

NEGOTIATIONS : A CHALLENGING TASK IN JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT

ALIND RASTOGI

*Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education,
Dehra Dun (U.P.)*

Introduction

Whether the Joint Forest Management (JFM) in India is to be evolved as an institutionalized process or an organizational mandate. Before entering into such framework of questions it would be worthwhile to understand the differences in the organizational modalities and institutional modalities.

1. An organization is a rational instrument whereas an institution is a responsive adoptive mechanism which is a natural product of social needs and pressures.

2. An organization has an efficient, mechanistic and expedient entity whereas in an institution proactive member of the community is valued and prized by the society.

3. Organizational business decisions are primarily based on the principle of maximizing returns on investment whereas an institution's decisions take into account human needs and values.

4. The organization's primary emphasis remains on ends and targets. In institution equal importance is given to means and processes.

5. The internal structure and culture of an organization is governed by the logic of its activities whereas in an institution it embodies and protects commonly held norms and values of the larger society.

6. The individual-system relatedness in organization and institution can be differentiated as under :

Organization	Institution
Individual is considered as Performer of tasks for certain rewards.	Individual experiences a sense of belonging and involvement.
Thrust is on Motivation.	Thrust is on Commitment.
Limited Communication.	Broad based communication.
Individual is considered as bundle of skills and capabilities.	Individual is accepted with totality of his humaneness.
Leadership is primarily as resource control ownership.	Leadership is viewed as trusteeship.
Training and development is focussed on organizational needs.	Training takes into account individual needs aspirations and expectations.
Relatedness between members is anchored in tasks assigned.	Relatedness between members is as between human beings.

Role of a Forester

The JFM is an institutionalized process wherein the role of a forester as a Negotiator is of paramount importance. A forester with an organizational mandate has been put to a challenge of institutionalization of JFM. The real challenge lies in the pace of transformation of organizational mandate into the institutionalized process of participatory management. The present day ecological conflicts have their roots in economic compulsions, sociological stresses, technological intensification, changing consumption patterns, scarce land availability and contending resource users. Making trade-offs between competing goals is thus a necessary skill for the natural resource managers. If the trade off is not attained the FUD factors i.e. Frustration, Uncertainty and Doubts load the forester with more stress. The following conflicts remain to be negotiated by natural resource managers.

- Issue of short term livelihood needs and long term ecological conservation.
- Increasing biotic interference and limited carrying capacity of forest area.
- Resource ownership and programme ownership.
- Controls on exploitation and harvesting and increasing the scope of sharing.
- Extent of management by the people.
- Socio-cultural background and collective management ensuring equity and no gender biases.
- Poor or limited market infrastructure and emphasis on NTFP's marketing.
- Economic, political and social plurality and task singularities as collective resource sharing, recycling the benefits and participatory decision making.
- Strong authority of Forest Department and sharing of authority, responsibility,

control, facilitating empowerment.

- Demands between large users of forest products i.e. big contractors and small operators and forest users of Minor Forest Products.
- Demands between forestry and non-forestry uses of land in Reserve Forest areas (Castro, 1991).

People who are skilled in negotiation, mediation and conciliation are seen as having qualities of leadership than the brute who grows in power and then uses that power to grow more. The empowerment of people through JFM ultimately deals with diffusion, fractionalisation and thinly spreading of power among more people than concentrating in traditional structures (Rastogi, 1996). JFM represents a process of decentralized empowerment benefiting some of India's most disadvantaged groups (Poffenberger and Singh, 1991). Negotiations play major role in empowerment process where autonomy and democratic processes at community levels are facilitated.

Good negotiator produces good objectives as well as psychological results where it fits everyone's priorities. Both people and Forest Department get what they really need and make acceptable sacrifices. Every one feels good about both the deals and the process by which it is reached. Everyone is the winner and nobody has lost face. Avoidance of zero sum game (Sparks, 1982) specified the negotiation strategy as under :

- Talk about both parties interests thoroughly. Learn as much as possible about people's needs, wants and interests before proposing anything.
- Generate a lot of options. More options proposed mean more likelihood of a

quality decision having acceptance of both the sides.

- Produce recommendations for environmentally sound decisions.

Critical Errors

Three critical errors usually made by foresters in the negotiating process may be categorized as under :

1. *Prescriptive Error*: The over-reliance on short term results is not a desirable feature. The future implication may be technological, financial, social or ecological. No nutrient recycling is allowed in Arabari Model of JFM wherein the forest floors are swept for collection of leaves. A question mark has been put forth on its sustainability. The concepts of nutrient recycling, water balances and ecological security though closely related to ecological sustainability are ignored at the cost of quick economic returns. In Sukhomajri, out of 40 micro dams only 7 dams are providing irrigation. Most of the catchments were not treated before building the dams due to which irrigation pipes have got choked (Dogra, 1997). The prescriptive error relates to concentrating on the present to the exclusion of the future. Perhaps the concentration on the present is due to resource scarcity and need immediacy. JFM resolution prescribes the formation of Forest Protection Committees and its monitoring through the performance related outputs. The future considerations are avoided because there exist no scientific prediction about growth and yield potentials of Non-Timber Forest Products.

2. *Understanding Error* : These errors exist as the built in subtle differences between oneself and other party are completely ignored. These subconscious differences may

be in value definition, unfamiliarity with local customs and the customs of each other and economic size. The practice of Shifting Cultivation, once abhorred, has now been considered as a way of life for the tribals. The policing action of foresters has given way to participatory ventures. The JFM induced fears of loss of intellectual mastery and control on part of foresters are totally unfounded. They must realise that the JFM provides an opportunity to reassert the techno-sociological competencies and gain better control through sharing.

3. *Utility Error* : A natural tendency is to undervalue what one already has especially in excess. The poor tribals do not consider Teak plantations as timber resource but as fuelwood resource. Many a times a forest product is misvalued what one has to trade. Subsistence farming communities perceive forests as convertible resource for new agricultural land whereas planters and foresters consider forests repository of wealth for sustained revenue earning. However the role of these errors can be dampened if the holistic view of the problem is considered.

Quality and Pace of Negotiations

If there exists the resource conflict regarding land, labour, money, time and space, these may be negotiated quickly and a consensus solution may be evolved. In case of pathway conflict wherein each party supports achievement of an accepted goal based on concern for its own convenience or position, the consensus decisions though prolonged yet emerge as an effective solution. The value conflict is connected to a commitment or belief which arouses responses that ignore facts. It has endless tube of irrational, unrealistic demands chain-linked by emotions. The effective

solutions rarely emerge. However, longer a conflict exists more likely its importance will escalate (Berne, 1990). The quality and pace of negotiation depends on the type of conflicts. The JFM poses certain resource, pathway and value conflicts. The effective negotiations of resource and pathway conflicts may pave the way for value conflicts too to be resolved. The important

components of the negotiation process are communication, persuasion, mutual understanding, trust building, need satisfaction through management of conflicts, time power information and opportunity. The institutionalization of JFM calls for conscious and continuous efforts in this direction from natural resource managers.

SUMMARY

The negotiation skills with the foresters can play a positive role in shaping the institutionalization of Joint Forest Management (JFM) in India. The real challenge lies in the pace of transformation of organizational mandate into the institutionalized process of participatory management. The present day ecological conflicts have their roots in economic compulsions, sociological stresses, technological intensification, changing consumption patterns, scarce land availability and contending resource users. Making trade-offs between competing goals is thus a necessary skill for the natural resource managers. The paper also discusses the quantity, quality and pace of negotiations in the process of JFM.

संयुक्त वन प्रबन्ध में चुनौती भरा कार्य - वार्ताएँ

आलिन्द रस्तोगी

सारांश

भारत में संयुक्त वन प्रबन्ध को एक संस्था बनने का रूप देने में वानिकों का बातचीत करने का कौशल सकारात्मक भूमिका निभा सकता है। वास्तविक चुनौती संघटन जनादेश को सहभागिता प्रबन्ध की संस्था बनी प्रक्रिया में स्थानान्तरित करने की गति में है। आज के पारिस्थिकीय संकट की जड़ें आर्थिक विवशताओं और सामाजिक दबावों, प्रौद्योगिकीय गहनीकरण, बदलती उपभोग सज्जाओं, भूमि की अति दुर्लभता और परस्पर संघर्ष करते संसाधनों के उपयोग कर्ताओं में गई हुई है। परस्पर प्रतिस्पर्धा लक्ष्यों में व्यापार चला पाने का कौशल प्राकृतिक संसाधन प्रबन्धकों में होना परम आवश्यकता है। प्रस्तुत अभिपत्र में संयुक्त वन प्रबन्ध की प्रक्रिया में वार्ताओं की मात्रा, गुणवत्ता और गति का विवेचन किया गया है।

References

- Berne, Eric (1990). *Games people play*.
 Castro, A.P. (1991). *World Development* 19(12) :1695-1704.
 Dogra, C.S. (1997). Sukhomajri dream fails to materialize, *Times of India*, 24 April. p. 7.
 Sparks, D.B. (1982). *The dynamics of effective negotiations*, Gulf Publishing Company, Texas.
 Poffenberger, M. and Chatrapati Singh (1991). Emerging directions in Indian Forest Policy : The legal framework for JFM. *Working Paper*. No. 14. Ford Foundation, New Delhi.
 Rastogi, A. (1996). Assessment of Training Needs of Frontline forestry staff - JFM perspective. *JFM Series*. No. 20, Tata Energy Research Institute, New Delhi.