

Documentation/ Inventorization of Formal and Informal Institutions with participation of different stakeholders in the implementation of JFM in Chhattisgarh

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Joint Forest Management (JFM) is a forest management strategy under which the Forest Department and the village community enter into an agreement to jointly protect and manage forest land adjoining villages and to share responsibilities and benefits. The village community is represented through an institution specifically formed for the purpose. Institutions are defined as rule, norms and values, which evolve over time. One essential function institutions is to stabilize different people's activities into more or less predictable pattern of roles. Moreover institutions are distinguished as formal and informal.

Formal institutions are grown out of definite policy and rules are enforced on the basis of definite guidelines, so that exogenous enforcement is required. The authority relationships created by management are called 'Formal relationships'. **Informal Institutions**, however, may be endogenously enforced; and are upheld by mutual agreement among the social actors involved or by relations of power and authority between them.

Stakeholders in JFM programme are highly diverse. The diversity is made more complex because of the fact not only proximate, but also distal communities; depend upon goods and services provided by forest. Further, value addition and marketing change of forest products rendered nature and diversity of stakeholders in forestry more complexes. Those stakeholders could be from both within and outside the JFM projects are identified and aligned with project goals. They should be listed in terms of sustainability and in the process of formation of formal and informal groups.

The project has been designed to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To document or inventorise formal and informal institutions and organizations related to implementation of JFM.
2. To identify the key stakeholders who have interest in and influence on JFM programme.

3. To analyze the roles, responsibilities and inter-relationship of different institutions and stakeholders in the JFM programme.
4. To map out perceptions of different group of stakeholders regarding participation of different groups of stakeholders.

Both secondary as well as primary data was collected for this purpose. Since the study was exploratory in nature more emphasis was given on qualitative tools and techniques. Further to get a complete understanding with respect to the participation of different Stakeholder group's quantitative analysis was also performed.

Initially the list was prepared of village level institutions and different stakeholders involved in JFM program of Chhattisgarh from the concerned officer at PCCF office and the key persons involved in the JFM program for couple of years.

Sampling of the study area was done in the three stages:

- a) The Chhattisgarh state is divided in to six circles and thirty two divisions. All the six circles covering the three climatic zones were selected for the study.
- b) From each circle, two divisions were selected on the basis of the concentration of JFM activities.

The village/committees were selected in order to collect the primary data to show the involvement of different groups of the stakeholders during course of the JFM implementation.

Data was collected both through secondary and primary sources.

- a) Tools and Techniques used:
 - Structured / Unstructured Interviews,
 - Focus group discussions,
 - Questionnaire method,
 - Interview Schedule.

Research Findings:

In Chhattisgarh, **FPCs and VFCs** are the major village level institutions, which are constituted under the facilitation of the state forest department. There is standard procedure of constituting FPCs and VFCs through out the Chhattisgarh and all villagers who are eligible to vote may

become a member of the general committee of FPCs or VFCs. In almost all the committee selected for study, it was found that villagers have followed the norms regarding the representation of member in executive committee where women, marginalized groups, weaker sections have given the position of executive member. As there is legal provision to have adequate representation of women, scheduled tribe, SCs and other minorities. It was observed that every member is given opportunity to speak and take decisions but only influential member express their views in meeting and interviews. The FPC and VFC prepare micro-plan and annual action plan with FD and in some areas with the involvement of NGOs. Although condition of forest has improved and members are actively involved in forest protection and management work but they also expect benefits in return. As per the state resolutions each family that belongs to the committee receive an annual nistar. Member of committee also receive a share of any forest product through thinning and Silvicultural operations. CG forest department has also started in come generation activities through forest resources. Income generation activities which provide them livelihood develop their interest in protection and management work. The FPCs and VFCs are involved in forest protection, income generation and infra-structure development.

National forest Policy also envisaged the involvement of **voluntary agencies and NGOs** in implementation of JFM. But in Chhattisgarh State Forest Department Resolution, there is not any provision of involvement of NGOs in implementation of JFM. In Chhattisgarh state forest policy, not much meaningful efforts have been done by NGO sector. Their role has been restricted to preparation of micro plan, motivation of villagers and training programmes. This can be attributed to the lack of foreign funding to the FD. But NGOs are playing active role on monitoring and evaluation of FDA villages.

Self Help Groups formed under the JFM programme are playing active role in implementation of JFM. As women are closely related to the forest, they are sensitive towards the issues of degradation of forest. Chhattisgarh Forest department realized the importance of women participation in JFM programme and started forming SHGs. These SHGs are involved in supporting JFM implementation related to protection and management. Apart from this SHGs are also involved in group savings, afforestation activities and plantation.

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Various training organizations have provided training on Lac cultivation, Mushroom cultivation and processing and marketing of various forest products.

Due to various cultural life and belief system there are number of informal institutions viz. Devgudi, Sarna, informal or Self Initiated Committees forest committees i.e Panchavati forest, Women forest committee, Khabra, Dev Sthan, Dongepratha, Vriksha Ropan Samiti, Shram Dan, Saja Vriksha Dev etc. Self Initiated Forest protection committees were also evident as in other states. These are known as **Vriksha Raksha Sutra Programme (VRSP)**.

In the implementation of JFM programme large number of stakeholders are involved. These may be formal and informal organizations. Under the formal grouping the organizations are Forest Department, Forest Development Agency, Prathmic Van Upaj Sahkari Samiti, Rajiv Gandhi Watershed Mission, Village Protection Committee (VPC), Gram Panchayat, Self Help Group (SHGs), Mangalam Timber, Krishhna Gowshala, Mohlai, Durg, CREDA, NABARD, National Medicinal Plant Board and so on. The informal institutions are Mahila Mandal, Jesus Club, Daundi Lohara, Lac Production Committee, Bharritola, Durg, Nav Yuvak Mandal, Saja Vriksha Dev, Jan Bhagidari Samiti, Village Vaidya, Ramayan Mandli and so on.