

Towards Sustainable Mechanisms for Forest Management

Third Annual & Final Report

JFM Phase II (April 2000 - March 2003)

Centre for People's Forestry - CWS

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In this

Overview and the way ahead

Part - I JFM Annual Report 2002 - 2003

Part - II Consolidated report of Phase II
(April 2002 to 2003 March)

OVERVIEW AND THE WAY AHEAD

The compilation of the work of the past one year as well as consolidation of reports of various activities over the phase II (April 2000 – March 2003) follow this section. Ahead of that we present here an overview of the phase, in terms of the outcomes of work vis-à-vis stated objectives in our document “*Promoting Sustainable Mechanisms in Joint Forest Management through NGOs in Andhra Pradesh*” We also restate the short term & long term objectives and the approach of CPF in its future course.

1. PHASE II OVERVIEW

A review of the work in the phase as depicted on the cover may be summarized as - some concrete results; some areas under various stages of progress and the emerging second generation issues.

- 1.1 Placing Gender concerns “central to the project” (as assessed by the evaluators); formation of 32 range level networks of VSSs (local Vanasamakhya) and promotion of a State level VSS federation (Vanasamakhya) which is now registered under Societies registration Act; and the establishment of an independent institute “Centre for People’s Forestry” to work towards livelihood rights of forest dependent and/dwelling communities through forestry programmes; voicing out the concerns of Dalits in the forestry work are the concrete steps taken during the project phase.
- 1.2 Sustainable NTFP management; Livelihood assessment and enabling the VSSs to develop their own business plan; taking forward the linkages established with the forest department at all levels; convergence with Panchayats and other village level institutions; capacitating Vanasamakhya at different levels - to take up the responsibilities performed by CPF - Partners combine till now; are those that figure in the continuing agenda.
- 1.3 Membership regulations at VSS level; attempts of entry of hitherto uninterested stakeholders into VSSs and trying to dominate the vulnerable groups; problems faced by VSSs in protecting the forests after regeneration; conflicts among members in management of VSS; realizing the benefits from bamboo, timber, etc. by grasping the procedures involved; conflicts between different communities - are some of the second generation issues that need careful handling as the sustainability of Community Forest Management depends to a great extent on how these issues are addressed.

Other details regarding the accomplishments of the project and the learnings during the phase are described in the reports that follow.

2. CENTRE FOR PEOPLE'S FORESTRY (CPF)

Centre for People's Forestry is based on the vision that can help realize the objectives/goals pronounced in the National Forest Policy of 1988 which had a remarkable pro-people tilt compared to the previous forest policies. The establishment of an independent institute is to primarily cater to the needs of communities. The need for an organization like this in the People's sector was identified as the existing Institutions in the Government sector are all established and developed in a different context with a different objective and it becomes difficult for such institutions to switch to overtly people centred approaches. Such Institutions have technical training and/or Research as mandate and their clientele generally are the new recruits and/or in service officials to whom induction and/or refresher trainings are offered. The sustainable forest management envisaged in the National Forest Policy on the other hand, demands the effective participation of communities and NGOs in the Forest Management. While the National and State Governments try to take the concept to people and the concerned officials expend their energies in designing appropriate projects and mobilizing the required resources for implementation of such projects; the projects would not by themselves be able to make much head way in the area of - "the much needed capacity building of people concerned".

There is a wide gap between what the project documents envisage and what has actually been happening in the field situation. The reason is - for the Government machinery the first priority always is - orientation and training to the officials, which also is necessary. With the result most of the time energy and resources are expended on capacity building of/orientation to staff concerned and in the process training needs of CBOs and NGOs are often not paid adequate attention. As a consequence, there is always a mismatch between the intentions of a majority of officials and aspirations of people. The time has yet to come where the officials are trained to consider CBOs and NGOs on equal footing with themselves. This is not to deny the efforts of the exceptional officials who strive hard from their side to change the prevailing situation. But their numbers are not adequate to fill the existing wide gap.

Thus, CPF has been created out of such perceived needs and its primary mandate is - to identify and cater to the participatory training/Research needs of Communities and NGOs that would boost their confidence; and to encourage the people to assert themselves and work towards realizing the

entitlements due to them. With communities in the steering position being effectively guided by NGOs and Officials, sustainable forest management would become a reality in near future.

The Centre also provides a platform for regular interaction between the communities, NGOs and the Officials to debate and arrive at meaningful conclusions/consensus on contentious issues.

2.1 Approach

Centre for People's Forestry believes that *"the claim to Conservation, Control and Management of the forest resources belong to the forest dependent/dwelling communities and their livelihoods should be the primary concern of all forestry programmes"*. The Approach is to work in critical collaboration with the State and National Government/s in general and with the Forest Department/s and Ministry of Environment and Forests in particular. This is so because CPF recognizes that sustainable development in general and sustainable forest management in particular are possible only through *alliances of* committed - CBOs, NGOs, Officials and other concerned individuals from Academic and Research Institutions.

2.2 Short Term Goals - Consolidation of efforts in CFM in AP

CPF has identified the JFM and CFM programmes as means to reach its goal and hence has associated with them. In the near future the efforts will be to consolidate such efforts and work towards enabling the Vanasamakhya to become self reliant. However, CPF continues its association with Vanasamakhya and its local federations, in ways that they seek. The project for the Phase 2003-06, titled "Strengthening Community Forest Management Initiatives through NGOs and CBOs in Andhra Pradesh" is the means through which this consolidation will be attempted.

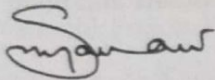
2.3 Long Term Goals

Working in the areas of - rights and entitlements of people around the Protected areas (National Parks and Sanctuaries); examining the status of the compensatory afforestation measures taken up by industries and other development projects in Andhra Pradesh and in other States on the one hand and looking into the International Conventions/Agreements such as the - Convention on Bio Diversity; WTO particularly the TRIPs provisions; the Kyoto protocol, and carefully examining and working on the implications of such arrangements to local forest dwelling/dependent communities on the other, form the long term objectives of the Centre.

The Centre would strive hard - in updating its knowledge on the changing external circumstances; simultaneously taking the message to the communities and encourage informed debates on all matters relevant to people, thus enabling them to take their own decisions.

As such, it would be aptly justified when we say that we work towards - "the livelihoods and development of women and men living in and around forests and dependent totally or partly on forest resources directly or indirectly for their sustenance, and work towards creation of sustainable natural resource base that restores the built in organic linkages between people and forests and *build the capabilities of people further to face the challenges ahead in the changing external environment*".

We look forward to the Cooperation of one and all in our endeavour!



Dr. D.Suryakumari

Director

31st July 2003

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