



# Participatory Forest Management<sup>1</sup> and Forest Governance in India

Compiled by Dr.D.Suryakumari  
Centre for People's Forestry  
(Briefing Paper II for FGSG)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

State control over the forests of India began during the British regime, in 1864 with the constitution of Imperial Forest Department which is aimed at planned and scientific management and thus came the Indian Forest Act 1865 as the first legislation on forests.

In order to manage the varied natural resources of the vast country and to organize the affairs of the Imperial Forest Department, *Imperial Forest Service* was constituted in 1867. The subject of "Forestry" which was managed by the Federal Government until then was transferred to the "Provincial List" by the Government of India Act, 1935 and subsequently recruitment to the Imperial Forest Service was discontinued.

The Indian Forest Act 1865 was revised in 1878 and the process of forest reservation began, resulting in alienation of the indigenous communities who resorted to protests and rebellions. The Forest Policy of 1895 gave importance to Agriculture over forestry. The Forest Policy 1952 is the first forest policy of India, after independence. This policy emphasised on the industrial and commercial needs, labelling local needs as secondary to "national" interest with an adhoc adoption of objective of 33% forest cover.

The Indian Forest Service, one of the three All India Services, was constituted in the year 1966 under the All India Services Act, 1951 by the Government of India. The main mandate of the service is the implementation of the National Forest Policy which envisages scientific management of forests and to exploit them on a sustained basis for primary timber products, among other things.

Between 1950s through 1970s, forest degradation and conflicts between the forest department and the rural communities due to prioritising commercial exploitation at the cost of local livelihoods continued. Evidence of ineffectiveness of the forest policy and growing unrest through people's movements across the country (eg: Chipko) were witnessed. It is in early 1970s that experiments with community participation on forest lands was started in India, which eventually led to the emergence of JFM programme later. The National Forest Policy, 1988 (NFP) the primary and foremost policy instrument on involvement of local communities in management of forests, lays emphasis on conservation of forests and marks a departure from the earlier policy where the supply

---

<sup>1</sup> Two major forms of forest management which has community involvement such as – JFM/CFM under the Joint Forest Management Programme and the Community Forest Resource Management under FRA are treated as PFM in this paper



of wood as raw material for industrial use was of prime importance. It further emphasises on joint management of forests involving village and rural population.

## **2. JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT**

### **Provisions in the Guidelines**

Formal guidelines for Joint Forest Management were issued in 1990 following the pronouncements in the NFP. These guidelines were revised in 2000 and 2002 incorporating - increased representation to women, extending JFM to good forests, recognition to self initiated groups and to strengthen linkages between JFM groups and Panchayats (local governance bodies).

### **Forest Type given and rights to communities**

The first guidelines issued in 1990 did not explicitly mention about the type of forest to be given to community. The revised guidelines issued in the year 2000, after 10 years of implementation dealt with a section on “extension of JFM in good forest areas”. It is mentioned as - “JFM programme should cover both the degraded as well as good forests (except the protected area network). The microplan or treatment plan and memorandum of understanding should be different for degraded forests and good forests (crown density above 40%)”.

As per the benefits – the 1990 guidelines state that – “the beneficiaries should be given usufructs like grasses, lops and tops of branches and minor forest produce. If they successfully protect the forests, they may be given a portion of the proceeds from the sale of trees when they mature”. The 2000 guidelines prescribe that the benefit sharing arrangement will be different for the degraded and good forest areas. It states that – “the JFM committees will be eligible for benefit sharing for timber, only if they have satisfactorily protected the good forests for a minimum period of at least 10 years and the sharing percentage should be kept limited to a maximum of 20% of the revenue from the final harvest. The felling of trees and harvesting of timber will be as per the provisions of the working plan. The extent of good forest areas to be allowed will depend upon the number of village households and should be restricted to a maximum limit of 100ha and generally limited to 2 km from the village boundary”.

### **Implementation across States**

The JFM resolutions of different states<sup>2</sup> have provided for different kinds of benefit sharing arrangements. Representation to women and the role to be played by them are also different along with the type of forest allotted to the forest protection committees.

---

<sup>2</sup> In Andhra Pradesh, several progressive measures have been incorporated in the CFM GO 2002 coinciding with the sanction of Phase II of the World Bank supported project



However, representation of the forest official in the executive committee of the forest protection committees is a commonality across states. The financial arrangements for these JFM Committees (JFMCs) are made through different sources. Externally aided projects (Andhra Pradesh and Odisha etc), centrally sponsored schemes and state government supported projects are the main sources of funding.

### **The key learning and indicators of success**<sup>3</sup>

- JFM has been successful in sensitizing the local communities towards the importance of forest conservation, and need for their proper management, conservation, and development.
- JFM has clearly demonstrated that active community participation in forest management is important for conserving forest and natural resources and helped in building rapport between the communities and the forest department officials.
- JFM committees are able to check illegal tree felling, wild fires and poaching to a large extent and considerably regulate its members in accessing and use of forest resources.
- Forest dwellers are able to derive benefits in terms of free access to fuel wood, small timber, grass, controlled grazing rights, bamboo wood lots, NTFPs, medicinal herbs and many other forestry products and services.
- Despite of multi-dimensional pressure on forests and wild life, there are definite indications of overall increasing forest stock, in which JFM has contributed significantly.

### **Forest Development Agency**

In August 1992, the concept of creating Forest Development Agency at division level has been initiated to channel the funds from the centrally sponsored schemes through a single window. Forest Development Agency (FDA) is formed at division level with the representation from the JFMCs of the division, who have to be nominated by the Conservator of Forests. The overall objective of the scheme is to develop the forest resources with people's participation, with focus on improvement in livelihoods of the forest-fringe communities, especially the poor. The functions of the FDAs and the activities to be taken up by them were specified in the FDA guidelines.

### **Insights from the field in Andhra Pradesh (Undivided)**<sup>4</sup>

The first JFM GO issued in June 1992 in Andhra Pradesh was modified several times to incorporate pro people measures and the GO 173 issued in 1996 was the basis for the

<sup>3</sup> Source – From a paper of titled “Evolution of JFM to JFM+ for Sustainable Forest Management ” by Mr.A.K.Bansal, former

<sup>4</sup> Since the author has in depth knowledge and experience in the J/CFM process and implementation in Andhra Pradesh State from 1999 to till to date, this section is based on those experiences.



formation and functioning of Vana Samrakshna Samithis (VSSs) in the State for a long time. Though the GO was issued in 1992, the programme gained momentum in 1994, through the AP Forestry Project supported by the World Bank. The initiative of the then Chief Minister is instrumental in creation of around 8000 VSSs in the State of which 5000 were supported by the second phase of the World Bank project titled APCFM project, which was implemented during 2002 and 2010.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh in general and the Forest Department in particular have shown lot of enthusiasm and interest in taking forward the JFM. In fact, before the development of proposal for the second phase, extensive stakeholder consultations were organised to seek opinions and suggestions from the – VSS communities, local and state level NGOs and the field level officials of the Forest Department. Almost all the recommendations of these consultations were incorporated in the CFM GO issued in 2002 and the Project Implementation Plan (PIP). When NGOs and communities sought clarifications on the benefit sharing mechanisms, another state level consultation was organised with massive participation of community members and Forest Officials (including field level officials) along with NGO representatives and the demands made by the community with regard to share of benefits pertaining to Bamboo, plantations and timber were accepted. These were issued as an addendum to the CFM GO, in 2004. The measures in the CFM GO with regard to benefit sharing are provided in the box below.

**Benefits to the Vana Samrakshana Samithis as per CFM GO and addendum**

Vana Samrakshana Samithi shall be entitled to the following forest produce obtained from forests managed by them;

- All Non-timber Forest Produce
- 100% of the incremental volume of timber and bamboo harvested from the forest
- All Intermediate yields obtained from silvicultural operations in natural forests
- A teak plantation whose silvicultural rotation age is 50 years, if allotted to a Vana Samrakshana Samithi when it was 40 years old, upon its final harvesting, if the total yield obtained is 100 cum of timber, the Vana Samrakshana Samithi will be entitled to share of  $100 \text{ (final yield obtained)} / 50 \text{ (total age of the plantation at the time of harvesting)} \times 10 \text{ (period of management by VSS)} \times 2 = 40 \text{ cum}$ . The same yardstick will apply to yield from thinning.
- In case of other plantations, whose age is known, 50% of harvest (including thinning) of the period of management of plantation by Vana Samrakshana Samithi is less than 50% of the rotation period and 100% of volume harvested if such period of management by the Vana Samrakshana Samithi is more than 50% of rotation period of the plantation.
- A plantation other than teak whose silvicultural rotation age is 10 years, if allotted to a Vana Samrakshana Samithi. When it was 6 years old, upon its final harvesting, if the total yield obtained is 100 cum of timber, the Vana Samrakshana Samithi. Will be entitled to share of  $100/2 = 50 \text{ cum}$ .. If a similar plantation was allotted to a Vana Samrakshana Samithi when it was 2 years old, the Vana Samrakshana Samithi Will be

entitled to a share of 100 cum total yield. The same yardstick will apply to yield if any obtained from thinning.

- Domestic requirement of the forest products will be set apart and distributed among all the V.S.S. members as per the norms evolved by the Managing Committee. The surplus quantity may be disposed as decided by the managing committee.
- Expenditure necessary to sustain the productivity of the forests as per the micro-plan shall be deposited in the V.S.S. joint account. This amount shall not be less than 50% of the net income.
- Balance income shall be deposited in the V.S.S. account and utilized as per decisions taken by the General Body of the Vana Samrakshana Samithi.

The interest shown by the then Chief Minister, the regular monitoring by the World Bank team, effective leadership in the Forest Department as well as at the project level, supportive NGOs at field and State levels in critical collaboration mode and enthusiastic communities contributed to the partial success<sup>5</sup> of the project during that period. Some key indicators of success are - enhanced community participation including of women in forest protection, livelihood opportunities, stopping of undue harassment of communities by the field level forest functionaries when they collect NTFP, fodder and fuel wood and small timber for household use, ability to keep and maintain records by the communities and enthusiasm of forest officials to build rapport with the communities.

However, the attitude and functioning of officials at all levels is of “Project mode” only. As such despite the suggestions by NGOs, no attempts were made to build the VSS as an institution towards long term sustainability. Lack of convergence of schemes through the VSS institution and lack of clarity on “what next” were the conspicuous gaps reflecting the short sightedness of the forest bureaucracy about the so called “community forest management”. After the conclusion of the World Bank project, interactions between forest department and the VSSs stopped almost everywhere. The VSSs being supported through FDA are now acting as extension agents for the forest department by receiving instructions and implementing without the sense of belongingness or ownership.

### **Vanasamakhyā**<sup>6</sup>

The State level federation named as “Vanasamakhyā” was registered under societies Act in the year 2003. CPF, local NGOs and Vanasamakhyā (range and state levels) played a

---

<sup>5</sup> Though many activists and academics dismiss such claims based on studies which have too small sample size to arrive at generalisations. It can be said only partial success as the spirit of achieving CFM did not happen; rather it was not aimed at by the project.

<sup>6</sup> CPF was associated with around 600 VSSs and promoted federation of VSSs at range level and State level. The range federation is to have engagement with the field level officials up to the Circle level and the State Federation to have engagement with the State Forest officials, Ministry and the Chief Minister if there is a need.



critical collaborative<sup>7</sup> role with the Forest Department and had constructive engagement till the end of the World Bank supported project. Vanasamakhyas also conducted “participatory performance assessment” of around 641 VSSs of eight forest divisions on the request of forest department, using the participatory methodology developed by CPF. The VSSs were assessed using 40 indicators and 7 parameters such as – social, institutional, resource, livelihoods, and linkages with other institutions, gender and HIV/AIDS awareness. Most of the VSSs were lagging behind in respect of linkages with other institutions. The VSSs were dependent on the forest department in many respects though awareness and inclusion of women in decision making were maintained.

In July 2009, CPF independently conducted performance assessment of VSSs supported by APCFM project and the FDA. The divisions where both APCFM and FDA were operating were taken up for the study to understand the attitude of forest officials towards the VSSs. It was a pleasure to note that the treatment of both kinds of VSSs was similar by the forest officials at the field level, though there is variation in funding. It gave some hope that there was change in the attitudes of the officials.

### **CPF’s work after the conclusion of the APCFM project**

After the conclusion of the APCFM project in 2010, CPF continued its efforts in three forest divisions with special focus besides supporting the Vanasamakhyas in general. These three divisions are – 1) Nellore where plantations in VSS forests are being harvested and 2) Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam where Bamboo has been regenerated in VSSs and was ready for harvest. It was felt that as CPF supported the J/CFM programme, it is important to see that the benefits from the forest returns reach the communities as per the provisions in the CFM GO. These three forest divisions presented two different kinds of experiences which are narrated below.

*Nellore* - In about 92 VSSs harvest of eucalyptus and casuarina plantations was taken up so far. In some VSSs harvest was being done from the year 2004 onwards and the amount was deposited (after deducting the expenditure incurred by forest department) in the VSS joint account (forest official too will be one of the signatories for operation of account). Of this 50% was reinvested in forest operations regularly. However, the other 50% which has to be transferred to the VSS second account (where only community members operate the bank account) was not transferred. The VSSs through the local range federations approached Vanasamakhyas and CPF for support in this regard. After persistent efforts by CPF and Vanasamakhyas the amounts were transferred to the second accounts during 2009 and 2011 but the process stalled there. Again CPF and Vanasamakhyas had to have series

---

<sup>7</sup> CPF developed resource material for Microplan development, Gender Mainstreaming, Conflict resolution and Facilitation skills in the form of posters and manuals and organised trainer’s trainings. Besides, through the network of NGOs and range federations of VSSs, the implementation of CFM GO was regularly reviewed and feedback was provided to the FD which in turn took measures to improve the situation.





of interactions with community members and the forest officials to see that the amount was shared to the individual members of the VSSs in the year 2011. Transparent procedure was followed in this regard and the payment from the second account to member was done by cheque and/or account transfer for 39 VSSs for an amount of Rs. 1, 14, 98,985. Around that time it also came to light that there were instances of misuse of funds where the amount in the second/first account was used by the local forest officials by influencing the community representatives. Vansamakhyia then demanded for audit of VSS accounts, both joint and second. After this exercise, in the year 2012, the FDA Nellore came up with a plan where the community part of amount is separately maintained at the FDA level with details of VSS wise fund. Whenever a VSS approaches the FD with a general body resolution clearly stating about how they propose to share the amount among the members in a transparent way, the amount will then be transferred to the second account of the VSS concerned. There were some VSSs where the amount was too low for the members to share among themselves. Such amount was still lying in the FDA level account. The members were unhappy and becoming sceptical as they were not able to receive any benefit after putting in so much effort in forest protection. Then the idea of creating a fund out of this amount for the benefit of the members was thought of. After much discussion it was decided to create “VMWDF” (VSS Members’ Welfare and Development Fund)<sup>8</sup> using such money. Initiated with 6 VSSs in 2011, it is being followed in 35 VSSs as of now with an amount of around 32 lakh rupees. CPF was instrumental in developing an operational manual for the fund and offering trainings to the VSS members in maintaining the records. Vanasamakhyia took the responsibility of field level implementation with the support of the forest department and the FDA Nellore is now prompting them to think of extending this to all the VSSs under the purview of Nellore FDA.

### ***Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam***

100% returns from the Bamboo (incremental) harvest were promised to the communities as per the CFM GO. In the VSSs of Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam, natural Bamboo was not present at the time of VSS formation and was not recorded in Forest Department’s working plans. After years of protection by the VSS communities who are homogenous tribal communities, the Bamboo regenerated and was ready for harvest by 2008. Since then CPF and Vanasamakhyia have been making efforts to get the Bamboo harvested in 100 VSSs (Srikakulam 70 and in Visakhapatnam 30). Up to the year 2012, 13 VSSs in Srikakulam and 11 VSSs in Visakhapatnam could get harvest permits and sell the Bamboo with facilitation by the FD. However, amount was not transferred to the VSS second account. After the above harvest, till now, no permits were given to the VSSs though they have been continuously following it up with the department. First they were asked to come up with an inventory and harvest plan, when it is made they were asked to

---

<sup>8</sup> For more details please refer ....



bring it in the format of the FD. When that condition too was satisfied, the local forest officials denied the presence of bamboo in the VSS forest saying that there was no mention in the working plans. Then the VSSs were groomed to record the GPS coordinates of their bamboo plots and when such readings were shared, it was said that since it was not there in the working plan they cannot issue harvest permits. The head office officials instructed the field functionaries to develop a working scheme to harvest the bamboo which was not part of the working plan. The VSSs were told that such schemes were submitted and they have been awaiting approvals. Till now such approvals have not come it seems. The Bamboo in the VSSs was either getting dried up or get caught in fire or being cut by the petty smugglers in connivance with the local forest officials. The VSS members have to become mute spectators of such things and are getting very much disillusioned. In all, as per the estimates made by CPF and Vanasamakhyā, on an average, Rs15000/household per year to 3000 households, for the past seven years (since 2008) is the loss to the VSS communities due to the indifferent attitude of the forest officials. Who will be accountable for this kind of lapse is not clear. The efforts are still on, to see that the harvest permits are issued to the VSS with authority to issue transit permits.

In all these 100 VSS villages, after September 2012 with the amendment of FRA rules, the gramsabhas have submitted claims in “form C” under FRA seeking community forest resource rights so that they can manage their bamboo resources on their own. But the titles were not issued yet.

### **What ails J/CFM –?**

There is no institutional structure in FD to address the field level issues. No one is accountable if nothing happens. There is no system of tracking whether the promises made are kept or not and no one bothers about this. FD officials expect communities to come forward and work as and when they need but do not have any plans to have a continuous engagement with communities. When the World Bank project is over, the message is that there is no need to have any engagement with the VSSs, when there is a change of government, they focus more attention on the new priorities of the government and VSS/J/CFM becomes no/least priority.

As per the existing literature and the field realities, the most important issues associated with the Joint / Community Forest Management programme are -

- a. No legal sanction: J/CFM is still being operated under an executive order. Very few states provided legal provisions.
- b. Operating in the same way: It has already been two decades that JFM is being implemented but the name and associated practices remain the same without any progressive development based on reviews of field situation.



- c. Differences in benefits: The benefits to communities across the country vary from state to state.
- d. Undemocratic structure of FDA: the Forest Development Agency currently has nominated (by FD) members from the village forest protection committees.
- e. No recognition to skills of the community: there is any recognition to community members having technical forestry skill. FD always treats them to be the ones to be trained
- f. No institutional mechanism in FD for facilitation of management in J/CFM areas: The FD operates in the same old ways with the same mindsets. Though there has been a welcome change in the government's policy the administrative machinery inherited from the colonial period and the values guiding that machinery remained unchanged.
- g. Complicated procedures of benefit sharing: When it comes to share the returns promised with the communities, the procedural complexity and the callousness of the concerned officials either the sharing does not happen or delayed for too long resulting in discouragement and distrust among the communities.
- h. Lack of single line of operation: MOEF currently operates Green India Mission and FDA scheme separately. In States also – FDA nodal officer is different and externally aided projects have a separate set up. This often creates confusion among communities on whom to approach in case of an issue. It also creates an impression that the government is not serious in pursuing the JFM and take it forward but is only making ad hoc arrangements.
- i. Lack of transparency: There are no efforts to create a separate website at National and State levels for JFM/Community Forestry and to post all information including benefits received by communities up to individual level, despite the demands by CSOs several times.
- j. Lack of separate training and research institute for community forestry at National and State levels: When 28% of the country's forests are under JFM arrangement, it is highly essential to have a dedicated training and policy research institute.
- k. Budgetary allocations for J/CFM committees: There are no attempts to make budgetary provisions to ensure the sustainability of the J/CFM institutions.

The often quoted reason for the failure of J/CFM is the “Attitude of forest officials”. However, if we see deeper, it will be understood that it is not the case. The lapse is in the Government's intent and prioritisation and the will of the political leadership. The same is true with regard to the implementation of Community Forest Resource Rights under FRA.

### **3. FOREST RIGHTS ACT**



The Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 popularly known as the FRA (Forest Rights Act) marks the first time that a law recognises the rights of forest communities. The Act, among other things ensures tenurial security and legitimises the scheduled tribes and forest dwellers' ownership over the minor forest produce and their role in management of forests.

Though the Act came into force from January 2008, the initial focus was on individual titles only. Civil Society Organisations have been advocating<sup>9</sup> for recognition of community rights over the forest resources. As of now, very few community titles were issued and the disaggregated figures for individual and collective rights are not available at the National level. Lack of awareness at community level, lack of technical personnel to conduct verification, low level of budgetary allocations and lack of interest among concerned officials are the key reasons for the slow implementation of this historic legislation. The Forest Departments are particularly reluctant to implement the provisions of section 3.1(i), which proposes to confer Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRe rights) on the communities and issue titles to the concerned gramsabhas.

There is one section among the civil society which argues that FRA is to be followed rigorously and the JFM areas too to be brought under FRA. However, it has to be noted that, the JFMCs are mostly present in the forest fringe villages which are not necessarily tribal habitations. They have membership of ST, SC, BC and general categories. FRA is applicable to those JFMC areas which are present in the tribal areas as the name of the Act "The Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers recognition of rights (Forest rights) Act" itself indicates. Even the high profile FRA committee<sup>10</sup> felt that there has to be a mechanism to bring in legal sanction to the JFMCs in other (non tribal) locations. As per the membership of JFMCs, on an average around 30% belong to tribal community and the rest to SC (scheduled caste), BC (backward caste) and general categories. There is also possibility that some tribal communities which are not part of JFMCs too are eligible for CFRe rights under FRA. However details regarding such instances are not readily available.

In Andhra Pradesh State, of the 8000 JFMCs, 2100 are identified to be present in exclusive tribal areas and the government of Andhra Pradesh proposed to issue collective rights titles to these VSSs (JFMCs in AP are called as Vana Samrakshana Samithis or VSSs) under FRA. However, this matter became contentious as i) the title has to be in the name of Gramsabha and not in the name of VSS as per provisions of FRA ii) the title carries a clause that they have to be managed as per the guidelines of CFM GO which is

<sup>9</sup> Civil Society consultation report submitted to Planning Commission on - "**Regenerating Natural Resources and Rural Livelihoods in Rainfed Areas of India: Priorities for the 12th Five Year Plan**"  
Inputs to the Approach Paper on the sub theme - Forest Rights and Tribal Farming Systems  
(Anchored by Centre for People's Forestry<sup>9</sup>) – December 2010

<sup>10</sup> Please refer the section below "Joint Committee on FRA on Forest Governance"



against the provisions of FRA and iii) the VSS areas may not always be co terminus with the traditional use areas by the community.

Even in places where titles were issued also there are several issues as the forest officials are not forthcoming in extending cooperation and support to the title holding gram sabhas with regard to harvest, management and funds. The gram sabhas need guidance in technical matters and support in facilitation for formulation of their own governance norms. Funding support also is needed for taking up development activities. The tribal welfare department which is nodal agency for implementation of FRA can facilitate the title issue process and provide some support with regard to convergence in case of individual rights title holders' land development, but cannot support the communities with regard to CFR title areas due to lack of technical expertise and funds. So there is a strong felt need in the field that there should be some mechanism through which the gramsabhas and communities can be helped/supported in – preparation of forest management plans, mobilisation of resources to execute those plans, development of governance norms to take care of the community institution and the forest in their charge.

#### Joint Committee on FRA on Forest Governance

The alternate view expressed by 50% members of the FRA committee (2010) recommends that the JFM areas in tribal areas be recognised under FRA and the rights conferred on the Gramsabhas. It further suggests that the **JFM areas in other locations** have to be recognised by bringing in appropriate amendment in the Indian Forest Act 1927 and has to be linked to the panchayat system making the gramsabha the implementer rather than the village forest protection committees which remained as an extension arm of the forest department.

With regard to governance, the committee's view is as under:

*Where management claims are accepted under FRA, the management committee formed under Rule 4(e), to be named as Community Forest Resource Management Committees (CFRMC, or simply MC) should carry out functions on behalf of the Gram Sabha. If JFMCs exist in these villages/hamlets, their functions and resources (forest area, funds) should be transferred to the corresponding CFRMCs (after due process of figuring out jurisdiction, management of funds, etc.). If there are other existing arrangements or institutions (such as Biodiversity Management Committees) and if the Gram Sabha so resolves, these can be considered as CFRMCs for the purposes of the FRA, with appropriate changes to meet criteria of equity.*

*State- and National Forest Governance Councils: Forest Rights Councils (similar to NREGA Council) should be constituted at the state- and national level. These Councils, chaired by the respective ministers, will include FD officials, representatives of forest committees, and representatives from PRIs, civil society and academia. These Councils*



*will provide direction to overall forest governance in the state, including by overseeing monitoring, state/national planning, and regulation. The Council should also suggest the setting up of appropriate district level committees with public representation for monitoring and guiding forestry activities at the district, sub-district, and village levels.*

#### **4. GREEN INDIA MISSION (GIM)**

The Green India Mission document proposes to revitalise the JFM committees and involve them in the mission activities. But the document is silent on how this revitalisation will be attempted. There is also no clarity on how much of the forest area proposed to be developed under the GIM is under JFM and how much is eligible for CFRe titles under FRA.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION ON MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF PFM AREAS**

Based on the above discussion, it may be looked into on how the PFM areas (both J/CFM and CFRe) can be governed in future. Certain key changes are needed in policies, implementation structures and monitoring systems. Based on the field level and Policy level experiences met with so far with regard to JFMCs and CFRe management committees, the Governance model for the PFM areas could be as under:

##### **Setting up of National Community Forestry Authority**

A National Community Forestry Authority (CFA) has to be constituted under the aegis of the MOEF&C. At State level State Community Forestry Agency (SCFA) has to be created and at Forest Division level Community Forestry Agency (CFA) has to be formed. The current FDA and SFDA may be replaced with CFA and SCFA. Norms have to be developed for the creation and operation of such structures so that they can facilitate/support both J/CFM committees as well as the CFRe management committees at division and State levels. As per amended rules of FRA issued in September 2012, the CFRe management plans of the gramasabhas have to be in tune with the working plans of the FD. If the CFA of FD takes up this role there will not be any difficulty in bringing in such integration. All these bodies at different levels need to have representation of the community, NGOs and Academics.

##### **Development and issue of Guidelines**

The current guidelines of FDA with regard to structure, functioning and activities to be undertaken, have to be replaced with guidelines for CFA at different levels, based on *intensive consultations with all concerned*, including the representatives of the MOTA, the NGOs associated with J/CFM and CFRe management (under FRA) and the community representatives from the J/CFM committees and CFRe management



committees. MOTA and the Forest Departments have to work in coordination to complete the process of issue of CFRe titles for the eligible gram sabhas. The CFRe areas and the JFMC areas have to be clearly demarcated on the forest maps of the respective divisions and kept in public domain.

### **Creation and operation of Website for NCFA**

Details about the membership, their management plans, harvest plans and returns received by the community institutions, amount reinvested in the forest development has to be made available in the public domain by creating and operating specific website for this purpose.

### **Establishment of exclusive training and research institutes at different levels for community forestry**

The CFA at National and State levels need to take proactive role in creating National and State level Community Forestry training and research institutions which are exclusively meant for strengthening the CF institutions (both CFR management committees and JFMCs) and their federations at village and forest range levels. All existing institutions have their own specific mandates and hence new institutions have to be promoted which have a clear mandate of fostering the community forestry institutions of all types.

### **Budgetary Allocations**

There have to be regular budgetary allocations for the CFAs and the Training and Research institutions.