

## **Measurement of structural linkages (social capital) and assessing its effect on the programs under the Forest Development Agency Project in Madhya Pradesh**

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The basic premises of the research were that there must be some change in the relationships between the villagers and forest department officials, change in the attitude of the people towards the forests surrounding them and change in the whole set of structural linkages among different stakeholders involved in the process of Joint Forest Management. The ethnographic findings showed that the change in relationships between and among the different stakeholders of the JFM process was not just because of the policy itself. There were many other factors, such as increasing awareness of the people, increase in their educational standards, economic status, political involvement and like things that had influenced the process. The study revealed that though the JFM policy had increased their confidence, the change was occurring much before the policy came into existence.

The most important change noticed was that JFM policy had revived their sense of belongingness towards forests which was lost during the period when forest was under the full control of the Government. Moreover, the policy had now clearly demarcated the forest boundaries which helped protecting one's forest from the 'others'. In this way, it had created a kind of identity of the people over certain forest areas and not over certain others. Most importantly, because the boundaries were assigned by the forest department and recorded in the legal documents, the 'others' were made to accept it.

The findings showed that there was a good amount of horizontal solidarity among the villagers and between the villages. But the vertical linkage between the villages and the government, the NGOs, and other stakeholders outside the village was low. In other words, it was found that the bonding social capital in the villages of study was the highest followed by bridging social capital and then linking social capital. This was done by using social capital as a tool for study for it was all about how linked the units were in maintaining the whole structure, which was all about relationships. The social capital concept was used as a tool of analysis, if not for anything else.