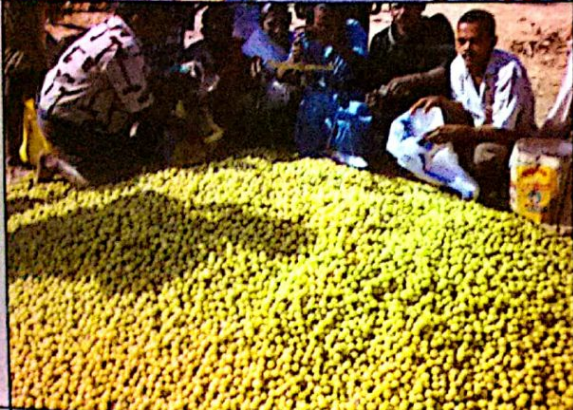
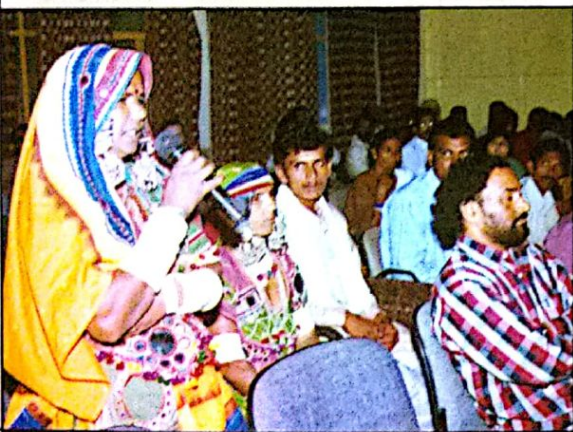


# Stakeholder Consultations on Community Forest Management

**Report**  
September 2001



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## REPORT

September, 2001

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## PREAMBLE



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Eversince it has been proposed to consider a shift from the ongoing Joint Forest Management to Community Forest Management, extensive discussions are going on, among all those who have been actively involved in the programme. The following are the concerns frequently expressed:

- ❁ What does Community Forest Management actually mean?
- ❁ How dose the Forest Department perceive and how do the communities view this?
- ❁ Is the idea to cover entire programme across the State or is it limited to a specific area?
- ❁ What is the role of NGOs in this attempt?
- ❁ Is it really possible to operationalise this new concept?
- ❁ What is the experience in the neighbouring States like Orissa where CFM seems to be already in practice, and what is the relevance of that experience to Andhra Pradesh?
- ❁ What are the measures that enable the shift - as the Forestland belongs to the State?
- ❁ Are communities really ready and/or capable to handle such responsibility?
- ❁ Is there something in the concept that is not yet clearly enunciated to the public?

Discussions with the Forest Officials, NGOs and others reveal that there are no readily available answers to all the questions being raised. It is however clear that, the Government and the Forest Department are willing to bring in



this shift in the whole State, and are not thinking of confining it to any particular area. This assurance relieved some anxiety. Then, when asked for a definition, the Forest Department mentioned that, it would become clear as we go along. But the Department thinks CFM covers empowering the communities so that their livelihood aspects are addressed properly to the extent possible while managing the forest in a sustainable way. This has to be carried forward by all who are involved in the process.

Rather than viewing it as a received concept, the People concerned, the Foresters, the NGOs and all others interested need to develop a common understanding on Community Forest Management in our own context (models of other places may not fit in toto here, though they are helpful in giving some guidance) and try to evolve a definition that is acceptable to all the players.

It is in this background; the consultation process has been attempted. The understanding thus emerging is that – Community Forest Management is a Forest Management model, which enables the people living in Forest fringe areas to manage the designated forests as well as their livelihoods in a sustainable way. It may be reviewed and further evolved from time to time based on experiences. The role of foresters and NGOs will be of guiding and facilitating rather than controlling and regulating.



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