

BEYOND JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT

R.C. SHARMA*

Introduction

With the ever increasing anthropogenic pressure and archaic managing institutions, the life support system of the earth has been beaming distress signals in the form of continued natural resource degradation leading to depletion of the vegetal cover, land degradation, distortion of hydrological cycle and consequent decrease in productivity per unit area. The role and importance of forests in maintaining the life support system in terms of ecological, economic and socio-cultural framework is better understood now. However, the inadequacy of the incongruous classical state-controlled forest administration in discharging this role meaningfully has necessitated a paradigm shift from regulatory to participatory forest management.

Whilst sporadic efforts were made by self initiated groups and individuals, more specifically in Eastern part of the country in Orissa and Bihar, the National Forest Policy, 1988, paved the way for 'involvement' of the people in forest management by making following stipulations :

- Having regard to the symbiotic relationship between the tribal people

and forests, the primary task of all the agencies responsible for forest management, including the forest development corporations should be to associate the tribal closely in the protection, regeneration, management and development of forests as well as to provide gainful employment to people living in and around the forests and to involve people in conserving biodiversity.

To translate this basic policy shift, the Government of India issued an enabling Joint Forest Management (JFM) Resolution in 1990 for involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies in the regeneration of degraded forests. This has been operationalised by envisaging partnership between the State Forest Departments and the local Forest User Groups (FUGs) and right holders on the basis of sharing benefits and forest management responsibilities. By now, 22 states have endeavoured to achieve the policy objectives by formulating location specific guidelines, which has resulted in 36,075 village level committees jointly managing over 10.24 million ha of forests. In the State of Madhya Pradesh alone there are more than 12,000 such committees jointly managing forest area around 58 lakh ha. However, the outcome of the

* Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests and Managing Director, M.F.P. Federation, Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

programme has been unruly for variety of reasons. Some of the grey areas and weak links are :

- Attitude and ethos of the forest bureaucracy
- Lack of understanding of Socio-economic and cultural value system of the locals
- Gender issues and womens' representation
- Inter- and Intra-village conflicts
- Lack of statutory authority to local institutions
- Inadequacy in meaningful people's participation
- Coverage of degraded forests only under JFM
- Donor-driven rather than need-driven
- Target-oriented rather than people-oriented
- Sustainability.

In some of the recent studies, it has been reported that at present JFM is budget-intensive and there is confusion, confrontation and apprehension and hence sustainability of the programme is doubted and loaded with lots of preconditions (Maithani, 1998). Furthermore, the link between the foresters and locals is quite fragile. As such there is no existing guarantee of funding and structuring of the process of JFM. Wherever we have success stories, it is because of individual motivation and innovation. It is important at this stage to institutionalize the process so that a proper mechanism is evolved to support and sustain efforts in this direction (Anon., 1998). With a view to have a deeper insight into the malady, it will be worthwhile to analyse the role of important actors and stake holders namely the State Forest Departments and the local people.

Forest Bureaucracy

In India, the Joint Forest Management programme is being implemented by forest bureaucracies, which have largely inherited the colonial forestry ethos. The current crisis in forest management is deeply embedded in the system that evolved since the middle of the 19th century, which reflects the concepts of bureaucratic centralization in resource governance, authoritative legislative strategies and management attitudes and practices that have been borrowed from the temperate industrialized world and widely adopted in many less developed tropical countries (Poffenberger, 1996). In order to protect and increase the production from the forests, the traditional forester concentrated on the 'Tree' and by and large the scientific forestry including various silvicultural practices hovered on biological, technical and to some extent economic aspects of the productive and protective functions of the forests. This was in keeping with the process of evolution of forest management the chronological growth of which is given in Table 1.

A perusal of Table 1 reveals that it is only after 1988 that forest management opened its doors for affected forest dwellers. Foresters, though well versed with the theory and practice of scientific forestry, lack the skills to deal with the people because they were never called upon to do so. Therefore, to implement a peoples' programme, the capacity building of the Forest Department becomes *sine qua non*. With the help of multi-disciplinary team consisting of social scientists, anthropologists, communication specialists, reputed NGOs as well extension experts, orientation programmes for developing appropriate attitudes have been initiated.

Table 1*Paradigm Shift in Forest Management in India*

Year	Event	Main Thrust	Result/Outcome
1861	Appointment of I.G.F.	A German Professor to head the Forestry Administration in India	Silviculture based on Temperate Forests.
1865	Enactment of Indian Forest Act	Declaration of forest areas	Authoritative legal Framework for Centralization
1878	Revision of the Indian Forest Act	Reservation of Forests	
1894	First National Forest Policy	Regulation of rights and restriction on users' privilege	Alienation of local community
1927	Indian Forest Act, 1927	Comprehensive Legal matrix	Bureaucratic centralization
1952	National Forest Policy, 1952	Sustained supplies of timber to Industry, Communication and Defence.	Colonial Hangover Continues
1976	National Commission on Agriculture	Commercial Forestry	Deprivation of locals
1988	National Forest Policy, 1988	Ecological security and people's participation	Community involvement envisaged.
1990	J.F.M. Resolution, GoI	Usufruct sharing with locals in degraded areas	Decentralization of forest management begins
1996	Provisions of the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996	Conferring ownership rights of M. F. P. on local institutions	From gatherers to owners : Devolution process continues

The course content consists of theory and tools of participatory techniques, role relationship, leadership attributes, gender analysis, sociological variables, respect for local and indigenous knowledge as well as

community based methods for inventory planning and substituting silvicultural options to benefit the locals. All this has led to inculcate inclination towards people but the level of motivation differs from place to

place and from person to person. There are instances when foresters, in their zeal to police and protect the forests, hold on to their territorial and silvicultural moorings and perceive JFM as a tool to win the support of the locals to protect the forests by offering them employment and some usufruct sharing. People on the other hand, with their past experience of dealing with the bureaucracy, have little faith in the state-apparatus. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that, by far, many success stories from different parts of the country are due to the pioneering efforts of dedicated and innovative forest officers. A wind of attitudinal change is blowing, but since it is a complicated phenomenon, it is bound to take its own time.

Local People

The enabling resolution of the Government of India, 1990 contemplated involvement of the village communities, living close to forest-land by offering usufructory benefits to ensure their participation. Participation, involves the right and opportunity to take part in decisions affecting one's life and livelihood. Informed decisions require access to information, developing the capability to analyse it from one's own perspective and awareness of alternative options (Sarin *et al.*, 1996). However, people's participation in forestry sector, being a new feat, has been perceived subjectively by different stakeholders.

Gender issues

There is yet another important facet of the people's participation which deserve a sharper focus. It is normally the poorest and most marginalised group within communities whose dependence on forest resource for survival and livelihood is

highest. The poorer the family, greater is the dependence on the woman's contribution to household income. Although National Forest Policy, 1988 talks of involvement of women, JFM Resolution, 1990 remained silent about it.

Gender analysis begins with the recognition that while sex is a biological category, which cannot be changed, gender is a social and cultural construction. Gender is about the roles that are socially accepted for women and men, though differently organized in different societies and communities. In most cultures, while women have multiple, often disproportionate responsibilities, they have little ownership or control over resources such as land and property, education, technical skills and market information. This disparity in the ownership and control over resources relative to gender responsibilities places women in a subordinate and dis-empowered position relative to men as they are forever dependent and run a greater risk of being excluded from their homes and livelihood (Sarin *et al.*, 1996).

For a successful forestry programme, women should not be looked at as mere beneficiaries of JFM but as contributors in the development process because they are the primary users of the forest product. Furthermore, the participatory approach should not be masculinist in nature, recognizing only male dominance in the JFM activities and decision-making process. It is also worthwhile to mention that the new JFM resolution clearly lays down in mandatory terms that 50% women members should be a prerequisite for holding the general body meeting and 33% of the membership in JFM executive committee should be held by women.

It has also been felt that due to lack of statutory authority to the institutions participating in the JFM programme many inter- and intra-village feuds have cropped up leading to social incongruities. Being mostly donor-driven in terms of financial support and consequent numerical targets, the sustainability of the programme is also jeopardized.

An analysis of performance of JFM during last decade of the twentieth century reveals that although JFM is spreading its roots in India, the progress at some places is not commensurate with the expectations. However this should not disappoint the policy planners because a number of factors such as natural resources including forest, agro-climatic conditions as well as many social factors and basic infrastructure facilities for education, health, communication and awareness interact in a highly complex manner to provide ground for operationalization of a participatory programme. JFM is process-oriented and does not lend itself to becoming a target- and product-oriented programme (Saxena, 1997). In the ultimate analysis, forest degradation, decentralization of degraded forest management and people's participation is too serious a matter to be left to 'JFM' alone. Hence for meaningful participation there is an urgent need to look beyond the myopic vision of the JFM resolution, 1990.

Beyond JFM

New Resolution of MoEF (Feb 2000)

It is heartening to note that the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests, have issued guidelines for strengthening of JFM Programme on Feb 21, 2000. This circular *inter alia* contemplates :

- (a) Legal backup to the JFM committees,
- (b) 50% members of the General Body should be women and
- (c) Extension of JFM in good forests areas with sharper focus on activities concentrating on NTFP/NWFP management.

However, the detailed operational modalities to translate these concerns have not been spelt out. In succeeding paragraphs, an attempt has been made to evolve a proactive and people friendly framework for meaningful implementation of the programme.

At this juncture, it will be appropriate to examine the dynamics of the impact of the people on the forests and impact of the forests on the people because it is the resultant scenario that will have far reaching consequences on the partnership. In the primary sector, people harvest natural resources to satisfy their physiological needs by using local techniques and goods so produced are either consumed by them or are bartered or marketed. The ever-increasing anthropogenic negative impact on the natural resources goes beyond the carrying capacity of the forests and the problem becomes acute in fringe areas where there is neither enough land, fit for cultivation nor industries to provide employment. Furthermore, people living in and around forest areas do not have adequate educational facilities, health cover, and nutrition and safe drinking water facilities. Human Development Index (HDI) is at its lowest in these areas. People still practice primitive subsistence agriculture with very low productivity and to meet their growing food grain requirements, they go in for more extensive cultivation including shifting cultivation or encroachment in

forest areas. Degradation of forests due to their exploitation for fuelwood and illicit felling of trees is yet another facet of the same problem. In this process steep slopes and areas unfit for growing of annual crops are brought under the plough, making it a near ecological disaster. Availability of water, so critical for our survival, is closely related to the level of availability of biomass in the surrounding environment. The water-balance in the situation described above is totally upset by the destruction of vegetation. Distortion of the hydrological cycle and consequent decrease in productivity per unit area leads to enhanced poverty and misery. Poverty and illiteracy coupled with malnutrition are again the main causes of increased population growth, which further accentuate the natural resource degradation process. Thus poverty, in these areas, becomes both the cause and the effect of natural-resource degradation.

From the above discussion it is evident that for building partnership the management has to take care of the human sensitivities in terms of the felt needs of the people, social norms, beliefs and systems born out of history, culture and traditions. It is a debatable point whether poverty with its pressure to survive or affluence with its pressure to consume leads to environmental degradation but it is more than obvious that poor people cannot be signatory to conservation of forests if the process is in conflict with their survival needs. Mystical words like ecology and environment have no meaning for the poor forest-dwellers. For them there is another 'E' namely 'Economics' which is more important than 'Ecology' and 'Environment'. Thus, by keeping local people in the core, the attempts have to be on reinforcing human building blocks by many 'E's like 'educating' them, 'enlisting'

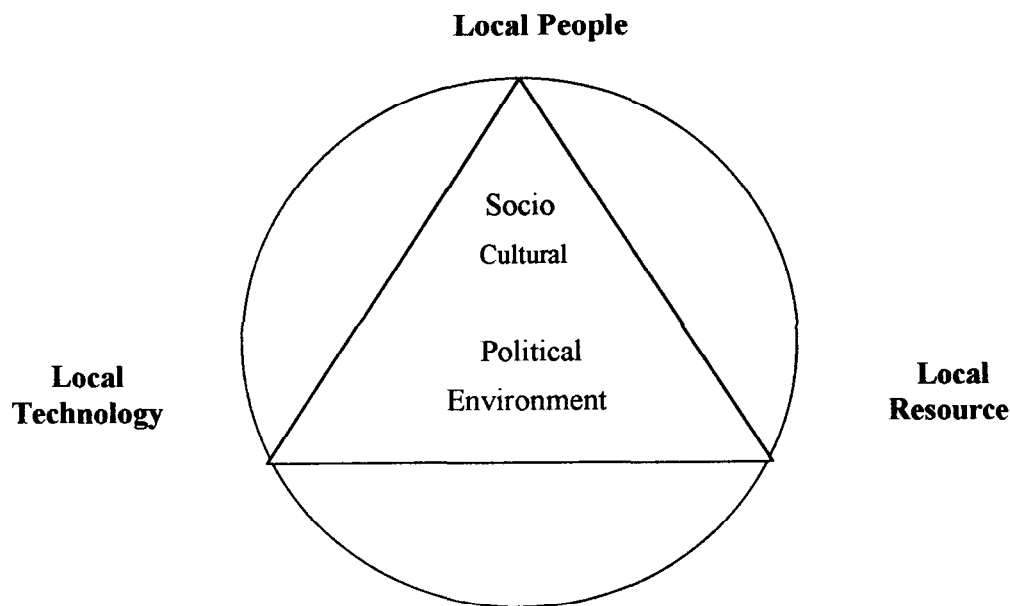
their support, 'empowering' them bringing in 'equity' and allowing them to 'enjoy' the benefits as per their priorities apart from 'employing' them. Similarly in respect of local resources, there are many 'E's, viz., 'enriching' the resources, and their 'efficient' and 'economic' use, all of which lend support to the sustainability of the system. Accordingly, enhancing productivity of the resources as also augmenting income from on-farm as well as off-farm activities and gradual upgradation of the technology can provide a developmental matrix, which will be conducive to people's participation (Sharma, 1997).

This approach can be represented as a green triangle as shown in Figure 1.

Sustainability of the Programme

After the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio (1992), Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created to implement Agenda 21, including the Forest Principles in Chapter 11, endorsing the role of local communities and other stakeholders. Inter governmental Panel on Forests (IPF) initiated by CSD in 1995, further stressed the participation and sustainable Forest Management. In fact, Sustainable Forest Management is a normative concept whereby societies define broadly which aspects of forests, their components, process or functions they intend to preserve over the long term and which to utilize. SFM therefore is a dynamic concept, the result of ongoing political process driven by various actors, their respective values, interest, knowledge and their relative negotiation power (Remetsteiner, 1998). Besides financial and infrastructural capital, the sustainability of any programme will largely depend upon

Fig. 1

*Green Triangle of Locals*

capital base consisting of human capital, natural resources and social capital. As a corollary to this, the sustainability will be governed by the capacities and capabilities of the institutions, relationship among them and their relative power. Stated briefly, the concept of Sustainability rests on three pillars viz. :

Ecological sustainability :

- Appropriate Resource assessment and enhancement
- *In-situ/ex-situ* conservation and propagation
- Non-destructive harvest
- Integrated ecosystem approach.

Economic sustainability :

- Rural income generation

- Food security
- Health cover
- Institutional support
- Processing, grading and value addition
- Entrepreneurial development
- Marketing.

Socio-cultural sustainability :

- Capacity building of people at all levels
- Liberal use of social capital
- Incorporation of traditional knowledge base in forest management
- Representation of people from different communities
- Priority given to people dependent entirely on forest resources
- Respect to value based systems
- Consideration for social norms and traditions of various groups.

Adaptive Institutional Framework

Forest Fringe-area Development Authority (FFDA) : The outcome of execution of a programme is determined not just by new policies but by institutions as well. Organisations are the players in the political, social and economic environment whereas institutions are the rules of the game for the players and includes not just the laws, rules, regulations and their enforcement but their social norms and belief systems as well. Thus, policy change is a blunt instrument that achieves rather little without informal norms also being synchronised.

Rural development programmes like IRDP in India and state's 1987 poverty alleviation programme in China (Kushan *et al.*, 1997) have been taken up as a means for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation programmes in many countries of the Asian region.

Presently in the forest fringe the institutional framework responsible for developmental administration consisting of various line departments is not truly effective because there are no infrastructural facilities in the interior areas and programme implementors look for softer options. Under these constraints, forest fringe areas suffer Disadvantaged Geographical Location (DGL). That is why the poverty map of the country approximately tallies with the forest map. It is in this context that an innovative development administration system should be thought of. The Forest Department, on account of its presence in these areas should be considered as a practical alternative nodal agency for facilitating, coordinating and executing programmes of the line departments of the State. This agency can

be designated as Forest Fringe Area Development Authority.

Forest management, on account of their physical presence in those areas could be considered as an alternate agency for facilitating, coordinating and in some cases even executing programmes of the line departments responsible for the socio-economic development. The rural development funds for any administrative unit can rationally be divided between the existing agency and FFDA management as per the following formula :

If X is the number of the villages within the forest or 5 km of the forest (Fringe area);

Y is the number of villages outside the fringe area;

The total funds available being A and B and C, the funds to be spent by the FFDA and DRDA respectively, then :

$$B/A = X/(X+Y), \text{ and}$$

$$A = B + C$$

i.e. the funds made available are in direct proportion to the ratio of the villages existing in the fringe area to the total number of villages. This apportionment must be laid down at the State-headquarters level to obviate any chances of favouritism, with the PRIs having the option of allocating more funds than this share to the fringe areas (Chadha and Sharma, 1998).

Integrated Ecosystem Approach : The new criterion envisioned under the JFM lay emphasis on structural and functional aspects of the Joint Forest Management. Yet, the gray areas persist. It is only by having an integrated ecosystem approach that the issues of meaningful participation,

empowerment of the people (specially of the marginalised sections of the society as well as women), equitable distribution of duties and responsibilities and benefit sharing etc. can be suitably addressed. The sustainability of the programme, therefore hinges on integration of ecological sustainability, economic sustainability and socio-cultural sustainability.

Role of MFP towards Sustainability of JFM:

Minor Forest Products (MFP) or Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) originating from diverse sources ranging from large plants to micro-flora consisting of heterogeneous products constitute a critical lifeline for poor forest dwellers by producing family sustenance and livelihood. MFP with their attendant instrumentalities play a meaningful role in bringing sustainability to JFM because the employment generation from this enterprise is around 2 million persons year, which is approximately half of the forestry sector. M.F.P. related activities take care of both the unemployed as well as underemployed and M.F.P. based small scale enterprises can further strengthen the linkage of the socio-economic base on account of :

- Low capital and low energy requirements
- Proper utilisation of local renewable resource and technological know-how
- Checking migration from rural to urban areas; and
- Satisfaction of creation it provides, being a family activity.

However it has been observed that price paid for collection of the MFP at times is not commensurate with the labour input and time spent in collecting. Procurement price of an MFP is usually linked to the price prevailing in the wholesale market in

the vicinity wherein the price is unilaterally fixed by the unscrupulous traders and middlemen (Anon., 1997)

This aspect has now been taken care of by a landmark Constitutional Amendment, namely "The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996" which provides for the extension of the provisions of the Part IX of the Constitution relating to Panchayats to the scheduled areas. The Act, *inter-alia* empowers the Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats in scheduled areas to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and customary modes of dispute resolution and more specifically, it makes a provision for endowing Panchayats at the appropriate levels, with the ownership of MFP (Anon., 1998)

In line with the time tested philosophy of care and share and to ensure that harvesting of MFP has essentially to be on a non-destructive basis and in accordance with the prescriptions of the approved management plans, it has been decided to that the net surplus available from the MFP should be transferred back to the Gram Sabhas through the agency responsible for trade in MFP with the stipulation that at least 20% of the surplus is invested for the development of MFPs and 30% for community development. Accordingly, in Madhya Pradesh one of the central States of the country, during 1998 collection season 24 lac families organized in form of 1,947 Co-operative societies will get around Rs. 127 crores as net surplus from the Tendu-patta (leaf wrapper for bidi - Indian cigarette) trade alone. With proper research sustainable harvest, storage, processing and marketing, the turnover from MFP may cross even the Rs. 10,000

crores mark – a substantial sum by any standard for the rural poor.

Presently, JFM modality in degraded forest areas envisages sharing of usufructs with the FUGs. However, forestry in general and tree production in particular, is a long term venture. Poor people cannot wait for tangible benefits in terms of timber for a long period of time. To sustain them, immediate outcome of the programme is needed.

People's Protected Area (PPA) - Bringing out Human face of forest management : Sustainable forest management, rural income generation and biodiversity conservation can thus become a vehicle to attain the twin objective of biodiversity conservation and rural livelihood. As is well known, biodiversity encompasses a variety of plants and animals, microorganisms as well as the ecosystems and ecological processes to which they belong. Biodiversity is part of our lives and livelihood and comprises the resources upon which families, communities, nations and the future generations depend.

The International Convention of Biodiversity (CBD), to which India is a signatory, recognizes that most effective and practical way of preserving biological processes that modulate is the establishment and maintenance of Protected Areas (PA) network and for its *in-situ* conservation, Protected Areas (PAs) have been established across the globe.

In India, the PA network has been targeted on faunal aspect envisaging exclusion of anthropogenic pressure. However, poor people may not conserve biodiversity if the process of conservation competes with their survival needs. The

ground reality is that, the ecological security of the PA, divorced from livelihood security of the people has no future.

The organic link between the conservation and sustainable utilization by the dependent people will be better reinforced by having a sharper focus on key issues relating to interdependence of PA management and human sensitivities in terms of the felt needs of the people, their social norms, beliefs and systems born out of history, culture and traditions. Wherever a resilient and adaptive management has been able to reconcile the dichotomy of threat perceptions, arising out of conservation – development orthodoxy, chances to succeed are better.

Thus, to reinforce JFM, Madhya Pradesh State Minor Forest Produce Federation is advocating the concept of People's Protected Areas (PPA). The new emerging concept of PPA focuses on Sustainable Forest Development through Rural income Generation and Biodiversity conservation with an active involvement of the people.

The concept thus emerged is proactive and people friendly so that the Protected Areas of floral as well as faunal biodiversity are managed by the people, for the people and with the people, hence the name People's Protected Area (PPA).

Madhya Pradesh State Minor Forest Produce Federation has envisioned networking the People's Protected Areas for Sustainable forest development, rural income generation and biodiversity conservation. This would be done by paying highest regard and concern for people and their traditional knowledge, caring and sharing with the villagers; capacity building

at all levels and upgradation of local technology.

Our mission is to develop community based participatory management plan, appropriate resource assessment methodologies, non-destructive harvesting, *in-situ/ex-situ* conservation and propagation, grading, processing and value addition, marketing, eco-tourism, biodiversity prospecting and bio-partnership, equitable benefit sharing, improved food security and health cover, enabling policy and legal framework. Thus, with this broad vision, mission and values, it is aimed to attain sustainable forest development by ensuring income generation and employment opportunities to the rural masses in the MFP sector.

Food security : One of the focal areas of the PPA network is poverty alleviation. This is done by ensuring food security of the people through the management of MFP. Food security envisages adequacy, stability as well as economic and physical access to food to all people at all times. If there is enough food, but people have no money to purchase it, the food security is incomplete.

MFPs contribute to food security through :

- Direct contribution to the food basket in form of edible fruits, leaves, flowers, gums, roots and tubers etc.
- Income generated from sale of surplus MFP enables poor gatherers to have access to food.

By ensuring better opportunities of income generation, people will benefit and thus, with an alternative source of livelihood, the pressure on the forests will reduce.

Health Cover : PPA also aims at improving health cover. The present status reveals that about 80% of the world's population depends on plant based traditional forms of medicine for meeting their primary health care needs. Even 25% of the allopathic medicines are derived from plant medicines. The Indian systems of medicine, Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani have evolved over hundreds of years. The folk and tribal system of traditional medicine is equally important. 90% of medicinal flora occurs in the forests. However, more than 70% collection from forests involves destructive harvesting. Consequently there is a threat to the genetic stock and biodiversity. With the PPA coming into play, some of the most valuable and commercially heavily exploited and near endangered species of flora of medicinal values may be conserved and commercially utilized on sustainable basis.

New Millennium initiatives

As a part of strategy to translate above philosophies into implementable action programme, the MFP Federation has started following initiatives:

- State Bio-diversity board constituted
 - Hon'ble CM as the chairman and Dr. M.S. Swaminathan as advisor.
 - Three inter-disciplinary committees constituted to prepare strategies.
- Establishment of PPAs
 - Khatpura-Yaarnagar (Sehore), Katni and Shoepurkalan PPAs established
 - Seven more sites identified.
- Legal frame work evolved
 - M.P Laghu Van Upaj (Gram

Sabhaon ko Swamitwa ka Sandan) Vidheyak, 1999 sent to GoI for approval.

- New State Govt. Resolution regarding sharing of all forest products including timber and Bamboo from good forest areas with the JFM samities.
- Enhancement of collection rates of some NWFP as under :

Produce	Collection rates 1999 (Rs./quintal)	New Collection rates (Rs./quintal)
Harra	300	550
Kacharia	400	700
Balharra	500	900
Kullu Gum	3000	5000
Salai Gum	2000	3000
Other Gums	3000	3500-4500
Green Amla	50-100	250-500
Achar guthli	1000-1500	2500-3500
Mahua seed	500	550-600

This intervention by the MFP Federation has led to enhanced wages to the MFP gatherers. In that process they will get around Rs. 8 crores wages as against Rs. 3 crores received last year. Series of such interventions can substantially increase the earnings of the poor forest dwellers.

Conclusion

Joint Forest Management, its sustainability and meaningful people's participation is a serious matter. It is lot more than merely issuing guidelines and resolutions for degraded forests and/or good forests. Due to pluralistic environment in

which forest managers operate, evolving a trade-off between dichotomous threat perceptions arising out of conservation-development orthodoxies becomes a real challenge for the new millennium. For effectively reconciling the objectives of sustainable forest development, rural income generation and biodiversity conservation, which constitute critical inputs for meaningful joint forest management, following thrust areas need immediate attention.

- Evolve a policy framework to integrate conservation policy with other development policies.
- Evolve an integrated ecosystem approach by developing :
- Hardware of Physical activities like
 - Judicious mix of interventions for sustainable harvesting of land, water and biological resources
 - Enhance the resource base
 - Increasing the productivity
 - Efficient and economic utilization
 - Appropriate technology for above.
- and
- Software of Human sensitivities like
 - Enlisting support of the people.
 - Empowering them.
 - Enhancing the creditability.
 - Equitable benefit sharing
- Capacity building at all levels.
- Enabling Policy and Legal environment to achieve above (Sharma, 1999)

It is hoped that the suggested institutional mechanism in conjunction

with above mentioned approach will lead to greater decentralization of forest management and meaningful empowerment of the locals which will be a step in the right direction towards

Sustainable Forest Development, leading to preservation of natural heritage for the posterity. This will also result in fulfilment of the cherished dream of "Man with Forests" rather than "Man versus Forests".

SUMMARY

The role and importance of forests in maintaining the life support system in terms of ecological, economic and socio-cultural framework is better understood now and accordingly the incongruous forestry administration is undergoing a paradigm shift from regulatory to participatory management. Whilst sporadic efforts were made by some self-initiated groups and individuals, the National Forest Policy, 1988 and the enabling resolution of the Government of India, 1990 coupled with recent Constitutional Amendment conferring ownership rights of minor forest produce on village level organizations, form a watershed in the saga of Joint Forest Management (JFM) in India. Foresters, though well equipped with silvicultural armoury, had to tread hitherto unknown path of sociological variables. In order to inculcate attitudinal change and capacity building, national as well as regional level training institutes are organizing orientation and training programmes covering wide array of social issues including theory and tools of participatory techniques. However, with an impressive 36,075 village level committees, jointly managing around 10.24 million hectares forests in 22 states, the outcome has been uneven for variety of reasons. JFM being driven by the "helplessness" of the state and with little mindset change, foresters tend to hold on to their territorial and silvicultural moorings and perceive JFM as a tool to win the locals by offering employment and some usufruct sharing. People, on the other hand with their past experience have little faith in state apparatus. Their aspiration is, not to remain mere passive wage earners but to become active partners and owners of the assets created. The ground reality is that apart from policy regulations and their enforcement, complex social values born out of history, culture and traditions, determine the outcome. The message is loud and clear- wherever a resilient and adaptive management has taken good care of these human sensitivities, chances to succeed are better.

संयुक्त वन प्रबन्ध से आगे

आर.सी. शर्मा

सारांश

वनों की भूमिका और महत्व को पारिस्थिकीय, आर्थिक और समाज-सांस्कृतिक चौरवटे के रूप में जीवन को सहायता पहुँचाने वाली प्रणाली को बनाए रखने के लिए अब ज्यादा अच्छी तरह समझा जा रहा है और इसलिए अटपटे वानिकी प्रशासन में अब विनिमय कर्ता प्रबन्ध कर्ता होने से हटकर एक सहभागिता वाला प्रबन्ध बनने जितना परिवर्तनकारी पैराडिगम उसका बनता जा रहा है। कुछ छिटपुट प्रयत्न स्वयम् प्रेरित वर्गों और व्यक्तियों ने पहले जरूर किए थे तथापि राष्ट्रीय वन नीति, 1988 और तत्पश्चात् भारत सरकार को अधिकार देने वाले संकल्प ने संविधान में किए गए विगत संशोधन से मिल कर ही, जिसने गौण वनोपजों पर ग्राम स्तरीय संगठनों को स्वामित्व अधिकार दिया गया है, भारत में संयुक्त वन प्रबन्ध के इतिहास में विभाजक रेखा बनाते हैं। इनसे वानिकों को यद्यपि वे वन संवर्धन उपकरणों से भलीभाँति सुसज्जित हैं समाज शास्त्रीय विचारों के अभी तक अज्ञात मार्गों पर चलना पड़ा है। उनके दृष्टिगत परिवर्तन तथा क्षमता निर्माण को प्रेरित करने के लिए राष्ट्रीय और क्षेत्रीय स्तर के प्रशिक्षण संस्थान नई-नई बातें सिखाने और प्रशिक्षण देने के कार्यक्रमों में लगे हैं जिनमें विस्तृत सामाजिक मुद्दों को लिया गया है जिनमें सहभागिता प्रविधियों के सिद्धांतों और उपकरणों को सम्मिलित किया हुआ है। किन्तु, 36075 जितनी प्रभावकारी ग्रामस्तरीय समितियों के होने पर भी जो संयुक्त रूप में लगभग 10.24 लाख हेक्टेयर वनों का 22 राज्यों में प्रबन्ध कर रही हैं, अनेक कारणों से उनकी उपलब्धियाँ सर्वत्र समान नहीं रही हैं। संयुक्त वन प्रबन्ध

राज्य की मजबूरियों और छोटे मन से किए गए परिवर्तनों के कारण, वानिकों की अपने-अपने क्षेत्रीय और वनसंवर्धन चिन्तनों तथा संयुक्त वन प्रबन्ध को स्थानीय लोगों को रोजगार तथा कुछ अफलप्रद हिस्सेदारी देकर उन्हें अपनी ओर करने का उपकरण मानने की ही रही है। स्थानीय लोगों को इसके विपरीत अपने पिछले अनुभवों के कारण राज्य की मशीनरी में कुछ ज्यादा विश्वास नहीं है। उनकी आकांक्षा मात्र निष्क्रिय रोजी कमाने वाला बनकर रहने की नहीं बल्कि निर्मित की गई परिसम्पत्तियों के सक्रिय भागीदार और स्वामी बनने की है। जमीनी वास्तविकता यह है कि नियमनों और प्रवर्तन कार्य को एक ओर रखकर इतिहास, संस्कृति और परम्पराओं से जन्म लेने वाले जटिल सामाजिक मूल्य ही इनकी उपलब्धियों को विनिश्चित करते हैं। यह संदेश स्पष्ट और मुखर है कि जहाँ-जहाँ लचीले और अनुकूलनीय प्रबन्ध ने इन मानवीय संवेदनाओं की अच्छी तरह से परवाह की है वहीं-वहीं सफलता मिलने की संभावनाएँ ज्यादा अच्छी रही हैं।

References

- Anon. (1994). An Ecological Basis for Ecosystem Management. USDA Forest Service, *General Technical Report RM-246*.
- Anon. (1997). *Antalya Declaration of the XIth World Forestry Conference, 1997*, Antalya, Turkey.
- Anon., (1988). National Forest Policy, 1988, Government of India, New Delhi.
- Anon., (1998). *Report of the Expert on Conferring Ownership Rights of MFP on Panchayat/Gram Sabhas*, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, New Delhi.
- Anon. (1998). *Proceedings of the Senior Foresters Workshop on Emerging Issues and Challenges in Forestry*, Indra Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehra Dun.
- Anon. (1998). *Pricing of Minor Forest Produce Procured by the Girijan Cooperative Corporation*, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh. Institute of Applied Manpower Research.
- Chadha, C.S. and R.C. Sharma (1998). *Theory and Practice of Forest Fringe Area Development Authority (FFDA) : Conceptual Framework* submitted to Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India, New Delhi.
- Maithani, G.P. (1998). Socio-economic Studies to Link People with Regeneration and Protection of Forests; *UNDP/ICFRE Report*, Himalayan Village Resource Development Society, Dehra Dun.
- Poffenberger, M. (1996). *Communities and Forest Management – A Report of the IUCN Working Group*.
- Rametsteiner, E. (1998). The Use of SFM-Indicators as Tools in Political and Economic Context; *IUFRO/CIFOR/FAO International Conference on Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management*, Melbourne, Australia.
- Sarin, Madhu, et al. (1996). *Who is Gaining? Who is Losing? Gender and Equity Concerns in Joint Forest Management*. NSG for JEM, SPWD, New Delhi.
- Saxena, N.C. (1997). *The Saga of Participatory Forest Management in India*, CIFOR.
- Saxena, N.C. (1998). *Leasing of Degraded Forest Lands; Working Group Report for Planning Commission*, Government of India, New Delhi.
- Sharma, R.C. (1997). Total Forest Management (TFM); *Paper presented at the XIth World Forestry Conference*, Antalya, Turkey.
- Sharma, R.C. (1998). What Ails JFM? *Paper presented at the International Seminar on Decentralization and Devolution of Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific*, Davao City, Philippines. 30 Nov-4 Dec.
- Sharma, R.C. (1999). *FAO/UNEP International Technical Consultation on Protected Area Management and Sustainable Rural Development – How can they be Reconciled?* Paper presented in Harare, Zimbabwe. October 26-29.
- Shi Kunshan et al. (1997). *China's Country Report on Forestry* APFSOS/WP/14. FAO, RAPA, Bangkok.