority to issue the transit pass. Although the Forest Department of Odisha had issued a notification to this effect on 28 December 2012, it did not actually hand over the transit pass to the Gram Sabha . In a move to put pressure on the Government, Mr. Bhakta Charan Das planned for the visit of two central ministers to Jamguda, Kalahandi on 3rd March, 2013. Both these ministers have been known for their pro-people and sincere activism. This move worked well and put pressure on the Government of Odisha. Finally the Forest Department succumbed to the pressure and handed over the transit pass to the Gram Sabha on 3rd March, 2013.

Future plans of the Gram Sabha

According to the plan of Jamguda Gram sabha, the whole CFR area of the village will be divided into four parts. On basis of rotation, mature bamboos will be harvested from one part among these four parts each year. There are approx. 12,000 bamboo clumps. The Gram sabha is planning to harvest mature bamboo from 3000 clumps this year (by June 2013).

The Gram sabha has decided that during the next harvest each labourer would be paid Rs. 3/ per bamboo. It is estimated that a labourer can harvest 50 bamboos a day and so will be earning Rs. 150 per day. According to their bamboo management plan, the villagers will protect the upcoming green flush of bamboo seedlings. They plan to develop earthen mounds around the bamboo clumps. Fire lines for protection of the bamboo forest from fires in summer season also forms a part of their management plan.

Conclusion

After a long struggle of eight months and support of the local MP Bhakta Charan Das and the community forestry federations at district- and state level, the Jamguda Gram Sabha managed to get the transit pass to sell bamboo. Now there is a ray of hope for other such villages in Odisha. But it is the responsibility of the government to spread the information among the other villagers and

Decay of harvested bamboo due to delay in issuance of transit pass

support them according to the need. Government also needs to develop capacity of the villagers for value addition and marketing of bamboo by which the economic condition of the villagers can change. Civil society organizations can also play an important role facilitating this process.

Last but not the least it is important to mention here that the 28 December notification allows the forest right holder gram sabhas to assert their rights over bamboo only for the 2012-13 harvesting year, i.e. from October'12 to June'13. Hence, this is a kind of temporary arrangement. However, the good point is that the Forest Department has agreed to provide technical support through the ST & SC Department to help the gram sabhas prepare the microplan for harvesting.

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The Corroded Corridors

Wildlife corridors have great significance for some flagship species such as tigers and elephants. Natural instinct and the habit passed from one generation to another leads them to follow certain specific geographical tracts not obliging any political boundary. Among other immediate benefits such as availability of food, the corridorial movements are supposed to be good for the population psychology as well as physical health of the concerned wildlife.

"**A wildlife corridor or green corridor** is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities (such as roads, development, or logging). This allows an exchange of individuals between populations, which may help prevent the negative effects of inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity (via genetic drift) that often occur within isolated populations. Corridors may also help facilitate the re-establishment of populations that have been reduced or eliminated due to random events (such as fires or disease). This may potentially moderate some of the worst effects of habitat fragmentation."(Wikipedia, 2013)

Zoologists Sandeep Sharma and Trishna Dutta of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, who made a genetic study of the tiger population in the Satpura-Maikal region, found that the tigers showed a high amount of genetic diversity because of the wildlife corridors that allow tigers to travel past mining operations and developed areas to the haunts of their striped neighbors. It was thus obvious for the researchers to conclude that the pathways that allow the felids to travel and interbreed must remain open. The study also observed that for the leopards these corridors assumed additional significance (Switek, B. 2013).

It is therefore natural for wildlife conservationists to focus on the conservation of the wildlife corridors of the country. In fact the Wildlife Trust of India has identified as many as 88 corridors on priority basis for this purpose (European Outdoor Conservation Association, 2013). Moving a step forward, two non-profit organisations, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and its foreign partner International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) transferred to the Karnataka Forest Department the land they bought from farmers and villagers in 2005 to safeguard a wildlife corridor(Edayargalli-Doddasampige corridor). This was the first such instance in the country, and the corridor was linked to the Biligiri Rangaswami Temple sanctuary(The Business Standard, 2007).

The natural wildlife corridors have now been severely disrupted in many areas leading to various negative consequences, the most important being human-animal conflicts. This has had differential impact on the wildlife. For the tiger, the loss of corridor has led to a rather silent decrease of the population without much conflict with the humans whereas for the elephants it has led to violent conflicts killing both elephants and humans, and even to accidental death of jumbos by the trains. The Railway Minister stated recently that as many as 49 jumbo deaths were caused in train accidents since 2010(The Times of India, 2013)

In Odisha, the great natural wildlife corridor extended from Koraput(Balimela hills) through Kalahandi and Phulbani districts passing then through Sambalpur(Badrama pass) upto Meghasani hill in the Mayurbhanj district[1] (Nayak, 1997). These have now been fragmented and localized in many places. Even the localized corridors are being fragmented further causing critical threats to the very survival of the species.

The unfortunate fact is that while the weak and diluted system of this country allowed such kind of fragmentation and corrosion of the wildlife corridors, the legal flaws further increased the vulnerability. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 doesn't define or mention an wildlife corridor, and as such the concept is not a legal entity under the Indian law. Only corridors that come under a Protected Area come

[1] All undivided districts

under a legal umbrella. While some NGOs demanded that all wildlife corridors including those that wildlife animals use frequently but do not reside in as well as other wildlife patches regardless of legal status should also come under the scrutiny of the National Board of Wildlife Board while clearing development projects, the Ministry of Environment & Forests decided to put only wildlife areas with a legal status under the panel's scrutiny (Sethi, 2012). This is a serious setback to the conservation programme and in fact questions the very sincerity of the concerned authorities in ensuring wildlife conservation. Although the Minister for Environment & Forest Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan had announced in October 2012 that the Ministry would take necessary steps to amend the law to give a legal identity to the corridors used by elephants, tigers and other animals (WebIndia123, 2012); it is yet to be done.

Under such circumstances the competent authority in wildlife management, i.e. the Forest Department should ensure all possible measures to safeguard the existing corridors in one way or the other, i.e. if legal action is not possible then community action/initiative might be considered. However, the instance of the artificial corridor in Dhenkanal district displays sheer negligence of the authorities. In the Kamakshyanagar area of this district, the Rengali Left Bank canal was constructed which passed through an elephant corridor. An artificial corridor was thus proposed with plantation of those species that can provide food to the elephants, alongwith the construction of game tanks. However, what happened in practice was different. Local people were not properly consulted before planning the construction. In fact, the citizen's committee of Brahmania, the village near which the corridor was constructed, was informed later in response to an application filed under the Right to Information Act that since it was done in public interest hence no public consultation/hearing was carried out (vide letter N.483, dtd. 25-6-2008 of the Sub-divisional Officer, OECF Sub-division No.III, Jiridamali[2]). Some Acacia plantation(Basu, 2011) alongwith few other species was raised along the artificial corridor, and nothing more. The elephants however rejected this and used their own preferred path. The project not only failed but created a menace for the local villages. Elephants are now frequently visiting the area, staying nearby, and eating the crops(Rath, 2012). In fact, the whole Rengali dam project in the twin districts of Dhenkanal and Angul have proved to be so destructive to elephant habitats that about 50% of the total human deaths caused by human-elephant conflicts in the state are reported from this region(Basu, 2011).

The corroded corridors are among the many examples that suggest how the ecological stake has been ignored practically in the name of development. The government has tried to honour this stake by terms such as 'compensatory afforestation', but such superficial attempts would obviously be not able to restore the lost ecological assets and dynamics. While it is high time that a sincere political dialogue and debate on this issue becomes a part of the election/political manifesto followed by adequate compliances, the concerned communities should also come out with a conservation approach & strategy that looks beyond their 'own' resources and considers a larger ecosystem to be taken care of.

Bikash Rath

The elephant corridor artificially built over the canal

Acacia plantations on both sides of the artificial corridor

[2] RCDC acknowledges the kind sharing of such documents by Sri Gadadhar Nayak, Brahmunia whose RTI application received the response of the concerned authority.

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This cement board pointing at the local elephant corridor also witnesses how a human corridor (road) runs at the cost of elephants' stake

Protected Areas: With or Without Human Presence?

A Review

Though the history of biodiversity conservation through protected areas goes back to the colonial period, the last three decades of 20th century created many heated debates around the world on intension, impact and methods of biodiversity conservation. One of the debates on biodiversity conservation is about protected areas with or without human presence. This review, primarily, choose 6-8 scholarly written articles on the topic and critically evaluates some major arguments and their underlying assumption, judgment and contention made for and against with respect to human presence in protected areas. The review takes political ecology discourse, and attempts to evaluate & distinguish each argument with widely available work.

"…No apology should be required for adhering to the accepted definition of a (national) park as a haven for nature where people, except for visitors, staff, and concessionaires, are excluded. To advocate anything else for developing countries, simply because they are poor (one hopes, a temporary condition) is to advocate a double standard, something we find deplorable"[1]*. (Terborgh. 2002, p. 6)*

Arguments like this for conservation can be reviewed critically for their assumptions to regard indigenous communities as a threat to nature by overlooking respectful social co-existence of nature with humans for over 8000 years. For instance, nature and wildlife is still an integral part of cultural and religious life of indigenous community in India and many parts of world. Many authors critique such narratives as a product of colonial mindset, ideology based on exclusion and suppression to create 'wilderness'- a place without human presence for their own objectives (Whande & Busher, 2007; Adams and Hutton, 2007). The establishment of protected areas (PAs) that exclude people reflects a conceptual division between nature and human society that has deep roots in the Western thought. The displacement of people in this way needs to be understood in the context of wider modern engagement with nature (Neumann 2004 in Adams & Hutton, 2007).

The traditional conservation narratives advocate for restructuring nature to have it serve human needs but don't give place to the needs of "people" living in it. In such arguments there is no place for local people's participation in decision making, rather reliance on federal agency managers and decision makers is preferred. Since traditional conservation believes in a linear process, top down command & control management, and single issue; it generates confrontation and polarization of masses. Further, terms like "human" and "people" for indigenous communities is mentioned as forces of destruction. What about visitors, staffs and concessionaires; are they not "people" or "human"? How staffs, tourists and concessioners surpass "people"? How it is ensured that tourist do not bring virus of disease that impact local flora and fauna….and what is the guarantee that staff and concessionaires do not get corrupted? The evidences are in plenty where the government- or private run parks have not done any miracle in order to save the bio-diversity. The conventional approach to conservation has failed to deliver better outcomes. Critical ecosystems are on the verge of extinction, many animal and plant species have disappeared, and those that remain risk disappearing for good. A prominent elder in Ngorongoro community (Tanzania) had this to say when interviewed on the current status of wildlife in the area:

"Where are all the rhinos we used to have around? They have disappeared. I can only say the day will come when all of us will be forced out and nothing of the remaining rhinos will be left, not even their bones for one to see".(William Olenasha, 2004)

According to various estimates, a major part of population is dependent on forests e.g. Lynch and Talbot (1995) sug-

[1] Extinctions are occurring at hundreds of times the rate recorded through normal times in fossils history... Humans have a moral obligation to share the earth with other forms of life. That moral obligation has been acknowledged by at least 80 per cent of the governments on earth in the form of legally constituted protected areas. But this is not enough; first, there needs to be more land dedicated to biodiversity-much more than is currently 5% devoted to the purpose. Second, land that is dedicated to bio-diversity conservation must be adequately protected from a whole host of erosive forces..." in "Making the Park Work" (Terborgh, 2002)

gest that 447 million people may depend on forests in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand alone, White and Martin 2002 estimate a number closer 500 million for the world, the World Resource Institute suggests that the figure may be about 350 million people of the world (WRI, 2002), and in contrast, the WWF-UK estimates the total number of the forest-dependent people to be close to 1.2 billion (WWF, 2002: 2, in Arun Agrawal 2007). The arguments for PAs "without human presence" do not give insights, if this population is driven out of the forest; where is it going to be settled for their livelihoods? In villages…..but, do people find enough water for irrigation, same soil qualities as they had before, and some extra benefit that these communities use to get from Non Timber Forest Produce ? OR in cities...but, how cities will absorb such number ? Is it possible to provide livelihood options to this number of people in cities ? How cities (already overpopulated) are going to maintain their ecosystems ? What about the life style and knowledge of indigenous communities ? Is it going to be feasible in urban set up ? Unlike colonial masters, as Hingston points out,

"What the sportsman wants is a good trophy, almost invariably a male trophy, and the getting of that usually satisfies him….The position is not the same with the native hunter. He cares nothing about species or trophies or sex, not does he hunt for the fun of the thing" (Hingston, 1931, p.404. in Adams, et al. 2003)

For the native, it is a matter of specific needs for their survival thus in-turn protecting nature becomes an obligation for their life and livelihoods. This interdependency between nature and human is ignored by conservationists who advocate PAs as heaven for nature without human presence. A distinguished Maasai elder in Ngorongoro (Africa) had this to say when interviewed on the subject:

"We conserve nature because we live in it, because it is our life, it is the life of our cattle. The conservationists do it because it gives them employment, because they get money from the white men [tourists]. For them, if the white man does not bring money, it is the end of the story. For us, even if the white man does not bring money we will still preserve the environment. We did it before the white men came. We do because it is our lives; it is the life of our ancestors and our unborn children".(William Olenasha, 2004)

"Nature conservation must be pursued… according to scientifically validated principles..." (Terborgh, 2002). According to Hutton and Adams, the work of contemporary scientific conservation planners, identifying and lobbying for the preservation of hotspots, or the work of their colonial forbears, certain ideas of nature are formulated, purified and harnessed to social action in ways that reveal profound differences in the power of different actors. Ideas of nature are laid out on the ground in PAs, and the needs, rights and interests of people are bent to fit the resulting conservation landscape. All this takes place against the backdrop of a wider social assault on nature through processes of industrialization, urbanization, pollution, and the conversion of terrestrial and marine ecosystems to industrial purposes (Adams & Hutton, 2007). Such a philosophy basically prefers to evict and make life miserable for present generations of certain communities - the fathers and mothers of the future generations in whose name conservation takes place. The million-dollar question is: from which communities will future generations come when present ones are destroyed in the interest of conservation? As far as to claim that scientific knowledge is the ultimate way, to look at the thing, needs to be rechecked with following empirical illustrations:

Jushpur, a small tribal populated town of Chhattisgarh province in India; people survive here on subsistence farming. I was on my visit to see progress of a community development program initiated by a local group. While I was travelling to a local village with a young man, suddenly he expressed that it is going to rain today. I exclaimed and thought that this guy must be crazy as there was no sign of cloud in the sky and sun was shining bright. I thought the young man must be joking and I forgot the incident. I could not believe, that evening it rained really heavily and it was very difficult for us to walk for 3 km due to muddy and flooded roads. I was shocked and asked with curiosity to the boy as how could he predict it. The boy smiled and said, you did not notice that I was half naked and I could feel the wind and it's moister on my body, which indicated that it is going to rain. "My father taught me this", the boy said. Yes, indeed being a formal science (Biology) student it was difficult for me to understand this knowledge of 'ordinary' people but it was a reality.

I forgot the above mentioned incident and this time I was travelling from Agra to New Delhi by bus for my official work. Before leaving home I was watching NDTV News (one of the most respected English TV news chanels in India) and in the last slot of news they presented weather report that according to

meteorological department it was going to be a sunny and warm day with no indication to rain shower anywhere close to Delhi and Agra. I cannot forget the day because on half of the way it was raining like hell and when I reach Delhi it was difficult to find any auto rickshaw due to heavy water logging on the roads. This time, it was hard to believe that even scientific calculations can be so wrong.

These two personal empirical illustrations are basically to put things into perspective that "the principle of incompleteness of all kinds of knowledge is the condition of the possibility of epistemological dialogue (Santos, 2006:20 in Vazquez, 2008). It creates a space for further exploration into struggle one Vs other. There are successful examples for the use of indigenous knowledge of native people that brought effective communal management of resources. Zanjera system in Philippines is an example of community irrigation operating, at least, since 1630. It has rules, officials, monitoring and maintenance. It is based on shared knowledge on irrigation that provides long standing success even though it involves hundreds of individual farmers who have to contribute material and labour (Ostrom, 1990 in Pellegrini 2009). Makuleke community from South Africa is another example of successful community based management of forest conservation. Therefore, incorporation of different 'ways of knowing' and due respect to traditional indigenous knowledge is required in biodiversity conservation.

Conclusion

The conservation without people is an idea that has its root from the colonial past, which was based on exclusion of local people and believed in concepts such as "Democracy is problematic" (Kaplan, 1994) and "park as a haven for nature" (Terborgh, 2002). The narratives based on the principles of rationality and command & control management create imbalance in power and lead to conflict between haves and haves not. There are not many substantial examples where conservation in this fashion has done any miracle. Therefore, such model is required to re-evaluate its course in light of Zanjera system and Makuleke community and people's right to participate and right to livelihood must be respected in biodiversity conservation. CBNRM might not be perfect, but at least it's better than old-fashioned fortress conservation (Dowie, 2006).

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Protection at its best : A case study from Deogarh, Odisha

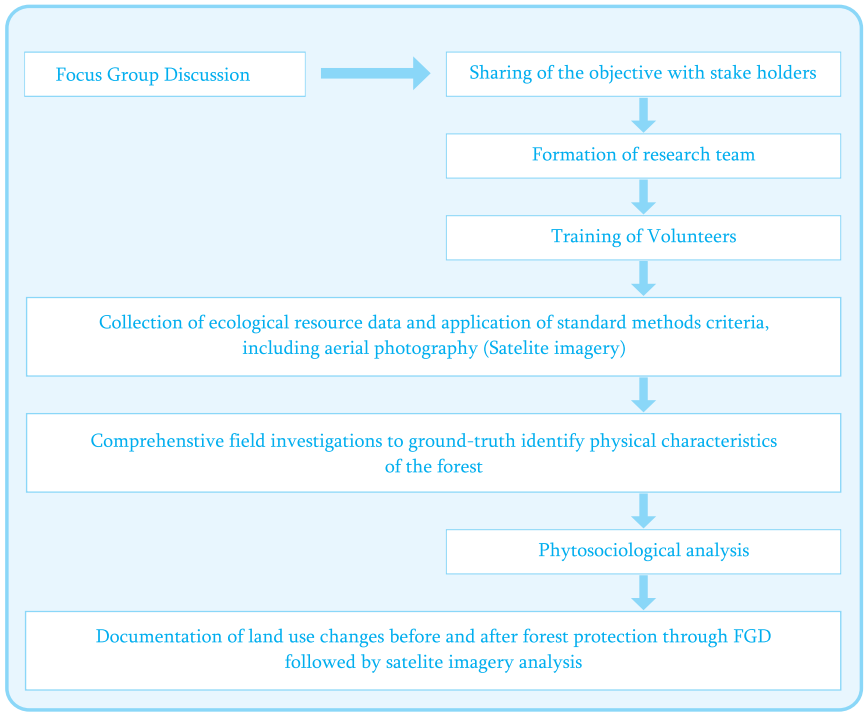
Odisha has seen large-scale initiatives by local communities to protect and manage state forest lands (Kant et al., 1991; Singh and Singh, 1993) known as community forest management (CFM) systems. Almost ten thousand communities are protecting *de jure* state owned forests in the state, some from as early as 1940's - 1950's, though most are recent in origin (Singh and Nayak, 2003). In many cases the forest protection started in late 1970's and early 1980's (Singh, 2002). This came as a spontaneous response to forest degradation (Singh, 2001) and acute scarcity of forest products (Singh and Nayak, 2003). These efforts made by the community for forest protection has not been properly recognized and documented, particularly at the governmental level. The Forest Right Act, 2006 for the first time is helping in recognizing this effort with a legal mandate. With the venture of the Act many communities have applied for their individual as well as community rights. Vasundhara, as a facilitator to this process tried to undertake ecological assessment of these CFM areas whose results later on could also be useful to the community to indicate their role in forest protection.

Revenue forest of Budhabahal

This study was conducted in Deogarh district of Odisha. Four villages with self-initiated forest protection groups were selected for the study. The name of the sample villages are as follows: Budhabahal and Badasiradehi (joint protection), Rangamatia and Khajuribahal. These sample villages were selected randomly with the help of local organizations and institutions.

Ecological assessment of the CFM forests

The methodology used for the study is given in Box 1. For ecological assessment of the forest we adopted the transect method, alongwith a GIS analysis of the satellite imageries sourced from Goggle Earth. The size of transect was 100 m length and 10 m width with 5 belt transects at each site. The plots were chosen as per forest types and dependency level, like, Sal forest (dry deciduous), riparian forest and mixed Sal forest (moist deciduous forests). Accordingly, the species count for herbs, shrubs and trees were carried out. Measurement of gbh(girth at breast height) was done for each tree above 10 cm diameter to know the density and standing biomass including species diversity, distribution, basal area, total volume and important value



Box 1 : Methodology followed in the study

index. In the transect we have also counted the number of birds sighted, their call, presence of foot marks of wild animals, their scat/droppings etc., and also the number of butterflies spotted. We have documented the flora and fauna of the area with the help of local communities.

Status of forest before the initiation of protection

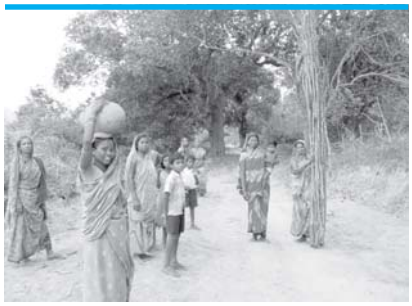
Forests in all the four villages had degraded due to expansion of agricultural lands and dependency of people on forests. Forests were in complete chaos due to departmental tree felling, illegal tree felling and timber smuggling by the mafias. Due to complete habitat destruction even the numbers of faunal diversity and its population plummeted. The forest destruction reflected in the lives of people as they were totally dependent on the forests for their daily needs like fuel wood, NTFP's and meat.

Illegal felling of trees

Siali leaves collected from the forest

Village level institutions for forest protection

All the villages protect a part of Badautela Reserve forest. They all started protection since 1992 except Rangamatia which started the protection from 2001. Till some years back Budhabahal, Khajuribahal and Badasiradehi had a joint protection group. Now Budhabahal and Badasiradehi are protecting the forest jointly and Khajuribahal is protecting its part of the forest independently. In 1970's and 1980's there were no forest protection committees. Forest protection committees were formed five years back in these villages. Now a general body and executive committee are constituted which look after the forest protection rules and regulations. All the members of every household are members of the general body. There is variation in the composition of the executive committee from village to village. The frequency with which the general body meeting is held also varies from village to village. All the issues related to forest protection are discussed in the general body meeting. The executive committee meeting is held fortnightly. Forest is protected through "Thengapalli" (protection of forest through patrolling on a rotation basis). Both men and women are involved in the protection activity of the village.



Collection of firewood from forest

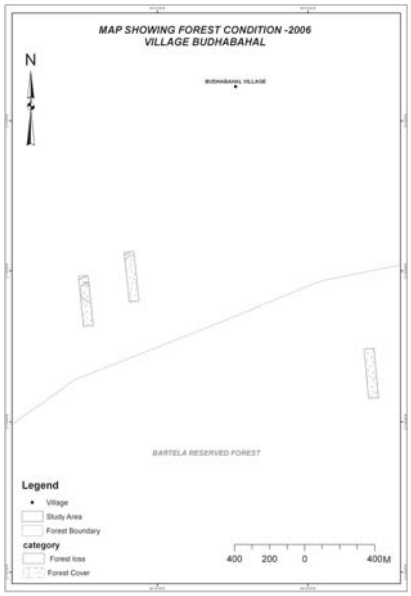
Study on land use changes before and after protection

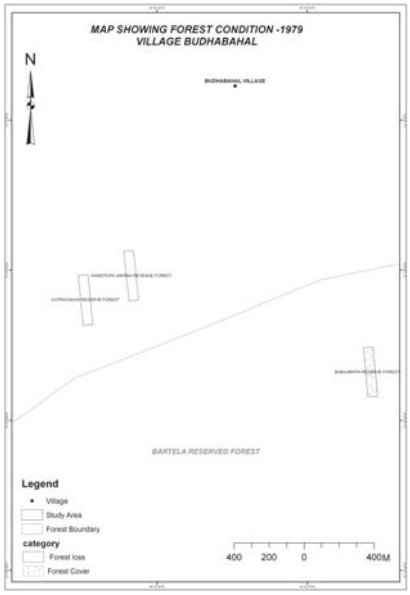
a) Budhabahal and Badasiradehi

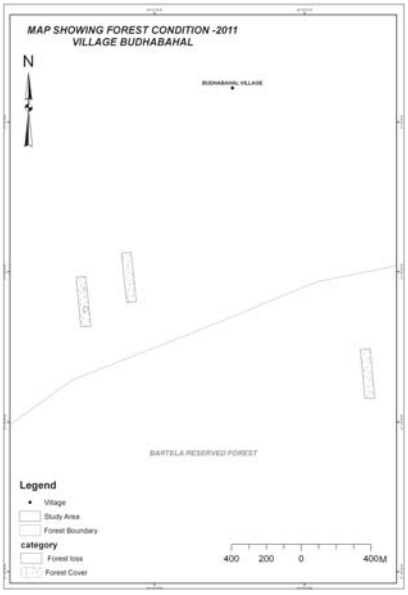
Out of the three surveyed plots, two were in reserve forests and one was in

Ethnography of the sample villages

Village name	Total households	Total population	Name of Community			
			GEN	SC	ST	OBC
Khajuribahal	87	412	-	Dhivaro Dhuva	Gondo Kandho, Munda Kulho, Kisano	- -
Budhabahal	55	212	-	Pano Duba	Gondo Chasa	Gound
Badasiradehi	11	47	Banya Pyka Thuriya	- -	- -	- -
Rangamatia	85	333	-	-	Gondo, Kolho Bhuiya	Gound Chasa







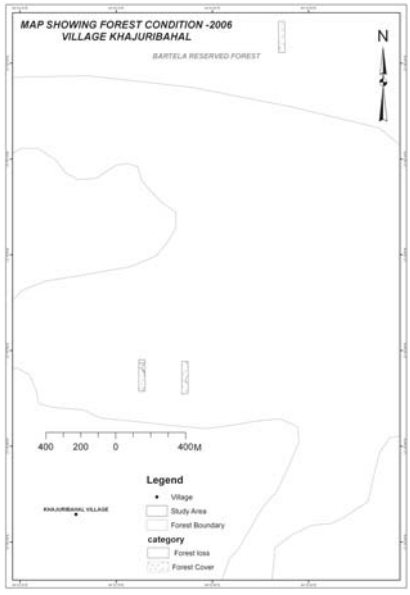
revenue forest. In 1979, only Babajimath reserve forest had forest patch. But the other two plots had no forest cover. In 2006, the forest cover in Babajimath reserve forest remained unchanged, but the other two plots had partially regenerated. In 2011, no change in forest cover was observed in Babajimath reserve forest. Handitupa Jharna Revenue forest had regenerated fully and the forest condition of Kutrachua Reserve forest had improved slightly from its condition in 2006.

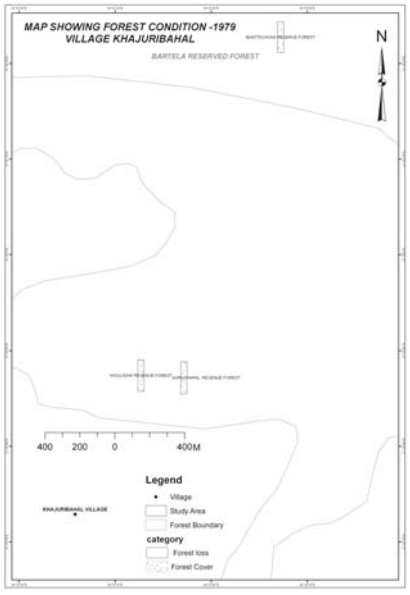
b) Khajuribahal

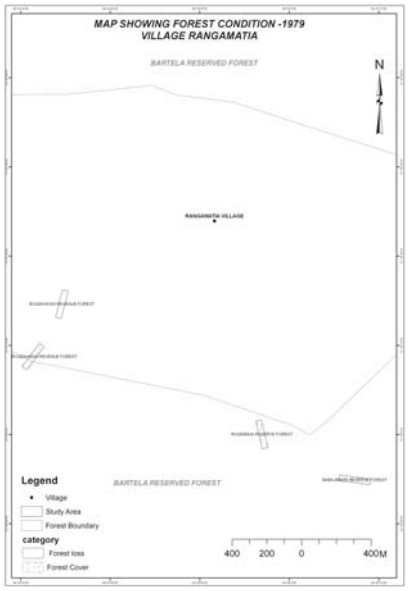
Out of the three surveyed plots, two plots were in revenue forest and one in reserve forest. In 1979, all the three plots had forest cover. In 2006, only Bhattachua reserve forest had no change in its forest cover. The other two plots had lost its forest cover partially. In 2011, the earlier deforested plots showed total regeneration. Bhattachua reserve forest showed decrease in forest cover due to landslide in that area.

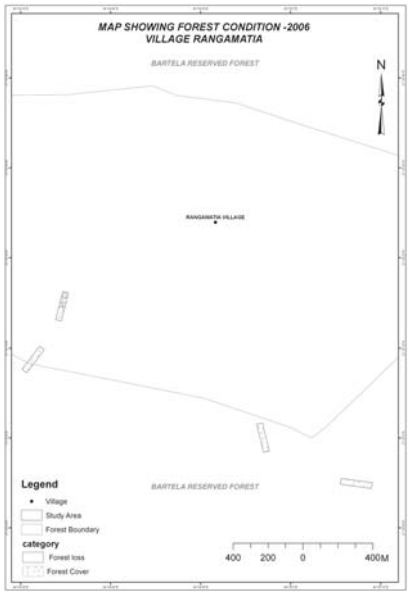
c) Rangamatia:

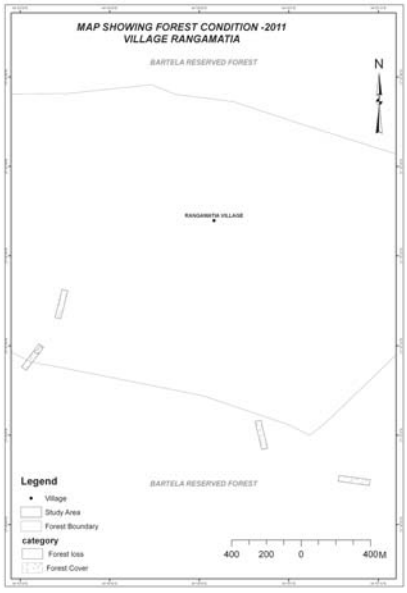
Out of the four surveyed plots, two plots were in revenue forest and two in reserve forest. In 1979, all the four plots showed forest cover. In 2005, only one plot of Rugdikhoni revenue forest showed loss in forest cover. The remaining three plots remained unchanged. In 2011, one plot of Rugdikhoni revenue forest showed forest regeneration and the other plot showed loss in its forest cover. In the remaining two reserve forests the forest cover remained unchanged.











Observations

After critical analysis of the satellite data it was found that a lot of positive changes had occurred in terms of forest cover. All the forests under protection had revived in forest cover in all the sample villages due to active forest protection and conservation of the local communities of the village.

to be high in Budhabahal and Badasiradehi (joint protection) whereas the least basal area was recorded in Khajuribahal. Highest total volume of trees (biomass) was recorded in Budhabahal and Badasiradehi. The forest patch at Budhabahal and Badasiradehi , and Rangamatia are remnant of an old

around 31% - the lowest amongst the forest patches studied, which implies that the species composition is more evenly shared by more species in this forest than in any other forest patch under study. However, the current forest stand in Budhabahal and Badasiradehi contains a large number of snags (ca. 12% of stands); most of

Ecological parameters studied in the sampling villages

Parameters	Budhabahal and Badasiradehi	Khajuribahal	Rangamatia
Species richness (S)	24.66666667	23.66666667	25.25
Density (D)	3043.333333	3356.666667	2500
Shannon wiener index(H')	2.142034583	2.038404328	2.187616963
Hill's diversity Index (N1)	8.83898527	8.19396355	8.974142038
Top height in m	30	25	37.5
Crop height in m	10.03468327	9.954520963	9.615413825
Total volume in cub. M	613.5617578	469.4115938	475.8570693
Canopy cover in %	66.8	68	77
Basal area (BA) in m/Ha	62.26313694	43.40522824	49.78763933

We recorded highest species richness, canopy cover and tall trees in the forests protected by Rangamatia followed by highest species diversity where as highest stem density was recorded at Khajuribahal. The basal area was found

mixed forest stand, chiefly growing from old and new coppice. The patch, with wide species diversity and thick stems indicates the age of the stand. Moreover, the relative density of the dominant species *Shorea robusta* is

these snags are cut above 0.5 m, prohibiting the scope of coppicious regeneration of trees. This implies that the recruitment of trees is considerably thwarted, while the harvest and removal of trees continues. The unre-

Impact of conservation and management on forests

The existing status/observations on indicators of forest management, as reflected in the following table suggest the extent to which the positive impact of forest conservation and management has been experienced in the study areas:

Village Name	Management							
	Grazing		Fire		Lopping		Logging	
	Reserve forests	Revenue forests	Reserve forests	Revenue forests	Reserve forests	Revenue forests	Reserve forests	Revenue forests
Khajuribahal	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
Budhabahal & Badasiradehi	++	++	++	+++	++	++	++	++
Rangamatia	+	++	+	+	+	+	+	+

Note: +++: High, ++: Medium, +: Low

straint harvest from the patch has resulted in the dispersion of the remnant stems that approaches regular distribution.

Conclusion

There is a positive effect of protection of forests on the forest cover. In all the villages the forest cover seems to have increased. Even streams have come up in various locations. Though there seems to be some management issues for which the community requires technical advice, the study findings do support a confident conclusion that the communities have been able to protect the forest in a good way.

Acknowledgement

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Map credits(based on Google Earth) : Vasundhara

Communities versus Government: Women reject eco-tourism project for livelihood

Introduction

Odisha has the unique distinction of having a large number of local self-initiated forest protection committees (Siripurapu, 2012). These community initiatives can be perceived as a response to the rapid degradation of forests and consequent threats to livelihoods, subsistence and environment (Siripurapu, 2010). Interestingly the regions, which witnessed rapid degradation of forest, marked a strong presence of Community Forest Conservation Groups (Siripurapu, 2010). Budhikhamari Community Forest Protection Committee (BCFPC) in Mayurbhanj district is one such example. Budhikhamari Community Forest Protection Committee is a confederation of 122 villages protecting and managing a large patch of forest.

History of protection

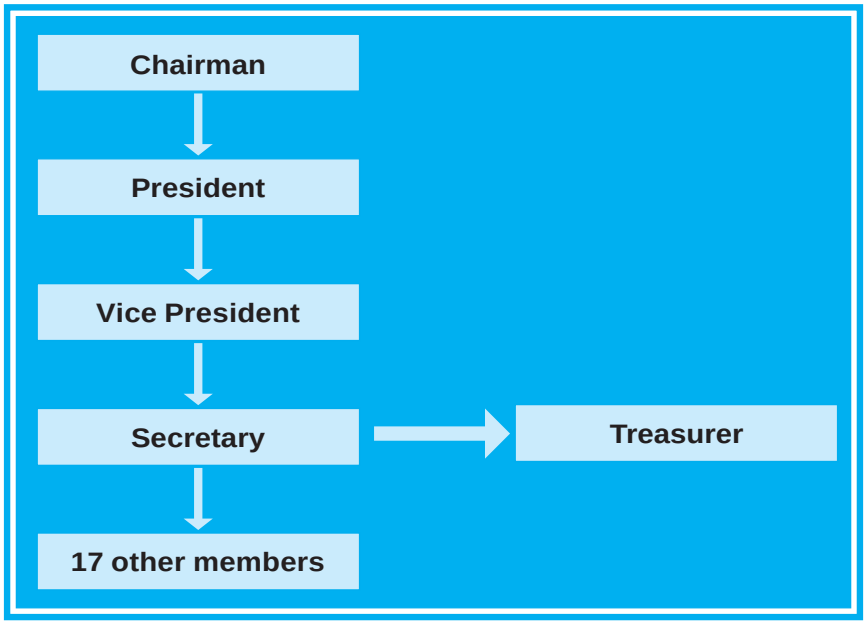
From 1952 to 1972 the reserve forests of Budhikhamari were managed under the coppice circle as per the Forest Department's working plan (OJM, 2012). Felling by the Forest Department along with the pressure from the adjoining villages led the forest into complete degradation. After reaching this alarming situation, the villagers in support of Gorachand Mohanta, a local leader started protecting the forest first in 1983. In 1988, the Budhikhamari Community Forest Protection Committee was formed with the membership of 20 Village Forest Protection Committees (VFPC) which later in 1995 turned to a total of 95 villages (OJM, 2012). Presently there are 122 Village Forest Protection Committees in BCFPC from 6 blocks of the district (OJM, 2012).

Institutional arrangement for forest protection

The executive committee of BCFPC has 22 members (see box 1). Each VFPC has a president and a secretary. These positions are elected by villagers. The BCFPC has chalked out some rules for forest protection, which if disobeyed, the person is likely to be fined or socially boycotted in the village. The role of BCFPC is to resolve issues of VFPC's. The VFPC's monitor their respective thengapalli systems and resolve village and forest level issues.

Role of women in forest protection

The role of women in forest protection is usually ignored. Women spend most of their time in forests. It is they who keep a close watch on forests and detect any minor change in them. While the men take on protection responsibilities as duties and separate tasks, the women integrate these with their daily chores (Vasundhara, 1999). Though women play a major role in protection, they don't form a part of the traditional village governance system.



Box 1: The structure of Executive Committee of BCFPC

In 1989, the men watchers faced problems stopping women head loaders. So, to overcome such scenario it was decided to include women in the patrolling squad. Before 1992, the patrolling squad had unpaid volunteers but later it was paid with the help of funds received from an organization. This squad consists of 21 members out of which 3 are women. Women were not included in the Executive Committee till 1997-1998 (OJM, 2012). When they were accepted in the Executive Committee, they were looked upon as paid watchers having an employee-employer relationship with other committee members instead of equals (Sarin et al, 2003).

A majority of the NTFP gatherers are women (Singh, 2001). NTFP like sal leaves and seed, kendu leaf, mahua seeds, fuel wood and wild fruits are collected by women. They also visit the sacred groves called jahira to offer prayers for the well being of the forest and the village (OJM, 2012).

Eco-tourism project in Budhikhamari

The Forest Department proposed for an eco-tourism project called Sriram Vatika in Manchabandha Reserve forest - I of the Pithabata Range of Baripada Forest Division covering an area of about 118 hectares. This area has been protected by four villages namely Swarupvilla, Mahulia, Goudadiha and Bagdiha since 1985 (OJM, 2012). The forest is the source of fuel, fodder, food (mushrooms, leafy vegetables, wild edible fruits, tubers) and income (Sal leaf plates). Approximately 600 families of the four villages depend on this forest for livelihood. Nearly 200 families are critically dependent directly or indirectly on the forests for their daily existence. All the four villages to be directly affected by the project have filed their Community Forest Rights (CFR) claims over the forest area where the eco-tourism project had been planned. All the components of the eco-tourism project like enlarging existing ponds, fencing off the whole forest with only one entry gate, building jogging track, creating sitting and dining places, building staff quarters, watch towers and overhead tank for water supply, converting parts of the forest into lawns, dustbins, and Panchakarma centre including a deer park, etc. will affect the existing community forest rights of the villagers which they have claimed under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.

Villagers protest against the eco-tourism project

The Forest Department on 26th January, 2012 started constructing a road by felling approximately 1000 to 1500 Sal trees, when the villagers were busy with Panchayat elections. A pond was renovated using heavy JCB machines and tractors. They also started fencing the entire forest without consulting the gram sabha of the four affected villages thereby violating the law. After the elections were

Villagers collect sal leaves for making Sal leaf plates

ECO-TOURISM SITE MAP OF MANCHABANDA RF-II OF BARIPADA FOREST DIVISION

The eco-tourism plan prepared by the Forest Department
(Source: OJM, 2012)

Sal forests of Budhikhamari area

Destruction of forest due to eco-tourism project

over, on 17th February 2012, all the four affected villages came together for a discussion which was facilitated by Bishnu Purthy and Lalit Mohan Mahanta. The BCFPC, VPFC's and village leaders played a major role in bringing the villagers (men and women) of all the four villages on a common platform and discuss the issue. During these regular discussions they became aware that this eco-tourism project was not only affecting their livelihood but also violating the Forest Right Act. Since then, they organized strong protests against the project construction work and started sending memorandums to the District Collector and other concerned authorities. This all lead to success in stopping the project construction in their forest area.

Eco-tourism project versus FRA

The four villages to be affected by the eco-tourism project namely Bagdiha, Goudadiha, Mahulia and Swarupvilla have filed their FRA claims. The villagers have claimed for the following rights in the area where the eco-tourism project is proposed:

Fencing of the forest by the Forest Department

- Right to protect, conserve and manage the forest.
- Right of ownership, collection and sale of minor forest produce
- Right to collection of dead plants parts
- Right to fishing in the pond
- Right to timber for making household implements, agricultural implements and for cremation with gram sabha approval.

Chronology of protest against the Eco-tourism project

Date	Events
18/2/2012	All four villages had a common meeting. A memorandum was submitted to the District collector objecting the felling of trees for road construction and starting eco-tourism project without the consent of the gram sabha.
22/2/2012	Gram sabhas 'managed by forest department were held in all four villages which passed resolution approving the eco-tourism project.
24/2/2012	Forest department restarted the construction work.
25/2/2012 to 1/3/2012	Two youths Sukra singh and Muna Mahanta, played a key role in mobilizing villagers and held village level meetings on provisions of FRA
1/3/2012	Mohulia village passed a resolution in gram sabha to stop the project. Notice served to SDLC, DLC and SLMC.

3/3/2012	Goudadiha village passed a resolution in gram sabha to stop the project. Notice served to SDLC, DLC and SLMC.
6/3/2012	Bagdiha village passed a resolution in gram sabha to stop the project. Notice served to SDLC, DLC and SLMC.
7/3/2012	500 villagers (dominated by women) demonstrate protest rally in district headquater and submit memorandum to the District Collector to scrap the eco-tourism project
15/3/2012	Mass meeting mear the forest to stop the project
22/3/2012	Police arrested Lalit Mohanta, grandson of Gorachand Mohanta, who was involved in leading the protest
23/3/2012	Another mass meeting was held to scrap the project. Leaders from CSD,Odisha Jungle Mancha and District Forestry Federation, Nayagarh and Balasore also participated to express their solidarity.
25/3/2012	Women and youth stopped fencing work and gheraoed 18 forest department staff for 4 hours. Concerned Tahasildar came with police force and rescued the forest department staff and assured that the project would be stopped. A meeting was arranged with the District collector
26/3/2012	Collector assured them that the project would be stopped. On the same day, the villagers met the DFO who told them that the FD would implement the project with only one village (Swarupvilla).

Source: OJM, 2012

So, this eco-tourism project is a clear violation of FRA. This project will also deprive the people of their rights and livelihood source.

The SDLC has now issued an order to the Forest Department stating that the eco-tourism work would be halted till the rights have been settled.

Role of women in protest against eco-tourism

The women of village Gaudadiha and Bagdiha were the first ones to notice the destruction of forests in the name of eco-tourism project and discussed their concerns with the other villagers. As the women are interacting more with the forest as compared to men, they felt the threat of marginalization due to the eco-tourism project. In the whole process of protest the women had participated actively. They took the lead in articulating their concerns to the District Collector about the direct threat the project posed to the villagers' lives and livelihood, to the local environment, to their safety and tranquility due to people from the town starting to come to their forest and the restrictions on women's access to the forests (OJM, 2012). Women were more active and led the protest against the eco-tourism project after the arrest of Lalit Mohan Mohanta. On 25th March, 2012, more than 300 women along with youth gheraoed 18 forest department staff for four hours at the eco-tourism project construction site. This act created pressure on the government. The concerned tahsildar came with police force and rescued the forest department staff and assured that the project would be stopped. A meeting was arranged with the District Collector on the next day. The District collector assured that the project would be stopped. In this meeting the women demanded that their village community forest rights should be recognized. They also demanded compensation for the large number of trees felled by the forest department for road construction and questioned whether such a project in a reserve was legal under the Forest Conservation Act (OJM, 2012). After the major combat between the villagers and the forest department, the project has been stalled.

Conclusion

Women play a very important role in development. If they are made aware of the rules, regulations and their rights they can stand off in the most difficult situations. Here, it is their love towards the forest and their dependency on forest that made them stand in the struggle against the forest department. They foresaw the problem which eco-tourism could have on their livelihood. So they united and took appropriate steps to avert them. It is remarkable to see

how the women protected and conserved the forest where even men failed in protecting the forest against mafias and illegal felling. It is also true that it was only due to the tireless efforts and protests by the women that the eco-tourism project stands halted in the area. But it is very unfortunate enough that the women still face the brunt of male dominance and their effort in conservation is ignored. They still have no legal recognition of their conservation and protection efforts. The best part why the women are successful in their role as protectionists and conservationist is because they don't feel it's a task but feel that it is part of their daily routine. This quality of women must be saluted and must be given due and much needed recognition.

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The Cycad trade

Plants of Cycas genus are known for their multiple utilities. The common use is as an ornamental plant, and the leaves are used with flowers to decorate the groom's car for marriage apart from being eaten as vegetable when tender(CSIR: NISCIR, 2010) . Some species yield edible 'fruits'(actually seeds) and the trunk of some varieties are cut and processed to yield a starch that can produce a sago substitute though inferior in quality (Wikipedia,2013).

Odisha was known to have only one wild species of the cycads, i.e. *Cycas circinalis* L. variety *orixensis*. The planted varieties include *C. revoluta* and *C. rumphii*(Saxena & Brahmam, 1996). However, there is now an argument that *C. circinalis* was actually endemic to the Western Ghats and that its wild counterpart in Eastern Ghats(Odisha and Andhra Pradesh) is a slightly different species, *Cycas sphaerica*(Dash, 2011).

Some two years ago the media reported of a rather unconventional trading of the wild species(locally known as araguna or adunga) in the district of Nayagarh. Local people were not used to see commercial cutting of this plant for its trunk, so they were surprised as to what might be the reason behind it. Ecologist Prasad Dash reported, " Now a days the plant is under threat of extinction as the frond is been smuggled illegally by the local people instrumented by the traders. It is reported that the trunk is sold per Rs.1000/-. Hence the tree is completely up rooted in most parts of Nayagarh district of Orissa which support maximum population of this plant"(Dash, 2011).

However, the communities did not do much. The veteran barefoot botanist and plant lover of the area, Sri Antaryami Sahoo, popularly known as 'Gachha Sir' was however shocked by this indiscriminate cutting and tried to approach various stakeholders for necessary intervention. When he approached RCDC, we followed up the matter with a fax to the concerned Divisional Forest Officer urging for immediate action, but without any response. As such, the threat to the plant continues.

The adunga plant
(drawing by Manas Biswal based on Dash, 2011)

The seed-powder is made into a tasty cake(Dash, 2011) as per local tradition, but without sufficient awareness that these seeds(and some other parts) have some neurotoxic elements that are harmful to human body(CSIR: NISCIR, 2010) if the consumption is regular(however, the indigenous practice of treating the seeds with water before consuming helps to remove these toxins to some extent). But in a district like Nayagarh where community forest protection has been well established in several areas and the villagers have protected forests from the smugglers, the indiscriminate cutting of this poor Cycad probably suggests that the community interest to render protection doesn't normally arise unless the resource is supposed to be directly valuable to them. In fact, Gachha Sir also expresses his anguish and frustration over the same (personal communication, 15-3-13).

Bikash Rath

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Impact of MGNREGS on NTFP-based livelihood

There has been some suppositions that with the gradual success(whatsoever) of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS which was initially launched under the name NREGS) and other such welfare schemes of the government like the supply of highly subsidized rice(Rs.2/kg now revised as Re.1/kg) provided alternatives in the livelihood that helped reduce the vulnerability of the disadvantageous sections which in turn reduced their interest as well as involvement in the collection of non-timber/minor forest produce. With educational development the young generation of these communities did not seem to find some of the traditional occupations such as the MFP collection essential or preferable. Such inferences were drawn mostly on the basis of field-level interactions with the concerned communities. However, formal studies on this aspect have hardly been done. As such, RCDC decided to take up a formal study on the impact of MGNREGS on NTFP-based livelihood. Because of certain limitations this study was decided to be done on a pilot basis at few sites of the state with a community focus, i.e. what has been the impact vis-a-vis the differential community status and approaches. The reason: different communities have been known to have responded differently to the same opportunity because of their distinguished traditional approaches and also because of their differential capacity. The Juangs are not the same as their co-dweller Bhuyans in asserting their rights as anthropologically they have been a weaker race than the latter. If the universal approach of MGNREGS did not take care to consider such differences so as to adopt an adequate strategy for an effective achievement, then that is a different matter; but our pilot study focused on the particularly vulnerable tribal groups and some well-organized and otherwise strong tribal communities so as to see if there has been any differential impact.

The study began with the Mayurbhanj district in the north of the state. The first community to be interacted with was the Lodha, a PVTG infamous for their tradition of burglary. The government has been running a microproject for the socioeconomic development of this community. Obviously a more lucrative and viable alternative than burglary is supposed to be effective in helping the Lodhas abandon their age-old profession. Although some Lodhas have already adopted other options such as collection of NTFP, MGNREGS could mean a lot for this community in further strengthening their interest in dignified occupation.

The Lodha village Nedam that was visited for this purpose has agriculture as its chief occupation, but agricultural land being meagre the people have to depend on NTFP collection. Lodha men engage themselves primarily in firewood business whereas the women prefer NTFP. The menfolk believe in a principle 'earn and spend', i.e. whatever they would earn in a day is spent on the same day. This makes their livelihood further vulnerable alongwith the practice of alcoholism.

The Lodhas of Nedam with a development contrast in the background.

Although there is not much awareness about MGNREGS in the village, people say that so far they have seen NREGS work being implemented only twice. However, delayed payment discouraged them in the scheme. Their job cards and bank passbooks are with the contractor. Further, they found that forest collection was more profitable than NREGS. In some families some members worked under the scheme while others went for forest collection. In brief it was observed that they were least bothered about NREGS, and were more concerned for their forest-based livelihood particularly because the forest resources are dwindling. The sal leaf plate making has been started in the village since last 6-7 years, and this has proved to be quite promising. NREGS could not prove itself that way.

Another PVTG the Mankdias were studied in the Damasahi Colony, Kaptipada block. The Mankdias are basically a nomadic tribe whose chief occupation is collection and processing of siali fibre. The Forest Department doesn't allow siali fibre collection. Further, the government has tried to help them adopt a permanent settlement here in this colony. But this made them further vulnerable. While their forest-based life and livelihood was discouraged, no viable alternative was given to them. Either they have to collect the siali fibre in the 'illegal'(?) way

A traditional Mankdia way of capturing monkey. The skill is still hired in cases of monkey menace though occasionally.

In an out-of-forest life the Mankdia trap is of obscure use now.

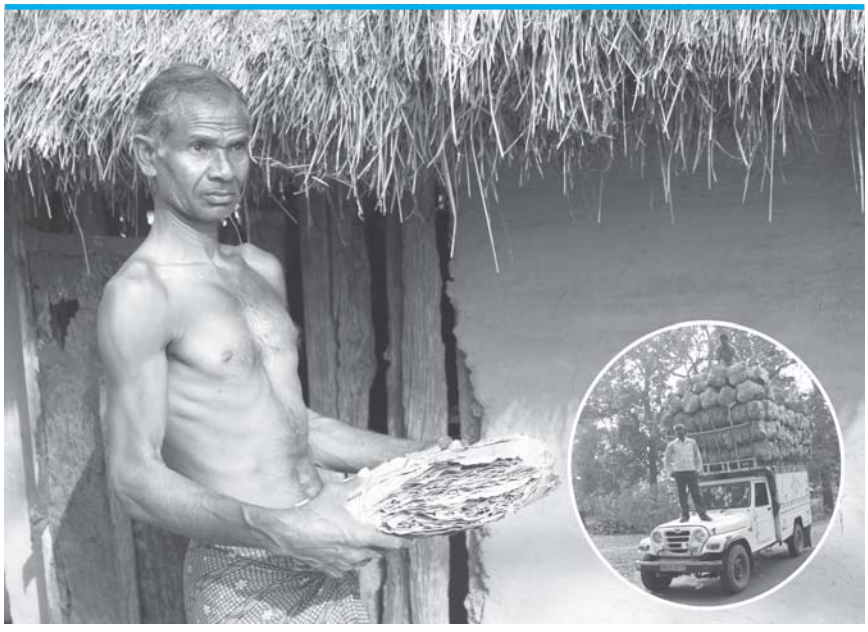
or have to work as labourers. Unfortunately, plastic ropes have proved to be a big threat for their siali ropes whereas wage labour is not always available. Under such circumstances MGNREGS could have proved to be a saviour for them, but it did not reach them properly. The subsidized rice they get with their Annapurna Card is now their chief source of living. It must be understood here that this community had special skills in siali fibre collection and processing as well as in capturing monkeys. It has not preferred other forest-based occupations including collection of siali leaf. Such a community requires a special attention and strategy if their socio-economic development is to be sincerely pursued. This has hardly been done despite another micro-project the Khadia-Mankdia Development Agency being implemented in the district.

This board mentions construction of the cement concrete road to the Mankdia colony funded chiefly under the PTG development programme and partly under NREGS.

Still another highly vulnerable tribal group, the Hill Khadias, who were interacted with in the Kundabai Khadia Colony(resettlement) of Udala block, clarified that although MGNREGS did seem to be important for them as a livelihood option, but since this opportunity comes only 'occasionally' and that too with a delayed payment, hence MFP collection still remains their preferable option after agriculture as it provides them a regular income.

In contrast to these thee PVTGs the Santals are a well-organized and socio-culturally strong tribal community. In Olsigoth village NTFP collection is second to the chief occupation of this community, agriculture. There is no other viable option for them. The village women have formed a self-help group, and are making and selling sal leaf plates that gives them a promising income. MGNREGS doesn't appear to be promising for the people because of a number of reasons. The work that is meant for them is shared with the machine(JCB) which works at night and the villagers are deprived of some additional days' income. The job card is with the contractor, and the local Bank is not comfortable with opening accounts for them showing reason of insufficient staff. Delayed payment further discourages them. Hence, they do not find this scheme reliable enough.

The Ho community of Keshpada Juaria Sahi, Kaptipada block expressed a little different attitude. They said, NREGS work can't wait whereas the sal leaf collection can wait. Hence, they would prefer to avail the opportunity under MGNREGS though that would not affect their regular dependency on MFP collection particularly because there is hardly any other viable alternative to the latter. However, they see the scope in MFP-based livelihood being reduced day by day because of a number of natural and social reasons. In fact, there have been cases of distress migration from this village because the available livelihood options are not so viable. Hence, they look for some more viable options, particularly irrigation-based agriculture.



A Ho man with sal leaf plates. Inset : commercial transportation of leaf plates.

The next phase of the study was conducted in the Lahunipada block of Sundargarh district. In the Bijaghat village the PVTG Paudi Bhuyans have the Mundas as their co-villagers. The Mundas prefer agriculture followed by seasonal migration as they do not find NREGS much reliable practically. Kendu leaf and mahua collection from the common property resources is still a part of the villagers' occupation, but many of the mahua trees have been uprooted in a storm two years ago hampering mahua collection. MGNREGS work hardly comes to the village, and there is no other viable traditional occupation than MFP collection next to agriculture. Such limitations affect the Paudis most as they are less smart than the Mundas in their entrepreneurship and external communications.

The third phase was covered in an area towards extreme west, in the Sunabeda plateau of Nuapada district. Cherechuan and Barkot villages, which have the PVTG Choktia-Bhunjias, fall inside the Sunabeda sanctuary area. Agriculture and MFP collection have been their traditional occupation, but while there is a drought-like situation since last two years the sanctuary restrictions alongwith the monkey menace have reduced the scope in NTFP harvesting and business. Under such circumstances MGNREGS could have proved to be a boon for them, but the experience has been otherwise. NREGS comes but occasionally to them. Corruption and delayed payment makes the situation further critical. While they understand that NREGS work can be more comfortable for them than kendu leaf collection, the opportunity is hardly available. The naxalite operations have made the scenario further drastic. Regular/normal operations of

the government have been almost stopped in the plateau.

Still worse is the situation of the Paharias who have been waiting for a due recognition from the government, as a Scheduled Tribe, since many decades. They are less smart and less organized than the Choktias, and are actually more vulnerable than the latter. In Gadagada village of the plateau most of the Paharias are almost landless. Making bamboo-ware is their traditional occupation. Other MFPs such as kendu leaf also serve as sources of income. The villagers alleged that they were yet(as on 23-2-13) to get their payment against the NREGS work that was done in 2012 for about 25 days. Although finding MGNREGS not a reliable option because of obvious reasons they still look forward to it and at the same time would not like to do NREGS work at the cost of their traditional occupation, particularly bamboo work.

Despite its limitations RCDC's pilot study makes one thing very clear that seems to be true in other areas too, that is: it was but an official failure that the target communities' trust in the potential of MGNREGS could not be built up. All of these communities had interest to avail the opportunity under the scheme, but one or more discouraging experiences such as delayed payment caused them a loss of interest. NTFP collection is something that is a part of their tradition and culture, and particularly for women it seems a preferable job; but dwindling resource base, poor market linkage, and inadequate price are some of the factors that threaten the scope in it. That NREGS is not simply a scheme of wage labour but a package offering several facilities could not be experienced by them, thanks to the concerned authorities. The scope of linking NREGS with NTFP by raising plantations of MFP species under the scheme has hardly been availed in the state. On the other hand, NTFP-based livelihood provides scope for diverse creativity and delicacy that is hardly available in MGNREGS. A part of the forest collection is consumed at home in diverse ways(including nutritious food) whereas MGNREGS would provide only the wage normally. While it is not likely that MGNREGS would be able to completely substitute NTFP-based occupation, the guarantee that it stands for does mean a lot for the disadvantaged communities, and while the government is trying for proper implementation of the scheme an anthropological approach should be considered for an effective implementation.

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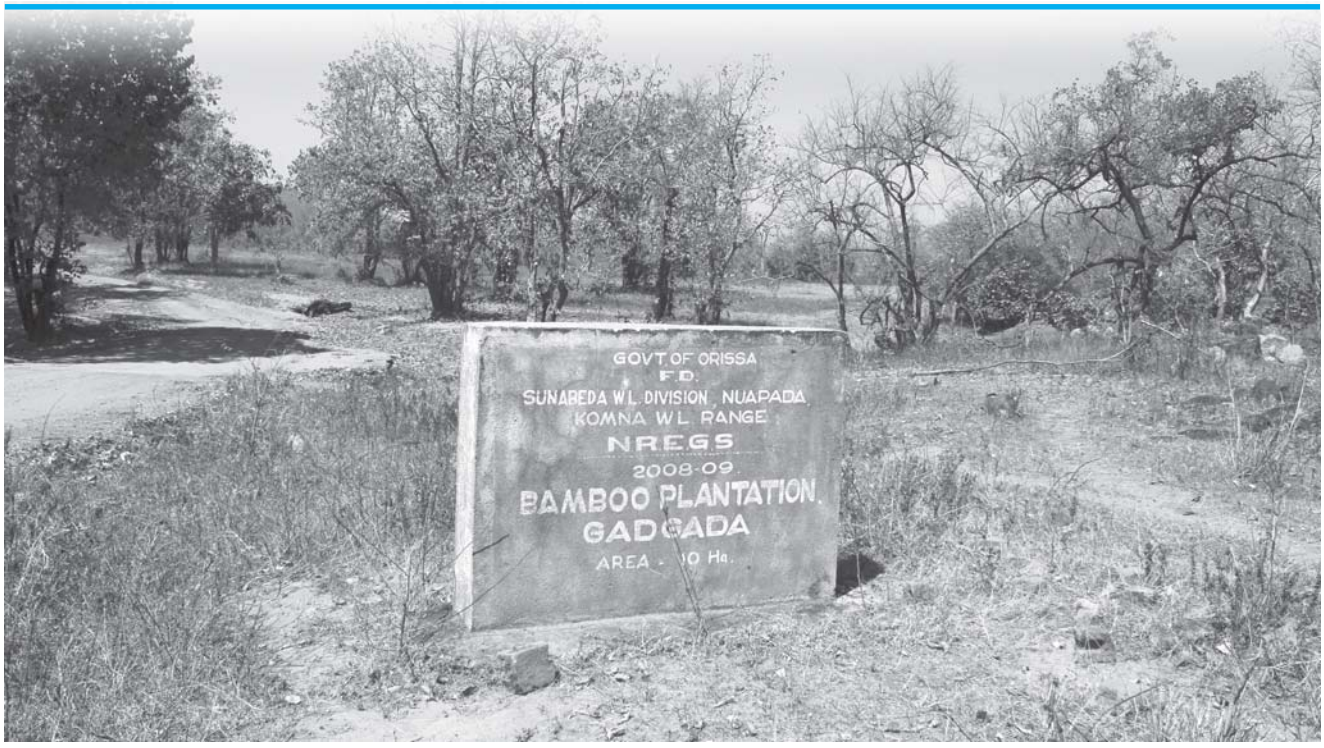

The 'bamboo plantation' under NREGS at Gadagada, with hardly any trace of bamboo however.
This is supposed to have been carried out keeping in view the livelihood needs of the bamboo-dependent Paharias.

From Management to Governance : Implications of the Change in Participatory Forestry

Introduction

Participatory or community-owned approach to natural resource conservation is gaining interest among the scholars, policy makers, funding organizations, federal as well as the non-government organizations, around the world recently. This paradigm shift from the centralized state managed approach of natural resources governance; to a decentralized participatory or community-owned approach could be the result of many compelling factors. The shift could be in response or out of desire to rectify the human costs associated with the coercive conservation approaches. (Dressler et al., 2010; Ostrum, 1990; Hecht and Cockburn, 1990; Marks, 1984; Blockhus et al., 1992; Poffenberger, 1990; Ascher, 1995; Bromley et al, 1992; McCay and Acheson, 1987; UNFAO, 1990). The exclusionary and coercive state controlled approach has not only put the state and local communities at loggerheads with each other but also turned forests into an open access system leading to their severe degradation, local extinction of wildlife, and impacted the livelihoods of millions of resource dependent communities around the world. On the one hand, interest in participatory or community-owned approach among different stakeholders has been growing in the recent years, partly due to recognition that traditional knowledge can contribute better to conservation of forests and biodiversity (Gadgil et al., 1993), rare species (Colding, 1998), protected areas (Johannes, 1998), ecological processes (Alcorn, 1989), and to sustainable resource use in general (Schmink et al., 1992; Berkes, 1999).

On the other hand, mounting pressures on the states from increased fiscal deficits, aid from international donors emphasizing the involvement of local actors, along with pressures from local communities and indigenous groups for reclaiming their traditional rights and exercise greater control over their traditional lands, with evidence that local actors have the capacity to protect and use forest resources more sustainably and at lower costs than government agencies (Agarwal, 2007). According to Gopalakrishnan (2005), until the end of the 19th century, at least 80 percent of India's natural resources were held under common property regimes. The amount of forest area under state control increased progressively since the British colonial period. The severe and rapid degradation of forests in the first three decades after India's independence caused great concern and once again, since the 1980s, there has been a slow shift towards the concept of community management (Gopalakrishnan,2005), paving the way for participatory or community-owned natural resource governance.

Interestingly, the report of The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), (2013), mentions that forestry is back on the investor map. According to the IIED report, the tightening supply through deforestation and rising demand for conventional products, emerging ones like biomass fuels, and environmental services such as carbon storage are boosting financial returns. It was mentioned in the above report that, over the past 20 years, forestland has outperformed the broader equity markets, for instance, annual returns from United States, Timberland investments have averaged 14.9 per cent, and also enjoys better risk-adjusted returns because of its relatively low volatility. (Campanale, 2009). Due to the investment opportunities highly saturated in the North, investors are now turning to South as there is considerably faster growth in the tropics, despite of the traditional risk-related aversions. (IIED, 2013). However, as per the report, what complicates forestry investment, particularly in the South, and is considered either a threat or an opportunity depending on one's viewpoint is people. Scholars estimate that globally, forests support 0.5 billion indigenous people and 1.3 billion other forest dependent people who live in and around the forests, depend on, and have priceless knowledge attuned to forests, which still remains largely ignored by the conventional scientific world. Indigenous and other forest dependent communities also have customary or formalized land rights, otherwise referred to as local forest rights and non-negotiable basic needs for food, fuel and fiber. (IIED, 2013).

However, in reality these people and their customary rights are often ignored completely when forests are diverted

either for non-forestry activities or industrial plantations or large scale logging operations (Mayers, 2006). On the other hand, the ever expanding large scale industrial forestry never stemmed the loss of biodiverse natural forests (IIED, 2013). The IIED report (2013), prescribes that the economic gain does not intrinsically respect social justice or environmental sustainability; however, 'Quality' investment in forestry must go beyond simple economic returns. The IIED (2013) report accentuates that the economic pursuits must recognize that forest landscapes are inhabited by people who have rights over forest resources. It is high time that governments, industries, and policy makers should recognize and accept the fact that the old model of capital seeking forest resources and requiring cheap local labour must be replaced immediately by the local rights holders managing forest resources arrangement - the starting point for locally controlled forestry (Elson, 2012). Macqueen (2011) found that locally controlled forestry not only address issues of social justice, but also shown to enhance environmental management. Hence, investing in Locally Controlled Forestry (ILCF) is a whole new approach to quality investment in forestry (IIED, 2013).

Although the concept of participatory or community-owned approach to natural resource conservation and the issues there within are gaining momentum lately, but the existing situations on the ground do not appear promising enough! According to the studies conducted by, White and Martin (2002) and ITTO (2005) it was estimated that for the past 20 years approximately 200 million hectares of forest land has been transferred to the local communities by the state governments around the world. The increasing area under community-oriented tenure regimes can be seen as an implicit admission by national or provincial level decision makers that local community actors can govern their resources quite effectively when they have the opportunity to do so (Agarwal, 2007; Andersson et al., 2006; Brooks et al., 2006). However, this change in control is less of an increase in pure community ownership; rather it is more of a spread of a new form of natural resource management known as co-governance arrangements in which federal governments are under pressure from a number of sources to extend rights to govern natural resources to a larger number of actors (Nygren. 2005; Lemos and Agrawal, 2006; Wittman and Geisler, 2005). This leaves us with four broad questions: 1) Is involvement of local communities by the state under co-management agreements, without providing them legal rights and ownership of forest lands is analogous to community-owned natural resource governance? 2) What is the success rate of these state promoted community-based projects under the co-management arrangements? 3) Are there any alternative arrangements that could be called as community-owned governance systems in existence? And 4) Are those alternate systems function better than the state promoted co-management arrangements?

For instance, a close examination of the state promoted, so called, participatory or community-based projects such as Social Forestry (SF) and Joint Forest Management (JFM) and the self-initiated community-based forest management (CBFM) of Odisha, in India may provide answers to the above questions. The following sections present a review of two major state promoted projects, SF and JFM and the self-initiated community-based forest management (CBFM) mechanism, initiated by the local communities of Odisha in India. Here, in the following sections, issues associated with state sponsored JFM and community initiated CBFM will be discussed in detail in order to understand the impacts of co-management arrangements as well as challenges faced by the self-initiated CBFM in India. However, a brief on SF could be a good starting point to discuss later about JFM and CBFM.

Social Forestry - a debacle!

A report submitted to the Indian Government by the National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) during 1976 noted that forests occupied 23% of India's land, but their contribution to the National Product was less than 1%. It concluded that mixed plantations had no commercial value. During this phase there was a shift from conservation forestry to production forestry. The NCA suggested the setting up of a corporation to manage forests and to attract monetary assistance from various government and nongovernment sources. As a result, autonomous forest corporations were started and large-scale plantation activities began. The NCA report also suggested starting SF programme on non-forestry lands such as village commons, government wastelands and farmlands to reduce pressure on forests. The consequent degradation of vegetation on village lands led to increased pressure on the forests from the people affected by these activities. Though the programme was largely aimed at meeting the needs of the community, however, the involvement of local communities was found to be marginal or absent (Murali et al., 2003).

According to Kant (undated), upon recommendations of the NCA, in 1976 during the Sixth Plan (1980-85), Social Forestry and Farm Forestry Projects were launched in as many as 14 States of the Indian Union from 1982-84 to 1999. The SF Project brought a significant attitudinal change in the minds of the Indian public to undertaking degradation control measures and large-scale plantations in non-conventional areas. An area of 2.64 million ha was brought under plantations under this project at a cost of INR 18.4 billion. However, the SF afforestation schemes carried out on public lands were characterized by lack of a viable long-term institutional framework to sustain the objective of increased biomass for the poor, social equity and resource sustainability. Massive investments in the SF programmes converted private agricultural lands, barren public revenue lands to productive assets in successful cases. However, SF schemes in reality took a resource away from the local poor, since they no longer had access to the areas now policed by the forest guards. The experience of SF made it abundantly clear that it would be impossible to prevent degradation of forests unless real and immediate benefits equitably accrue to the local communities who depend mostly on forests for their livelihood needs. Consequently, a revised approach that required decentralized and participatory management involving active participation between the forest department and local villagers was advocated (Kant, undated).

One of the major criticisms of SF project was that it did not meet its objectives such as meeting the diverse biomass needs and participation of local communities and lack of involvement of local communities in the choice of plantation species. Exclusion of local communities by the state has resulted in the plantation of monocultures of exotic species such as Eucalyptus and Acacia on large stretches of lands claimed by the government as waste lands and commons. The programme proved to be helpful to farmers who were market oriented (such as farmers in Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana) but less helpful to meet the needs of biomass for firewood, fodder, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and subsistence of the rural poor and tribal communities. This resulted in continued dependence of the rural poor and tribal communities on forests resulting in the degradation of natural forests (Arnold and Stewart, 1991; Murali et al., 2003). Although SF could be hailed as the inception phase of co-management arrangement, however, this arrangement did not meet the success as it was expected to be. The marginalization of the marginal sections of the society along with the lack of proper institutional frame work are blamed, but it leaves us with the question whether the inclusion of marginalized sections along with better institutional frame work could have saved SF from ending as a debacle. A thorough review in the following sections of another major integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP), famously known as JFM with a robust institutional frame work and inclusion of the marginalized segments could provide some answers.

Joint Forest Management- a fiasco!

According to Murali et al. (2003) the government of India, noticing lapses in the SF programme, enacted the National Forest Policy of 1988, which departed significantly from the previous forest policies because it mandates that local people must be actively involved in the forest conservation and management projects. For the first time, local people living in and around the forests were officially involved in forest management activities with a considerable stake. They were considered partners, not only in the protection and regeneration of forests but also in sharing the usufructs and profits. Furthermore, even the focus of forest management has shifted from revenue generation to conservation of the soil, environment and safe guarding customary rights of the local communities (Murali et al., 2003). Subsequently, on June 1, 1990, the government of India passed guidelines launching the JFM programme. Those guidelines recommended participation of the local communities in the regeneration of degraded forests and notified that villages that are effectively protecting the forest would have exclusive rights to that forest's products. The 1990 circular of the government of India, paved the way for most states (23) to adopt participatory forest management strategies by passing the JFM resolutions (Murali et al., 2003). Currently it is estimated that 17.33 million ha of forestland is being managed through JFM efforts. There are around 84,672 JFM communities spread over 27 states of India (Gopalakrishnan, 2005).

However, even after twenty five years of experimenting with JFM in different states of India, the sustainability of the programme is still doubted and its implementation hinges on a number of preconditions. Various social, economic and cultural factors affected and dented the progress of JFM. The problems identified are as follows: the need to change the attitude and ethos of forest bureaucracy, lack of understanding among the government officials of locals' socio-economic and cultural

value systems, not giving priority to the gender issues, inter and intra-village conflicts and resolution, lack of statutory authority to local institutions, inadequacy of meaningful involvement of local communities, donor driven, rather than need driven programme, target oriented rather than people oriented and failure to address the issues of sustainability (Reddy et al., 2004). For instance, the State of Forest report, MoEF, GoI (1999), mentions that the attempt to conserve forests through JFM in Andhra Pradesh has not produced the much hyped positive impact. Although large numbers of Vana Samrakshana Samithis(VSSs)/forest protection committees (FPCs) were established through JFM, it couldn't control deforestation. In fact, the same report further quotes that, before the formation of VSS/FPC, the forest area in the state was 23.02 % and it declined to 16.08 % since establishing VSS/FPCs. In other words the rate of deforestation was found to have increased at places where VSS/FPC were found to be very active (Ravindar, 2003; Reddy et al., undated).

A major drawback in functioning of VSS/FPC is that of the involvement of forest department (FD) which supersedes the local communities. The participatory role of local communities in the planning process of JFM has always been ignored by the FD officials. The micro-plan for forest and village development is mostly framed at the FD office; and rarely does it reach the villagers. Local communities are seldom aware of the budgetary allocations and the budget plan for their village. Ideally the VSS/FPC should be in possession of a copy of the budget plan but that is a very rare case. The second copy should be with the Forest Ranger, which is never available for outsiders (Reddy et al., undated).

Datta and Sarkar (2010) mentions that the impact of JFM is supposed to be felt in promoting environmental sustainability, economic betterment and socio-political empowerment of the poor rural masses inhabiting the forest fringe areas. However, this is far from real due to hazy legal and policy frame works associated with forest and biodiversity conservation. Hence, there is a need for more clarity on the legal and policy frameworks related to JFM because the provisions of Executive Order governing JFM often comes in conflict with the Forest Conservation Act 1980, leading to set backs in efforts of the poor local communities to seek livelihoods from forests they tend (Gopal and Upadhyay, 2001). Livelihoods of the poor in rural areas largely depend upon their nearby forests for food, fuel wood, fodder, small timber, and non-timber extractions. Hence the policy makers are expected to consider paying attention to these five categories as a policy of management rather than perceiving it as an obstacle (Gopal and Upadhyay, 2001). It is even more imperative, especially when tribes within the Scheduled Areas are finding it difficult to compensate livelihood losses due to restrictions on head loading and giving up shifting cultivation as an agreement to participate in JFM (Reddy et al., undated).

Baviskar (1998) stresses the importance of understanding the vulnerability and internal dynamics of tribal communities, prior to the framing of policies pertaining to forest and biodiversity conservation, because, it is they, the re-

The departmental wall proclamation for the Royalghati VSS mentions a non-legal category of forest, PRF(Proposed Reserve Forest) without explaining the villagers the limitations and implications thereof. Had the villagers not raised objection, the area under exotic Eucalyptus plantation in the natural forest area would have been larger than seen here. Photo: RCDC

source dependent poor, who play an important role in the affairs of forest management. So, more decision-making powers should be provided for them as the first step towards greater decentralization and devolution of forest conservation. This is a major issue raised frequently by both supporters as well as the critics of JFM movement (Jodha, 2000). More explicit and equitable sharing mechanisms should be brought into place to ensure the benefits of JFM percolate down directly to the tribes, women and landless labourers. Such mechanisms are necessary because it was found that women in particular are deprived of their traditional earning options following the introduction of JFM in many areas (Jodha, 2000). Furthermore, the organizational environment of forest agencies should also be reoriented to allow women to participate equally along their men counterparts. Many scholars recommended for working groups, diagnostic studies, new monitoring systems, and feedback loops that will enable emerging experiences to be channeled into policy-making which will transform the state and federal institutions, making them accountable to their staff and the public that they serve (Poffenberger and Mc Gean, 1996; Reddy et al., undated).

Besides the socio-economic and political issues of JFM, the most common conflict existing between the VSS/FPC members and FD officials is the choice of species for forest plantations. For instance, while the local communities of Vishakapatnam insisted on NTFPs, horticulture, and coffee plantations; the local communities of Cuddapaha VSS/FPC stressed on horticulture plantations, and the local communities of Adilabad VSS/FPC inclined towards both NTFPs and horticulture species for plantations. However, the FD officials have shown very little or no interest in the species choice of VSS members (Reddy G. et al., undated). Unfortunately, the species selected by the FD as usual was Eucalyptus for afforestation in the river valley catchments and Silver oak for plantations on the higher reaches of hills in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts. Moreover, Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation has encouraged planting coffee and pepper under the Silver oaks in over 5000 ha tribal lands in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts (Kshitija, 2006). All the above issues related to the neglect and ignorance of local communities' livelihood needs, interests, by the JFM implementation bodies of the state leaves the question whether JFM could be considered participatory or community-based forest management. For that matter what is participatory and how is it defined?

The unresolved issue of target group participation in JFM

Datta and Sarkar (2010) mentions that as a general definition, Paul (1989) views participation as an active process by which beneficiary/client groups influence the direction and execution of a development activity in order to enhance their wellbeing in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish. In this context, the importance of peoples' participation in the success of JFM was analyzed by Naik (1997), by using a theoretical model. The model suggests that the extent of participation depends on a host of factors like expected levels and changes in net earnings to labour from JFM and alternative enterprises, their degree of co-variation, expected share of profit from JFM activities, prevalent interest rate, the degree of risk aversion of the households and total household labour endowment (Datta and Sarkar, 2010).

Datta and Sarkar (2010) argue that protection of forest resources presupposes active participation of the forest dependent communities; therefore, active participation in forest conservation activities requires a sense of commitment, attachment and motivation on part of the forest dwellers. Datta and Sarkar (2010) employed a dynamic

Villagers engaged in departmental thinning & cleaning operations in their village forest under JFM in a tribal village of Gajapati district, Odisha. Photo: RCDC

optimization model to focus on the likely socio-economic determinants of participation, to conduct a case study in a remote rural region of India and found that the index of determinants of people's participation and actual participation indices are only moderately correlated. Balooni et al., (2010) indicate that JFM has elicited an enormous body of literature in the developing world but this literature indicates that, despite of changes in the policy and rhetoric, only scattered and modest successes of local community participation in JFM appeared on the ground (Campbell et al., 2001; Blaikie et al., 2006; Ribot et al., 2006). Even the National Forest Commission Report (Government of India, 2006) provided a very critical review of JFM program, which points out poor participation, especially of women in JFM and the failure of government authorities to address the concerns and rope in the energies of marginalized sections (Vemuri, 2008).

Few dubious assumptions about target group participation

A large body of existing literature on common-pool resource management focuses on developing conditions that would enable the self-organized groups of resource users to collectively manage common pool resources. Devolution or transfer of rights and responsibilities to the local user groups is advocated for several reasons. Knox and Dick (2001), suggest the following: firstly, it is argued that local communities have an incentive to preserve the resource because they are "critically" dependent on the resource for livelihood. They therefore have an "interest" in the use and maintenance of the resource over a long period of time. Further, the limited effectiveness of the state in managing natural resources effectively at the local level, bounds on the financial capacity of developing countries to adequately monitor the use of large natural resources such as forests and the demand for democratization of the decision making process in the management of natural resources by increased participation of people most affected by the program and social empowerment of local user groups are other important factors that have led to the focus on community participation in resource management (Knox and Dick, 2001). These were the arguments that motivated participatory management programs like the JFM in India and many other countries (Gopalakrishnan, 2005).

Similarly, studies of D'Silva and Nagnath, (2002) found that many VSS members viewed JFM as a programme for employment generation through forestry activities. Most of the expenditure incurred on forestry operations was used for wages, which provided 24 to 87 days of employment per member per annum. However, these positive impacts have not reached several villages in which the JFM program was introduced. Furthermore, there was a decline in the performance of JFM efforts as soon as the external funding was withdrawn (Ravindranath and Sudha, 2004).

Factors that could affect the participation of target communities

Though it had been argued that local communities have an incentive to preserve the resource because they are critically dependent on the resource for livelihood, there might be some other factors existing which could determine the participation of communities in JFM and other similar projects. For instance, the analytical approach followed by most works on collective action is that of methodological individualism. Hypotheses based on the rational-choice model under which the representative self-interested individual, after a rational benefit-cost calculation, acts in a way that maximizes utility. According to Gopalakrishnan (2005) scholarly works of Ostrom (1990), Wade (1988) and Baland and Platteau (1996) are among the most significant contributions towards developing institutional conditions for successful collective action. These institutional "design principles" have served as the guidelines for many initiatives, like JFM programmes in India, and to promote community-based resource management programs in the developing countries. However, the varying rates of success of many such initiatives suggest that these principles cannot be taken as a blueprint for successful collective action and that there may be other factors that influence people's choices, which need to be considered in analyzing the success or failure of collective action in managing common-pool resources. (Gopalakrishnan, 2005). Berks (2007) points out that the partnership established between the state and local communities under co-management arrangements is less of a participation or community-owned approach and more of a top-down approach of partnership for project implementation. Many authors have documented that this kind of participation is often used as part of a top-down process of cooption and consultation (Berks, 2007). Brown (2002) considers that these top-down processes as a major reason for the failure of many ICDPs. Now that it becomes somewhat clear why co-management arrangements like JFM could not be considered either as participatory or

community-owned, this opens the window to segue to discuss in the following sections about the self-initiated CBFM and the issues lying there within.

Community-based forest governance in India- a big question?

Dressler (2010) suggests that the origins of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) are best understood in relation to the history of the western conservation model. From 18th century and onwards, ideals of a people-free landscape for the purposes of leisure and consumption played an important role in defining land use in colonized regions of the world (Neumann 2002; Brockington et al. 2008). While many reserves preceded Yellowstone as America's first national park in 1872 (Cronon 1995; Brockington et al. 2008), the Park's management approach of restricting local access to natural resources through coercion became the de facto model for most protected areas (Nash, 1967; Stevens, 1997; Igoe, 2005). In the post-war period, as the conservation movement began to diversify (through capitalist expansion) in ways that would later support the rise (and fall) of CBNRM, so-called 'fortress conservation' strongly influenced the development of protected areas in former colonies (Neumann, 1998). Conservation policies upheld the view that those who depended on resources near the reserves be criminalized for what they harvested (Neumann, 1998). In some cases, resource dependent people were forcibly evacuated and dispossessed from their lands, subjecting them to suffering economic displacement (Brechin et al., 2002; Brockington and Igoe, 2006; Dowie, 2009). The 'legitimacy' of Anglo-European scientific understandings of nature and culture were reproduced coercively through protected areas for decades (Brockington et al., 2008).

For instance, in India, both the colonial forest policies and the forest policies of independent India 1864 - 1980 were initiated to allow exclusive State control over forest management. The forest policies of India until 1988 aimed to increase government control over forest resources and develop forests to meet timber needs of the industry and defense. Those forest policies declared that village communities should not be permitted to exercise their traditional rights over the forests at the expense of national interest. The Wildlife Protection Act 1972 was initiated to establish sanctuaries and national parks for protection of wildlife. By 1996, 80 national parks and 441 sanctuaries have been constituted, accounting for 4.3 % of the geographical area and 20% of the forest area in the country. This Act prohibited communities to enter forests. Even today, local communities including tribal people are being evacuated and relocated from their settlements in the forests (Murali et al., 2003).

During the 1980s, while the administration was preoccupied with large-scale plantation oriented social forestry projects; self-initiated community-based forest protection groups began to emerge. These initiatives received either little or no support from the state Forest Departments, with the exception of West Bengal, where a few progressive foresters actively supported and facilitated the initiation of self-initiated forest protection committees (FPCs). The spread of these initiatives is apparent in States such as Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Karnataka and Haryana. Over 13,000 systems were available in the country in different states (Murali et al., 2000). Though these systems are in existence over a century and throughout India but are poorly understood and documented, they do appear to be gaining momentum and receiving support at the village, state and national levels. However, it is only recently that the federal and state governments began to perceive its significance and acknowledged the need to recognize and legitimize community efforts (Murali et al., 2000).

In this context the Indian state of Odisha offers a unique example of traditional forest management practices where self-initiated forest protection groups had been protecting forests for generations without receiving any support from the State Forest Department (Borgoyary, 2006). Many villages especially of Western Odisha voluntarily initiated forest protection during the 1960s but the 1970s - 80s saw a huge trend - which, by now, had taken on the proportions of a veritable movement - spread to other regions of Central Odisha (Pattanaik, 2002). However, according to the JBIC Discussion Paper (2006) Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) existed in Odisha as early as the 1940s. As per the estimates of NGOs and federations of forest protecting communities, there are no less than 8,000 to 12,000 village groups protecting some 350,000 to 400,000 ha. of forests in the state now (Sarin, 1994; Sarin, 1995; Poffenberger, 1995; Sarin, 1996; Vasundhara, 1996; Khare, 1998; Jeffery and Sundar, 1999; Pattanaik, 2002; Sarap and Sarangi, 2009). The emergence of Community-Based Forest Management in India can be perceived as a response to the rapid degradation of forests and the consequent threats to livelihoods, subsistence and environmental services and also as a ground

level democratic response to a highly centralized, ineffective and inefficient forest governance system. According to Gopalakrishnan (2005), the explanation for the motivation for collective action of local communities is based on the theory of 'relative deprivation'. Relative deprivation is defined as, "a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities" (Gurr 1970: 13) and it is argued that social conditions that increase expectations without increasing capabilities to realize them create discontent, which is the basic motivation for participants in collective violence (Marx and Wood, 1975). It is interesting to see whether the explanation for collective violence would also be applicable to the collective action such as self-initiated CBFM of Odisha, where the local resource user groups, who felt deprived of opportunities to use the forest resources over a long period due to lack of legal, political and economic power, so acted collectively towards achieving a change in the structure of property rights. (Gopalakrishnan, 2005).

Community-based forest management-The Cinderella of conservation!

The case study published on a Community-Based Organization - Brikshya O' Jeevara Bandhu Parishad (BOJBP), of Odisha by Borgoyary et al., (2005), provides a glimpse of the success achieved by the local communities in Odisha. However, most CBFM groups of Odisha neither enjoy any legal recognition despite of their amazing success in forest conservation, nor did their achievements transform them immediately into equal partners in forest conservation. The root cause for their lack of recognition is deeply embedded in the biased notions of the government that local communities do not have the knowledge about forest conservation and do not have legal rights on forests. Dressler (2010) points out that critical scholars working on participatory approaches and conservation with indigenous peoples argued that conservation ultimately silenced those people who held the greatest insights into their own state of affairs in the name of science (Simpson, 2001; Ryan and Robinson, 1990). Furthermore, Borgoyary (2006) in the report on Participatory Forest Management Networks of India published by JBIC found that "the case of Odisha, there had been an increasing conflict between the Forest Department and the community-based forest protection committees. While the Forest Department was refusing to accept the traditional community-based forest protection communities, and wanted to implement the JFM programme all over the state, the community-based organizations had been refusing to accept the JFM programme." (p. 18).

Arnold (1999) argues that, one of the main reasons perpetuating these trends has been expropriation of forests by governments as forest reserves or some other form of state property. In India, for instance, governments started to lay legal claim over use of much of the forest estate, and to exercise these new powers, during the British colonial period. In the post-independence period, with the abolishment of the princely states and the expropriation of their forests, control by the central government was greatly extended. Many local people lost their rights of access to the forests during the process of forest reservation, and those 'rights' that were legally recognized at that time have tended to be progressively circumscribed, downgraded from 'rights' to 'privileges', or extinguished by subsequent legislation and practices. By 1980, nearly 23% of India's total land area was under state management, while the rights of an estimated 300 million resource users had become increasingly unclear (Poffenberger and Singh, 1996; Lindsay. 1994). Arnold (1999) also points out that over time, pressures from growing populations, together with the effects of economic and political changes, have frequently greatly reduced the availability of forest resources available for use by local people. Many of the systems for controlling access and use have at the same time been severely weakened or have disappeared altogether. Increasing pressures on the resources that remain have frequently led to their progressive degradation.

The issue of community ownership and rights

Although Gibson and Becker (2000) are slightly critical about the efficiency of local communities to conserve their surrounding natural resources, nevertheless, they summarized three very important requirements unanimously put forward by scholars around the world. Scholars around the world (Bromley et al., 1992; McCay and Acheson 1987; Ostrum 1990; McKean, 2000) advocate for three prerequisite conditions for effective local community participation in the natural resource governance. They are: 1) locals must value the resource, 2) they must possess some property rights to the resource, and 3) they must construct local-level institutions that control the use of the resources. Most scholars heavily bank on the second condition of local communities having property-rights as a prerequisite for successful local level natural resource management (McKean 2000; Demsetz

1967; Libecap 1989; North 1990; Ascher 1995). Furthermore, Schlager and Ostrom (1993) argues that communities having property-rights and stake in the resources would allow local communities to control the benefits and costs of a resource and thus provides a reason for local communities to manage the natural resources for the longer term.

Brogoyary *et al.,* (2005) argues that tenure and access issues have to be most critical elements of any forest-centered strategy since often these very elements have been responsible for creating and perpetuating poverty. It is necessary to notice here that it is imperative to recognize the fact that the lack of recognition of local resource user's rights and tenure security ultimately constrains the livelihood choices of the resource dependent poor which in turn have a direct affect on social security, environmental stability and sustainability. The lack of, or deprivation of, rights over land and forests leads to impoverishment, compelling the resource-dependent to resort to unsustainable extraction which, in turn, leads to further environmental degradation, impoverishment and conflicts. In India, the issue of creation of a state forest estate is a hotly debated issue. It has been argued that many areas currently included in the state forest estate are customary uncultivated common lands as well as communal lands under rotational cultivation, which were appropriated by the state through notifications. Thus, the process of creation of a state forest estate adversely impacted on the livelihoods and resource rights of its pre-existing, often ancestral users (Sarin, 2003).

According to Chhatrapati Singh:
"The basic reason for rural poverty…is the privatization of common property resources in a non-equitable manner.… It is argued that state monopoly over common property does not constitute privatization. This would be true if state ownership made the resources commonly available to many people, including of course to those who were already utilizing the resources. But this is not how things are. The state monopolizes resources so that it can make these available to specific private industries. The state, therefore, becomes a medium through which the process of privatization is facilitated" (Singh, 1986).

Brogoyary et al., (2005) points out that the issue of 'access' or 'rights' over forests is a hotly debated issue in India. While on one hand, policymakers bask in the glory of setting in a successful trend towards a reformist and people-oriented policy regime, with increasing devolution of authority; on the other, increasing concern is being raised by critics over the fact that the forest policy regime is gradually moving towards becoming more 'centralized' and 'state-centric'. The critics also argue that the so called 'devolution policies' as propagated by the government are increasingly 'decreasing space for exercising democratic local control over forest management decisions, affecting adversely livelihoods' (Sarin et al, 2003). The fact that 'access to assets' is a critical factor in strengthening poor people's livelihoods is also being increasingly recognized. (Brogoyary et al., 2005)

Forest Rights Act 2006- the potential game changer

The Scheduled Tribes and other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, has been implemented in India since 2008. This Act provides for the legal recognition of rights of the tribes and other forest dwellers on forest land which has been under their cultivation as well as provides statutory space for community management of forest resources through community based forest rights (CFR). The Scheduled Tribes and other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, (from hereon FRA 2006), be-

A community notice board in a remote village of Kalahandi district, Odisha. It dares the Forest Department as the villagers have submitted their claim on the forest under FRA which protects their rights. Photo: RCDC

lieves that redistribution of forest tenure is indispensable to redress the historical dispossession of forest/land ownership and rights of the people by the State. The transfer of tenure to forestland and connected resources is the key strategy to overcome people's exclusion from forest management. Support for tenure transfer has long originated from grassroots organizations, civil society organizations, and researchers, whose demands have only recently been heeded by national governments. Nevertheless, the transfer of tenure to forest people has now gained significant momentum in many parts of the world, particularly in Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America, and most recently in India (Sunderlin et al., 2008).

But non-uniformity in implementation of the Act and lack of awareness among the local communities has left many community-based forest groups unable to utilize the opportunities provided by the Act. According to the report (Nov. 2010) of the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes (SC & ST) Development Department, of Odisha the number of community-based forest protection groups that received legal community forest resources (CFR) rights on the forest patches protected by them was 585, which is just 4.9% of the total estimated number (8000 - 12000) of the community-based groups protecting the forests in Odisha. Such poor turn-out of the communities to claim their CFR rights on forest resources they have been protecting for ages would undermine the very objective of the Act!

Revisiting SF, JFM and self-initiated CBFM

After a review of the SF, JFM and self-initiated CBFM, it is good to revisit the question: Is co-management analogous to participatory or community-owned forest governance? For that matter, is participatory and community-based forest management the same as community-owned forest governance? What differentiates community-owned forest governance from the rest of forest management and governance systems? To figure out the answers for these questions, we may have to consider the following terminology. So, before proceeding to revisit SF, JFM and self-initiated CBFM, it would be helpful to present here the difference between the terms 'management' and 'governance'.

Although these two terms 'management' and 'governance', are used interchangeably, however, they are not analogous to each other. Hence, it is argued that addition of these terms to the word community could make a lot of difference. For instance, application of the above argument may indicate that community-based forest management (eg: SF, and JFM) and community-based forest governance (eg: CBFM) are not analogous. According to, Crona, et. al., (2011) management means specific actions that are carried out to accomplish the goals of any resource management scheme, such as carrying out agricultural experiments or trial fishing to assess stocks. But governance means the broader system of formal or informal institutions in which the management actions are embedded and which provide the essential direction, resources, and structure needed to meet the overarching resource governance goals. Probably this difference would provide us a clue why SF and JFM had been such failures and why self-initiated CBNRM is suffering from lack of legal recognition. However, the question still remains. What differentiates community-owned forest governance from the rest of the forest management and governance systems? How to change local communities from mere participants to equal partners in the decision making process and how would that affect the socio-economic and ecological outcomes of participatory programmes?

The one issue that resurfaces in the literature on SF and JFM is the issue of communities' lack of power to make their own decisions about the management of the forest resources and their employment/use as a work force to work on the land owned by the forest department for departmental objectives. It is important here to ask the question, why communities are unable to make their own decisions? What could be the reason for the failure of communities to make their own decisions? Although generic, but it is not wrong to assume that local communities lack something very crucial which could give them the authority and power to make their own decisions. May be it the lack of legal ownership of the forest land that is depriving them of the authority and power to make their own decisions? However, further detail research studies are necessary to substantiate this assumption.

Conclusion

The failure of ICDPs like JFM and the struggles faced by the self-initiated community-based forest management systems like CBFM in Odisha, brings us to this conclusion that participatory or community-based forest management arrangements work better only when they are backed by legal ownership of the forest land, have the freedom and power of making decisions on their own. However, the power and freedom of making their own decisions directly depends on the status of community legal ownership of forest

patches they had been protecting and managing for generations. Besides this it also clear that there is a huge difference between the terms community-based management and community-based governance. It was found that most ICDPs projects like JFM were based on the community-based management approach but not community-based governance approach. Hence, there should be a shift from community-based management to community-based governance for achieving the goals of local community participation, uplifting rural livelihoods and conservation of our valuable forest resources.

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Editorial comment

Some of the observations made/quoted in this article would assume greater relevance with their corresponding updates. For instance, while the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2002 recognized for the first time a clear stake of the communities in wildlife management through the creation of two new Protected Area tenures (Community Reserve and Conservation Reserve), the Government of Odisha revised its JFM resolution in 2011 in the light of PESA Act and Forest Rights Act; and the Forest Rights (Amendment) Rules, 2012 has created new scope for recognizing community forestry. In fact, a number of CFR titles has been granted recently though the overall progress in that respect is still not very encouraging. The Government of India has also put in public domain the draft protocols for voluntary relocation in critical wildlife habitats, that tried to incorporate the forest rights. All said and done however, the basic problem still remains; i.e. the Forest Department is still not comfortable in transferring the power to the communities. A good example of this is that the Department did not show interest to promptly reconstitute the old VSS committees as per the revised JFM resolution. The trend is definitely from management to governance, but the practice is lagging behind.

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Protection of Forest Rights versus Conservation of Wildlife

The Pioneer, dt. 22/03/2013

Concern about forest rights Vs wildlife protection

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 28th Standing Committee (SC) meeting of National Board For Wildlife (NBWL) expressed concern over serious flaws in the implementation of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers under the (Recognition of Forest Rights)-2006 by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs Ministry (MoTA).

This clash of interest between Wildlife Protection Act-1972 and Forest Rights Act is according to the members is causing increasing encroachments in the Protected Areas (PAs) across the country.

Raising the issue prominently in the 28th meeting of SC-NBWL, member Kishor Rithe pointed out that this is a "grey area" which certainly needs to be addressed as it is adversely impacting the conservation in Protected Areas.

He pointed out that people first register the claims before gram sabha. Then they start girdling trees, setting fire, ploughing the forest land to make Forest Department unable to take any action by showing that "their claim is pending". "No encroachment should be treated as an encroachment till pendency of claim", pointed out the members.

28TH SC MEETING OF NBWL

According to the members, the circulars and guidelines of MoTA do not ensure compliance of the provisions of Wildlife Protection Act 1972 (Sec-20, 27(3), 29 and impose bar on accrual of fresh rights. These cause damage to the boundaries of PA and destruction of wildlife habitats.

MoTA has not ensured any mechanism to restore forest lands where claims have been finally rejected by the district administration In Maharashtra alone, large number of claims for "individual rights" has been rejected by District Level Committees (DLCs) chaired by district collectors which are basically fresh encroachments made after the cut off date of December 13, 2005.

Rithe said that in order to ensure the compliance of Sec-20, 27(3), 29 of WPA 1972, certain priority actions need to be taken, he felt. This includes issue the notification of Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWH) under Sec 2 (b) of FRA 2006. Before considering any Individual Forest Rights (IFR) the claims regarding Community Forest Rights (CFR) must be settled to minimize encroachments.

However, any genuine "individual right" that exists at the time of issuance of notification of sanctuary/National Park under Wildlife Protection Act 1972, must be granted, noted the members.

In a letter to MoEF, Rithe has said that the states and Union Territories should report fresh encroachment incidents after 13th December 2005 from the PAs to the SC-NBWL along with the action taken report.

The MoTA should be asked to issue advisory to ensure that implementation of FRA 2006 should not violate Sec-20, 27(3), 29 of Wildlife Protection Act 1972. To add to the above, the members pointed that "wildlife corridors" connecting PAs are also badly affected due to growing fresh encroachments and immediate action needs to be taken.

A REQUEST TO OUR ESTEEMED READERS & CONTRIBUTORS

Community Forestry is an in-house quarterly journal of RCDC primarily focusing on various dimensions of community-based forest management but broadly looking into the aspects of community-based ecosystem management. Although it awaits several external measures to validate itself as a journal useful for all relevant stakeholders (particularly the academicians although we don't intend to make it an academic journal and prefer rather to follow a standardization that matches with the attitude of social activism), the uniqueness and distinction attributed to this periodical has remained intact over the years since it was first published in January 2002. In the recent past we have made an attempt to make its message more systematic and streamlined through the following columns:

1. Cover story: This can cover some pertinent issue that did not receive much attention.
2. Current issue: This is about something that has been highlighted recently.
3. Law & policy: This makes an analysis of some legal or policy matter.
4. Role models: This is a case study of communities successful in forest/biodiversity/ecosystem management
5. Conservation: This attempts to touch upon one or more dimensions of conservation practices chiefly by the communities, implying the contribution in conservation. This a more critical study than the case study under 'Role models'.
6. Eco-commerce: This discusses some dimensions of commerce related to one or more ecosystem elements like NTFP.
7. Livelihood: This is about the NRM-based (with forest and biodiversity in focus) livelihood of communities: how that works, threats thereto, issues, etc.
8. Emerging trends: This is about new trends noticed in community-based NRM.
9. News & events: This is about the media coverage or proceedings of some relevant event, related to communities and NRM.

We therefore invite original articles suitable for these columns, with full details of the author(s), designation, organization address, e-mail, etc.. References, wherever applicable, need to follow the following standard sequence:

- For books : Author (year of publication). Name of the book (bold). Name of the publisher. Place of publication. [Example : Bag, Hemant et al (2011). NTFP Policy Regime after FRA: A Study in Select States of India. RCDC, Bhubaneswar]
- For articles: Author(year of publication). Name of the article (bold). *In* Author/Editor (year of publication).Name of the book/ compilation/report in which it was published. Volume No., page No.. Name of the publisher, place of publication.
- For internet citations: Author(year of publication). Name of the article (bold). Internet source (address). Date of access.

Please send your photographs/pictures/maps, etc. in jpg format. In case that is not possible please contact us with details of the problem. Your constructive feedback is very much welcome.

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