

INCORPORATING STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS IN PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT

Communication workshops: a report of proceedings

March 2005

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Workshop 1
Ecodevelopment Centre, Rahetgaon, Harda
5th November 2004

The first workshop of the Communication and Uptake Phase of the NRSP Project titled “Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management” in Harda Forest Division was held at the Rahetgaon eco-development centre, Harda. The workshop was conducted for the Divisional Officers of the Harda Forest Division and witnessed the participation of the DFO, 8 Range Officers, 3 Dy. Range Officers, 1 SDO and 21 Forest Guards.¹

Welcome: Ms. Girija Godbole,

Background of the Project: Dr. Bhaskar Vira, University of Cambridge

Objectives of the project:

- To understand the perceptions of different stakeholders in forestry in Harda
- To understand the linkage between the perceptions and policy process
- To communicate our understanding to the stakeholders involved with the help of different techniques such as street plays at the village level, and workshops at the district, divisional, state and national level.

Background of the Study: Participatory Forest Management in Harda is a Joint Forest Management (JFM) agreement between the State Forest Department and the local communities. Under this JFM agreement, popularly known as the ‘Harda Model,’ the Forest Department channelises development funds to wean local communities away from forest dependence and engage them in forest protection and development in a meaningful way. While the Forest Department views JFM in Harda as a success, some other stakeholders, notably the *Sangathans* are of the view that JFM has increased the injustices meted out to the local communities. As a result of these different perceptions there have been conflicts among the stakeholders. Meetings that have been organized

¹ For a complete list of participants see Annexure.

over the last couple of years have been conducted in a confrontationist mode that has accentuated the conflict instead of facilitating reconciliation and understanding.

The *key issue* under study was exploring the reasons why stakeholders have different perceptions regarding the same ground reality.

- Peoples perceptions are influenced by their knowledge
- This knowledge may be of three types-empirical, world view and policy and its components need not be the same across all the stakeholders.
- Every stakeholder looks at the situation in light of his knowledge and therefore his understanding of the problem and its solution is different from that of other stakeholders.

The *stakeholders* included in this study were:

- Local Community
- FD
- Media
- PRIs
- Legislators
- MTOs and NGOs
- Traders and other Market related institutions.

The *broad findings* were:

- There is a difference in stakeholder perceptions- some are in favour of the existing policy whereas others are against it
- While there are areas of conflict between the groups, there are also areas of consensus.
- Within each stakeholder group, there are differences in perception.

Where there is consensus, progress is easier. Where there is conflict, initiating dialogue is essential.

Project Time-line: Field testing the model

Period	Activities
March 2003-2005	Total Project Period
August 2003-June 2004	Field work
July –October 2004	Compilation of findings and report writing
November 2004-January 2005	Communication and Uptake

The purpose of communication and uptake is to initiate a process of dialogue that continues beyond the project period.

Impact of JFM: Mr Manish Shankar, SANKET

The field work was conducted in 24 villages by a team of six people. The criteria for the selection of villages included: presence of Sangathan; World bank funding; types of forest- Reserved Forests and Protected Forests; forest density; and revenue villages and forest village.

Some key findings from the village are:

1. In the early years, the success of JFM was due to the irrigation interventions. However, in villages like Dhega, where the land availability is low, irrigation did not have much impact on livelihood. Hence there was little positive impact.
2. The coordination between the FD and the other line departments that took place as a result of the ‘Shivirs’ (Camps) strengthened the developmental activities.
3. There has been a decrease in cattle population and a consequent decrease in milk production mainly because of the non-availability of fodder. Dairy activities have come to a complete halt. Earlier the decrease in the free grazing was on account of the JFM activities. Recently, however, this is due to the weed infestation in the area.
4. People’s participation in forest protection has decreased substantially. In the first few years of JFM, there was rotational patrolling. This practice has stopped and now the committees have appointed watchers for forest protection. These watchers do not carry out their functions.
5. The Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme had a positive impact on household income and also resulted in better protection of bamboo forests.

However, there are also villages where there has been no improvement in the bamboo forests.

6. There has been an improvement in the relationship between the FD and the people. However, the relationship between the FD and the people has once again become tense on account of the land related conflict.
7. The practise of *Begar* has completely stopped. The SAS claims that its activities in the villages is responsible for this achievement, and that JFM has had no role to play of its activities in the villages and not due to JFM.
8. There has been an improvement in the forest density in several villages. At the same time, the forests in other villages have degraded further.
9. The infrastructure that was created as a part of the programme did not really impact the poor and the marginalized. It only helped the influential people of the village.
10. Distress migration has decreased.

PRI view of impacts:

1. Leadership that the FD had provided, no longer exists
2. There has been a decrease in the illegal felling, illegal grazing and forest fire. Lower level Panchayat functionaries feel that whereas earlier, this may have been on account of JFM, now it is because of weed infestation.

Points raised during the Discussion:

1. *Impact of JFM: 25% people from Dhega benefited from the works. Is that not an achievement? Further, there are three dhanas in Dhega. In two there was an improvement. The third was not so successful due to different reasons. Yet overall there was a positive impact.*
2. *Influential people have benefited the most: When JFM started, there were very few influential people. Almost all were homogenous in terms of socio-economic status. Elite emerged out of benefits when check dams were made. Those whose lands were adjoining the dams got more benefit. As a result a class of elite emerged. Also, benefits depend on who works harder.*
3. *FD has control over finances: FD has administrative control. But there are some powerful committees where it is not possible to use any funds without the consent of the committee. In these committees if fund is used contrary to the wishes of the committee or without their approval, they protest that no proposal has been made.*
4. *FD on emergence of watcher system- appointment of watchers for forest protection: Earlier there was rotational patrolling. Then the watcher system started because there was a decrease in the interest level. Further, the committee members found that their other work suffered with the system of rotational*

patrolling. Therefore they decided to appoint two people so that the forests could be saved and the work could also continue.

5. *There have been no benefits: there cannot be a sudden rise in the benefits. Moreover, in some cases, the JFM fund was withdrawn and used squandered in gambling. This affected the relationship between the FD and the committees.*

We cannot say that there have been no benefits. Yet, there have been some who have not benefited

6. *Improvement of relationship between the community and the FD: The relationship between the community and the department has improved. At the same time the expectations have increased. The Department could undertake large scale entry point activities only because of the funding. There is still some work going on, but not on the scale that it was earlier.*

Land and Rights Issues: Mr. Pankaj Lal, Winrock International India

1. *Land rights and encroachment:*

The legal position :

- The forest villages in MP are situated in the reserved and the protected forests and are under the administrative control of the forest department.
- The MP Forest Village Act 1977 guarantees 2.5 hectare land. People have the wrong perception that with the conversion of forest village to revenue villages they will automatically get ownership rights over the land they are presently cultivating. The process for conferring of land rights is long and requires the Central Government to amend the existing law.

The MTOs believe that the land belongs to the people and that the Forest Department has no role to play in this respect. They state that conflicts cannot be resolved without addressing the land related issues. Further, they demand that all adults in the village should be given 5 acres of land and that existing encroachments should be regularised. Village level respondents state that the powerful people of the village who have the support of the FD carry out the encroachments. There are two different views in the FD, on the issue of encroachment. One group feels that the encroachment has decreased on account of the irrigation facilities as well as the increased awareness among the people. The other group feels that encroachment has increased owing to the Governments policy of regularising encroachments. Further, the committees are unable to control encroachment since members' relatives are often the encroachers. The FD also feels that there is lack of political vision on the issue. Finally, they believe that the MTOs have been encouraging encroachment. The legislators believe that the people have the first

right over the land and that the encroachments should be regularised but only by following the due process. The NGOs are against regularisation of encroachment.

2. Orange Areas: There is a lack of political will in resolving the issue, and lack of coordination between the Forest Department and the Revenue Department. MTOs perceive that the FD interprets the Supreme Court orders in such a manner that suits its purpose. This has been seen in the case of evictions.
3. Nistar: The MTOs believe that the restrictions on transporting of fuelwood by using bullock carts has increased the difficulties of the people since they now have to engage in fuelwood collection more frequently. They further state that the timber made available through the *nistari* depots is not of good quality and cannot be used for repairing of houses. Moreover, the depots are far from the villages and the timber available through them is expensive. The NGOs feel that the *nistar* Policy needs to be made more 'people friendly.' FD feels that there is an imbalance between the demand and the supply of *nistar* and that is why the 'right' has been converted into a 'privilege.' The village level respondents state that the problem of nistar has decreased mainly since PoRs are no longer issued by the Department and the JFMC now controls the *nistar* extraction Legislators maintain that the people have the first right over forest produce and believe that the FD should make the people aware of their rights.
4. MTOs in politics: The MTOs state "*ya to hum rajniti ko niyantrit karenge, ya fir rajniti hume niyantrit karegi.*" (If we do not participate/ exercise control in politics then politics will control us.) Further, they believe that contesting the elections is necessary for them to be able to reach out to the people. Participating in politics gives them a chance to exercise pressure on the Government. The FD believes that the MTOs are not really concerned about the people. Instead, they are only following a political agenda.
5. Conversion of Forest villages to Revenue Villages: The FD believes that not all the FVs are in favour of such a conversion. On the other hand, the MTOs state that most people are in favour of a conversion. At the same time, the NGOs do not support the conversion of forest villages to revenue villages since they feel

that this will lead to increase in population of the villages and degradation of the forests.

Discussion

1. *The Orange area land is with the Forest Department. There is no confusion regarding that.*
2. *Conversion of FV to RV: In most cases the people do not want such a conversion because they are familiar with the FD. If the villages are converted into revenue villages they will have to deal with multiple Government agencies. As far as credit is concerned, they are still getting credit for agriculture. The people have the wrong belief that if the conversion takes place then the land will be theirs. In fact, with the conversion, they will lose their land. Since there are conflicting views, whose viewpoint should we take into account?*

JFMC functioning: Ms. Girija Godbole:

1. Role of Committees: The FD view is that the committees are there only to assist the FD. Therefore there is no need for legally empowering them. The Village level respondents perceive that the committees are not able to do what they were mandated. There has been no livelihood generation through the committees and these committees have been unable to meet expectations.. The MTOs, and the PRIs feel that there is no work visible. The MTOs further add that the committees exist only on paper.
2. Capacity of the Committee and their capabilities: Village level respondents feel that there are some committee members who do not know that they are members. Further, they feel that training provided was insufficient. Additional training is required especially for record maintenance. Finally, the MTO respondents hold that the committees are competent but the FD does not want to recognise this competence.
3. Decision making in the Committees: Village respondents state that there is no participation of women, and the marginalized. Also, the meetings are irregular. MTO respondents state that the committee members have no say in the decisions. Since there are no meetings, the committee is completely unaware and only the FD point of view holds.
4. Conflicts: FD feels that there have been no conflicts with the formation of the committees since the allotment of forest area was in consultation with the community. Wherever conflicts did occur, these were resolved through

dialogue. The MTO respondents state that conflicts have risen since the start of JFM, especially in the context of nistar.

5. Accountability and Transparency: Village respondents feel that there is no transparency in financial transactions and that they do not get any information. FD however believes that the committee knows.

Discussion:

1. *Transparency: Even we do not understand the heads under which the funds have been allotted. However, the committees know the fund flow and the expenses in their JFMCs. These are read out in the meetings. However, we do not keep the records with them because they may be destroyed and then FD will be held responsible.*
2. *Decision Making: Only closure of areas is as per the DFOs understanding, and there are technical reasons for this. The nature of works to be carried out is decided by the people. The Department only works out the technicalities. At times, the works suggested cannot be taken up since they are not feasible, or because the department has financial constraints. In some cases, the people take the decision that a work has to be done. However, they do not follow up, and as a result do not know that the work has been completed.*
3. *There were some villages where interventions were carried out under the Watershed Mission. Since the FD was the implementing agency for this project, other villagers feel that the FD has been biased.*
4. *Lack of employment and livelihood generation: Employment is not the only mandate of JFM.*

Apoorva Mishra and Anirban Ganguly: PRI role in JFM

Discussion:

1. *Conflict between the JFMCs and the PRIs:*
 - *DFO: Under the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, the PRIs cannot do any work in the forest areas. Hence there is no question of any conflict. Though the PRI is a constitutional body, it has to respect the FCA. Also, we are the nodal agencies for works of the Zilla Panchayat. Hence there is a cooperation*
 - *BV: In the villages, community assets that were created under JFM have been handed over to the PRIs. If these assets are misused then there are chances of a conflict.*
 - *NK: Conflict may arise on account of MFP management.*
 - *One possible solution is the recognition of the JFMC as a body of the Gram Sabha.*

Media and Legislators: Dr. Bhaskar Vira:

The study reveals that several stakeholders including Media persons and Legislators do not get information about the FD's work. Their source of information in this respect is

restricted to such sources newspapers, MTOs etc- that give them only a one-sided picture. As a result only the problems and short-comings of governments efforts are highlighted whereas the success and other positive outcomes remain unknown. This lack of information has implications for Transparency.

Discussion: We accept that our 'presentation' has been weak.

Annexure

List of Participants

FD Participants

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri. Atul Khera	DFO, Harda
2.	Shri. VS Pandey	SDO, North Harda
3.	Shri.VK Dubey	RFO, Magardha
4.	Shri. VD Sharma	RFO, Borpani
5.	Shri.HN Mishra	RFO, Rahetgaon
6.	Shri. HK Gaur	Dy.RFO Rahetgaon
7.	Shri. Ramesh Kumar Verma	FG, Rahetgaon
8.	Shri. Gaya Prasad Patel	FG, Rahetgaon
9.	Shri. Ramesh Kumar Chandel	FG, Tema gaon
10.	Shri. Hargovind Misra	FG, Temagaon
11.	Shri. Shiv Prasad Atrolia	RO, Borpani
12.	Shri. Durg Singh Tomar	FG, Temagaon
13.	Shri. Sanjay Kumar Pradhan	FG, Borpani
14.	Shri. Jivan Lal Sinha	Dy.RFO Temagaon
15.	Shri. Ram Khillon Gaur	FG, Temagaon
16.	Shri. Jagdesh Prasad Atre	FG, Temagaon
17.	Shri. Vinod Kumar Urpache	FG, Magardha
18.	Shri. Vijay Barkhane	FG, Rahetgaon
19.	Md.Sarif khan	FG, Borpani
20.	Shri. Durga prasad Verma	FG, Magardha
21.	Shri. Dwaka prasad Raghuvanshi	FG, Borpani
22.	Shri. Ram Vilas Verma	FG, Borpani
23.	Shri. Manohar Dhruve	FG, Borpani
24.	Shri. R B Bhargava	RO, Borpani
25.	Shri. Kamal Singh Chavan	FG, Rahetgaon
26.	Shri. Khemraj Burman	FG, Rahetgaon
27.	Shri. RD Rao	RO, Borpani
28.	Shri. Raghvedra Srivastava	FG, Temagoan
29.	Ms. Kumari Sarita Uduke	FG, Temagaon
30.	Shri. RK Singh	Dy. RFO, Rahetgaon
31.	Shri. S K Shukla	RO, Rahetgaon
32.	Shri. Mahesh Chadra Pagare	FG, Rahetgaon
33.	Shri. Ajay Kumar Saksena	RFO, Temagaon
34.	Shri. Kamal Singh Thakur	FG, Rahetgaon

Workshop 2
Hotel Raj Residency, Harda
6th November 2004

The second workshop of the Communication and Uptake Phase of the NRSP Project titled “Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management” in Harda Forest Division was held at Hotel Raj Residency, Harda. The workshop was conducted for district level government functionaries, as well as representatives from MTOs, NGOs, political parties and the Media².

Welcome: Ms. Girija Godbole

Question: Did the research group have a ‘local guide?’

BV: Yes. We had a field team that was posted here.

Background of the Project: Dr. Bhaskar Vira

Objectives of the project:

- To understand the perceptions of different stakeholders in forestry in Harda
- To understand the linkage between the perceptions and policy process
- To communicate our understanding to the stakeholders involved with the help of different techniques such as street plays at the village level, and workshops at the district, divisional, state and national level

Question: What is the meaning of ‘davedaar’ () as used in the project? There is a difference between ‘daavedaar’ and beneficiary.

BV: We have used the term to mean stakeholder-that is, anyone who has an influence or is influenced by the forest management. Our focus is on forest management and not forests. The stakeholders that we have looked at are:

- Local Community
- FD
- Media
- PRIs
- Legislators
- MTOs and NGOs
- Traders and other Market related institutions.

² For a complete list of participants, see Annexure.

Background of the Project: Participatory Forest Management in Harda is a Joint Forest Management (JFM) agreement between the State Forest Department and the local communities. Under this JFM agreement, popularly known as the ‘Harda Model,’ the Forest Department channelises development funds to wean local communities away from forest dependence and engage them in forest protection and development in a meaningful way. While the Forest Department views JFM in Harda as a success, some other stakeholders, notably the *Sangathans* are of the view that JFM has increased the injustices meted out to the local communities. As a result of these different perceptions there have been conflicts among the stakeholders. Meetings that have been organized over the last couple of years have been conducted in a confrontationist mode that has accentuated the conflict instead of facilitating reconciliation and understanding.

The *key issue* under study was- understanding why stakeholders have different perceptions regarding the same ground reality.

- Peoples perceptions are influenced by their knowledge
- This knowledge may be of three types-empirical, world view and policy and its components need not be the same across all the stakeholders.
- Every stakeholder looks at the situation in light of his knowledge and therefore his understanding of the problem and its solution is different from that of other stakeholders.

Discussion:

In addition to knowledge of policy, change and world view, Statistics and numbers also affect problem definition. Whenever a programme like this is initiated, there are very high expectations. When these expectations are not met, then people feel let down. Displeasure with JFM has come in only after experiencing it for a period of ten years.

Project Time-line: Field testing the model

Period	Activities
March 2003-2005	Total Project Period
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November 2004-January 2005	Communication and Uptake

The purpose of communication and uptake is to initiate a process of dialogue that continues beyond the project period.

Land and Rights related Issues: Mr. Pankaj Lal, WII

Land rights and encroachment:

The legal position

- The forest villages in MP are situated in the reserved and the protected forests and are under the administrative control of the forest department.
- The MP Forest Village Act 1977 guarantees 2.5 hectare land. People have the wrong perception that with the conversion of forest village to revenue villages they will automatically get ownership rights over the land they are presently cultivating. The process for conferring of land rights is long and requires the Central Government to amend the existing law.

The MTOs believe that the land belongs to the people and that the Forest Department has no role to play in this respect. They state that conflicts cannot be resolved without addressing the land related issues. Further, they demand that all adults in the village should be given 5 acres of land and that existing encroachments should be regularised. Village level respondents state that the powerful people of the village who have the support of the FD carry out the encroachments. There are two different views in the FD, on the issue of encroachment. One group feels that the encroachment has decreased on account of the irrigation facilities as well as the increased awareness among the people. The other group feels that encroachment has increased owing to the Governments policy of regularising encroachments. Further, the committees are unable to control encroachment since members' relatives are often the encroachers. The FD also feels that there is lack of political vision on the issue. Finally, they believe that the MTOs have been encouraging encroachment. The legislators believe that the people have the first right over the land and that the encroachments should be regularised but only by following the due process. The NGOs are against regularisation of encroachment.

Orange Areas: There is a lack of political will in resolving the issue, and lack of coordination between the Forest Department and the Revenue Department. MTOs perceive that the FD interprets the Supreme Court orders in such a manner that suits its purpose. This has been seen in the case of evictions.

Nistar: The MTOs believe that the restrictions on transporting of fuelwood by using bullock carts has increased the difficulties of the people since they now have to engage in fuelwood collection more frequently. They further state that the timber made available through the nistar depots is not of good quality and cannot be used for repairing of houses. Moreover, the depots are far from the villages and the timber available through them is expensive. The NGOs feel that the Nistar Policy needs to be made more people – centred. FD feels that there is an imbalance between the demand and the supply of nistar and that is why the ‘right’ has been converted into a ‘privilege.’ The village level respondents state that the problem of nistar has decreased mainly since PoRs are no longer issued by the Department and the JFMC now controls the nistar extraction. Legislators maintain that the people have the first right over forest produce and believe that the FD should make the people aware of their rights.

MTOs in politics: The MTOs state “*ya to hum rajniti ko niyantrit karenge, ya fir rajniti hume niyantrit karegi.*” (If we do not participate/ exercise control in politics then politics will control us.) Further, they believe that contesting the elections is necessary for them to be able to reach out to the people. Participating in politics gives them a chance to exercise pressure on the Government. The FD believes that the MTOs are not really concerned about the people. Instead, they are only following a political agenda.

Conversion of Forest villages to Revenue Villages: The FD believes that not all the FVs are in favour of such a conversion. On the other hand, the MTOs state that most people are in favour of a conversion. At the same time, the NGOs do not support the conversion of forest villages to revenue villages since they feel that this will lead to increase in population of the villages and degradation of the forests.

Discussion:

- a. *No one has mentioned population pressure as one of the reasons for the problem. Also, the ration of people to forests has been changing. There has been an increase in population accompanied with a decrease in the livelihood opportunities. This has led to the increase in pressure on the forest resources.*
- b. *All illegal felling and encroachment in the forests is because of the Adivasi Mukti Sangathan*
- c. *The subject (JFM) is so vast that different perceptions are natural.*
- d. *Were political organisations also engaged in the study?*

- e. *Family based forest management is the real JFM: we need to estimate what the forest produce will be after a period of 'X' years. Whatever is the increased production at time 'X' should be given to the family involved in protection as a reward. Only when the forest land is leased in this way will there be a change. People get interested in environment when it is converted into trade, as in the case of Lok Vaniki.*

Apoorva Mishra

Discussion:

- *Schemes and programmes that are implemented through the Panchayat are mainly Central Government Schemes. Most of these schemes are social welfare schemes wherein the FD approval even in FV is not always necessary. Also, the FD approaches PRIs for funds for works.*
- *One of the main reasons for the dissatisfaction with JFM was that the people did not get benefits. Since there was no legal basis for the agreement there was nothing that could be done.*

Anirban Ganguly

Discussion:

- *The same people are in politics, Panchayat and JFM. Therefore there is no question of conflict*
- *It is not true that the Panchayat members do not have knowledge of the forests.*
- *The only role of the Forest Guard and the Range Officer is to coordinate the activities of the JFMCs. The Gram Panchayat can also execute that role.*

JFMC functioning: Ms. Girija Godbole

Role of Committees: The FD view is that the committees are there only to assist the FD. Therefore there is no need for legally empowering them. The Village level respondents perceive that the committees are not able to do what they were mandated. There has been no livelihood generation through the committees and these committees have been unable to meet expectations.. The MTOs, and the PRIs feel that there is no work visible. The MTOs further add that the committees exist only on paper.

Capacity of the Committee and their capabilities: Village level respondents feel that there are some committee members who do not know that they are members. Further, they feel that training provided was insufficient. Additional training is required especially for record maintenance. Finally, the MTO respondents hold that the committees are competent but the FD does not want to recognise this competence.

Decision making in the Committees: Village respondents state that there is no participation of women, and the marginalized. Also, the meetings are irregular. MTO respondents state that the committee members have no say in the decisions. Since there are no meetings, the committee is completely unaware and only the FD point of view holds. Sometimes, however, the influential people are able to have a say in the decision making process.

Conflicts: FD feels that there have been no conflicts with the formation of the committees since the allotment of forest area was in consultation with the community. Wherever conflicts did occur, these were resolved through dialogue. The MTO respondents state that conflicts have risen since the start of JFM, especially in the context of nistar.

Accountability and Transparency: Village respondents feel that there is no transparency in financial transactions and that they do not get any information. FD however believes that the committee knows.

Discussion

- *Cattle grazing in the forest helped the ecosystem. Then the FD imposed a complete ban and the forests suffered.*
- *No matter what the arrangement, if the implementing agency has no hidden motives, then anything can be achieved.*
- *Even today, the Forest Guard is called 'Maharaj' (King).*
- *There are serious limitations in the implementation.*

Impact of JFM: Mr. Manish Shankar, SANKET

The field work was conducted in 24 villages by a team of six people. The criteria for the selection of villages included: presence of Sangathan; World bank funding; types of forest- Reserved Forests and Protected Forests; forest density; and revenue villages and forest village. Some key findings from the village are:

Forest Fire: The village level respondents state that forest fires have increased as a result of *mabua* collection, passage through the forest areas in the night, conflicts and also because the people believe that burning of the forest floor will result in better fodder yield. MTOs perceive that the forest fires have increased to hide illicit felling. The FD

however feels that the forest fires have decreased and there are no more cases of deliberate fires.

Protection: MTOs do not perceive any positive impact of JFM on the forests. They feel that peoples participation in forest protection has decreased substantially. In the first few years of JFM, there was rotational patrolling. This practice has stopped and now the committees have appointed watchers for forest protection. These watchers do not carry out their functions. Some NGOs however state that JFM has led to an increase in forest cover especially on account of decrease in forest fires. At the village level, respondents note that there has been an improvement in the forest density in several villages. At the same time, the forests in other villages have degraded further. The FD holds that committees have been engaged in protection works. Therefore there has been a increase in forest cover and wildlife population.

Grazing: The FD perceives a decrease in the grazing in the forest on account of the works of the committee. The village level respondents state that there has been a decrease in cattle population and a consequent decrease in milk production mainly because of the non-availability of fodder. Dairy activities have come to a complete halt. Earlier the decrease in the free grazing was on account of the JFM activities. Recently, however, this is due to the weed infestation in the area. Some MTO respondents feel that the restrictions on grazing are uncalled for since the villagers need fodder and do not, in any case, leave the cattle to graze in the plantations.

Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme: The village level respondents feel that the Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme has had a positive impact on household income and has also resulted in better protection of bamboo in the forests. However, there are also villages where there has been no improvement in the bamboo forests. In this respect, the MTOs feel that only those who supported the FD were included in the scheme.

Relationship between FD and People. The village level respondents feel that there has been an improvement in the relationship between the FD and the people. However, this relationship has once again become tense on account of the land related conflict. The MTOs believe that the differences between the people and the department persist. In fact, they feel that the balance of power has further tilted toward the Department since

the real power remains with the department. The NGOs however, feel that there has been a shift in power in favour of the people. Senior level FD respondents believe that before JFM, the relationship of the Department with the people was one of hostility and distrust. Post-JFM, they feel there has been an improvement in the relationship. Field level respondents, on the other hand feel that this relationship was always pleasant and continues to be so.

Begar: The practise of *Begar* has completely stopped. The SAS claims that this achievement has been on account of its activities in the villages and not due to JFM.

Infrastructure Development: The NGOs perceive an improvement in infrastructure on account of JFM. The MTOs believe that the infrastructure that was created as a part of the programme did not really impact the poor and the marginalized. It only helped the influential people of the village. With respect to infrastructure development, the FD perceives that the infrastructure development that took place as a part of the entry point activities has resulted in benefits to the people especially on account of the wage opportunity that was created through these works. The respondents further state that the mandate of the department is not rural development rather it is forestry. The department however, can serve as the implementing agency for government schemes.

Discussion:

- a. *It is a social phenomenon that the powerful people take control of the benefits*
- b. *A number of good works have been carried out through JFM. These include irrigation works and financial assistance to people. Irrigation works were carried out throughout, but more in the earlier phase.*
- c. *Even the examples of 'negative' villages or village where JFM has been unsuccessful should be kept forward. By only citing the 'positive' examples, it seems like the workshop has been organised only to please the press and the politicians.*
- d. *Questions may be raised on the role of the Sangathans in making JFM a success or failure. It is necessary to use Constitutional means to advocate for peoples rights.*
- e. *From the presentation it seems like there is more focus on the perceptions of the FD and the Sangathan rather than the people.*
- f. *What is the teams' assessment of the impact of JFM?*

The Way Forward : Dr. Bhaskar Vira:

The broad findings were:

- There is a difference in stakeholder perceptions- some are in favour of the existing policy whereas others are against it
- While there are areas of conflict between the groups, there are also areas of consensus.
- Within each stakeholder group, there are differences in perception.

Where there is consensus, progress is easier. Where there is conflict, initiating dialogue is essential. The essential question is how to take the findings of this study further. There needs to be communication among the stakeholders so that the policy process can be influenced.

Annexure
List of Participants

	Name	Organisation
1	Shri.Sunder Singh	Samavesh
2	Shri. Gauri Shankar Mukati	President, BJP Harda
3	Shri.Prashuram Tiade	Aide et Action,Harda
4	Shri.MaheshPatel	Ambedkar Vicharmanch
5	Shri.Sher Singh Malviya	
6	Smt. Sangeeta Tale	
7	Shri. Anil Patel	President, Dist. Congress. Committee.
8	Shri. Hemant Tale	Nirantar
9	Shri. Prahlad Sharma	Bureau., Dainik Bhaskar
10	Shri. Sukhram Vamane	Nirantar
11	Shri. Santosh Cholkar	Nirantar
12	Shri. Ram Vilas Mandrai	
13	Shri. Hemant Chaurasia	
14	Shri. Dinesh Malvia	Nirantar
15	Shri. Ajay Jain	
16	Kumari Rita Gaur	
17	Nasren Banu	Nirantar
18	Shri. Raja Patel	
19	Shri. Manohar Das Sharma	
20	Shri. Suresh Jain	
21	Shri. Kamal Patel	
22	Shri. Ashok Gurjar	Krishak Jagriti, Bhopal
22	Shri. Hari Mohan Sharma	Nirantar

Workshop 3

Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management Cambridge Harda Project

Workshop December 13, 2004 Satpuda Bhavan, Bhopal

At the state level in Madhya Pradesh, two workshops were conducted to communicate the findings of the NRSP Project titled “Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management” in Harda Forest Division. The first of these was conducted at Satpuda Bhavan on December 13, 2004 for the Senior Level officers of the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department. Officers of the ranks CF, CCF and PCCF attended this workshop.³

Welcome on behalf of FD: Shri. AK Joshi, CCF JFM

Welcome: Ms. Girija Godbole

GG welcomed the participants and presented the objectives of the project, the project-timeline, and introduced the partners.

Project Background: Dr. Bhaskar Vira

BV presented the background of the project, and the methodology used.

Land and Other Rights Issues- Mr. Pankaj Lal, WII

- **Land Rights:**

The MTOs believe that the land belongs to the people and that the Forest Department has no role to play in matters of forestry and forest management. They state that conflicts cannot be resolved without addressing the land related issues. Further, they demand that all adults in the village should be given 5 acres of land and that existing encroachments should be regularised.

³ For a complete list of participants, see Annexure.

Discussion:

In response to the Sangathan's demand for 5 acres land for all adults, and at the same time, demand for the regularisation of the encroached land, a participant wanted to know what the Sangathans demand was in cases where the encroachment is less than 5 acres.

• Encroachment:

All Sangathan respondents were against removal of encroachment. They believe that some day the entire forest will belong to them-“*Pura yakin hain humko, Ek din jaroor aayega, Jab mor jaisa nachne ka, Sara jungle hamara hoga.*” According to them, unemployment and mechanisation (use of harvesters and road rollers) are the main causes of encroachment. NGOs are against the regularization of all encroachment. They further believe that the Sangathan people are indulging in illegal felling to extend cultivated land

Discussion:

- 1. With respect to the Sangathan perception 'saara jungle hamara hoga...' a participant inquired if the term 'hamara' implied that the forest would belong to the people or the Sangathan. SS responded that the Sangathans believe that they are the representatives of the people, so the forest will be of the community and not the Sangathan, per se.*
- 2. In response to the NGO perception 'against demand...' a participant wanted to know if NGOs support some encroachment. SS clarified that the NGOs want a 'case-by-case' approach and are against a blanket regularisation of all encroachment.*
- 3. A participant wanted to know if the project team had been able to get the responses of NGOs engaged in conservation in MP. BV replied that there were no such NGOs in Harda.*

Legal Position on Encroachment: The forest villages in MP are situated in the reserved and the protected forests and are under the administrative control of the forest department. The MP Forest Village Act 1977 guarantees 2.5 ha land. People have the wrong perception that with the conversion of forest village to revenue villages they will automatically get ownership rights over the land they are presently cultivating. The process for conferring of land rights is long and requires the Central Government to amend the existing law.

Discussion

(a) *Area to be allotted as per lease: There was a discussion on the legal provisions for allotment of pattas. The key positions in this regard were:*

FD:

- *There is no legal provision for forest villages in the Protected Forests. FVs can only be in the Reserved Forests*

SU:

- *There is no legal provision that states FVs can only be in the reserved forests. If there is a departmental circular etc. to that effect then we are unaware of it.*

FD:

- *2.5 ha is the upper limit for allotment. It is not necessary that all be given 2.5 ha.*

SU:

- *Neither the law nor the pattas state that 2.5 is the upper limit.*

BV:

- *the point that is being made here is that there is a difference in the demands of the MTOs – they want 5 acres land per adult and in the forest villages, they want 2.5 ha allotted.*

(b) *Strength of NGOs*

A participant from the FD wanted to know if the qualitative and quantitative strength of the Sangathans had been analysed. SS replied that such analysis had been undertaken based on the estimates of elections and the election results. A participant pointed out that election results could be mis-leading and that “elections are a different matter altogether.”

(Further perceptions presented on the issue of encroachment...)

There are two points of view within the FD with respect to encroachment. One group feels that encroachment has decreased on account of the irrigation facilities as well as the increased awareness among the people. The other group feels that encroachment has increased owing to the Governments policy of regularising encroachments. Moreover, the committees are unable to control encroachment since members' relatives are often the encroachers and the Sangathans have been encouraging encroachment. The Legislators perceive the people as having the first right over the land. They feel that encroachments should be regularised but only by following the due process. The community perceives that the powerful people of the village who have the support of the FD carry out the encroachments.

- **Orange Areas**

There is a lack of political will in resolving the issue, and lack of coordination between the Forest Department and the Revenue Department. The Sangathans perceive that the FD interprets the Supreme Court orders in such a manner that suits its purpose. This has been seen in the case of evictions. The FD view as expressed during the workshop at Rahetgaon, is that the Orange area land is with the Forest Department. There is no confusion regarding that.

▪ **Nistar**

The MTOs believe that the restrictions on transporting of fuelwood by using bullock carts has increased the difficulties of the people since they now have to engage in fuelwood collection more frequently. They further state that the timber made available through the nistari depots is not of good quality and cannot be used for repairing of houses. Moreover, the depots are far from the villages and the timber available through them is expensive. The Legal Position on nistar is as follows: There has been a systematic erosion of nistar from a “right” to a “concession.” The rights to bonafide use of forests products admitted as rights in revenue records have been diluted to privileges. Subsequent enactments such as M.P Protected Forest Rules, 1960 and MP Disposal of Timber and Forest produce Rules, 1974 recognized the legal basis to Nistar but regulated it as privileges. Subsequent Nistar Policy & the JFM resolutions further diluted these privileges to concessions and favours, subject to the availability of the material. Further, the “Facility” has been provided only to the villages lying within the periphery of 5 kms from the forests. The present JFM resolution further makes entitlement to *nistar* subject to the discretion of the DFO and empowers DFO to deprive any villager of the facility to derive *nistar*. Such systematic erosions of rights are bound to give rise to conflicts in terms of access and use of forest products for bonafide community use.

Discussion

There was a discussion on the status of nistar as a right or a privilege. According to one participant unless the rights were recorded in the wajib-ul-urq, they cannot be rights. SU differed from this point of view and responded that the Wajib-ul-urq is the record of public rights over private land. Nistar rights were recorded in the nistar patrak, which is the record of public rights over public lands. These were prepared by the Revenue Department and in these, nistar was recorded as a ‘haq.’ The term ‘riyayat’ came in only after 1959. The FD participant reported that the records of 1970 only talk of riyayat and there is no mention of ‘haq.’ Further, during the settlement, rights were extinguished or compensation was made. According to SU, the settlement of rights does not necessarily mean extinguishing of rights.

(Perceptions on Nistar continued)

On the issue of nistar, some legislators felt that the forest fringe villagers should be allowed to meet their bonafide needs from forests free of cost. Further, they considered the FD responsible for creating awareness on the community's rights. Some legislators were unhappy with the demarcation of the forest boundaries. Most of the legislators felt that the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 need amendment. The NGOs feel that the Nistar Policy needs to be made more people – centred. FD feels that there is an imbalance between the demand and the supply of nistar and that is why the 'right' has been converted into a 'privilege.' The village level respondents state that the problem of nistar has decreased mainly since PoRs are no longer issued by the Department and the JFMC now controls the nistar extraction. Legislators maintain that the people have the first right over forest produce and believe that the FD should make the people aware of their rights.

▪ **Conversion of Forest Villages to Revenue Villages**

The FD believes that not all the Forest Villages are in favour of such a conversion. At the Rahetgaon workshop they expressed that "In most cases the people do not want such a conversion because they are familiar with the FD. If the villages are converted into revenue villages they will have to deal with multiple Government agencies. As far as credit is concerned, they are still getting credit for agriculture. The people have the wrong belief that if the conversion takes place then the land will be theirs. In fact, with the conversion, they will lose their land. Since there are conflicting views, whose viewpoint should we take into account" On the other hand, the MTOs state that most people are in favour of a conversion. At the same time, the NGOs do not support the conversion of forest villages to revenue villages since they feel that this will lead to increase in population of the villages and degradation of the forests.

Discussion:

A participant from the FD wanted to know the Sangathan view on revenue villages in Forest Areas and whether they perceived these villages as a "comfortable example." SS responded that the Sangathans are concerned with a broader issue of land rights. Conversion of forest villages to revenue villages is seen as a first step.

▪ Sangathan participation in politics

The MTOs state “*ya to hum rajniti ko niyantrit karenge, ya fir rajniti hume niyantrit karegi.*” (If we do not participate/ exercise control in politics then politics will control us.) Further, they believe that contesting the elections is necessary for them to be able to reach out to the people. Participating in politics gives them a chance to exercise pressure on the Government. The FD and the Legislators believe that the MTOs are not really concerned about the people. Instead, they are only following a political agenda. Respondents from the Media believe that everybody has right to stand in elections. Finally, the NGOs perceive that the Sangathans have brought forest management to centre stage.

Discussion

A participant expressed the view that Sangathans are creating the background for a naxalite movement. Another participant, however, clarified that this view is a personal view. There is no evidence to support this.

Role of Panchayat in Forest Management: Ms. Nanki Kaur, TERI

- There are many policy reforms that aim at facilitating synergies between JFM and PRI. Eg. 2000 Resolution – Sarpanch to reside over initial meeting and, 2001 Resolution– Gram Sabha approval essential for the functioning of committee.
- The policy problems are -Forest management does not facilitate social justice; Decision-making process not participatory; No change in rights and ownership pattern; Benefit-sharing mechanism skewed toward FD; Forest management has not sustained the community's interest.
- Perceptions on role of PRIs: The district level PRI respondents perceived a monitoring role for PRI since the PRIs lack capacity in terms of funds, functionaries and knowledge to engage in forestry. They do not see any institutional conflict. At the block level, the respondents also perceive only a monitoring role on account of lack of transparency and ineffectiveness of PRIs in facilitating social justice- corruption, elite domination, and political agenda. At the village level the PRI respondents perceive a monitoring role on account of corruption, lack of transparency and lack of awareness among the PRIs. MTOs do not perceive any role for the PRIs since they are corrupt and their 'own house

is not in order.’ There are two points of view among the Legislators. Some perceive that the JFMC should maintain a separate identity and the PRIs should have only a monitoring role since they are corrupt and lack the capacity to manage and protect. Also, their involvement will lead to politicisation of issues since the PRIs are political bodies. Others however feel that the PRIs should exercise the constitutional mandate to avoid parallel institutions. The FD perceives that the PRI has no role on account of the Forest Conservation Act.

Discussion

A FD participant inquired about the respondents at the state level, and whether people were aware that they have a role especially in the planning process. Further, in response to the FD perception (divisional level) that the PRIs have no role on account of the Forest Conservation Act, a participant pointed out that the FCA has no bearing on NTFP. Another participant expressed the view that PESA is not applicable in the Reserved Forests and Protected Forests. PESA extends only to the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha is a village body, defined by the village boundary. The village boundary does not include forest compartments. SU pointed out that the GS has ownership right over MFP. At the same time, there is no legal definition of MFP. The 1997 amendment states that the GS has ‘control over land, water and forests.’ The JFM resolution also states that the ‘GS will constitute the JFMC.’ A FD participant stated that ground reality is hazy because the RF/PF are not attached to specific villages. Therefore, they are outside the purview of the Gram Sabha and hence the Panchayat law cannot extend over these areas.

- Perceptions on Decision Making in the JFMCs: At all levels of PRIs, the respondents perceived that there is nominal participation of the marginal communities in the decision making on account of elite capture in the committees. The respondents further felt that the FD dominated the decision making in the JFMCs. The reasons offered for this were, however, different at the three levels-at the district level respondents felt that this was on account of the better capacity of the FD and the lack of accountability; at the block level this was on account of the existing nature of rights; and at the village level it because the decisions related to management and protection.
- Perceptions impact of JFM on Protection: At the district level, the PRI respondents felt that there is a high standard of protection on account of the collaboration between the FD and the community. At the block level, the respondents perceived that protection was taking place not due to JFM activities but more on account of fear. At the village level, the respondents felt that the

protection was limited to the initial years. The involvement has declined on account of lack of leadership, lack of benefits and partnership, ineffective dispute resolution mechanisms and the influence of MTOs.

- Perceptions on Benefit sharing Mechanism: At the district level the respondents perceived that the design of the benefit sharing mechanism was equitable. However, it is not implemented since the lack of awareness in the committees makes the FD unaccountable. At the Block level, the respondents felt that the design was inequitable. Finally, at the village level, the respondents felt that benefit sharing was skewed in favour of the FD-the FD reaps the benefits from community protection of the forests and the institutional support is unequal.
- Perceptions on Rights and Ownership pattern: At all the three levels of PRIs, respondents did not perceive any change in the rights pattern. At the district level respondents attributed the lack of change to lack of education and technical knowledge; at the block level, the respondents attributed the absence of change to the lack of capacity of the community to balance decisions; and at the village level, respondents perceived the lack of willingness of the FD to devolve power as the cause of the lack of change in the rights. At the same time, only the village respondents perceived a change in the ownership. They believed that ownership has increased.

Market Perceptions in JFM: Anirban Ganguly, TERI

- Percentage contribution of NTFP to Household Income: Mahua-69%, Tendu – 20%, Achar-8% and Gulli- 3%.
- There is a negative correlation between household income and dependence on NTFP.
- Perception of the Community: JFMCs have been reasonably successful in forest protection and infrastructure creation. However sufficient efforts have not been taken to enhance availability of NTFPs; JFMCs in general have not succeeded in securing better price for traders; FD has not taken enough effort to promote NTFPs through plantations
- Perceptions of the JFMCs: Awareness has not been generated within the community and unsustainable harvesting practices continue; FD dominates decision-making even in the choice of species for plantation, and NTFP species are typically neglected

- Perception of the FD: Though the community has gained from JFM, NTFP availability has not increased due to unsustainable harvesting practices and natural reasons, like lack of rainfall; External instigation (from the MTOs) has made the community destroy forests, taking its toll on the availability of NTFP; JFMC has been unsuccessful in generating awareness about forest protection among the community
- Perception of the Middlemen: Decrease in availability of NTFP for trade is due to over-consumption; Community has gained some bargaining power but they do not understand the implications of operational costs (of middlemen); Traders want bulk amounts, which are difficult to obtain from the collectors.
- Perception of the traders: Community awareness has increased. However communities do not understand market dynamics and impact of quality of the product on prices; Middlemen are generally helpful as they get bulk amounts, reducing transaction costs; Sometimes, middlemen do not get sufficiently high amounts, and yet demand a higher price than communities
- Perception of the Sangathans: Middlemen, traders and FD are all exploiting the community; Communities should fully control the market chain

Discussion:

There was a general agreement that is a negative correlation between income and dependence on NTFP.

A participant inquired if the Sangathans had suggestions on how the community should control the market channels for NTFP. The PCCF further inquired if there were differences in perceptions regarding nationalised and non-nationalised NTFP. He also requested more details on the contribution of MFP to household income and identification of the most important MFP in Harda. AG replied that Mahua had emerged as the most important MFP. A participant pointed out that Tendu formed significant portion of the income. MS responded that the percentage contribution of tendu to household income is only 2-3%. However, it comes at a critical time when there is no other source of income available, and it also brings cash. BV added that in calculating value both, cash income as well as value of MFP consumed was taken into account. A participant further observed that in Harda, the number of committees formed for tendu collection, and the production of tendu are both low. The PCCF believed that if Mahua was so significant then large scale Mahua plantations should be undertaken since Mahua (in unfermented form) provides food security!

A participant noted that some JFMCs have also bought Mahua from other committees, stored it and sold it at a time when the Mahua availability was low. He wanted to know if this dimension had been studied. MS responded that the cross-linkages that have developed among the committees have been included in the report.

Perception of Different Stakeholders on the Formation and Working of JFMCs:

Ms. Girija Godbole

Formation of JFMCs: According to the village respondents, there was no active participation of the community in the formation of the JFMC. Further, the members of the EC were chosen by the FD. On the other hand, the FD believes that the EC was selected by the villagers and that there was no interference from the FD. Finally, the MTOs perceive that the JFMCs exist only on paper and only the FD favourites were made members of the EC.

Empowerment and Capacity Building: The villagers perceive that the JFMCs are not capable enough and require training especially in record keeping and accounts. FD view is that the committees are there only to assist the FD. Therefore there is no need for legally empowering them. The FD also believes that the villagers are capable but do not know the technical language. Finally, the MTO respondents hold that the committees are competent but the FD does not want to recognise this competence.

Decision making in the Committees: Village respondents state that there is no participation of women, and the marginalized. Also, the meetings are irregular. The FD respondents state that efforts have been made to involve women but social customs, and the lack of women field staff is a major constraint. MTO respondents perceive that the JFMCs do not function in a democratic manner and that only the FD view holds. Further, the committee members are not aware, as meetings are not held regularly. The PRI respondents state that the marginalized have no say in the decision-making that is dominated by the elite. With reference to the village and FD, the FD dominates the decision-making.

Discussion:

There was a debate on the methodology used and the outcome of the study. The PCCF was of the view that the perceptions of the Sangathans, the FD and the NGOs are true to some extent. Hence, the meeting records of the JFMCs should have been analysed to see the extent to which these viewpoints are valid. In response, BV observed that people have reported that the meeting registers are taken around the village after the meeting, and members of the JFMC who have not attended the meeting are asked to sign/put their thumb impression in the registers. Hence they do not know what has happened in the meeting. The PCCF however, was of the view that people who sign are aware of the document and its content. BV responded that not all the members were literate. SU further added

that the objective of the study was to understand people's perceptions on PFM, and that the project was not a fact-finding mission. The PCCF then responded that the FD wants to know the facts. The Department needed facts that emerge from the records so that action could be taken.

Transparency: Villagers respond that financial transparency is lacking and that records are not kept with the villagers. According to the FD however, all transactions are conducted only after the approval of the JFMC members. The villagers are aware of the transactions since their signatures are required. Finally, they state that it is risky to leave records in the village. The MTOs perceive that the FD controls all the funds. They criticise the way signatures are taken and believe that villagers have little knowledge of transactions. According to them, there is no transparency at all

Conflicts: FD feels that there have been no conflicts with the formation of the committees since the allotment of forest area was in consultation with the community. Wherever conflicts did occur, these were resolved through dialogue. The MTO respondents state that conflicts have risen since the start of JFM, especially in the context of nistar.

Sharing of responsibilities: According to the FD, the JFMC receives funds for protection but is not held responsible in case of theft etc.

Discussion:

An FD official wanted to know the perceptions of the other stakeholders. BV responded that they did not have a view.

After this presentation, the PCCF left.

Impact of JFM: Mr. Manish Shanker, SANKET

Forest Fire: The village level respondents state that forest fires have increased as a result of *mabhua* collection, passage through the forest areas in the night, conflicts and also because the people believe that burning of the forest floor will result in better fodder yield. MTOs perceive that the forest fires have increased to hide illicit felling. The FD however feels that the forest fires have decreased and there are no more cases of deliberate fires. Finally, MS observed that during their stay in the field, the field team had observed several fires and seen large stretches of burned forest.

Protection: At the village level, respondents note that there has been an improvement in the forest cover in several villages. At the same time, the forests in other villages have degraded further. According to them, the quality of participation has deteriorated, and protection by rotation has given way to protection by appointment. MTOs perceive that forests have mostly degraded owing to poor participation. NGOs however state that JFM has led to an increase in forest cover especially on account of decrease in forest fires. The FD holds that Forest cover has improved over time and so has the wild life owing to active involvement of the JFM committees.

Discussion:

FD participants wanted to know whether the cause for the decrease in participation had been analysed. BV responded that participation appeared to have declined mainly on account of non-fulfilment of expectations.

Grazing: The village level respondents state that earlier the decrease in the free grazing was on account of the JFM activities and this decline was sustained on account of weed infestation. The scarcity of fodder has led to a sharp decline in the cattle population and productivity. Dairy activities have come to a complete halt. Hence JFM has had a negative impact on the livelihoods of cattle rearing communities. MTO respondents feel that the restrictions on grazing are uncalled for since the villagers need fodder and do not, in any case, leave the cattle to graze in the plantations. NGOs perceive that the scarcity of fodder has resulted in a decline in the number and productivity of the cattle. The FD perceives a decrease in the grazing in the forest owing to effective protection.

Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme: The village level respondents feel that the Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme has had a positive impact on household income and has also resulted in better protection of bamboo in the forests. However, there are also villages where there has been no improvement in the bamboo forests. In this respect, the MTOs feel that only those who supported the FD were included in the scheme.

Relationship between FD and People. The village level respondents feel that there has been an improvement in the relationship between the FD and the people. However, this relationship has once again become tense on account of encroachment of forest land.

The MTOs believe that the differences between the people and the department persist. In fact, they feel that the balance of power has further tilted toward the Department since the real power remains with the department. The NGOs however, feel that there has been a shift in power in favour of the people. Senior level FD respondents believe that before JFM, the relationship of the Department with the people was one of hostility and distrust. Post-JFM, they feel there has been an improvement in the relationship. Field level respondents, on the other hand feel that this relationship was always pleasant and continues to be so.

Begar: The village community, FD, MTOs and NGOs believe that Begar has completely stopped. According to the village respondents state that the practise of *Begar* has completely stopped due to JFM as well as the influence of the Sangathans. The Sangathans claim that this achievement has been on account of its activities in the villages and not due to JFM. NGOs believe that beggar has stopped as a result of JFM.

Infrastructure Development: The NGOs perceive an improvement in infrastructure on account of JFM. The MTOs believe that the infrastructure that was created as a part of the programme did not really impact the poor and the marginalized. It only helped the influential people of the village. With respect to infrastructure development, the FD perceives that the infrastructure development that took place as a part of the entry point activities has resulted in benefits to the people especially on account of the wage opportunity that was created through these works. The respondents further state that the mandate of the department is not rural development rather it is forestry. The department however, can serve as the implementing agency for government schemes.

Discussion

A participant wanted to know the solutions that emerged from the people. BV replied that they do not have solutions. MS intervened, and stated that the people did not have solutions on this issue but for others like thalua, they have solutions.

The FD stated that they would like to go through the copies of the report. BV agreed to send the reports by email. The FD committed that they would respond to the reports within 15 days of receipt.

Conclusions: Dr. Bhaskar Vira

There are diverse perspectives (attitudes) identified across and within different stakeholder groups but there is also common ground. Most important need is for dialogue, to move beyond the current situation. Such dialogue is only possible if stakeholders are willing to engage with each other and to listen, learning to respect the validity and relevance of each other's perceptions.

Summing Up: Mr. A K Joshi

1. The FD would like to review the draft documents for comments and feedback
2. In case of issues where there are grey areas, there needs to be more interaction between the project team and the FD.
3. The records should have been a source of information. If time permits, these should be included in the report.
4. Though the objective of the project did not include fact finding, the FD would like feedback for strengthening JFM
5. Some presentations would benefit from self-critiquing and removal of researcher bias.

Vote of Thanks: Ms. Girija Godbole

Anenxure

List of Participants from MP-FD

	Name	Designation
1.	AS Ahlawat	CCF. Director, Rural Employment, Dept. of Panchayat and Rural Development
2.	Ajit Sonakia	CCF-Projects
3.	Jauwad Hasan	CCF-MPCFMP
4.	Dr.Animesh Shukla	CCF Land Management
5.	Ravindra N Saxena	CCF Wildlife and Ecotourism
6.	Sh. Mohammed Hashmi	PCCF; MD MPSFDC
7.	Dr. PB Gangopadhyay	Addl. PCCF-Production
8.	AS Joshi	CCF JFM
9.	Satish K Tyagi	CF Development
10.	Anil Oberoi	CCF Development
11.	Dr.RP Singh	CCF MPRVVN Ltd
12.	Ratan Purvar	CCF Policy
13.	Dr. AP Dwivedi	PCCF

List of Participants-Project Team

	Name	Organisation
1.	Sanjay Upadhyay	ELDF
2.	Dr. Bhaskar Vira	University of Cambridge
3.	Sushil Saigal	Winrock International India
4.	Pankaj Lal	Winrock International India
5.	Manish Shankar	SANKET
6.	Dr. RK Singh	IIFM
7.	Dr.VK Sinha	IIFM
8.	Dr. KN Krishnakumar	IIFM
9.	Girija Godbole	
10.	Sweta Verma	SANKET
11.	Deepak Malviya	
12.	Rohini Chaturvedi	

Workshop 4

Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management Cambridge Harda Project

Workshop December 14, 2004 Institute for Local Self Governance, Bhopal

A state level workshop for was held at the Institute for Local Self Governance to communicate the findings of the NRSP Project titled “Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management” in Harda Forest Division, to the members of the civil society organisations-MTOs, NGOs, Media.⁴

Welcome: Ms. Girija Godbole

GG welcomed the participants and presented the objectives of the project, the project-timeline, and introduced the partners.

Project Background: Dr. Bhaskar Vira

(b) BV presented the background of the project, and the methodology used.

Discussion:

Reservations were expressed about the methodology used. Some participants wanted to know how standardisation was achieved in the survey process since six organizations were conducting the same, and whether all six were capable of carrying out survey using the latest techniques. BV responded by clarifying that the team had spent a considerable amount of time in developing a common understanding of the methods, in order to minimise these differences.

Land and Other Rights Issues- Mr. Pankaj Lal and Mr. Sushil Saigal, WII

- **Land Rights:**

The MTOs believe that the land belongs to the people and that the Forest Department has no role to play in matters of forestry and forest management. They state that conflicts cannot be resolved without addressing the land related issues. Further, they

⁴ For a complete list of participants, see Annexure.

demand that all adults in the village should be given 5 acres of land and that existing encroachments should be regularised.

- **Encroachment and illegal felling:**

With respect to illegal felling, the Sangathans believe that the State is not concerned about their livelihoods and that clearing of forest area or extension of agricultural land is not illegal since the wood is not being sold in the market. All Sangathan respondents were against removal of encroachment. They believe that some day the entire forest will belong to them—“*Pura yakin hain humko, Ek din jaroor aayega, Jab mor jaisa nachne ka, Sara jungle hamara hoga.*” According to them, unemployment and mechanisation (use of harvesters and road rollers) are the main causes of encroachment. NGOs are against the regularization of all encroachment. They further believe that the Sangathan people are indulging in illegal felling to extend cultivated land. There are two points of view within the FD with respect to encroachment. One group feels that encroachment has decreased on account of the irrigation facilities as well as the increased awareness among the people. The other group feels that encroachment has increased owing to the Governments policy of regularising encroachments. Moreover, the committees are unable to control encroachment since members’ relatives are often the encroachers and the Sangathans have been encouraging encroachment. The Legislators perceive the people as having the first right over the land. They feel that encroachments should be regularised but only by following the due process. The community perceives that the powerful people of the village who have the support of the FD carry out the encroachments.

- **Nistar**

The MTOs believe that the restrictions on transporting of fuelwood by using bullock carts has increased the difficulties of the people since they now have to engage in fuelwood collection more frequently. They further state that the timber made available through the nistari depots is not of good quality and cannot be used for repairing of houses. Moreover, the depots are far from the villages and the timber available through them is expensive. The Sangathans also question the policies that allow submergence of large forest areas for the construction of dams but restrict extraction of timber by tribals, for the construction of a hut. They argue that the villagers have limited needs and are

being prevented from meeting these whereas large quantities of timber have been used in the MP World Bank Forestry Project office.

Some legislators felt that the forest fringe villagers should be allowed to meet their bonafide needs from forests free of cost. Further, they considered the FD responsible for creating awareness on the community's rights. Some legislators were unhappy with the demarcation of the forest boundaries. Most legislators felt that the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 need amendment. The NGOs feel that the Nistar Policy needs to be made more people – centred. FD feels that there is an imbalance between the demand and the supply of nistar and that is why the 'right' has been converted into a 'privilege.' The village level respondents state that the problem of nistar has decreased mainly since PoRs are no longer issued by the Department and the JFMC now controls the nistar extraction.

▪ **Conversion of Forest Villages to Revenue Villages**

The MTOs state that most people are in favour of a conversion since the FD has been unable to look after them. Most of the respondents at the village level however, support conversion. There are a few who do not since they fear loss of livelihood. The NGOs do not support the conversion of forest villages to revenue villages since they feel that this will lead to increase in population of the villages and degradation of the forests. The FD believes that not all the Forest Villages are in favour of such a conversion. At the Rahetgaon workshop they expressed that "In most cases the people do not want such a conversion because they are familiar with the FD. If the villages are converted into revenue villages they will have to deal with multiple Government agencies. As far as credit is concerned, they are still getting credit for agriculture. The people have the wrong belief that if the conversion takes place then the land will be theirs. In fact, with the conversion, they will lose their land. Since there are conflicting views, whose viewpoint should we take into account" On the other hand,

▪ **Sangathan participation in politics**

The MTOs believe that they have been successful in increasing the participation of the women in the issues that concern them. The FD and the Legislators believe that the MTOs are not really concerned about the people. Instead, they are only following a political agenda. Respondents from the Media believe that everybody has right to stand

in elections. Finally, the NGOs perceive that the Sangathans have brought forest management to centre stage.

■ **Reasons for Perceptions:**

- i. Knowledge of Change: Personal experience of corruption, denial of money from the common fund, destruction of huts of the Punasa Dam Outstees; Specific incidents like the Banspani and Bori cases; and, indirect indicators like worship of trees by *Adivasis*, out-migration, coupe felling by the FD and forest submergence are some of the factors that have led to perception formation among the Sangathans.
- ii. Knowledge of theory: Educational background, books on ideological beliefs, and networks and associations were found to contribute to the perception formation among the Sangathans.
- iii. Knowledge of Policy: Knowledge of policy that has been accumulated through the media, focussed research, networks and associations, events and publications was found to influence perception formation.

Discussion

Dr. Ram Prasad raised some points in response to the perceptions presented:

- *The conclusions have been based on the basis of what people have said. These people like the Sangathans, are powerful and write articles that appeal to the masses. On the other hand, the Forest Guard is not that articulate.*
- *In response to the Sangathan perception tribals have limited need of wood and timber, he pointed out that the findings from a study reveal that the average consumption of wood in an adivasi household is 6 quintals.*
- *Even if the resources of water, forests and land has been given by God, as the Sangathans claim, it must be remembered that there are also stakeholders in these resources who live at a distance.*
- *State control of forests is not a colonial legacy. Even Chandragupta Maurya has written about the State control of forests.*

Another participant inquired if the Lack of knowledge about the Forest Act and the Conservation Act were the main reasons for these perceptions.

Shri. Anwar Jafri wanted to know the extent to which the different groups influence each other and the level of agreement in perceptions within stakeholder groups. SS responded that the Q-sort revealed differences in perceptions within stakeholder groups. Shri Anwar Jafri commented that such differences indicate the growth of Democracy.

On the aspect of quantitative data collection, Dr. Ram Prasad felt dimensions that can be measured should have been measured. Like, for instance, the quantity of wood used. Shri. Anwar Jafri added that people need authentic data on these issues so that the readers can understand the study. Otherwise it is difficult to use a report that provides only what people say. Understanding trends in groups is social science research and therefore, saying that we did not go in-depth into understanding the perceptions is not enough.

Impact of JFM: Mr. Manish Shanker, SANKET

Forest Fire: The village level respondents state that forest fires have increased as a result of *mabua* collection, passage through the forest areas in the night, conflicts and also because the people believe that burning of the forest floor will result in better fodder yield. MTOs perceive that the forest fires have increased to hide illicit felling. The FD however feels that the forest fires have decreased and there are no more cases of deliberate fires. Finally, MS observed that during their stay in the field, the field team had observed several fires and seen large stretches of burned forest.

Discussion:

A participant inquired if an attempt had been made to understand the cause of the fires. MS responded that all the reasons that were mentioned by the different stakeholders were valid. In addition, the field team also made some observations. The participants further inquired about the statement on record in this regard. To this, Dr. Ram Prasad responded that fires are not reported. BV added that on paper, the occurrence of fire has decreased, and this decrease has largely been attributed to the protection by the JFMCs.

Protection: At the village level, respondents note that there has been an improvement in the forest cover in several villages. At the same time, the forests in other villages have degraded further. According to them, the quality of participation has deteriorated, and protection by rotation has given way to protection by appointment. MTOs perceive that forests have mostly degraded owing to poor participation. NGOs however state that JFM has led to an increase in forest cover especially on account of decrease in forest fires. The FD holds that Forest cover has improved over time and so has the wild life owing to active involvement of the JFM committees.

Grazing: The village level respondents state that earlier the decrease in the free grazing was on account of the JFM activities and this decline was sustained on account of weed infestation and the irrigation canal. The scarcity of fodder has led to a sharp decline in

the cattle population and productivity. Dairy activities have come to a complete halt. Hence JFM has had a negative impact on the livelihoods of cattle rearing communities. MTO respondents feel that the restrictions on grazing are uncalled for since the villagers need fodder and do not, in any case, leave the cattle to graze in the plantations. NGOs perceive that the scarcity of fodder has resulted in a decline in the number and productivity of the cattle. The FD perceives a decrease in the grazing in the forest owing to effective protection.

Discussion:

A participant inquired if stall-feeding could be one of the possible causes for the decrease in grazing. MS responded in the affirmative but also pointed out that the increase in stall-feeding was on account of the decrease in grass availability. Another participant pointed out that the decrease in cattle population could be on account of a deliberate reduction of cattle that produce less milk and investment in better quality cattle.

With reference to the perception that the fodder availability in Harda has decreased, a participant noted that fodder has been seen transported from Harda to other districts. Further, a participant pointed out that there is no canal in southern Harda, yet the decrease in grazing there has been attributed to the presence of the canal. MS responded that the presence of the canal increased labour opportunities and the interest in dairying declined, leading to a decrease in the cattle population. Further, he observed that migration had also decreased. A participant then inquired if the team had data to support the observation regarding the decrease in migration. BV responded that such an analysis was not possible since the team did not have baseline data. Dr. Ram Prasad concluded the discussion saying that some time needs to be invested in collection of such data.

Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme: The village level respondents feel that the Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme has had a positive impact on household income and has also resulted in better protection of bamboo in the forests. However, there are also villages where there has been no improvement in the bamboo forests. In this respect, the MTOs feel that only those who supported the FD were included in the scheme.

Discussion:

A participant inquired if the study found that certain communities like the Basod were more actively engaged in protection of the Bamboo forests.

Relationship between FD and People. The village level respondents feel that there has been an improvement in the relationship between the FD and the people. However, this relationship has once again become tense on account of encroachment of forest land.

The MTOs believe that the differences between the people and the department persist. In fact, they feel that the balance of power has further tilted toward the Department since the real power remains with the department. The NGOs however, feel that there has been a shift in power in favour of the people. Senior level FD respondents believe that before JFM, the relationship of the Department with the people was one of hostility and distrust. Post-JFM, they feel there has been an improvement in the relationship. Field level respondents, on the other hand feel that this relationship was always pleasant and continues to be so.

Begar: The village community, FD, MTOs and NGOs believe that Begar has completely stopped. According to the village respondents state that the practise of *Begar* has completely stopped due to JFM as well as the influence of the Sangathans. The Sangathans claim that this achievement has been on account of its activities in the villages and not due to JFM. NGOs believe that begar has stopped as a result of JFM.

Discussion:

A respondent wanted to know whether there was a difference in the 'age' of the Sangathans in terms of the time since when they have been active. A participant responded that there is only one group, that of Shamim and Anurag Modi, which is active in Harda. PL added that this Sangathan had started work in Betul in 1996 and in Harda in 2001. A participant commented that the Sangathan had also developed a political base in Harda.

Infrastructure Development: The NGOs perceive an improvement in infrastructure on account of JFM. The MTOs believe that the infrastructure that was created as a part of the programme did not really impact the poor and the marginalized. It only helped the influential people of the village. With respect to infrastructure development, the FD perceives that the infrastructure development that took place as a part of the entry point activities has resulted in benefits to the people especially on account of the wage opportunity that was created through these works. The respondents further state that the mandate of the department is not rural development rather it is forestry. The department however, can serve as the implementing agency for government schemes.

Discussion:

A participant noted that generally the FD took up no activity related to Infrastructure Development or irrigation. Normally, the FD focused on construction of temples and Panchayat Bhavans. Another participant however

differed. According to him, the FD had also made check dams. MS gave the example of Bori where the FD had made almost 300 check dams.

Perception of Different Stakeholders on the Formation and Working of JFMCs: Ms. Girija Godbole

Formation of JFMCs: According to the village respondents, there was no active participation of the community in the formation of the JFMC. Further, the members of the EC were chosen by the FD. On the other hand, the FD believes that the EC was selected by the villagers and that there was no interference from the FD. Finally, the MTOs perceive that the JFMCs exist only on paper and only the FD favourites were made members of the EC.

Empowerment and Capacity Building: The villagers perceive that the JFMCs are not capable enough and require training especially in record keeping and accounts. FD view is that the committees are there only to assist the FD. Therefore there is no need for legally empowering them. The FD also believes that the villagers are capable but do not know the technical language. Finally, the MTO respondents hold that the committees are competent but the FD does not want to recognise this competence.

Discussion:

Dr. Ram Prasad commented that while the JFMCs may not be empowered legally, they should be empowered to spend the money allotted to them. He observed that there were several things that the JFMCS wanted to do but were unable to owing to the restrictions imposed on spending.

Decision making in the Committees: Village respondents state that there is no participation of women, and the marginalized. Also, the meetings are irregular. The FD respondents state that efforts have been made to involve women but social customs, and the lack of women field staff is a major constraint. MTO respondents perceive that the JFMCs do not function in a democratic manner and that only the FD view holds. Further, the committee members are not aware as meetings are not held regularly. The PRI respondents state that the marginalized have no say in the decision-making, which is dominated by the elite. With reference to the village and FD, the FD dominates the decision-making.

Discussion:

In response to a participants query on whether there were more specific views on PRIs, BV stated that since the PRIs were not actively involved, there were no such views. A participant inquired if Gram Sabha approval to the JFMCs had been give. BV responded that while such approval had not been given, the constituting bodies were the same. In response, Shri. Anwar Jafri pointed out that in the JFMCs, the FD handles the affairs and influences decisions.

Transparency: Villagers respond that financial transparency is lacking and that records are not kept with the villagers. According to the FD however, all transactions are conducted only after the approval of the JFMC members. The villagers are aware of the transactions since their signatures are required. Finally, they state that it is risky to leave records in the village. The MTOs perceive that the FD controls all the funds. They criticise the way signatures are taken and believe that villagers have little knowledge of transactions. According to them, there is no transparency at all.

Discussion:

Dr. Ram Prasad expressed the view that if there was a risk in keeping records in the village, the FD could keep copies of the same. Shri. Anwar Jafri wanted to know how many of the 20 study villages had transparency. MS responded that no village had transparency. GG added that during the street plays in the villages the people agreed that there was no transparency.

Conflicts: FD feels that there have been no conflicts with the formation of the committees since the allotment of forest area was in consultation with the community. Wherever conflicts did occur, these were resolved through dialogue. The MTO respondents state that conflicts have risen since the start of JFM, especially in the context of nistar.

Discussion:

A participant inquired about the differences in responses between the forest and revenue villages. BV responded that while the project team had expected such differences, no significant differences were found.

Sharing of responsibilities: According to the FD, the JFMC receives funds for protection but is not held responsible in case of theft etc.

Discussion:

Dr. Ram Prasad noted that while no one is actually penalised, there is fear among the field staff. Shri. Anwar Jafri was of the view that actual responsibility has not been given to the JFMCs and the PRIs and that there is a problem with the forest policy. Another participant wanted to know why the field staff should be held responsible when the community was being given the money for protection.

Perception of Women: Ms. Shweta Verma, SANKET Information and research Agency, Bhopal

Discussion:

While introducing the issue it was mentioned that the presentation was dealing with Gender Issues. However the title of the presentation referred only to perception of women. In response, a participant noted that gender does not refer only to women.

■ Nistar

In many villages, the women have been facing a scarcity of fodder, fuelwood and water. In some villages, however, there has been a marginal improvement in their availability. The time required for collection of fuelwood and water has increased over time. The association with the Shramik Adivasi Sangathan has helped the women in overcoming the harassment by the FD staff in meeting their nistari needs. Further, women have often been involved in conflicts related to nistar.

Discussion:

A participant inquired if the freedom of women had increased. SV responded that in villages where the Sangathans had a presence, there was an increase in freedom.

■ Labour and Migration

There has been a decline in the availability of FD sponsored work leading to a reduction in wage labour opportunities for the women in the village. This has necessitated migration of women for finding wage labour opportunities. The length of migration period however, has decreased over time. While there are gender-based differences in the wage paid for agricultural work and other private owned activities, such differences do not exist in the case of the FD works.

Discussion:

A participant inquired if there had been a general decline in the wage opportunity availability or only for labour opportunity for women. SV responded that there had been a general decline. MS added that while the labour opportunity had decreased in the last four years, if a period of ten years is taken into account, the opportunity had increased.

- JFM and Women

Some women were unaware of the existence of a JFM committee in the village. On the whole, the women have no say in the decision-making in the committee. They are voiceless, and the institution of ‘Adhyaksh pati’ prevails.

- Women in Forest Protection

There has been a sharp decline in women’s participation in preventing/controlling forest fires. The women do not receive any payments from the FD for such protection and this has resulted in a decline in interest.

- Women and MTOs

The women feel empowered because of the Shramik Adivasi Sangathan. They participate in meetings and rallies, and issues that affect them. They now want financial decision-making.

- Livelihood

The sharp decline in productivity and number of cattle has had a direct impact on the livelihood of women belonging to communities that were traditionally engaged in cattle rearing. As a result of this decline, the women have had to shift from their occupation of cattle rearing to wage labour and this shift has increased vulnerability.

- NTFP

The women engaged in the collection of Mahua feel that the availability of Mahua has decreased. At the same time, the number of collection days for Tendu Patta has also decreased.

Discussion:

There was a discussion on the reasons for the reduction of collection days. Dr. Ram Prasad observed that the state of MP is now directly competing with Chattisgarh that produces better quality tendu patta. Hence the demand for tendu patta from MP has been affected. Moreover, collection targets are pre-determined and this affects the number of collection days. MS further added that there is a discrepancy between the phad records and peoples response.

In response to the point on empowerment of women on account of association with the Sangathans, a participant inquired if women's participation in protection had been observed in villages where the Sangathans had a presence. SV replied that such participation did not take place on account of internal disputes.

A participant also inquired if the decrease in NTFP means that JFM has decreased. BV responded that the success of JFM is dependent on several factors and one cannot conclude that JFM has failed only on the basis of decreased NTFP. Dr. Ram Prasad agreed that success of JFM depends on several factors.

Role of Panchayats in Forest Management: Ms. Nanki Kaur, TERI

- Perceptions on role of PRIs: The district level PRI respondents perceived a monitoring role for PRI since the PRIs lack capacity in terms of funds, functionaries and knowledge to engage in forestry. They do not see any institutional conflict. At the block level, the respondents also perceive only a monitoring role on account of lack of transparency and ineffectiveness of PRIs in facilitating social justice- corruption, elite domination, political agenda. At the village level the PRI respondents perceive a monitoring role on account of corruption, lack of transparency and lack of awareness among the PRIs. MTOs do not perceive any role for the PRIs since they are corrupt and their 'own house is not in order.' There are two points of view among the Legislators. Some perceive that the JFMC should maintain a separate identity and the priers should have only a monitoring role since they are corrupt and lack the capacity to manage and protect. Also, their involvement will lead to politicisation of issues since the PRIs are political bodies. Others however feel that the PRIs should exercise the constitutional mandate to avoid parallel institutions. The FD perceives that the PRI has no role on account of the Forest Conservation Act.
- Perceptions on Decision Making in the JFMCs: At all levels of PRIs, the respondents perceived that there is nominal participation of the marginal communities in the decision making on account of elite capture in the committees. The respondents further felt that the FD dominated the decision making in the JFMCs. The reasons offered for this were, however, different at the three levels-at the district level respondents felt that this was on account of the better capacity of the FD and the lack of accountability; at the block level this was on account of the existing nature of rights; and at the village level it because the decisions related to management and protection.

- Perceptions impact of JFM on Protection: At the district level, the PRI respondents felt that there is a high standard of protection on account of the collaboration between the FD and the community. At the block level, the respondents perceived that protection was taking place not due to JFM activities but more on account of fear. At the village level, the respondents felt that the protection was limited to the initial years. The involvement has declined on account of lack of leadership, lack of benefits and partnership, ineffective dispute resolution mechanisms and the influence of MTOs.
- Perceptions on Benefit sharing Mechanism: AT the district level the respondents perceived that the design of the benefit sharing mechanism was equitable. However, it is not implemented since the lack of w\awareness in the committees makes the FD unaccountable. At the Block level, the respondents felt that the design was inequitable. Finally, at the village level, the respondents felt that benefit sharing was skewed in favour of the FD-the FD reaps the benefits from community protection of the forests and the institutional support is unequal.
- Perceptions on Rights and Ownership pattern: At all the three levels of PRIs, respondents did not perceive any change in the rights pattern. At the district level respondents attributed the lack of change to lack of education and technical knowledge; at the block level, the respondents attributed the absence of change to the lack of capacity of the community to balance decisions; and at the village level, respondents perceived the lack of willingness of the FD to devolve power as the cause of the lack of change in the rights. At the same time, only the village respondents perceived a change in the ownership. They believed that ownership has increased.

Discussion:

With reference to elite domination, a participant inquired whether the people who had given the response were elite themselves. NK replied that these respondents included Sarpanches, and women among others.

A respondent wanted to know if the term 'monitoring role' had a negative meaning. BV responded that the term only means 'monitoring role.' Sbri. Anwar Jafri pointed out that there is a problem since the PRIs do not have the powers to monitor.

Perceptions of Market related actors: Anirban Ganguly, TERI

- Percentage contribution of NTFP to Household Income: Mahua-69%, Tendu – 20%, Achar-8% and Gulli- 3%.
- There is a negative correlation between household income and dependence on NTFP.
- The market related actors involved were primary collectors, JFMCs, frontline staff of the D, middlemen and traders.
- Perception of the Community: JFMCs have been reasonably successful in forest protection and infrastructure creation. However sufficient efforts have not been taken to enhance availability of NTFPs; JFMCs in general have not succeeded in securing better price for traders; FD has not taken enough effort to promote NTFPs through plantations. With respect to relationships and control/market access, the community perceived that the middlemen had tendencies to cheat but the community has slowly become aware. The middlemen remain essential for the market chain, for meeting immediate needs and reducing transaction costs. Further, the nature of the marketing channel is such that the traders pay better prices but do not entertain small amounts of the product. Also, the traders tend to control market prices and the communities find it difficult to bargain on these.
- Perceptions of the JFMCs: Awareness has not been generated within the community and unsustainable harvesting practices continue; FD dominates decision-making even in the choice of species for plantation, and NTFP species are typically neglected
- Perception of the FD: Though the community has gained from JFM, NTFP availability has not increased due to unsustainable harvesting practices and natural reasons, like lack of rainfall; External instigation (from the MTOs) has made the community destroy forests, taking its toll on the availability of NTFP; JFMC has been unsuccessful in generating awareness about forest protection among the community
- Perception of the Middlemen: Decrease in availability of NTFP for trade is due to over-consumption; Community has gained some bargaining power but they do not understand the implications of operational costs (of middlemen); Traders want bulk amounts, which are difficult to obtain from the collectors.
- Perception of the traders: Community awareness has increased. However communities do not understand market dynamics and impact of quality of the

product on prices; Middlemen are generally helpful as they get bulk amounts, reducing transaction costs; Sometimes, middlemen do not get sufficiently high amounts, and yet demand a higher price than communities

- Perception of the Sangathans: Middlemen, traders and FD are all exploiting the community; Communities should fully control the market chain

Discussion:

A question was asked on the profile of the middlemen. AG responded that these middlemen are not from the villages. They come to the village and buy from the collectors.

A participant felt that middlemen are not necessary-women who have been organised into SHGs and federated have been selling NTFPs on a large scale. BV responded that while these examples exist, they have not been seen in Harda.

A participant pointed out that E-choupal is an excellent example of community controlled market chain.

Law and Policy Context: Mr. Sanjay Upadhyay, ELDF

- The law and policy context was studied in two parts-the first involved desk based legal research of the national and state legal framework, and the second was a field based legal analysis stakeholders perceptions.
- Some of the issues that emerged were
 - Why can't we have more than 15 years in forest areas
 - Why can't the government convert all forest villages to revenue villages
 - Why are we called encroachers when we have been living here for many decades; why can't we be regularised; how do we prove that we are inhabitants since several decades?
 - What are orange areas?
 - What is nistar? Is it a right or merely a privilege or concession? What is our right over MFP?
 - What is PESA and what is the role of the GS in forestry issues?
- Legal status of Pattas: the distribution, renewal and cancellation of pattas, as well as restriction on transfer of patta from tribal to non-tribal, and the allocation of 2.5ha per family have been covered under the MP Forest Village Rules, 1977. MP Shaswat Patta Pratisanharan Adhiniyam, 1973 prescribes no perpetual lease.
- Conversion of FV to RV: The belief is that the conversion of FV to RV would help village people in getting the permanent entitlement to their lands. However,

the legal position is such that the conversion into RV would not automatically result in the entitlement of land. The process of conversion is itself lengthy and tedious.

- Encroachment vs. regularisation: Encroachers are people who have not proven that they have resided before 1980 and who do not have clear title to the land.
- Orange Areas: After the abolition of the Zamindari Act, 1950 and the acquisition of the princely forests between 1950-1954 all forests were vested with the FD through a blanket notification in 1954-58. A process of survey and settlement was started in 1960 and not qualified lands were transferred to the Revenue Department in the 1970s-1980s, however, without completion of the requisite process of de-notification. These areas were marked in Orange colour on the Patwari maps. The issue became complex with the enactment of the FCA in 1980 and the Godavarman orders in 1996.
- Nistar: Nistar has been systematically converted from rights to privilege to concession. The Nistar Patrak and the Wajib-ul-urz are the record of rights. After independence, all nistari land was transferred to the FD. The nistar policy by the FD converted the right to privilege and JFM has further reduced this privilege to a concession.
- Gram Sabha and MFP: There is no definition of MFP. However there are specific forest produce laws. The 73rd Amendment in 1992, PESA 1996 and MP PESA cover issues of MFP ownership and jurisdiction.
- PRI-JFMC linkage: In MP, there is a new definition of village that includes both FV and RV. Legally, there was a cosmetic linkage till 2001. In 2001, the amendment to the JFM resolution prescribed that the Gram Sabha will constitute the JFMC. At present issues that need to be addressed include those of overlapping jurisdiction, usufruct, benefit sharing, and functions-functionaries-funds.

Discussion:

A respondent wanted to know who initiates the process of de-notification. SU replied that it is the State Governments prerogative to initiate de-notification on the basis of information from the FD.

Conclusions: Dr. Bhaskar Vira

There are diverse perspectives (attitudes) identified across and within different stakeholder groups but there is also common ground. Most important need is for dialogue, to move beyond the current situation. Such dialogue is only possible if stakeholders are willing to engage with each other and to listen, learning to respect the validity and relevance of each others' perceptions.

Discussion:

On behalf of the workshop participants, Mr. Teji Bhogal expressed appreciation for the work done, and the effectiveness of the approach used. He expressed the view that when dialogue is needed, Sangathans have to be included and perceptions must be understood. However, to move ahead from dialogue to negotiation we need hard facts on different aspects. Shri. Anwar Jafri expressed reservations on the inclusion of Sangathans in the dialogue process. BV responded that since Sangathans have had an impact and since they believe in constitutional means, they need to be engaged.

Another respondent expressed the need for communicating each stakeholder groups problems to the other stakeholders to facilitate understanding and suggested that a documentary on the subject be made.

Vote of Thanks: Ms. Girija Godbole

Anenxure

List of Participants-NGOs/Sangathans/Media

	Name	Organisation
1.	Dr. Ram Prasad	
2.	Mr. Shrirang	Action Aid
3.	-	MP Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti
4.	Sangita Saxena	WWF-India
5.	Poulani Chakraborty	WWF-India
6.	Namrata Jaiswal	Energy, Environment and Development Society
7.	Mrs. Chaya Khale	BAIF
8.	Tejinder S Bhogal	CARM-DAKSM(?)
9.	Suresh Mishra	Samavesh
10.	Bhupesh	Bhupesh Seva Sangathan
11.	Ram Krishna Sumeriya	Dainik Sandhya
12.	RC Saxena	NCHSE
13.	S Rao	BAIF
14.	Anwar Jafri	Samavesh

List of Participants-Project Team

	Name	Organisation
13.	Sanjay Upadhyay	ELDF
14.	Dr. Bhaskar Vira	University of Cambridge
15.	Sushil Saigal	Winrock International India
16.	Pankaj Lal	Winrock International India
17.	Manish Shankar	SANKET
18.	Dr. RK Singh	IIFM

19.	Sidhi Tamrakar	ELDF
20.	Dr. KN Krishnakumar	IIFM
21.	Girija Godbole	
22.	Sweta Verma	SANKET
23.	Deepak Malviya	
24.	Rohini Chaturvedi	

Workshop 5

Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management: Cambridge Harda Project

Workshop February 09, India Habitat Centre New Delhi

A national level workshop was conducted at the India Habitat Centre; New Delhi to communicate the findings of the NRSP Project titled “Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management” in Harda Forest Division, to the members of the civil society organisations.⁵

Welcome: Ms. Girija Godbole (GG)

GG welcomed the participants and presented the objectives of the project, the project-timeline, and introduced the partners.

Project Background: Dr. Bhaskar Vira (BV)

BV presented the background of the project, the analytical framework, and the need for studying the perceptions to facilitate dialogue. After describing the key characteristics of the Harda model and conflict that emerged in Harda in 2001, he listed the key research issues that were born from the conflict and the methodology developed for the same.

Perception of stakeholders on land and other rights issues: Sushil Saigal (SS)

- The MTOs believed that the land belongs to the people and that government had usurped it. Further, they felt that the Forest Policy was based on a colonial legacy that presumes that people were degrading the forests and the aim of the government was to control the Adivasis. 92 percent of the respondents felt that providing land rights was an effective way of resolving conflicts in forestry. Further, the people could better manage the natural resources.
- **Encroachment:** All the Sangathan respondents were against the removal of encroachments, and not only demanded that all adults in the village should be given 5 acres of land but also demanded pattas on all encroached land. The Sangathans believed that the State was not concerned about peoples livelihoods and that clearing of forest area or extension of agricultural land was not illegal since the wood was not being sold in the market. The NGOs believed in balancing the livelihood and conservation ethos. They were against the

⁵ For a complete list of participants, see Annexure.

regularization of all encroachment. They felt that the Sangathan people were indulging in illegal felling to encourage encroachment. With respect to the issue of encroachment, there were two points of view within the FD. One group felt that encroachment had decreased on account of the irrigation facilities as well as the increased awareness among the people. The other group felt that encroachment had increased owing to the Government's policy of regularising encroachments. Moreover, the committees were unable to control encroachment since members' relatives were often the encroachers and that vote bank politics and lack of political vision had aggravated the problem. The Legislators perceived the people as having the first right over the land. They felt that encroachments should be regularised but only by following the due process. The village community perceived that the powerful people of the village who had the support of the FD were involved in the encroachments.

Nistar Rights: SS pointed out that in several cases the respondents had not distinguished between the 'legal' nistar and other forest produce while responding to questions on nistar. The MTOs believed that people's rights have been decreasing over time and that they do not get any real benefit. They reported that the restrictions on transporting of fuelwood by using bullock carts had increased the difficulties of the people since they now had to engage in fuelwood collection more frequently. They further stated that the timber made available through the nistari depots was not of good quality and could not be used for repairing of houses. Moreover, the depots were far from the villages and the timber available through them was expensive. They argued that the villagers have limited needs and were being prevented from meeting these whereas large quantities of timber had been used in the MP World Bank Forestry Project office. Some legislators felt that the forest fringe villagers should be allowed to meet their bonafide needs from forests free of cost. Further, they considered the FD responsible for creating awareness on the community's rights. Some legislators were unhappy with the demarcation of the forest boundaries. Most of them felt that the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 need amendment. The NGOs felt that the Nistar Policy needed to be made more people – centred. FD felt that there was an imbalance between the demand and the supply of nistar and that was why the 'right' had been converted into a 'privilege.' The village level respondents stated that the problem of nistar had decreased mainly since the

number of PoRs had decreased and the JFMC now controlled the nistar extraction.

- **Conversion of Forest Villages to Revenue Villages:** The MTOs wanted conversion of all forest villages into revenue villages since they believed that the FD had been unable to look after them. The NGOs did not support the conversion of forest villages to revenue villages since they felt that this would lead to increase in population of the villages and degradation of the forests. Most of the respondents at the village level however, supported conversion. There were a few who did not since they feared loss of livelihood. The FD believed that not all the Forest Villages were in favour of such a conversion.

Discussion

A participant enquired if a distinction had been made among the tribal, non-tribal and migrant populations. BV responded that such a distinction had been made and the team had not looked at 'village' as a homogenous community.

Perceptions of villagers, FD, MTOs and NGOs on Impact of JFM: Mr. Manish Shanker

- **Forest Fire:** The village level respondents stated that forest fires had increased as a result of *mabua* collection practices, surreptitious passage, conflicts, weed removal, encroachment and also because the people believed that burning of the forest floor resulted in better fodder yield. The NGOs perceived that the fires had decreased over time due to some positive impact of JFM. The FD also responded that the forest fires had decreased and there were no more cases of deliberate fires. Finally, the MTOs perceived that the forest fires had increased. They believed that the local FD staff was responsible for these fires that were started to mask hide illicit felling.
- **Protection:** At the village level, respondents noted that while there had been an improvement in the forest cover in several villages, there had also been deterioration in some. According to them, the quality of participation had taken a severe beating, and protection by rotation had given way to protection by appointment. MTOs perceived that forests have mostly degraded owing to poor participation. NGOs however stated that JFM had led to an increase in forest cover especially on account of protection from forest fires. The FD perceived

that Forest cover had improved over time and so had the wild life owing to active involvement of the JFM committees.

- **Grazing:** The village level respondents perceived that in the early years of JFM, grazing declined due to effective closure and this decline was sustained on account of weed infestation. The scarcity of fodder had led to a sharp decline in the cattle population and productivity. Dairy activities came to a complete halt. Hence JFM had a negative impact on the livelihoods of cattle rearing communities. MTO respondents felt that the closure of forest to grazing was uncalled for since the villagers did not let cattle graze in the plantations. NGOs perceived that the scarcity of fodder had resulted in a decline in the number and productivity of the cattle. The FD perceived a decrease in the grazing in the forest owing to effective protection.
- **Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme:** The village level respondents felt that the Bamboo Beneficiary Scheme had helped household economy of the beneficiaries and had a positive impact development of bamboo forests in several areas. At the same time, in some other areas, it had no impact on the bamboo forests. In this respect, the MTOs felt that only those who supported the FD were included in the scheme.
- **Relationship between FD and People:** The village level respondents felt that there was an improvement in the relationship between the FD and the people. However, this relationship had once again become tense on account of encroachment of forest land. The MTOs believed that the differences between the people and the department persist. In fact, they felt that the balance of power had further tilted toward the Department since the real power remained with the department. The NGOs however, felt that there had been a shift in power in favour of the people. Senior level FD respondents believed that before JFM, the relationship of the Department with the people was one of hostility and distrust. Post-JFM, they felt there had been an improvement in the relationship. Field level respondents, on the other hand felt that this relationship was always pleasant and continues to be so.
- **Begar:** The village community, FD, MTOs and NGOs believed that Begar had completely stopped. According to the village respondents, the practise of *Begar*

had completely stopped due to JFM as well as the influence of the Sangathans. The Sangathans claimed that this achievement had been on account of its activities in the villages and not due to JFM. NGOs believed that begar had stopped as a result of JFM.

- **Infrastructure Development:** The NGOs perceived an improvement in infrastructure on account of JFM. The MTOs believed that the infrastructure that was created as a part of the programme did not really impact the poor and the marginalized. It only helped the influential people of the village. With respect to infrastructure development, the FD perceived that the infrastructure development that took place as a part of the entry point activities had resulted in benefits to the people especially on account of the wage opportunity that was created through these works. The respondents further stated that the mandate of the department was not rural development rather it was forestry. The department however, could serve as the implementing agency for government schemes.

Discussion

A participant wanted to know if the team had tried to get numbers from the records specifically in the context of forest fires. BV responded that the project team had made some observations while they were on the field. The official trend reports a decline but the officials themselves admit that the cases of fire were underreported. MS added that the field team had observed large stretches of burnt forests. Some of these were on a result of deliberate fires by the villagers for cultivation. Also, some fires had been observed at the stumps to mask illicit felling.

Another participant wanted to know if the study looked at the delivery of services by other agencies since the problems of forestry were often a result of several factors other than forestry. BV replied that the team had not assessed impact of any programme. However, he acknowledged that people's perceptions were not formed on account of forestry alone but also the irrigation interventions, so in a way other developmental programmes have been included in the study.

A participant wanted to know if corruption had been isolated as a separate category, and whether the researchers' perceptions had also been included. BV responded that the team was not casting value judgements on the practices.

A question was raised regarding the presentation of perceptions of different stakeholder differences in the perceptions. BV responded that the team had engaged in enough dialogue to capture the findings of the team as a whole.

A participant wanted to know the intra stakeholder differences especially those among different village groups. MS replied that stratified sampling had been undertaken at the field level. The details have been included in the field report. BV added that some of the intra stakeholder differences would be highlighted in the presentation on the Q-sort findings.

Perception of Different Stakeholders on the Formation and Functioning of JFMCs: Ms. Girija Godbole

- **Formation of JFMCs:** According to the village respondents, there was no active participation of the community in the formation of the JFMC. The FD chose the members of the EC. On the other hand, the FD believed that the villagers selected the EC and that there was no interference from the FD. Finally, the MTOs perceived that the JFMCs existed only on paper and the FD favourites were made members of the EC.
- **Empowerment and Capacity Building:** The villagers perceived that the JFMCs were not capable enough and required training especially in record keeping and accounts. The FD view was that the function of the committee was to assist the FD. Therefore there was no need for legally empowering them. The FD also believed that the villagers were capable but do not know the technical language. Finally, the MTO respondents felt that the committees were competent but the FD did not want to recognise their capability as it may erode their (FD) power.
- **Decision-making in the Committees:** Village respondents stated that the women and the marginalized had no say in the decision making. Also, the

meetings were irregular. The FD respondents reported that efforts had been made to involve women but social customs, and the lack of women field staff was a major constraint. MTO respondents perceived that the JFMCs did not function in a democratic manner and that only the FD view prevailed. Further, the committee members were not aware, as meetings were not held regularly. The PRI respondents stated that the marginalized had no say in the decision-making, which was dominated by the elite. With reference to the village and FD, the FD dominated the decision-making.

- **Transparency:** Villagers responded that financial transparency was lacking and that records were not kept with the villagers. According to the FD however, all transactions were conducted only after the approval of the JFMC members. The villagers were aware of the transactions since their signatures were required. Finally, they felt that it was risky to leave records in the village. The MTOs perceived that the FD controlled all the funds. They criticised the way signatures were taken and believed that villagers had little knowledge of transactions. According to them, there was no transparency at all.**Conflicts:** Village level respondents reported cases of mutual arrangements among the JFMCs. The FD felt that there were no conflicts with the formation of the committees since the allotment of forest area was in consultation with the community. The MTO respondents stated that conflicts had risen since the start of JFM, especially in the context of nistar. Moreover, cases of conflict within the same tribal group that were unheard of before had been reported.
- **Sharing of responsibilities:** According to the FD, the JFMC received funds for protection but was not held responsible in case of theft etc.

Discussion

A participant enquired on the NGO perception on transparency. BV replied that most of the NGOs in Harda were not actively involved in the operational issues of forest management and therefore did not express a view of transparency.

Another participant enquired if any linkages had been observed between the elite and the caste hierarchy. MS responded that there were multiple committees and therefore power had become dispersed among different groups. While the General Body of the JFMC was essentially the GS, only a few people constituted the Executive Committee. This appeared to be a disjointed set.

A participant requested details of the conflicts related to nistar. MS described how allotment of a compartment to one committee for protection led to conflicts since access of people from other villages, who were also using these compartments to meet their nistar requirements, was curtailed. Some of these conflicts were resolved with the intervention of the DFO, while others were resolved by the people.

Stakeholders Perceptions on Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Forest Management: Ms. Nanki Kaur, TERI

- A role for PRIs in NRM has been envisaged in theoretical frameworks on decentralised governance, and the ecosystem approach as well as in the policy on decentralised governance and JFM in India. In Madhya Pradesh there are 22029 Gram Panchayats, 313 Intermediate Panchayats and 45 District Panchayats. 23 functions, 10 funds and 09 functionaries have been devolved.

Perceptions on role of PRIs: Among the MLA respondents, there were two points of view on the role of PRIs. Some respondents felt that the JFMC should maintain a separate identity and the PRIs should have only a monitoring role since they were corrupt, lacked capacity to manage and protect forests and their involvement would lead to politicisation of issues. Others felt that the PRIs should manage the natural resources and exercise their constitutional mandate to avoid development of parallel institutions. The MTOs did not perceive any role for the PRIs since they were corrupt and their 'own house was not in order.' There were two points of view in the FD. At the Divisional level, the respondents felt that PRIs had no role in the forest areas on account of the Forest Conservation Act. At the State level, however, respondents perceived a legal role for the PRIs but only through the JFMC since forests were not under the legal purview of the Gram Sabha. At the village level people did not perceived any role for PRIs in JFM. They perceived JFMC to be a separate institution sponsored by the FD, and having different functions. The district level PRI respondents perceived a monitoring role for PRI since the PRIs lacked capacity in terms of funds, functionaries and knowledge to engage in forestry. They did not see any institutional conflict. At the block level, the respondents also perceived only a monitoring role on account of lack of transparency and ineffectiveness of PRIs in facilitating social justice- corruption, elite domination, political agenda.

- There is a mismatch between stakeholder perceptions and the role envisaged by theory and policy. Space for multiple stakeholder dialogue had not been implemented.
- In light of the analytical framework it emerges that perceptions of corruption and inefficient functioning emerges from stakeholders' experience of actual PRI functioning. Further, perception of politicisation of issues as an obstacle to PRI involvement does not imply that NRM is not a political issue. Rather, it implies that NRM is not a priority for PRIs, which were political bodies that look at other issues politically. There was no perceived conflict between PRIs and other institutions since the general body of both was the Gram Sabha. JFMC was seen as a more specialised body complementing PRIs.

Discussion

A participant enquired why there was a conflict between PRIs and JFMCs when the constituting bodies of both were the same. NK responded that since the PRIs were not engaged in forestry, there was no conflict. SU added that the jurisdiction of the Gram Sabha and the JFMC was not the same. Funds for forestry were given to the JFMCs and not the PRIs.

A participant stated that at village level meetings, there was a tendency for people to be unaware of the issue that was being discussed and yet felt that they were participating since they were physically present at the meeting.

Another participant expressed the need for exploring the Scheduled Area provisions separately. BV responded that there were no scheduled areas in Harda. Further, conflicts also arose because the local institution and the constitutional GS may not match.

Perceptions of Market related actors: Anirban Ganguly

- Percentage contribution of NTFP to Household Income: Mahua-69%, Tendu –20%, Achar-8% and Gulli- 3%. There was a negative correlation between household income and dependence on NTFP.

- The background to the study of perceptions of market related actors comprised of Forest Produce Laws, extent of decentralization, local factors such as dependency, availability etc., and institutional factors.
- The relevant stakeholder groups for the study were primary collectors, JFMCs, frontline staff of the FD, middlemen and traders.
- **Perception of the Community on Availability:** JFMCs have been reasonably successful in forest protection and infrastructure creation. However sufficient efforts were not taken to enhance availability of NTFPs on account of lack of interest and capacity. Also, FD had not taken enough effort to promote NTFPs through plantations on account of lack of interest. Middlemen and traders perceived a decrease in availability of NTFP for trade due to over exploitation. Though the community had gained from JFM, NTFP availability had not increased due to unsustainable harvesting practices and natural reasons, like lack of rainfall; External instigation (from the MTOs) had made the community destroy forests, taking its toll on the availability of NTFP; JFMC had been unsuccessful in generating awareness about forest protection among the community. JFMC respondents felt that the FD typically neglected NTFP species in plantations.
- With respect to **relationships and control/market access**, the community perceived that the middlemen had tendencies to cheat but the community had slowly become aware. The middlemen were essential for the market chain, for meeting immediate needs and reducing transaction costs. Further, the nature of the marketing channel was such that the traders paid better prices but did not entertain small amounts of the product. Also, the traders controlled market prices and the communities found it difficult to bargain on these. Middlemen perceived that the Community had gained some bargaining power but they did not understand the implications of operational costs (of middlemen); Traders wanted bulk amounts, which were difficult to obtain from the collectors. Traders felt that community awareness had increased. However, communities did not understand the dynamics and impact of quality of the product on the price. Middlemen were generally helpful as they supplied bulk amounts, reducing transaction costs; sometimes, middlemen did not get sufficiently high amounts, and yet demanded a higher price than communities. Sangathans felt that the middlemen, traders and FD were all exploiting the community; Communities should fully control the market chain.

Stakeholder Perceptions from a “Q-Analysis”: Purnamita Dasgupta

Q –technique is a technique for examining human subjectivity with quantitative means wherein an individual subject models a “viewpoint.” The subject rank orders a set of sampled statements from a point of self reference-most disagreed to most agreed. Statistical analysis leads to extraction of few typical Q-sorts. The study found four discourses or attitude types in the merged data set, and three for each stakeholder group. The Q-technique looked at four stakeholder groups (FD, Village, MTO/NGO and others), along three analytical dimensions (change, world views and policy) with four statements in each group. Thus there were 48 statements. The statements were administered orally with illiterate respondents whereas those who could read sorted cards with statements. 155 sorts were conducted in 24 villages. Respondents comprised a range of individuals including the *anganwadi* helper, VFC/FPC office bearers, non-members, office-bearer of SHG, panch, forest guard, MTO and NGO activists, etc. Community wise representation and women’s representation was ensured. 133 sorts with cards were conducted for the literates. Respondents comprised 71 Villagers (including FD field staff); 16 Forest Department (higher) Officials; 20 NGO/MTO respondents, 6 PRI representatives; 6 Media persons and 14 MLAs.

- Findings from the orally administered: Type I: Pro-FD, Departmental view - somewhat sceptical of participation and people, sympathetic to FLS; not necessarily in favour of the way JFM had been functioning; critical of impact but agreement on concept of JFM; not communitarian or participatory; critical of PRIs; guarded/neutral on some controversial issues. Type II: Anti-establishment - Pro-people (rights), anti-JFM, anti-FD; more informed by world views and change; primarily concerned with rights based issues. Type III : Strongly pro-JFM and pro-FD - (more strongly so than factor 1) ~ highlighting participatory process as a success; positive on social outcomes (empowerment, relationship); more neutral on tangible economic outcomes. Type IV: Complex position, more pragmatic - middle path approach ~ fairly critical of the FD (not enamoured by FD as an institution); but, recognising some positive impacts of the JFM process. Not communitarian despite recognition of local rights, critical about functioning of local institutions (like ECs). Findings from the Card Administered Type I: Establishment view - ~ pro-JFM, pro-FD, anti-community (control over forests),

neutral on controversial political issues (control, authority, management); (reflecting an administrative/status quo mindset). Type II : Anti-establishment ~ Critical of current functioning of forestry establishment & institutions; anti-FD, anti-JFM, pro-community but not communitarian. Type III : Disenchanted ~ critical of FD, JFM, PRIs, World Bank, anti-communitarian – generally critical of current policy and its implementation. Type IV : Complex, pro-FD ~ focused more on political and democratic decentralisation; neutral on JFM's social & economic impacts; pro-FD in its role with regards coordination, protection, exploitation (lack of).

- Findings (NGO-MTO): Type I : Moderates, not supportive of JFM ~ primarily anti-JFM (both as a social process & in terms of impacts). Type II: Pro-Establishment ~ Pro-partnership and participation, supportive of JFM & FD; not in favour of PRIs. Type III: Anti-establishment but not communitarian ~ critical of current institutions & JFM, but not in favour of community-based solutions.
- Findings (Forest Department): Type I : Favours a FD led developmental model, with inter-departmental co-ordination under the DFO – the Harda model approach? recognise people's rights but forests not handed to people, cautious stand on JFM. Type II : Pro-participatory approach with greater recognition of community ~ Favours collaborative partnerships, including people and village institutions; more communitarian; not anti-JFM in terms of impacts. Type III: Statist, more inward looking approach - rather “status quo”; pro-FD; pro-state (nationalization of forest produce); emphasis on role of money. Conclusion: Partners and respondents both comfortable with Q sort procedure. Diverse perspectives (attitudes) identified across and within different stakeholder groups. Consensus and conflict statements provide policy relevant insights and identify potential coalitions. Discourses were influenced to varying degrees by knowledge of change, worldviews or policy.

Discussion: BV added that the team had the identity of the respondents, and it was found that a single viewpoint was not exclusively associated with a particular group. In response, a participant enquired if there was a tendency for most people in a stakeholder group to support a particular point of view. BV replied that the perceptions reported in the presentation were statistically significant.

A participant enquired if the inclusion of only two women per village was because gender was insignificant in the study or because of a difficulty in approaching the women. MS clarified that it was on account of the latter.

In response to a query on what tools were used, MB elaborated the two stage-pilot testing and final survey-process that was engaged in.

A participant enquired how the team dealt with ‘stereotypes.’ BV responded that the team had been grappling with the issue of posturing by respondents. The team cannot claim that it had been able to identify the deep beliefs of the respondents. All that can be said was that the stated positions of the respondents have been analyzed. PDG added that interpreting too much was not recommended since the researcher perceptions then interfered in the interpretation. MB added that different techniques were used with the same persons and this, to some extent, revealed posturing. Finally BV pointed out that the constant dialogue among the team also helped in confronting researcher bias.

Law and Policy Context: Mr. Sanjay Upadhyay, ELDF

- The law and policy context was studied in two parts-the first involved desk based legal research of the national and state legal framework, and the second was a field based legal analysis stakeholders perceptions.
- Some of the **issues** that emerged were
 - Why can't we have more than 15 years in forest areas
 - Why can't the government convert all forest villages to revenue villages
 - Why were we called encroachers when we have been living here for many decades; why can't we be regularised; how do we prove that we were inhabitants since several decades?
 - What were orange areas?
 - What was nistar? Was it a right or merely a privilege or concession? What was our right over MFP?
 - What was PESA and what was the role of the GS in forestry issues?
- **Legal status of Pattas:** the distribution, renewal and cancellation of pattas, as well as restriction on transfer of patta from tribal to non-tribal, and the allocation of 2.5ha per family have been covered under the MP Forest Village Rules, 1977. MP Shaswat Patta Pratisanharan Adhiniyam, 1973 prescribes no perpetual lease.
- **Conversion of FV to RV:** The belief was that the conversion of FV to RV would help village people in getting the permanent entitlement to their lands. However, the legal position was such that the conversion into RV would not

automatically result in the entitlement of land. The process of conversion was itself lengthy and tedious.

- **Encroachment vs. regularisation:** Encroachers were people who could not prove that they had resided on a land area before 1980 and who did not have a clear title to the land.
- **Orange Areas:** After the abolition of the Zamindari Act, 1950 and the acquisition of the princely forests between 1950-1954 all forests were vested with the FD through a blanket notification in 1954-58. A process of survey and settlement was started in 1960 and not qualified lands were transferred to the Revenue Department in the 1970s-1980s, however, without completion of the requisite process of de-notification. These areas were marked in Orange colour on the Patwari maps. The issue became complex with the enactment of the FCA in 1980 and the Godavarman orders in 1996.
- **Nistar:** Nistar had been systematically converted from rights to privilege to concession. The Nistar Patrak and the Wajib-ul-urz were the record of rights. After independence, all nistari land was transferred to the FD. The nistar policy by the FD converted the right to privilege and JFM had further reduced this privilege to a concession.
- **Gram Sabha and MFP:** There was no definition of MFP. However there were specific forest produce laws. The 73rd Amendment in 1992, PESA 1996 and MP PESA cover issues of MFP ownership and jurisdiction.
- **PRI-JFMC linkage:** In MP, there was a new definition of village that included both FV and RV. Legally, there was a cosmetic linkage till 2001. In 2001, the amendment to the JFM resolution prescribed that the Gram Sabha will constitute the JFMC. At present issues that need to be addressed include those of overlapping jurisdiction, usufruct, benefit sharing, and functions-functionaries-funds.

Discussion

A participant enquired if people's perceptions on the legal aspects had been collected. BV clarified that one of the two legal reports contrasts popularly held beliefs with the law. This report finds significant difference between the perceptions and the law.

A participant wanted to know the extent to which ownership rights were extinguished when the State exercises control over a resource as well as the definition of ownership rights. SU responded that the State was not an owner but only a custodian in the interest of the people. Ownership was only with reference to MFP, and in the Scheduled Areas

this right rests with the Gram Sabha. The MP Panchayat law states that the ownership of land, water and forest was vested in the Gram Sabha.

Conclusion: Bhaskar Vira

- There were diverse perspectives (attitudes) identified across and within different stakeholder groups but there was also common ground. Most important need was for dialogue, to move beyond the current situation. Such dialogue was only possible if stakeholders were willing to engage with each other and to listen, learning to respect the validity and relevance of each others' perceptions.
- Some of the contentious issues that emerged from the study include land rights and encroachment, nistar, conversion of forest villages to revenue villages, decision making in the JFMCs, transparency and financial accountability, conflicts due to JFMCs and sharing of responsibilities with JFMCs and procedural and implementation issues in JFM.
- The relatively uncontroversial issues included the limited role of PRIs, the crucial linkage between livelihoods and availability of NTFPs, the need for improvement in market access, trade and role of middlemen in favour of people, and the improvement of the relationship between FD and people.
- Some of the shared causes for concern were the increased incidence of forest fire, lack of sense of ownership and participation in forest protection, and livelihood impact of closure of forests to grazing and decline in fodder availability on some groups.

Discussion

1. Extent to which people were aware that they were members of the FPC and EC: MS responded that most of the committees were guided by the Secretary who was an FD representative. Where the committees were active, there was a core group that was part of the rural elite. This was a dominant group and identity among members of this group was quite strong.
2. Decline of interest in PFM among NGOs: SS responded that initially the program was FD driven and there was not much scope for the involvement of NGOs. The interest of NGOs in PFM had been on account of their other work and forestry issues arising as a part of that work. Some NGOs like Eklavya have not been involved directly in forestry issues but since they have been interacting with people they have formed perceptions on PFM. MTOs on the other hand see forestry issues as part of the larger issue of land rights. These MTOs have now

- entered the political process. MS added that there were some villages where the people openly support the MTOs but have not voted for their candidates.
3. Differences between PFM and Non-PFM villages in the Q-analysis: PDG responded that the discourses that emerged from the control villages were explained by the sample. AG added that there was greater awareness in the JFM villages.
 4. Whether the partners were also stakeholders: PDG responded that while the partners were stakeholders, their Q-sorts were not included in the analysis.
 5. Much of the critique on JFM was becoming repetitive. Would results in Harda have been different if PFM had been implemented in the first place? SU responded that much had not changed on paper.
 6. Extent to which the Nistar Patrak and the Wajib –ul-urz can be used to ascertain rights: SU responded that these were not prepared any more. Moreover, the FD now decided nistari rights whereas the revenue department prepared these documents. In the present context, the documents don't hold much value as far as determining of rights was concerned.
 7. Would the differences in perceptions disappear if a different terminology were used? BV responded that the term PFM was used since it was not liked with any programme input when the project began, and it could include different types of partnerships. The project did not try to validate any programme.
 8. Reasons for selecting Harda for the study: BV elaborated the reasons for selecting Harda for the study. Harda exemplified the JFM experience. Selection of Harda meant going back to an iconic example, which was important when the program reaches maturity. Moreover, Harda had gone through all the phases- leadership, external funding, and dissipation of interest- that other sites may not have gone through.
 9. Perception of financers was missing even though it influences the perception of other stakeholders: BV responded that there were no externally aided projects currently going on in Harda, which was why the financers had not been included in the study. However, their perceptions were reflected in those of the grassroots agencies and have been studied to some extent, albeit indirectly. A number of factors like these have been elaborated in the contextual part of the report.

Vote of Thanks: Ms. Girija Godbole

Annexure

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Consultation at the National Ecodevelopment and Afforestation Board, Ministry of Environment and Forests

A small consultation was held on February 8, 2005 at the National Ecodevelopment and Afforestation Board between the project team and senior officials of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. This was a briefing meeting, so no formal record was made of proceedings.

The project team was represented by Dr Bhaskar Vira, Project Leader; Ms Girija Godbole, Project Co-ordinator; and Mr Sushil Saigal, Winrock International India. Presentations were made by each of these members of the team, detailing project objectives, methods and key findings.

From the Ministry, the following officials were present at the meeting:

Mr Jagdish Kishwan, IG NAEB
Dr. Rekha Pai, DIG Forest Protection Division (FPD)
Mr A K Goel, DIG Research & Training (RT)
Mr Sanjay Kumar, DIG NAEB
Mr Anurag Bajpai, AIG, Forest Conservation (FC)
Mr Pankaj Asthana, AIG, FC
Mr Devendra Trivedi, AIG FPD
Mr Sandeep Kumar AIG FC
Mrs Alka Bhargava AIG, Externally Aided Projects (EAP)
Mrs B V Umadevi, AIG NAEB
Mr Sanjeev Chddha, Jt Director Wild Life

The officials were very receptive to the project findings and methods, and were keen to receive detailed final project outputs. They were also keen that the project team should organise further training sessions in order to disseminate the project methodology more widely, for use by Forest Departments and other organisations that were active in this sector. There was a suggestion that such a training session could be organised at National Forest Academy in Dehra Dun, and that the Ministry would be willing to facilitate this activity.