



# Participatory Forest Management CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Centre for People's Forestry

#### About us

Centre for People's Forestry (CPF) is a professional NGO working in community forestry in Central India. CPF became an independent institute in 2002 until when it was part of Centre for World Solidarity (CWS). The initial conception of CPF of building and strengthening the stakeholder network programme was launched as early as in 1996. However, the team of CPF began to function independently as a wing within CWS from April 2000 which led to the formation of CPF as an independent institute in 2002.

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## **PREFACE**

During the transition in Andhra Pradesh (AP) from Joint Forest Management (JFM) to Community Forest Management (CFM), Community Extension Workers (CEWs) were engaged either through NGOs or directly by the Forest Department in AP to facilitate enhanced participation and involvement of community in the management of forest.

Centre for People's Forestry was requested by AP Forest Department/Forest Academy to develop a ToT module cum manual to train the CEWs. Subsequently, CPF, based on its field experience over eight years as well as with inputs from materials, developed by other agencies, brought out this training manual in Telugu with AP-specific cases and illustrations, which was jointly published by APFD/APFA and CPF.

As CPF has plans to work in Orissa and Jharkhand, it has been felt useful to get the manual translated to English for use by partner NGOs and others in the states. There are also plans to incorporate state-specific components (like in AP) and publish regional versions (Oriya and Hindi) in future.

We gratefully acknowledge the support provided by APFD/APFA in developing and publishing the Telugu version.

## **CONTENTS**

www			
2.0	粉節	2	1
45.1	- E	CON.	LAST!

1.	Introduction	1
2	Conflicts - a conceptual understanding	97
	2.1 Conflict - a definition	3
	2.2 Origin and level of conflict	3
	2.3 Conflicts - Causes	4
	2.4 Types of conflicts	6
	2.5 Conflicting parties	6
	2.6 Conflict dynamics	7
	2.7 Conflicts concerning natural resources	8
3.	Resolution of conflicts	9
	3.1 Conflict - collecting information	9
	3.2 Conflict resolution approach	11
	3.3 Conflict resolution - Methods	12
	3.4 Conflict - devising the resolution plan	14
4.	Participatory forest management - conflicts	15
	4.1 From JFM to CFM in Andhra Pradesh	15
	4.2 Prime Objective of CFM in Andhra Pradesh	15
	4.3 Issues leading to conflicts	15
	4.4 Factors of conflict	16
	4.5 Stakeholders of conflicts	16
	4.6 Issues leading to conflicts	16
	4.7 Matrix on conflicts concerning Community Forest Management	19
5.	Training guide	21
	5.1 Instructions for trainers	21
	5.2 Communication Gaps - Exercise (i)	22
	5.3 Communication Gaps - Exercise (ii)	23
	5.4 Training approach (relating to 3rd Chapter)	25
	5.5 Issues for exercises	27
	5.5.1. Boundary conflict between two VSSs	27
	5.5.2. Conflict between VSS and the forest dependent people within	VSS
	5.5.3. Conflict between the VSS and those who have lost their livelih	
	5.5.4. Conflicts between the VSS and the herdsmen	30

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Any endeavor to bring about a change, including that of the current situation, would normally affect the persons or party concerned, which gives room for conflicts. Sometimes, the conflicts so arose could easily find a solution. However, on many occasions, the conflicts relating to possession of land and enjoyment rights of natural resources turn out to be somewhat complicated. Whenever a conflict is to be resolved outside the gamut of judiciary, a common proposal acceptable to all the concerned persons or parties is needed.

It is natural that different persons as parties to the conflict have various ideas, needs and ambitions. The proposed change may persuade such persons or parties to act in coordination with each other or it may arouse conflicts among them that result in splits in society. It happens so because every proposed change, while favouring a category of persons/parties, might pose a threat to many. So, it must be clearly understood that conflict resolution is intricately linked to 'those who oppose a change out of fear that it would hamper their own interests and to the circumstances created by them'. In this process, everyone connected to conflict shall have to demonstrate preparedness for few adjustments and flexibility in their stand. As there is bound to be people of self importance in large number, any attempt for conflict resolution might result in further deepening of the conflict or lead to fresh conflicts.

Coming to conflicts concerning natural resources, they may arise in environmental management, water management, management of common resources or forest, rural development plans etc. Though initially conflicts were settled in the traditional methods, in the course of time a tendency to resort to judicial process has developed. As the above two methods have some limitations, a search for 'alternative resolution methods' has been launched. The issues relating to management of common resources (natural resources in particular) are very dynamic in nature. In the process of time, changes take place based on circumstances among various stakeholders. Such a change may reflect in the nature and level of conflict or in representative characteristics of the conflict. Hence, of late, taking recourse to alternative methods for resolution of conflicts relating to common (natural) resources is seen much.

If a conflict is left unresolved in time, there is scope for all the concerned to sustain damage and loss. In order to find an amicable solution, awareness

shall have to be created in all the concerned persons about all aspects of the conflict and everyone's viewpoints taken into consideration. Everyone shall understand the accurate factors of the conflict. It is also to be understood that in view of the current variations existing in the society certain changes favour certain people and, however, such changes form basis for a future harmonious society. This conviction entail in 'alternative approaches'. Though alternative approaches couldn't resolve the conflict in totality, the tension caused would be mitigated to a large extent.

Keeping in view all the aforementioned aspects necessary information is incorporated in this handbook.



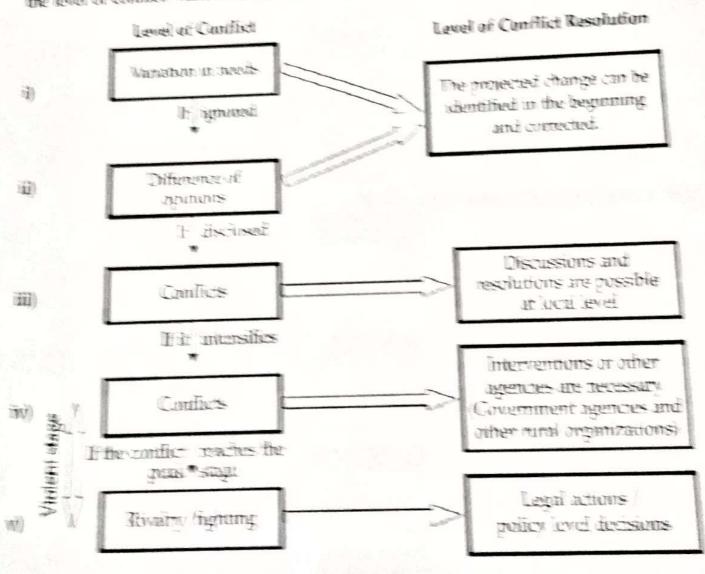
# 2. CONFLICTS - A CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING

An attempt has been made in this section to create an understanding on all aspects related to conflict

"A faction or an assumed difference between two or more opposite parties or individuals in respect of meets increas properties or objectives can be said as a conflict. Conflicts can also lead to violence.

## 22. Origin and level of conflict

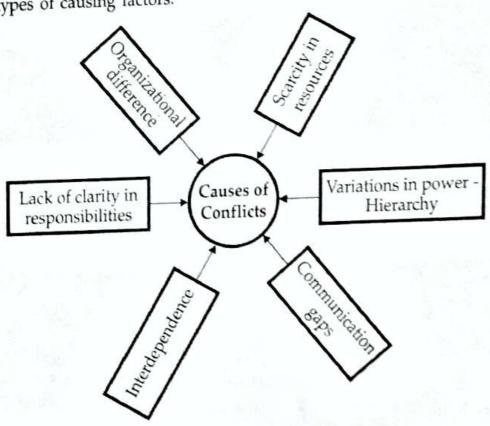
Differences of against start with variation is needs and they mansions into conflicts through different stages. The level of conflict resolution varies in consumance with the level of conflict Various levels me mentioned below



## 2.3. Conflicts - Causes

Conflicts primarily arise due to dynamics in access to resources and power; decline in the access to resources; deficiency owing to decline in resources; on value basis or insecurity feeling; contradictions in Government policies or communication gaps.

Causes of Conflicts: According to Prain Garry (1988), conflicts actually originate from factors beyond personal reasons, which can be described as causing factors. The causing factors are not directly linked to those who are connected to the conflict. There are six types of causing factors.



## a. Interdependence

Where there is interdependence among the individuals in respect to a task, the chance for an individual to act independently is much less or least. In the circumstances, there grows a need for inter-cooperation and it leads to difference in opinions and later to conflicts.

For instance, the decision of the managing committee is essential in respect of works in VSS and relevant expenditure. In this context, an arbitrary decision by the VSS president without consulting other Managing Committee members would give way for conflict. Even though if the Managing Committee members are consulted, a conflict can be anticipated.

## b. Lack of clarity in roles

Lack of clarity in regard to responsibilities of the stakeholders results in conflicts.

For instance, when more than one organization or individuals are involved in a program there should be clarity in responsibilities as to 'who should do what and what should be done'. There should be clarity as to what sort of cooperation is required to be extended by the Forest Department and the NGOs to the VSS. Absence of such clarity would lead to various conflicts.

#### c. Organizational difference

When there is division of work among the individuals belonging to different organizations, there is scope for conflicts to arise owing to organizational perspectives and objectives.

#### d. Scarcity in resources

Conflicts may creep in due to shortage in material resources like food, money, staff and natural resources or due to variations in levels of life standards, welfare, power and gaps in skills etc.

#### e. Power dynamics - Hierarchy

Though this is not directly related to material or resources, but due to variations in power determines the access to the same. Even marginal differences in the powers erupt into show of strengths. If the gaps in official levels are wider, conflicts are subdued. However, such tentatively buried conflicts would explode on one day or the other.

When no one is willing to compromise, even minor conflicts would resort to power dynamics. In the process, those who are in superior power might compel all others to accept what they propose for resolution of the conflicts.

### f. Communication gaps

Factors like distance, language and inhibition to share the information with others might result in communication gaps. Though addressing 'differences in understanding' is not an extraordinary task, they are the origin for many conflicts.

Communication gaps may happen between different levels of officers of Forest Department or between the Forest Department officials and NGO staff and ultimately they snowball into conflicts. Communication gaps happen due to inability of the individuals to understand properly the communication of others or to pass on the same

communication to others correctly. A message may be understood by different people in different ways. A proper understanding of the communications and message can avoid many conflicts.

It is vital to trace to the origin of the conflict and to check whether it is attributable to communication gaps. So, two exercises have been provided in 4th chapter viz. Training Guide to explain the same.

### 2.4. Types of conflicts

Generally, there are four types of conflicts:

- a. Material conflicts: Material conflicts relate to money, equipment, competence and organizational structure etc.
- Social emotional conflicts: This type of conflicts deal with individual existence and mutual relations.
- c. Varied interests/objectives: Conflicts arise when different people have different interests and objectives.
- d. Generation gaps: These conflicts relate to practice of past, present and future values.

### 2.5. Conflicting parties

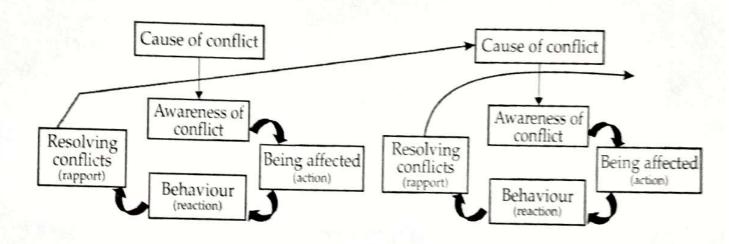
All the individuals/parties involved in conflict are called conflicting parties. An overview of our experiences with the CFM reveals that there is scope for conflicts to take place between the following stakeholders.

- Herdsmen and agriculturists
- · Hunters and fishermen
- Corporate agriculture and traditional land utilization
- Allocation of forest land for protection of wild life and the needs of the local people
- Rural people and industrialization (mining activities etc)
- Rural people and infrastructural projects like dams etc
- Rural people and tourism
- Needs of urban people and consumption of rural resources (example, water, firewood etc)
- Urban population and industries in respect of utilization of sea waters. Conflicts over utilization of sea waters on a small scale take place in developing countries.

 Different stakeholders frequently enter into conflicts over utilization/consumption of resources. Apart from the rural factors, conflicts emerge from urban, coastal factors and over issues relating to water management and environmental management.

## 2.6. Conflict dynamics

At times, fresh conflicts evolve from resolution measures themselves. Reason for this phenomenon is that the parties to the conflict are not always positioned static. They are dynamic. Process of resolution can be explained through the following diagram as follows:



The above evolution can be understood as follows:

Supposing when a farmer has to surrender a piece of land, he/she would naturally oppose the project. The farmer can be kept calm with an alternative offer of land in other village. But, the farmers of new village may object to this proposal. Few more farmers may demand similar alternative offer for their forfeited lands. Without much experience, it is not possible to gauge the public behaviour on such occasions.

As shown in the above diagram, the cycle of eruption of conflict, escalation of conflict, resolving the conflict and emergence of fresh conflicts from resolution continues. From this, the nexus between the human psyche and conflict dynamics is clear. Perceptions and experience of parties to the conflict assume the center point of the conflict resolution. The actions of the individuals can not be expected to be realistic always. Much significance is to be attached as to how the parties to the conflict comprehend it and how they react to it. As such, while endeavoring for a resolution much better result can be gained through influencing the understanding and thinking of the parties.

## 2.7. Conflicts concerning natural resources - a few examples:

Hereunder are furnished some examples for conflicts concerning natural resources.

- Reserve Forest Areas consumption of natural resources: When an area is declared
  as Reserve Forest Area, there is scope for three types of conflicts between the objectives
  of the said declaration and consumption of natural resources. They are;
- a. Full length conflict between the proposed developmental objectives for that area and the present contemplated objectives.
- b. Limited level conflict between the regional objectives and the fresh plan.
- c. Conflicts that may arise in other areas due to reserve forest areas.

The first category of conflicts is irresolvable. For instance, if the primary area objective is 'agricultural development', the fresh proposal for reserve forest area totally forbids the same. Rather than inviting new conflicts by poking into such conflicts, it is prudent to avoid such situations.

The second category of conflicts is amenable to some extent for a resolution. For instance, when new roads are to be proposed laid through reserve forest areas, conflict can be resolved through alternative ways.

The third category of conflicts is mainly related to neighbouring human habitations. Animals, birds, insects of Reserve Forest Area may turn out to be harmful to people and cattle of the surrounding areas.

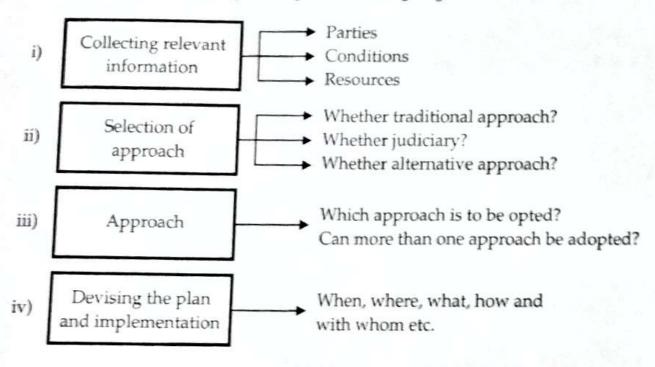
The main problems with Reserve Forest Areas are the vast area reserved for the purpose and prohibition of others into the area. At times, activities conducted in the surroundings of Reserve Forest Area also cause conflicts. For example, the pollution caused by industries in the surroundings may adversely affect the environment of the Reserve Forest Area.

- **2. Consumption of water resources**: We have seen several conflicts over consumption of water resources between the upper and lower command areas. Conflicts also arise over the threat of flood of vast areas of land in connection with construction of large scale irrigational projects.
- 3. Conflicts in areas of rich natural resources: When there is no unanimity over ways and means of utilization of resources, conflicts take place.



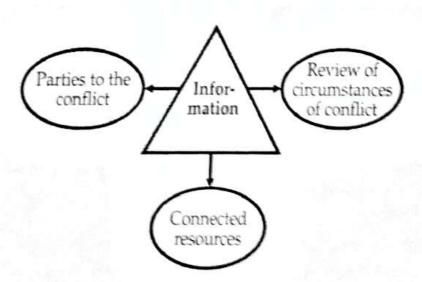
## 3. RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

The resolution process shall go through the following stages:



### 3.1. Conflict - collecting information

Prior to selecting the conflict resolution approaches, it is essential to collect relevant information. The information so collected shall be relevant to the following three aspects:



#### Parties to the conflict

The following information relating to conflicting parties shall be gathered.

- Whether the conflicting parties have unanimity of opinion over the origin of the conflict, if not what are the differences of opinion?
- The form of conflict and the number of parties to conflict
- What is the level of the conflict?
- What is the relief sought for by the each of the parties?
- How far an innovative decision is solicited?
- Whether the parties are positive or obstinate?
- Current relations among various parties and how they would value their relations in future.
- Whether there is rapport among the conflicting parties in implementation of resolution of the conflict?
- Is it necessary to hear the arguments of all the parties making it part of the resolution process and allow them to have a say on the final outcome of the conflict?
- Whether a final resolution is necessary at all?
- Whether any guidelines can be formulated from the current situation for future resolution of conflicts?

In addition to all the above, cultural values and principles are not to be ignored while dealing with conflicts concerning natural resources. It is vital to take a special notice of the context and the background of the conflict. It is unreasonable to expect the outcome achieved in a particular area to be replicated in another area or in respect of people of different culture. The significance of ethnic values shall not be looked down.

#### Review of conflict conditions

As it is indispensable to know the viewpoints of all the conflict partners, the following information shall have to be collected from them using apt methods for the purpose.

- What is the origin of conflict? Of what the conflict really is? Since how long? What
  are the measures taken to resolve the conflict? How to fill up the gaps in such
  resolution measures?
- What are the gains or losses for different parties to the conflict? The behaviours
  of a gainer and a loser can not be expected to be balanced ones and, in fact, those

who are not to incur immediate looses or gain immediate advantages tend to hear to resolution plans unbiased. It is very important to autopale the advantages or disadvantages in store for all due to resolution.

- What are fire atternatives suggested?
- Are there any particular motives to the parties?
- It is an illusion that the stakeholders open their minds in PRA and PRA meetings.
   Individuals with serious disputes shall be talked to personally and freir compulsions understood. Unless this is done, it is not possible to touch the bottom line of the conflict.

#### Connected Resources

What is meant by connected resources? Who switted rights over frem previously? What sort of difference is going to be made out due to proposed changes? Is these a provision for alternative resources? All these points shall be elicited.

### 3.2. Conflict resolution approach:

There are three types of approaches to conflict resolution viz. traditional, judiciary and alternative approaches. The pros and cons of the respective approaches are mentioned hereunder.

Appunati Traditional	People's empowerment	Negative features     Or equation:     Locally castlest     Monitoring mechanism is not foolproof
Judiciary	Official justice delinery system     Technical inputs are provided     Lawful decisions     Decisioeness	Expensive     Ethnic practices are not taken into cognizance     Count realities are generally ignored
Alternative methods	Interests of all parties given due importance Traditional approaches are included Lot of flexibility Competence: Information dissemination	Not conducine to all sorts of conflicts     Legal binding may not be feasible     People who are well nerse with ethnic concerns are required

#### 13. Conflict Resolution Methods

### a. Pre-conflict approach

This approach aims at identifying the probable conflicts through indicators and search for resolutions with people's involvement. When large scale projects are contemplated, Consemment and those who devise the project plan resort to this approach. Consulting stakeholders, formulating procedures for negotiations, finding cause and affect related solutions etc. come under this approach. This is a macro level approach i.e. at the planning stage of the project.

### B. Post-conflict approach

Whatever may be the cause for a conflict, be it natural or due to expected changes, the post-conflict resolution approach comprises of the following methods.

#### i. Judicial exercise

In the past, every conflict was viewed as a result of violating the law or an Act. So, every conflict was used to be referred to judiciary. However, in this method, some irrelevant issues were also to be focused. The experience proved that issues relating to natural resources better be resolved amicably through negotiations rather than taking legal recourse.

#### ii. Phase wise resolution

When conflict resolution is not felt feasible at one stretch, it should be attempted to achieve the same in phases.

- III. Avoidance: Avoidance means ignoring the conflict.
- by Arbitrations: An Arbitrator is an outsider to the conflict. All the parties to the conflict agree to abide by the award of the Arbitrator, which will be delivered after hearing to arguments of all parties. (This can be applied at macro or micro level.)
- V. Coercion Implementing a resolution through force is coercion.
- of tinanimity of all parties Through unanimity of opinion, making a resolution acceptable and heneficial to all the parties is done under this method.
- off, Resolving through negotiations: Without any intervention of outsiders, the parties resolve the issues through face to face discussions.
- viii. Mediation: The parties come forward and conduct negotiations with a judge or timeerned authority to resolve the conflict.

Satient features of above process are as follows:

- The mediator brings the conversed parties in the discussion data and appropriate them to negotiate. (Townson, the mediator size are estimate for first success.)
- The mechator reopens the distingue settings the parties and enthalic discussions for resolution.
- The mechator can identify the common intersects of all for parties to fix conflict on the basis of which the process of esculption because annuals.
- By personding the parties identify the realities, the mediative along attice regotiations/discussions. Thus he promotes an symmetry against analy, at the parties.
- When the relevant information available is one cohesion, the mediator extracts for correct information from the confused for and provides with density for augusted information to the parties.
- By providing information to the parties about the resolution coasses sakes up somewhere else in respect of a similar problem, the mediator clears the way sor an amicable resolution.
- By providing mew and fresh information, process for registrations can be further streamlined.
- Mediation method is generally adopted while endeavising is conflict association in a democratic mode. In order is make use of mediation as an alternative method for conflict resolution.

## The mediator shall possess the following characteristics:

- a. Importiality: All parties in the conflict are assured of a sair play when a neutral person acts as the catalyst in conflict issolution. A person, who is asseptable to all parties and devoid of any sett interest in the conflict, can sake measures conducive to safeguarding the interests of all.
- b. Integrity: The mediator shall possess utinous integrity in conducting for dialogue process. He shall not take my side and to also shall not divulge be dialogue tients against the will of the parties. For instance, the mediator shall not seed any record with him. Even if he writes notes during dialogue, he shall lear it sit some fix purpose is served.
- Gaining the confidence of the parties: He should have unequivocal approval iron all the parties.

d. Participation of all the stakeholders in the process: All the stakeholders, decision makers shall take share in resolution process. Absence of decision makers defeats the purpose of mediation. So, all the stakeholders shall participate in the process.

#### Importance

The importance for mediation approach is a suitable venue. Usually a neutral venue is desirable for carrying out mediation, which should be acceptable and accessible to all the parties.

## 3.4. Conflict - devising the resolution plan

For resolution of either an existing or an ensuing conflict, it is important to devise a resolution plan. This has to be done in consultation with all the stakeholders either severally or jointly. It has to be clearly agreed upon the aspects 'when', 'where', 'who', 'what' and 'how' and implement the same truthfully.

The following measure shall have to be taken up to gain good results through resolution approaches.

- Misconceptions of the stakeholders have to be removed and proper understanding developed.
- Objectives of the plans shall have to be clearly defined.
- Flexible alternatives have to be suggested.



## 4. PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT - CONFLICTS

We have learnt in the previous chapters struck conducts, their origin, evolution and resolution approaches etc.

Now let us see how all these have to be viewed in the context of "Participatory Forest

There are various means and approaches to conflict resolution. In it accessiable to resolve the conflict by hook or crock? The movies is a big 150. The majoritant objective of the conflict resolution is that it should be in conformity with the skinners objective of the Participatory Forest Management. We must independ that delay in conflict resolution can be telerated rather than compromising on the final objective of the conflict resolution. The following sections are written based on the experiences of CPF in Andhra Pradesh

## 4.1. From JFM to CFM in Andhra Pradesh

Community Forest Management has come into lonce with the objective of committeeing. the Joint Forest Management, being implemented from 1992, and the role of garagle. Extensive consultations were made during 2001-2001. After taking men confidence the viewpoints of all the stakeholders and the experiences with JFM, the C.O. selating, to CFM has been carefully formulated and released. VSSs are vested with more powers by the CFM.

## 4.2. Prime Objective of CFM in Andhra Pradesh

The prime objective of the CFM is to encourage people manage forest affairs and alongside achieve simultaneously empowerment of downtrodden, rural poverty alleviation and better forest management. Formulation of CFM is in harmony with the said noble task. However, in the process of implementation of the CFM in letter and spirit there is every possibility for some setbacks to happen.

## 4.3. CFM - Conflicts

During the JFM era, a number of conflicts emerged in the implementation process. While some of them could be resolved, others are in different stages. With the inception of CFM, there is room for fresh conflicts to arise. During the JFM era itself certain types of conflicts have been identified along with concerned parties, causes for conflicts and the circumstances leading to conflicts on the basis of which current conflicts relating to CFM can be understood.

<sup>\*</sup> Participatory Forest Management (PFM) and Community Forest Management (CFM) are used synonymously in this manual.

#### 4.4. Stakeholders of conflicts

- The inert and active members of VSSs.
- Panchayat
- NGO(s)
- VSS Chairperson
- Forest Department personnel
- Government policies
- Non-members of VSS villages
- Villagers of surrounding villages of VSS
- Other classes dependent on forest
- Other Government Departments
- Vested interests classes

#### 4.5. Factors of conflict

- Local political scenario
- · Power struggle
- Measures taken up for effective management of VSS
- Distribution of profits
- Forest protection
- Membership in VSS
- Awareness of the stakeholders about Government policies

## 4.6. Issues leading to conflicts

It has been identified that conflicts may arise in the following ways.

- a. <u>Forest Protection</u>: With establishment of VSSs, a safe environment for forests to some extent could be provided. No threat could be expected for the forest from the members of VSSs and the VSS members could prevent the harm caused by the outsiders to a large extent. However, the following types of conditions could lead to conflicts:
- That portion of forest, which has been allotted to the VSS members for livelihood sake, used to cater to the needs of the surrounding villages also. When the people of surrounding villages resort to continue old practices, conflicts are generated between the VSS members and the people of surrounding villages.

- When VX members prevent anuguling activities carried out beyond their hundring and hundres the anugulers to the forest department personnel, condicts may happen between the VX members and the forest department personnel.
- b. Individual distribution of forest lands for the purpose of surveillance, the members distribute among themselves the lands of VSSs where juplies. Furthering the cashew not are being grown. Continuouse of this practice triggers disputes in future.
- e. Memberships in the respective C.O.s relating to IPM and CPM, it has been mentioned that membership shall be offered to Dulit and Tubul families in the purview of VSS. But, this prevision is not being observed in VSSs where multiple castos exist and larger VSSs. This may lead to conflicts.
- de Power implications. This type of conflicts arise owing to failure in conducting timely elections and continuouse of one person as VSS President for some other reasons. Some treat as a hereditary matter. However, as VSS basically deals with resource management; recessary precaution is to be taken.
- e <u>Distribution of profits</u> Presently, produce from timber and bamboo is not yet completely encouraging in many VSSs. But in future conflicts may arise when timber and bamboo produce become attractive. VSSs accommodate both active members as well as mild members and the difference between both the categories is sinking in the case of larger VSSs. When the dalit and tribal members are active in VSSs, the mild members generally belong to landlord sections that have power in village issues in their hands. Non-timber forest produce, disbursement of wages to the members through VSSs do not generate any interest for the landlord sections. So, naturally they have not taken any active part in VSSs so far. But, once timber produce becomes profitable, it may trigger interest in them and pave way for politics to creep in.

In the circumstances, the following kinds of problems may arise in VSSs;

- Where VSSs are formed in small villages, social and political status levels of the members are probably low. Those who are vested with political power and have a say in the main village may create problems.
- In some VSSs, the number of mild members may be more than the active members.
   Conflicts may arise during distribution of profits in such VSSs.
- Problems may also arise where the extent of forest is low and the number of VSS members is high out of which mild membership may be dominating.
- As Panchayats are vested with statutory rights in the Scheduled Areas, conflicts may arise between VSS and Panchayat.







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4.7. Matrix on conflicts concerning Community Forest Management (Based on Andhra Pradesh Experience)

An analysis of the above types of conflicts reveals that conflicts can be broadly divided into 3 categories viz. (1) Boundary issues, (2) Organizational issues and (3) policy issues.

Nature of Issue	Between who	Cause 11 Cause	Present status	Imputs
1. Boundary issues	V5S and other villages	Violating the restrictions concattle grazing, head loads and felling the trees.	Trumber of such issues is regued down in accordance with the growing age of VSS. Social restrictions are being imposed on the offenders. However, this type of issues are still seen in VSSs where other villages depend on the same area.	Dissemination of the best practices in conflict resolution. Formulation of a clear grazing policy. Soliciting intervention of NGOs and forest department.
	VSS and another VSS	Failure to identify correctly the boundaries between two VSSs	Peace exists where measures taken for correct identification of borders and conflicts arise where it is not complied with.	Pormation of federation of VSSs. Soliciting intervention of NGOs and forest department.
2. Organizational issues	Panchayat and VSS	Distribution of profits (final disbursement)	So far didn't rise. Disputes may come up future with Panchayat's demand.	Should be left to the discretion of VSS. Conflict resolution through mediation of NGOs and forest department.
	Panchayat and VSS	Interference of Panchayats in VSSs affairs	VSSs oppose interference of Panchayats.	Should be left to the discretion of the USSs However, USSs shall be encouraged to maintain rapport with the Panchayats with non-USS villages.
	VSS and Forest Department	Transfer of powers to VSSs	The VSSs allege that all the powers are centralized with the Section Officer of Forest Department.	Entrusting joing accountability to VSS Chairperson and Section Officer of Forest Department. Declare VSS accounts details in Gram Sabha and management of all records by VSS itself.

Nature of Issue	Between who	Cause	Present status	Inputs
	VSs and Forest Department	Privatizing forest lands	Distribution of Japhies, eachers et- plants among the VSS members	Providence the land in the processed VSS should be treated as an idlence
230	Active and mild members of VSS	Non-participants in VSS works demanding share from the final disbursement.	The disbursement has not yet commenced. In the larger VSSs, members are getting fewer shares from final disbursement. The active members may be discouraged after the final disbursement.	Distribution of profits should be left to the discretion of the VSSs. Active members in the VSSs with larger membership of lesser reserve area should be assured of higher shares.
3. Policy related issues	VSS members and Chairperson/	Indifference of some members to participate in VSSs where members from lower and poor castes are there.	Membership of some whose participation in cases is not regular has been terminated.	Persuading the irregular members, social restrictions, imposing penalty and terminating membership etc.
	committee	Lack of transparency in VSS accounts and programs (non-availability of information)	Displeasure among the VSS members.	Displaying on wall the details of works carried out and the expenditure incurred, Checking the accounts after effecting payments and frequent convening of meetings.
	Forest Department policies and the field staff of forest department	Policy of meeting the expenditure from the final disbursement is not in accordance with the field realities.	Poor members can not volunteer their labour during disbursement. No separate account for disbursement expenditure.	Provision for corpus fund at VSS level through membership fees and other receipts. Keeping aside a portion of sale proceeds of non-timber forest produce.
	Forest department personnel and VSS	Denial for supply of plants desired plants by the VSS and to grow non-timber forest produce varieties. Lack of Government policy on cattle grazing.	When the works in VSSs are halted, the members may not be able to focus on forest protection due to scarcity in non-timber forest produce.	Implanting small scale forest produce plaints which gives faster yields for mitigating the financial troubles of the VSS members.
	Cattle owners and VSS		Scope for conflicts within VSSs and among VSSs and between VSS villages and non-VSS villages.	Providing advices, counseling and formulating a grazing policy involving all the stakeholders.

## 5. TRAINING GUIDE

#### 5.1. Instructions for trainers

- First or all, it should be accertained from the participants as to whether a 'conflict'
  is at all a positive one or a negative one. In our experience, many felt that any
  conflict is 'bad', 'undesirable', 'unwarranted' etc.
- Through some sample examples, it should be made clear that 'conflict' is a 'natural phenomenon'. For example, in a family of our members can a consensus be arrived at on spending a holiday.'

Another example is if more than one is to play with a single sports item, can it go smoothly?

Thus through quoting real life examples, it can be established that a decision made on the basis of differing opinions leads to disputes, which would take the shape of conflict, if become severe.

- A realization that 'conflict' is a 'natural phenomenon' would help develop a restraint attitude.
- Now we shall see how the term 'conflict' is to be understood in the context of managing natural resources and with particular reference to Community Forest Management. Striving to resolve the conflict without ensuring that the proposed resolution is in conformity with the ultimate objective of the Community Forest Management would defeat the very objective itself though the conflict seems to have been resolved for the time being.

For instance, the main purpose of the Community Forest Management is to strive for powerty alleviation through development of forest. Any resolution of a conflict shall sateguard the interests of the poorest of the poor in the VSS viz. dalits, tribals, landless sections, in particular, women belonging to these categories.

- It must be understood that all the disputes can not be resolved in a uniform manner and that all the conflict resolutions may not satisfy all the stakeholders or may not be acceptable to all.
- The reality that that certain types of conflicts can be resolved only in the process
  of time must also be understood.
- It can not be construed that the same approach can be taken to resolve all types
  of conflicts and that an approach adopted in an area can be generalized for other
  areas also.

 All these aspects belp us understand a conflict from all angles. However, it must be bome in mind that applying these guiding principles shall depend on the area, stakeholders to the disputes and their level and the backdrop of the conflict.

## 5.2. Communication Gaps - Exercise (i)

This exercise has been designed to explain the gaps emerged due to transmission of a communication through 4 or 5 channels. The exercise is as follows:

- Fine members from amongst the participants shall be asked to come forward. (It should be ensured that women also came forward).
- They shall be asked to stand in a line with a small distance between each of them.
- The communication prepared for this exercise should have been written on a chart or a board in advance and wrapped by another chart. Members shall be intimated of this arrangement.
- Now the communication on the board or chart shall be revealed to the first person in a manner that it can not be heard by anyone else.
- 5. The first person shall be asked to convey the same communication to the second person. The same procedure shall be followed till it is conveyed to the last person while taking due precaution that at one point of time only one person, who passes it to other person, can hear the communication.
- 6. Then the last person shall be asked to write the communication he has received on the board. In case he can not write, assistance shall be provided to get it written on the board.
- Now, the wrapper on the original communication written on the board/chart shall be removed.
- 8. One of the remaining participants shall be asked to readout the original communication. There ought to be difference between the original communication and the communication conveyed finally. It shall be explained that any gap in hearing, comprehending and passing it on from person to person shall get the communication pruned or meaning of the message gets changed.

## Communication to be written on a board/chart and to be covered for this exercise

(Resource Person shall readout this communication to the person No.1 clearly and slowly in a manner that he/she can alone hear it)

"As per National Forest Policy forests shall be 33% of the total land area. This means at least another 10% of land shall be brought into forest zone. Then only environmental protection can be ensured."

## 5.3. Communication Gaps - Exercise (ii)



- 1. Three copies of the above picture shall be made available.
- Three women and three men from among the participants shall be invited to take share in the exercise.
- Three groups shall be formed. One group shall comprise of two women. The second group shall include a man and a woman and the third group shall have in it two men.
- The three groups shall be supplied with a copy of the picture, charts and pens. If both the members of any group is not able to write assistance shall be provided.
- Each group shall individually observe that picture for five minutes and conduct an exercise on what is to be learnt from it and reflect what they have learnt on a chart.

- If concurrence is not possible (even after discussion), the same can also be written.
- Now all the three charts shall be displayed side by side and let any one read them aloud.
- Displaying the picture some of the remaining participants shall be asked to give their viewpoints.

## For information of the Resource Person

The participants may draw the following inferences from the picture:

- It is clear from the picture that the boundaries between the two VSSs can be identified and the boundary dispute resolved amicably.
- This picture goes to say that identification of boundaries between the two VSSs is wrong and that conflict continues.
- Though identification of boundaries between the two VSSs is done, it appears that
  members of both the VSSs are coming to an understanding that boundaries shall
  not stand in their way of meeting their respective needs.
- It can be inferred in any other manner.

## The Resource Person may explain the following aspects:

- Three different groups gave three different interpretations on the same picture. This
  goes to establish three divergent ways viewpoints about the same thing. Only one
  of these three interpretations could be correct or all the three may be wrong and
  the fact may be something else.
- 2. When a person tries to communicate a matter through a letter or personally to another person, he could be able to communicate only to the extent he understood or for that matter there may be a gap between what he understood and what he communicates. Thus there is scope for communication gaps to give rise for conflicts. You will witness contention between the first individual and the remaining two as to the true meaning of the picture.
  - So, there is every probability that the communication of an authority, though understood properly by the subordinates, may be improperly communicated to or misunderstood by the VSS members, which will entail in a conflict between the forest department authorities and the VSS members.
  - If the communication received by the VSS Chairperson from the forest authorities is not correctly and completely communicated by the VSS

Chairperson in turn to the VSS Committee or VSS General Body, there is scope for a conflict between the Chairperson and the VSS Committee or between VSS Chairperson and VSS General Body.

- 3. To make the participants understand the realities, the Resource Person shall explain them all the relevant aspects while explaining the picture. No part of any information shall be ignored to be communicated in the course of discussions or from taking the facilitation process from one level to another in order to avoid communication gaps and the resultant conflicts.
- If there is considerable variance between the opinions expressed by two men and two women, it shall be checked whether the expressions reflect the gender dynamics.
- 5. When there is room for varying viewpoints and so many disputes to loom large in reading a simple picture, it is not unreasonable that conflicts arise in a larger plane of managing forest in convergence with men and women of different castes and classes, forest department personnel and NGOs. The participants should be convinced that conflicts are a natural phenomenon.

## 5.4. Training approach (relating to 3rd Chapter)

The pertinent information relating to the content under this heading shall be elicited from the participants themselves and the following approaches can be taken for the purpose.

- a. The members shall be asked to explain the differences between the JFM GO (old and new) and whatever the differences they list out shall be written on the board. The Resource Person shall supplement at the end with whatever differences omitted by the participants.
- b. The members shall be asked about the 'primary objective of JFM' (as per new GO) and the answers of the participants written on the board. Key words such as follows shall be specifically identified.
  - · For alleviating the poverty
  - · For protecting and developing the forest
  - Towards empowering the people

Now it shall be clearly elicited from them as to 'which people' shall be focused. In the context of VSS, the term 'people' denotes women, dalits, tribals and other marginal sections who depend on forest for their living.

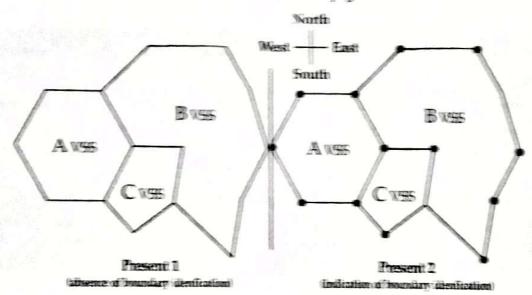
- c. Conflicts that arose during JFM earlier and conflicts that are arising or may be arising in the context of revised GO and the circumstances leading to conflicts shall be written on a board/chart.
- d. Now the members shall be divided into groups ensuring 10 members in each group. Each of the problems listed in the Exercise shall be given to two groups. Every group shall discuss and analyze the problem given to it and prepare a report on the chart with the following items.
  - Parties to the conflict
  - Circumstances leading to conflict
  - History of the conflict
  - Information to be obtained for conflict resolution
  - Resolution approach, strategy and method
  - Benefits / problems ensuing on account of final resolution
  - Which section, caste and gender (male/female) does this resolution favour? Or who is less favoured or put to disadvantage by the final resolution?
  - How to foresee the consequences of the resolution?
- e. The participants shall be asked to submit the group reports. As the same problem is being discussed by two different groups, they shall be displayed side by side.
- f. After all the groups finished their presentations, the Resource Person shall compare the resolutions proposed and analyses made for each of the problems.
  - No two groups analyze any particular problem in a similar manner. There ought to be differences between the two. It is also possible that there may be difference between what the groups proposed for resolution and the actual resolution made.
  - The Resource Person shall elucidate such aspects and focus on feasibilities in the process of conflict resolution.
  - Finally, the participants shall be explained how the conflict could be resolved in fact and that resolutions change depending on the particular circumstances, parties to the conflict and the mediators. It shall be made clear to them similar types of disputes may not get similar type of resolutions.
  - It shall also be explained to them that on certain occasions it may seem that
    making no attempt to resolve the conflict can be a better option than further
    complicating.

- Even before taking an approach for a conflict resolution, the individuals, organizations and staff, who deliberate to resolve the conflict, shall convince themselves of their compenence and strength and satisfy themselves of the assured external support in times of need.
- It should be kept in mind that the objective of resolution and the approach taken for such a resolution are more important than the resolution itself.

#### 5.5. Issues for exemines

## 5.5.1. Boundary conflict between two VSSs

When two VSSs or more than two VSSs are adjoined to each other, several conflicts took place in the State on account of failure to dearly indicate in records the boundaries or even if the extent of area mentioned in the records failure to show the boundaries physically to the VSS members. Such failures may give further rise to conflicts.



The identification marks indicating boundaries of VSS "A" when adjoined to VSSs "B" and "C" shall be as shown in picture 2 failing which conflicts will arise in the absence of boundary identification.

#### Exercises

- 1.1 One group shall be given Picture 1 in which ABCDs are adjoined and borders not demandated and they shall be asked to identify prospective conflicts and suggest suitable remedies.
- 1.2 Another group shall be given Picture-2 in which ABCDs are adjoined and boundaries demancated and they shall be asked to locate the prospective conflicts and suggest suitable remedies.

## For information of the Resource Person

## 1.1 Conflicts that may arise from non-identification of boundaries

Apathy on the part of the VSS in safeguarding the forest though boundaries are known may lead to smuggling of timber by another VSS. Thus a competition it expliciting the forest resources may lead to conflicts. Herdsmen tend to leave their with for grazing observing no limits and this may lead to conflicts between herdsmen of one VSS and people of another VSS/village.

## Analysis (on boundary disputes between two VSSs):

Failure to demarcate between two VSSs causes lot of damage. The following problems may arise:

- a. VSS can not prepare micro plan.
- b. In the absence of definite boundaries for protecting the forest, conflicts with adjacent VSSs may arise.
- c. The members of VSS may enter into petty skirmishes with neighbouring VSS members/villagers while meeting their daily needs in respect of firewood and
- d. In connection with collection of non-timber forest produce also, the VSS might enter into altercations with other villagers also.

By clear demarcation of the boundaries between the two VSSs by the forest department officials and by incorporation of the same in the records, most of the conflicts can be

Through a positive approach for resolution of all the conflicts, majority of the conflicts can be resolved.

# 1.2 Probable conflicts between a boundary-identified VSS and another VSS of no-

- a. As no two VSSs are alike in respect of forest resources (both timber and non-timber), members of one VSS depend on another VSS for procuring needed resources as has been the usual practice even prior to the formation of the VSSs. Intolerance on the part of the VSSs leads to conflicts.
- b. Conflicts also arise due to leaving the cattle for free grazing.
- c. If a check dam constructed in one VSS obstructed the inflow of rainwater into lake under another VSS, conflicts may crop up.

#### How to resultive!"

- There should be adjustments between two VSSs vested with different natural resources. Both the General Body members shall discuss the resilities from a practical angle and ity is enter min at amounte agreement. If needed, cooperation of NGO and Borest Department can also be taken for the purpose.
- Cattle management shall be some it a systematic manner rather than esting them
  grave tree. It has nitrection, notic operars shall be asken into continence and
  decisions are to be taken which are acceptable to them as well as not turning the
  times protection.
- Merping it view the direction and force and the past experiences of water management, check dams and alses shall have to be constructed so as to get better results failing which not only the funds go waste but also several problems will arise.

## 5.5.2 Conflict between VS5 and the forest dependent people within VS5

Prior to commutation of VSSs, collection of non-imper corest produce was being carried out by some lorest dependent cardies belonging to criticals, dailies and prior. In some villages, cardies belonging to certain cases may used to collect the non-turber corest produce. But, with the inception of the VSS collection of non-imper corest produce has emerged as a point right of VSSs. In some VSSs, either individual or caseswise collection of non-turber corest produce was promitted with the result there arise conflicts between the VSS committee and the forest dependent people.

#### Exercise

Are the forest dependent VSE members aftie to collect non-timber forest produce after formation of VSE? Or do they face any problems and, if so, what are the remedies?

#### For information of the Resource Person

Analysis: Even before emergence of VSEs, tribals, dailits, poor people used to collect nun-timber timest produce from forest areas. In certain areas only particular communities are in the habit of collecting specific types of non-timber forest produce. For instance, Mudinal community is involved in collecting and selling custant applies and they used to pay levy for the purpose to forest department. Grain Panchayan / Vallage Development Committee. Those who were making a living by collecting non-timber forest produce lost their livelihoods with the advent of VSEs and they are subjected to financial crisss. This sort of situations is leading to conflicts between the VSEs and the forest dependent people.

- How to resolve? Giving priority to those who were engaged previously in collection of non-forest timber produce.
- Payment of some amount of wages to those who collect non-timber forest produce and selling the total produce through VSS

## 5.5.3. Conflict between the VSS and those who have lost their fivelihood

With the establishment of VSS, those who were engaged in selling tirewood lost their livelihood. Some other families used to cultivate rain-fed crops during the pre-VSS era. It is natural that conflicts arise between the families who had to lose their livelihoods and the VSS.

#### For Exercise

Did any conflicts arise between the families / individuals involved in selling firewood and the VSS committee / General Body consequent on establishment of VSS? What are the proposed remedies?

## For information of the Resource Person

Analysis: It is true that landless poor made a living by selling firewood and some other used to cultivate rain-fed crops and now with formation of VSSs they lost their livelihoods.

## How to solve?

 Economic sustenance shall be provided to all those who lost their livelihood. through financial development programs with the approval of the General Body.

## 5.5.4. Conflicts between the VSS and the herdsmen

Prior to formation of VSS, the herdsmen used to leave their cattle for grazing in the forest observing no boundaries. But, the advent of VSSs imposed restrictions in view of the VSS development like prohibition of axes and knives while going into forests. This kind of restrictions gave rise for conflicts between herdsmen and VSSs.

### Exercise

What kind of conflicts arose between VSSs and herdsmen consequent on establishment of VSSs and how to solve them?

## For information of the Resouce Person

Analysis: Truly there is a curtailment on the activities of the herdsmen on account of which the herdsmen did not opt for VSS membership as they will have to abide by the VSS rules and regulations. The complication due to the cattle grazing is that the herdsmen cut small plants and feed to their ruminants in the course of grazing. As a result, the plants are not allowed to grow fully.

#### How to resolve?

- Dialogue should be held with herdsmen with a view to persuade them not to take axes or knives along with them while going into forest.
- Herdsmen should also be given membership and accommodated in the Committee too so that they would acquire awareness and responsibility can be entrusted to them. Then there would be little scope for conflicts.

#### For exercise

Consequent on formation of a VSS in a village, what sort of conflicts may arise when neighbouring villagers lose their access to the resources for meeting their daily needs and what are the resolution approaches?

## For information of the Resource Person

## Conflict between a VSS village and non-VSS village

Analysis: During the pre-VSS era when boundaries of the villages were clearly defined, the villagers used to be in the know of extent of forest under the jurisdiction of their respective villages. There existed harmony among all the bordering villages with sufficient access to the resources. There used to be tolerance when the neighbouring villagers cut the timber for agricultural purposes. Unless there was too serious animosity, utilization of forest resources was not a noteworthy issue for them. There used to be give and take policy in practice. For instance, certain resources are available in certain areas only and people of all villages go to those areas and obtain them crossing the boundaries. The people of village 'A' can get timber in village 'B' who in turn collects beedi leaves from village 'A' and both the villages may enter into village 'C' for some other forest produce. That was how the needs of the people of all villages were satisfied. The Forest Guard, at times, might register a case against a villager who resorted to too much exploitation of forest resources.

From this analysis, it is clear that previously only a Forest Guard could prevent the villagers from accessing the forest resources or register a case for exploitation of the same and the local people were utilizing the forest resources when they are in need of the same without any hesitation. But with the inception of VSS geographical limits are being strictly observed and the neighbouring villagers are forbidden to enter into the areas of VSS. This resulted in conflicts between the villagers of VSS and other villagers of non-VSS villages. With the emergence of VSSs, task of protecting the forest is entrusted to the VSS members and restrictions are imposed on adjacent villages. The VSSs argue that they can't turn a blind eye on any sort of violation or loss to the protective measures taken up for safeguarding the forest.

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We believe that the claim to conservation, coretol and management of tonest resources belong to the forest dependent/dwelling communities and their livelihood should be the primary concern of all forestly programmes.



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