

**Governance Issues and Livelihood Impact
Of Community Forest Management:**

(A Study of Selected Districts in Andhra Pradesh)

**V. Ratna Reddy
M. Gopinath Reddy
V.M. Ravi Kumar
M. Srinivasa Reddy**



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Preface

The present monograph is first among the series of studies on Forestry taken up at the Centre. This study titled: "Governance Issues and Livelihood Impact of Community Forest Management: A Study of Selected Districts in Andhra Pradesh" is an attempt to document the policy and practice of mid- course impressions of CFM in Andhra Pradesh. The study documents the gap between policy and practice of CFM and identifies the constraints that had undermined the objectives of the scheme. The study is based on intensive field study of nine VSSs spread over the three regions of Andhra Pradesh. These VSSs were initially studied for JFM phase and revisited to understand how the JFM policy initiatives were carried forward by CFM and assess the nature of impact on the governance and livelihoods of people. The approach followed in the study is mainly qualitative viz., focused group discussions (FGDs) with various stakeholders such as different sections of villagers, women, youth, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), forest officials and employees of various government departments, semi-structured and personal interviews with Forest Department (FD) officials and local leaders transact walks, etc. Besides, government orders, reports and other publications, and reports on CFM by government and NGOs were reviewed.

The study makes the following important conclusions and provides pointers to policy:

- 1) The lands given to local communities for management are degraded forests and exposed to chronic degradation and unsuitable tree growth or any other remunerative NTFP products. Consequently, the harvesting benefits are significantly low in most of the VSS sites. This would have a bearing on the post-programme sustainability of CFM.
- 2) The envisaged decentralization and institutional mechanism to enhance the efficiency in management and equitable distribution of forest resources has not been achieved for two reasons: one, the Forest Department which is supposed to play a facilitator's role had dominated the decision-making process related to VSS management. It is observed that works design, estimates and other management models are simply designed by FD and local communities do not have a role in them. As a result, forest management models unable to generate revenue to local communities. Second, the homogenized models in creating local communities without segregating primary and secondary stake holders resulted in elite capture, which resulted in the lack of interest on the part of people critically dependent on forest.

- 3) Decentralized institutions created in CFM could not live up to the expectations. Representative committees created for VSS management don't represent peoples' interests; rather they developed a tendency to toe the FD line for more gains. This resulted in new forest elite consisting of MC (Management Committee) members and FD officials that dominates the decision-making process.
- 4) VSS management committees are occupied by politically dominant sections excluding other groups in villages in sharing the benefits generated by CFM. Accountability on the part of VSS management committees is absolutely lacking. Democratically elected local panchyats were not given any control over VSS-MC functioning. MC that consists of rural elite and FD mainly dominate decision-making process without consulting majority of the people. Thus, VSS management is mainly accountable to FD rather than to the democratic institutions like panchyats. It is observed that VSS-MCs do not represent interests of the majority of needy people.
- 5) Transparency is lacking in VSS management. Accounts books, muster registrars, even micro plans are not kept with VSS, instead they are found in the office of FD. GB is not informed in the case of work estimates and sanction of funds. In fact, frequency of MC meetings has come down, which jeopardized the wider participation of all stakeholders.
- 6) Livelihood based approach to participatory forestry initiated in CFM is mainly benefiting the dominant groups who acquired control over equipment that was supplied by the FD, and reduction in wage employment kept land less poor away from any benefit.
- 7) Reclamation of podu lands under JFM/CFM and reduction of wage employment increased the vulnerability of poor tribes. This has resulted in threat to livelihood security of tribes in Visakhapatnam district, in the absence of effective rehabilitation policy.
- 8) Though women representation in all spheres of VSS management has increased in CFM, their role in decision-making process appeared to have not improved especially in tribal areas.
- 9) There is no inter-sectoral coordination that is essential to the success of CFM.
- 10) Local communities were not provided information on market possibilities to forest produce and value addition activities.
- 11) The relation between FD and people appear to have improved in the context of CFM, it is very much linked with availability of funding.

Policy Pointers:

- a) Genuine decentralized arrangements are to be pushed forward to make CFM

efficient. The role of Forest Department needs to be considerably reduced and the role for forest dwelling communities in the management of VSS needs to be substantially increased.

- b) The accountability and transparency dimensions and gender participation in the forest management need to be made real and robust in CFM in order to increase the efficiency and trust worthiness of the CFM programme.
- c) The funding pattern under CFM needs to be continuous and reliable so as to make programme more sustainable.
- d) In case of value addition activities backward and forward linkages need to be worked out seriously in order to make VSS members to get tangible economic benefits from the value addition initiatives.
- e) The issue of elite capture needs to be squarely addressed in order to make CFM a genuinely people centered programme.
- f) The role of NGOs needs to be made much more pro active and the onus of making NGOs more active squarely rests with Forest Department.
- g) The livelihoods based approach needs to be made central to the CFM programme to make people genuinely interested in the programme rather than traditional silvi cultural orientation of the forest department and
- h). Lastly, there needs to be genuine change of mindset of the Forest Department towards making people as central to CFM.

V. Ratna Reddy

Incharge Director, CESS

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFPRO	-	Action for Food Production
AP	-	Andhra Pradesh
APAAV	-	Andhra <i>Pradesh Adivasi Aikya Vedika</i>
APFA	-	Andhra Pradesh Forest Act
APFD	-	Andhra Pradesh Forest Department
APFP	-	Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project
BFW	-	Bread for the World
CB	-	Capacity Building
CCF	-	Chief Conservator of Forests
CEC	-	Centre for Environmental Concerns
CEW	-	Community Extension Worker
C-fee	-	Compounding fee
CFM	-	Community Forest Management
CIDA		Canadian International Development Agency
CP	-	Chair Person
CPF	-	Centre for Peoples Forestry
CWS	-	Centre for World Solidarity
DFO	-	Divisional Forest Officer
DPIP	-	District Poverty Initiatives Project
DRDA	-	District Rural Development Agency
DRO	-	Deputy Range Officer
DWCRA	-	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
EAS	-	Employment Assurance Scheme
EDC	-	Eco-Development Committee
EFES&T	-	Energy Forests Environment Science and Technology
EFS&T	-	Environment of Forest Science and Technology
FCA	-	Forest Conservation Act
FD	-	Forest Department
FDA	-	Forest Development Agency
FDC's	-	Forest Development Corporations
FGDs	-	Focus Group Discussions
FPC	-	Forest Protection Committee
FRO	-	Forest Range Officer
FSI	-	Forest Survey of India
FSO	-	Forest Section Officer
GB	-	General Body

GCC	-	Girijan Cooperative Corporation
GO	-	Government Order
GoAP	-	Government of Andhra Pradesh
GoI	-	Government of India
GP	-	Gram Panchayat
GPCMS	-	Girijan Primary Co-operative Marketing Society
HH	-	<i>Household</i>
HYV	-	High Yielding Variety
IFM	-	Integrated Forest Management
IFS	-	Indian Forest Service
IGA's	-	Income Generating Activities
INC/Cong	-	Indian National Congress/Congress
IPDP	-	Indigenous Peoples Development Plan
ITDA	-	Integrated Tribal Development Agency
JFM	-	Joint Forest Management
LF	-	Large Farmer
LL	-	Land Less
MC	-	Management Committee
MF	-	Marginal Farmer
MFP	-	Minor Forest Produce
MNCs	-	Multi National Companies
MoEF	-	Ministry of Environment and Forests
MP	-	Micro Plan
NABARD	-	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NGOs	-	Non-governmental organizations
NOIB	-	Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation
NTFP	-	Non Timber Forest Produce
PCCF	-	Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
PCF	-	Principal conservator of Forests
PESA	-	Provisions of the <i>Panchayats</i> (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
PFM	-	Participatory Forest Management
PMU	-	Project Management Unit
PR	-	Panchayat Raj
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Appraisal
R&R	-	Resettlement and Rehabilitation

RAP	-	Resettlement Action Plan
RF	-	Reserve Forest
RMGs	-	<i>Rythu Mitra Groups (Promoting Farmers Organization for technical and monitory benefits in Agri culture and allied activities)</i>
RUPFOR	-	Resource Unit for Participatory Forestry
SC	-	Schedule Caste
SDC-IC	-	Swiss Development Cooperation –Inter Cooperation
SF	-	Small Farmer
SF	-	Social Forestry
SHG's	-	Self Help Groups
SMC	-	Soil and Moisture Conservation
SPWD	-	Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development
ST	-	Schedule Tribe
SubDFO	-	Sub-Divisional Forest Officer
TDP	-	Tribal Development Plan
TDP	-	Telugu <i>Desam Party</i>
VAO	-	Village Administrative Officer
VCP	-	Vice Chair Person
VSS	-	<i>Vana Samrakshana Samiti</i> (Forest Protection Committee)
WB	-	World Bank

Glossary of Terms

<i>Adda</i>	-	<i>used for sewing plates (Bauhinia vahlii)</i>
<i>Adivasis</i>	-	<i>Schedule Tribe or indigenous peoples (although the term is contested)</i>
<i>Aswagandha</i>	-	<i>Indian Ginseng, Winter Cherry withaniasomnicera (Botanical Name)</i>
<i>Awal</i>	-	<i>Cassia, Cassia obovovata (Botanical Name)</i>
<i>Beedi leaf</i>	-	<i>Indigenous cigarette, which uses the kendu leaf instead of paper/Hand-made leaf cigarattes, Abnus(Botanical Name)</i>
<i>Bodha</i>	-	<i>wild grass used for roof constructions</i>

- Costal Andhra* - *Circar Districts of Andhra Pradesh*
- Dalit* - *untouchables, the lowest group of people in the Indian caste system*
- Entry point* - *to build up rapport with village community to participate in the envisaged programme, certain community beneficial schemes are implemented as entry point works*
- Ghats* - *hill*
- Girijan* - *Tribes living in forest- primarily forest dependent communities*
- Gond* - *A Tribal living in forests*
- Gram Panchayat* - *Village representative body*
- Gram/grama/gramam* - *Village*
- Grama Sabha* - *village assembly*
- Harijan* - *Low caste groups also called dalit, untouchable, or Harijan, who traditionally have been at the bottom of the social hierarchy in India. "Scheduled caste" is the official and most socially acceptable term used for these groups. A term coined by Mahatma Gandhi for Dalits*
- Kharif* - *Agricultural Season between June to October / Mansoon crop growing season*
- Konda kapus* - *Name of the tribal caste/community*
- Lambadas* - *A Tribe living in forests*
- Madiga* - *A sub caste of Scheduled Castes usually engaged in Leatherworker and scavenging*
- Mahila podupu sangham* - *Women's thrift group / a small group of women working as a Self- Help Group*
- Mala* - *A sub caste of Scheduled Castes usually engaged in Agricultural labour*
- Mandal* - *Territorial and administrative unit (with a population of about 50,000 to 70,000) between the village and district levels*

- Nallamala hills - name of the forest falling geographically in between Costal Andhra and Rayalaseema
- Naxalite - Left-wing extremist outfit
- Neradu* - *Roseapple, Syzygium Jambo (Botanical Name)*
- Palle* - *Village or rural locality*
- Panchayat* - *local village committee. In India Panchayats (also called Gram Panchayats) have become the basis of decentralized local government*
- Panchayati Raj* - *System of rural local government*
- pattas* - *Rights of Ownership*
- Pippalu - Wine palm, Caryotaurens (Botanical Name)
- Podu - shifting cultivation
- Polimeru* - *Artificial boundaries have taken over traditional village (village boundary)*
- Rabi* - *The cropping season that follows the kharif (November to March (or) winter crop growing season)*
- Rayalaseema* - *Ceded Districts of Andhra Pradesh*
- Sal* - *Sal, shorea robusta*
- Samithis* - *Committees*
- Sangham* - *Association*
- Sarpanch* - *Head of a Panchayat or Village Headman*
- SC/ST/BC/OC* - *this four-way classification is followed on the segregation of society adopted by Government of Andhra Pradesh in adopting its development and welfare measures. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes are very poor by any reckoning. Backward Caste represents a section of the society who are poorer as compared to Forward Castes but are above the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled*

Tribe people. Forward caste people represent richer section as compared to the other three sections

Silvicultural

- cultivation of plants

Sugali

- name of the tribe

Thanda

- tribal habitation/hamlet

Telangana

- *formerly Nizam Territory of Andhra Pradesh*

Vana samakya

- *An apex body of NGO network has played crucial role in formulating and implementing Resettlement and Rehabilitation Package to Podu cultivators*

Velugu programme

- *It is a World Bank supported poverty alleviation Programme implemented in Andhra Pradesh*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Background

In Andhra Pradesh (AP), Participatory Forest Management (PFM) scheme was introduced in the name of Joint Forest Management (JFM) in 1992. After one decade, AP Government has modified the JFM under the name of the Community Forest Management (CFM), promulgated in 2002. CFM had proposed several innovative policy interventions to facilitate active involvement of local communities' participation in forest management. CFM in AP was projected as an innovative scheme, credited to have gone beyond the JFM to community-centered forest management scheme. The basic difference between JFM and CFM is that while people's participation in JFM was used as a means to improve degraded forests, CFM has envisaged improving both health of forests and livelihoods of forest dependent people. Under CFM, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department was expected to play only facilitator's role and the communities role was envisaged to transform from protectors to managers.

The present study is an attempt to document the policy and practice of mid- course impressions of CFM in Andhra Pradesh. The study documents the gap between policy and practice of CFM and identifies the constraints that had undermined the objectives of the scheme. Specific objectives of the study include the following:

- § To understand how communities have responded to the concept and practice of PFM in reality.
- § To undertake a comprehensive review of the studies on JFM / CFM focusing on progress of implementation and its impact.
- § To understand how the institutional structures envisaged in CFM are functioning at local level.
- § To also understand how people's livelihoods are being influenced under CFM initiatives.

II. Approach & Method

The study is based on intensive field study of nine VSSs spread over in the three regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh. These VSSs were studied for JFM phase in a earlier study by the authors. The revisit was to test how the JFM policy initiatives were carried forwarded by CFM and assess the nature of impact on the governance and livelihoods of people. The approach followed in the study is mainly qualitative viz., focused group discussions (FGDs) with various stakeholders such as different

sections of villagers, women, youth, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), forest officials and employees of various government departments, semi-structured and personal interviews with Forest Department (FD) officials and local leaders transact walks, etc. Besides, government orders, reports and other publications, and reports on CFM by government and NGOs were reviewed.

III. Participatory Forest Management in Andhra Pradesh: A Review JFM in AP

The review of JFM in AP covered various issues such as i) impact of JFM, ii) numerous shortcomings of JFM which are found at both conceptual and implementational levels. Important issues viz., poor institutional sustainability, corruption and lack of transparency in the programme implementation, gender imbalances etc., in the actual implementation process that are discussed in the review are presented following paragraphs.

1. Impact of JFM in AP

The primary aim of JFM has been to improve forest condition through improved protection. Evidence suggests that the swift expansion of JFM in AP has led to regeneration of forests and the resulting economic gains of local people. The data to gauge the forest cover carried out using satellite data in the districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad, Kurnool, Khammam, Visakhapatnam and Warangal during the years 1996 to 1998, revealed that not only the forest area under VSS has improved but also the adjoining forests for which the entry was through the VSS. With regard to Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) production the decline before JFM for various reasons is thwarted after the introduction of JFM with the revival of people's interest in NTFP. Other ecological benefits like increase in water table is very appreciable because the increase ranged from a minimum of 0.13 meters to a maximum of 13.92 meters contingently improving the agricultural yield to the extent of 51.7 percent.

2. Shortcomings of JFM in AP

Although JFM undoubtedly represents a change in the state's approach to forest management, problems may be distinguished into two sets of issues (Saigal et. al., 1996). The first set is conceptual, for instance, the extent to which communities have economic, as opposed to subsistence, rights to forest produce. The second set of issues relate to the practical problems of managing the JFM programme including the assigning of forest areas to communities, developing systems for conflict resolution, dealing with different administrative and forest boundaries, and increasing women's participation and their active role. We need to understand whether the problems are arising from poor implementation or from poor policy and conceptual structure.

At the conceptual level one area of problems is the ambiguity with regard to terms used; like 'community', 'participation', 'benefit sharing' and 'stakeholders' as used in the National Forest Policy and also in the resolutions on JFM issued by the State Governments. Lack of non-clarity of these terms leads to serious confusion, as has been the case with benefit sharing (Jeffery and Sunder, 1999).

3. Asymmetric Power relations between VSS and FD

Although JFM claims to be 'joint', control over resources and decision-making is not 'joint', but rather the 'Department' maintains asymmetric power over the VSS. This is illustrated by many cases where the VSS wishes have been ignored. Participation of the village people in the planning process of JFM has in practice been ignored by the FD.

4. Poor Institutional Sustainability

Although, it was generally claimed by the forest officials that JFM is the most actively implemented government programme at the village level and no other government department has built up such kind of community institutional structure, yet field visits to many VSS areas show some contradicting results. From the field visits it is quickly realised that many VSS are, in fact, non-functional, and the ones that are functional face particular problems when the period of funding support ends. Livelihood benefits such as employment have been dependent on inflows of funds, and when this stops the motivation to be involved in VSS activities is also reduced.

5. Corruption and Lack of Transparency regarding Funds

Although, provision is there that funds are transferred to VSS to fund their forest works and employment generation, yet the system is not transparent, and irregularities in fund allocation are rampant. There is ambiguity and confusion at the grass root level over JFM funds, particularly with regard to 'final harvest' and the confusion over 'incremental benefits'.

6. Tribal Development Vs. Forest Development

There has been severe repercussion of the JFM on the 'indigenous tribals', whose very survival and sustenance is under threat, because they are forced to do away with their traditional stay in the forest and discouraged from 'podu', their traditional form of shifting cultivation. Although, government's action is justified on environmental ground, yet, the perception of the tribals in many affected areas is changing negatively towards the schemes of government.

7. Gender Equity

The role of women in JFM is found to be negligible in spite of their substantial membership in the VSS. In several villages women are unaware that they are members of a GB, let alone of the executive committee. Not only have women been excluded from community decision-making bodies by tradition, but JFM rules, in the name of protection, give further power to elite men to exclude poor forest dependent women from the forests.

IV. Community Forest Management (CFM): Context

In order to take forward the PFM initiatives more effectively and focusing on the livelihoods of forest dependent communities FD officials and NGOs networks have participated and the process have put forth a proposal for extending the JFM for another five-year period. The Government of AP had succeeded in acquiring fund from World Bank (WB) for the second phase of PFM with several changes in policy structure. Consequently JFM was renamed as CFM and several flexible rules were incorporated in to the policy framework. This approach aims to upgrade the initiatives taken under JFM. However, CFM is envisaged as distinct from JFM in a number of ways. The basic difference between JFM and CFM is that while JFM was more a partnership between the forest dependent communities and the GoAP (Government of Andhra Pradesh), CFM envisaged a more democratic process through delegation of the decision making process and focuses on empowering communities to take active part in the process of planning and implementation of forest management schemes. Communities are not only equal partners in CFM but also are given leading role in the management of forest resources. CFM is expected to strengthen the democratic institutional structures that were created under the JFM scheme for better management of forests resources by facilitating active involvement of people. Important changes in CFM policy are transparency in financial matters by creating dual account system, encouragement for women participation and 100 per cent of usufruct rights, etc. The main object of the CFM is: "to reduce rural poverty through improved forest management with community participation"(Andhra Pradesh Government, 2002). The project also pronounces that 'communities will be empowered to become more autonomous and self-sufficient regarding the management of forest resources assigned for them'. Thus, grater participation of communities by devolving more powers in forest management to communities was envisaged in the CFM policy. The legal backing for CFM has come through a package of supporting changes: the relaxation under Forest Conservation Act (FCA) for medicinal plants cultivation by VSS, the liberalization of the state monopoly of NTFP, conformity of Panchayat laws with CFM regulations.

V.CFM: Implementation Process

1. Awareness Generation

In CFM, the initiatives to form VSS are taken mainly by FD, and NGOs and educated people in villages facilitated the process. But apparently, FD took leading role in conveying information on CFM scheme to villagers. FD mainly did awareness building among people on CFM in the sample villages. Mostly, FD officials used public meetings for creation of awareness among people regarding the policy changes under the CFM. In the sample villages, FD officials highlighted the benefits of CFM to convince and involve people in the programme. On the other hand, NGOs role in this regard was observed only in Kadapa district where they used various means like songs on CFM, small street plays and discussions with various groups imparted details on CFM. The main problem with this sort of dissemination spearheaded by FD is that beneficiaries were not provided unbiased information. Majority of the people were not aware of the policy changes taken place in CFM. Only management committee members and some educated persons were aware of the policy changes from JFM to CFM

Most of the people, cutting across all sections, perceived that CFM is a wage employment programme rather than a livelihoods improvement initiative and foresters as providers of wages in critical seasons. This resulted in continuation of the FD preponderance in VSS activities. The main reason for this is that while imparting details on CFM, FD officials, besides promising several benefits like granting pattas and loans, projected CFM as wage generation scheme to gain popular support from people. Hardly any of these promises were fulfilled, as the FD and CFM programme are not empowered to grant pattas to VSS members, loans on livestock, etc. While land less and women are mainly interested in wage employment, small and marginal farmers are aware of importance of CFM in improving livelihoods due to the fact that they utilize the grass and wood.

The awareness building exercise of the FD appears to have aimed at convincing communities by projecting various benefits associated with VSS management. Extent of participation is also linked to VSS works, as the participation in GB meetings tend to be more during the time of VSS works. Women participation is reported to be low in most of the VSS, especially in tribal areas.

2. Management Committee (MC)

MC is a representative agency to carry out and supervise the VSS works in the village. It is observed that the locally dominant groups to whom FD generally extends its support control the election of MC. Though FD plays a crucial role, local political and power relations mainly influence the process. In JFM, most of the MC members were unanimously elected without major disputes, but in CFM, there were severe

conflicts around leadership issue that resulted in election and change of Char Persons (CP). In CFM, leadership conflicts for CP posts were prominent in our study sites. In the study districts, newly created Vice-Chair Person (VCP) post remained insignificant and allotted to women. The noticeable change in the institutional aspects of CFM is that wide spread conflicts within the communities for MC membership in general and VSS CP posts in particular. It is observed that for MC posts, dominant sections within village have fought. Out of nine field studies, six had experienced conflicts. The existing political structures in the villages reflected in VSS elections. In the sample villages most of CPs belong to economically or politically dominant groups in the village. In tribal areas, dominant clan groups have captured the MC posts, and in mixed population villages, numerically dominant groups acquired CP posts. This elite capture of the VSS management institutions prevented wider participation of people in the decision-making process regarding management of forest resources. Out of nine sample VSSs; five VSS presidents during JFM got re-elected, indicating that dominant sections were able to retain their power in VSS management. In some cases, though people wanted to change the VSS CP, FD officials deliberately prevented such change by postponing elections.

These unequal power relations had an impact on VSS functioning. In MC many instances exist which shows how dominant group nexus with FD captured the VSS functioning and excluded other communities from getting benefits.

3. Micro Plan (MP) preparation and Implementation

MP preparation is an important activity that determines the nature of functioning of VSS. It is observed that FD and NGOs mainly formulated MPs and peoples' participation remained superficial. Though Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was conducted at the time of MP preparation, it is observed to be a mere formality. In Adilabad and Visakhapatnam districts the FD is directly involved in the preparation of MPs. But in Kadapa district due to strong NGOs network they are involved in preparation of MPs. However, in this case also FD Officials succeeded in dictating the terms in the matters of MPs preparation to which the NGOs could not resist and ultimately compromised with the FD officials. The main reason behind the FD dominance can be attributed to the nature of the relationship between NGOs and FD (as NGOs depend on FD for financial assistance). Therefore, in all our sample villages it is observed that FD plays an important role in the preparation of MPs either directly or indirectly. In case of species selection, design of various works and other decisions, FD officials played dominant role in MP preparation. In our sample villages, FD officials prepared MP models. In all the three districts, it was the FD staff, in collusion with a few influential persons of the village decided the species for the plantation and other works of VSS. It is observed that while estimating VSS works, FD officials play crucial role, especially with the technical measurements

with which villagers are not familiar with. At the same time, in CFM, VSS MCs were allowed to undertake works and funds were sanctioned after completion of works spent by MC. It is reported that sanction of funds to VSS works is often delayed in CFM. FD took generally one and half to two months to sanction money for VSS works. Consequently, people constantly pursued the CP for their wage. This situation resulted in dominance of FD and widespread corruption. Thus, FD plays a dual role i.e. while estimating works and sanctioning funds to VSS. Moreover, there is a wide gap between MP objectives and implementation. In our field sites people informed that implementation of MP process is far from reality. Especially in CFM, they informed that implementation of MP has fallen short due to inconsistent allocation of funds on one hand, and delay of funds on the other. It shows that FD dominance has increased in CFM. At the same time, due to irregular works and delay in payments, people are not very keen to take part in the VSS works.

4. Decision-making process in VSS works

CFM policy laid greater emphasis on involvement of people in decision-making related to VSS works. However, many instances exist which show that MCs could not take independent decisions in managing VSS works due to the fact that the money for VSS works comes through the FD. MC is a vehicle to carry out CFM and peoples' participation. The implementation of CFM objectives is dependent upon the decisions taken by MCs. As for CFM policy, MC meeting should be conducted once in every month. Though MC meetings were regularly conducted in all districts, FD officials and their choices mainly influence the decisions. Members' attendance in MC meetings is reported to be poor. Moreover, MC meetings are often a close door affair even for its members. Women members are hardly invited to MC meetings in our sample sites nor aware of the meetings. It is also observed that foresters do not visit villages in the absence of VSS works. GB meetings are held whenever fund arrives and MC meetings are conducted while initiating VSS works and sharing wages from VSS. Thus, VSS institutional functioning takes place generally during March-April.

It is observed in our sample villages that people show apathy to participate in VSS works. In fact, people did not follow the forest protection rules formulated by VSS.

5. Women Empowerment

CFM policy laid down greater emphasis on women participation at all levels of VSS management. The object of the policy was to enable women to participate in decision-making process related to VSS management. However, the study shows that FD Officials often dominate the women CPs and prevent them from taking any independent decisions. In some cases it was found that back seat driving by husbands or sons of women chairpersons is prevalent in the sample VSS. Thus, in one hand

while women participation has increased numerically at one level, at another level very little has changed in practice. At the same time, women involvement in decision-making process is deteriorating in GB and MC.

6. Conflict Resolution

In our field sites, it is observed that protection aspect has become weak due to several factors like conflicts within the village and outside village, and lack of adequate financial incentives. Conflicts within villages arise mainly due to competition for MC CPs and VCP posts. MC posts have become prestige symbols for village elite to patronize their group members by providing wage employment and other incentives and to enhance their control over village. Due to these conflicts, rival groups did not follow the rules and regulations on protection of VSS. They graze cattle and goats in VSS areas and take wood without permission.

Though JFM/ CFM demarcated forest landscape for each village, often VSS committees found it difficult to control neighboring villagers and their forceful entry into VSS area, particularly during NTFPs season.

7. CFM: Accountability and Transparency

CFM policy envisages that MC is a legitimate and accountable body answerable to the GB. But it is observed that instead of downward accountability (to people), MC shows adherence to FD. As FD plays crucial role in fund allocation, CPs became accountable to FD rather than to local people. In our sample village it was observed that people were being dissatisfied with the transparency issues, particularly with allocation of funds to the VSS.

8. CFM and Inter -sectoral Coordination

CFM policy sought an effective inter-sectoral coordination among various departments associated with rural development. To achieve it, advisory bodies at state, district, divisional and village level were created. But unfortunately, such inter-sectoral coordination that is essential to the success of CFM is lacking.

9. VSS and Panchayats

At policy level, local Panchayats were not given any control over VSS, resulting in poor accountability of VSS to democratically elected bodies. Though Panchayats President is the CP of VSS advisory board at the village level, she/he does not have control over VSS activities. In our sample villages, it was observed that there is no cooperation between VSS and Panchayats in all aspects.

All groups in village informed that VSS village advisory meetings were never conducted in their village. Gram Panchayat (GP) Sarpanchs perceive interference

in VSS activities as unwanted and unnecessary burden. Some of the GP Sarpanchs informed that VSS members don't consult them for any advise. Thus, relation between VSS and G P remained ineffective.

10. VSS and NGOs

CFM policy envisages greater participation of NGOs to disseminate the participatory ideas and facilitate active participation of people in VSS management. However, it is observed that NGOs have proliferated in tune with the increasing number of VSS after the World Bank (WB) funding in Andhra Pradesh. Educated unemployed youth perceived the CFM as an employment-generating agency for NGOs. Thus, local NGOs generally go by the FD orders as they get financial assistance from it. Of late, the role of NGOs has significantly reduced and NGOs are asked to perform different roles after creation of awareness for two years. In 2005, Community Extension Workers (CEWs), who are directly answerable to FD, replaced NGOs role in VSS management. The objective of this policy change seems to be aimed at reducing the influence of NGOs in VSS functioning. Thus, the Government of Andhra Pradesh adapted the adhoc approach towards involving NGOs in the CFM work. Consequently, in CFM, NGOs do not take any interest in imparting training and providing information to VSS.

11. Foresters and People

A notable contribution of PFM in AP is improved relation between people and FD. Frequent interaction of FD officials with the villagers after JFM has contributed for such better relations. In our sample villages, people informed that they have good relations and friendly atmosphere. However, relations between FD and people are getting strained mainly due to the fact that FD is unable to keep some of the promises it had given at the beginning of programme.

12. CFM and Livelihoods of People

Basic thrust of the CFM is to reduce the dependency of people on forests. Forest dependency of people is influenced by the proximity to market, geography and demand for forest products. For instance, the share of forests in the household livelihoods ranges from 60 per cent (Visakhapatnam district) to 5 per cent (Kadapa district) across sample sites. Visakhapatnam marked highest dependency of forests by tribes due to the practice podu cultivation. The income from VSS ranges from 5%-10% in all our study sites. Even non-tribes like SCs dependent on neighboring forests for various livelihood activities. But, the income from VSS protection and wage employment is quite inadequate. Though wage employment works are provided in critical season, they were available for not more than one month. As a result, poor peoples' dependency on NTFPs like firewood had not come down. It is observed in our sample villages that there was no significant change in terms of livelihood

dependency on forests from JFM to CFM. But in some places, it is observed that due to insufficient wage employment in CFM, people are tending to fall back on forests for survival.

13. Employment and Livelihood Activities

All sections of the population are dissatisfied with the employment generated in CFM. As stated above, labor component in VSS works has comedown, and whatever limited wage works are sanctioned were halted in some of the VSSs due to internal conflicts.

At the same time, harvesting income from VSS areas was insignificant in most of the VSS. Thus, inadequate incentives to communities in CFM resulted in widespread discontent on programme. There is a major change in the case of disbursement of wages in CFM. It is observed that in CFM, payments of wages were not being given properly. In JFM, wages were given immediately after the works. But in CFM, people informed that wage payments were given, some times, after two to three months. As a result people were not interested in partaking in VSS works. Villagers informed that amount of fund allotted to VSS works is insignificant in CFM. In CFM, not only the number of wage employment days has decreased, but also time taken for payment of wage was a delayed process.

Since treatment practices have come to an end, FD attempted to undertake income generating activities with diversified strategies like NTFP value addition initiatives, honey bees, preparation of vermy compost, supply of leaf plates machinery, harvesting of valuable wood and other initiatives. These are meant for generating income from forest products under the supervision of VSS MC . However, our interviews with FD officials in Adilabad and Visakhapatnam revealed that these experiments were not successful, due to lack of conducive environment. On the other hand, CFM prohibits goats and other animals into VSS resulting in large-scale decline in small ruminants.

The income generation initiatives undertaken in CFM still in the formative stages. Some of them are just introduced and results are not yet known. In many cases, the initiatives taken in the CFM to generate income are neither backed by proper capacity building nor routed in deep understanding of local conditions, and tribes' concept and livelihood patterns.

14. Migration

Migration of people during agriculture lean season has existed mainly in Kadapa and Adilabad districts. People in Kadapa district revealed that in JFM, due to availability of VSS works at least for one and half months, migration level was

found to have come down. But in CFM in the absence of sufficient employment in VSS (not more than 20 days and for limited members) short-term migration in the agricultural lean season reappeared. It is observed that employment in VSS works was confined to relatives and group members of CP and VCP and other influential group members. In CFM, it is observed that migration has increased mainly due to decline in wage works in VSS. In JFM, during agriculture slack season they used to get reasonable employment in VSS works. But in CFM, VSS works were not undertaken in many places.

15. Access to Forest Produce

Regarding the availability and access to forest products, it is observed that there is noticeable change. Due to restrictions imposed by MC on wood collection villagers are not allowed to collect firewood in VSS areas. Conservation of forest areas allotted to VSS has not improved the availability of NTFPs. People in Kadapa, mainly depended on firewood selling informed that there is no change in the availability of firewood after VSS and they continued to depend on deep forests for firewood collection. In other districts also similar opinions were expressed. In CFM, FD undertook some of the value addition interventions in NTFP marketing in some places. Two reasons for the low productivity in NTFPs in our sample villages can be pointed out: one, forest allocated to VSS management are chronic degraded forests and do not have conducive atmosphere for NTFPs growth, and second is improper management models formulated in MC. For instance, in Adilabad district, most of the forest areas allocated to VSS have been converted into teak timber zones assuring the recurrent financial benefits. In Visakhapatnam district, FD, in order to increase green cover, has promoted Silver Oak trees. In Visakhapatnam district, Adda leaves (plate leaves) processing machines were supplied in Sobhakota and Nandivalasa villages. Training camps were conducted in CFM. After formation of VSS, grazing continued to be a problematic issue. Still people take their cattle out for grazing.

16. Forest Dependency

The main aim of the PFM is to reduce the dependency of people on forest resources by providing alternatives to forest products. In CFM, iron agricultural implements, smokeless chulas, roof tiles and other alternatives to wood were provided to people to reduce their dependency on forests. In Adilabad and Visakhapatnam districts, smokeless stoves were distributed to households in VSS villages. Though VSS wage works provide employment to villagers, in CFM wage employment came down resulting in dependency on forest products as usual. In Visakhapatnam district, people depended on NTFPs like Adda leaves collection, broomstick selling and others, particularly podu. It is observed that when they were receiving wage

employment in JFM in the agricultural slack season, they were not depended on forest produce collection, as wage employment came down people's dependency on forests has increased. It shows the vulnerability of people who live in forest fringe areas. In case of Visakhapatnam, most of the podu lands were brought under JFM plantation by FD with the assurance of wage employment to tribes.

17. CFM and Ecological Issues

The mid-term report of FD reports marginal increase in the overall density of forest cover from 36 per cent to 37 per cent. In our field sites, forest cover has to some extent, increased due to protection by VSS committee. Teak trees in Adilabad and Silver Oak in Visakhapatnam have improved due to protection. However, there is no significant improvement in Kadapa district. Due to proximity to roads, VSS MC's could not control illegal tree felling. For instance, in Visakhapatnam district, FD in order to increase forest cover promoted silver Oak trees. However, local people do not prefer them, as it undermines the growth of locally grown plants, which are important for them. In the name of promoting coffee plantations, FD promotes silver oak trees. Similarly, due to extensive promotion of teak forests in Adilabad district, people informed that availability of wild fruits and tendu leaves has become a problem.

18. Ground Water

Substantial funds are being allocated for construction of soil and moisture conservation (SMC) and rainwater harvesting structures in CFM works. However, people gave contradictory testimonies on the relation between forest conservation and groundwater. Moreover, it is difficult to attribute the increase of ground water level to improved forest conditions.

19. Sustaining CFM

Sustainability of CFM programme mainly depends on people's cooperation and participation in forest management. It is also linked to continuous revenue from forest resources. In our study sites except in Adilabad, where high value teak forests exist, there seems to be limited scope for sustainability of VSS in the post programme period. The main reason for this was that JFM did not follow livelihoods approach, and it had not undertaken systematic planning for revenue generation from forests. As a result, JFM remained as a wage employment programme. Even CFM did not follow livelihood approach to forest management in the initial stages. Only 2005 onwards income-generating activities (IGAs) like value addition to NTFPs, distribution of Beehives, vermi compost, bamboo products and other activities are undertaken. But no proper training to VSS members was given. Consequently, these activities also could not generate tangible revenue to local communities. However, in Adilabad district, due to the existence of teak plantations people have shown

interest in protecting forests. It shows that PFM programme lack vision on sustainable forest management. Some of the pertinent issues in this regard are discussed below.

20. Rights and Equity

PFM policy in AP perceived that local forest protection committees not only would develop a sense of ownership for efficient management of forest resources around them but also ensure equitable distribution of resources and benefits. Though 100 per cent usufruct rights were given to local communities, except in Adilabad district, where teak harvesting was done, there were no tangible financial benefits to communities, except wage employment. The main reason was that there was poor design of VSS works, which were not aimed at proper planning on IGAs. People do not take interest in management of forests, as they perceive CFM mainly a wage employment, rather than revenue generating programme. The reason could be that FD still plays a major role in VSS works and fund sanction and other things. NGOs are supposed to play an important role in creating awareness on rights and provisions that are proposed in CFM. It is observed that local NGOs, which are mainly managed by local educated, are mainly confined to mobilisation of people whenever forest officials come and writing of minutes and other things. They do not seem to impart awareness on people's rights on forests.

21. Training

Capacity Building (CB) for community to acquire better forest management skills was one of the important objectives of CFM policy. To enhance the management potential of communities. Training for different stakeholders i.e., VSS members, lower FD officials and NGO members are being offered in CFM. Trainings are conducted on bookkeeping, minutes writing, fire controlling, forest management and other skills.

In our field study it is observed that in CFM, so far only once training programme has been conducted for VSS members. It is also noticed that competent members were not selected for training. Since there was no financial assistance to NGOs they do not take keen interest in imparting training and information to villagers. In case of book keeping and writing of minutes, though some of the VSS members were trained, in most of VSS, MC still depends on NGO members or CEWs.

22. Value Addition

Though NTFP products are important component of livelihoods of forest dependent people, they are available only in particular seasons. Value addition process was still in formative stage and requires some time for community to acquire proper knowledge. However, the problem with these value addition schemes is that people prefer to collect NTFPs individually, rather than giving to VSS community. The

main reasons being: people want immediate returns for their produce and VSS committees offer lower prices than that of market prices. In the absence of people's participation, value addition activities could not achieve the expected targets.

VI. Conclusions and Policy Pointers

The envisaged decentralization and institutional mechanism to improve the efficiency in management and equitable distribution of forest resources has not been accomplished for two reasons: one, the FD which supposed to play a facilitator's role had dominated the decision-making process related to VSS management. It is observed that works design, estimates and other management models are simply designed by FD and local communities do not have role in them. Moreover, in many cases the representative committees formed for VSS management don't represent peoples' interests; rather they developed an inclination to toe the FD line for further gains. This resulted in new forest elite consisting of MC members and FD officials that control the decision-making process. Accountability on the part of VSS MCs is absolutely lacking. Democratically elected local Panchayats were not given any control over VSS MC functioning. Decision-making process is mainly dominated by MC that consists of rural elite and FD without consulting majority of people. Thus, VSS management is primarily accountable to FD rather than to the democratic institutions like Panchayats. Occurrence of MC meetings has come down, which jeopardized the wider participation of all stakeholders. Though women representation in all spheres of VSS management has increased in CFM, their role in decision-making process appeared to have not improved especially in tribal areas. There is no inter-sectoral coordination that is vital to the success of CFM. Livelihood based approach to participatory forestry initiated in CFM is mainly benefiting the dominant groups who acquired control over equipment that was supplied by the FD, and reduction in wage employment kept land less poor away from any benefit. The harvesting benefits are considerably low in most of the VSS sites as most of the lands given to the local communities are in degraded condition. This would have a bearing on the post-programme sustainability of CFM. However, compared to earlier period, the relation between FD and people appear to have improved in the context of CFM, which is very much associated with availability of funding.

Policy Pointers:

- a) Genuine decentralized arrangements are to be pushed forward to make CFM efficient. The role of FD needs to be considerably reduced and the role for forest dwelling communities in the management of VSS needs to be substantially increased.
- b) The accountability and transparency dimensions and gender participation in the forest management need to be made real and robust in CFM thus increasing the efficiency and trustworthiness of the CFM programme.

- c) The funding pattern under CFM needs to be continuous and reliable so as to make programme more sustainable.
- d) In case of value addition activities backward and forward linkages need to be worked out seriously in order to make VSS members to get tangible economic benefits from the value addition initiatives.
- e) The issue of elite captures needs to be squarely addressed in order to make CFM a genuinely people centered programme.
- f) The role of NGOs needs to be made much more pro active and the onus of making NGOs more active squarely rests with FD.
- g) The livelihoods based approach needs to be made central focus of the CFM programme to make people genuinely interested in the programme rather than traditional silvi cultural orientation of the forest department and
- h) Lastly, there needs to be genuine change of mindset of the FD towards making people as central to CFM.

Governance Issues and Livelihood Impact Of Community Forest Management:

(A Study of Selected Districts in Andhra Pradesh)

1. Introduction

In Andhra Pradesh (AP), Participatory Forest Management (PFM) scheme was introduced in the name of Joint Forest Management (JFM) in 1992. With this, systematic beginning towards participatory approach in the management of forests in Andhra Pradesh was made. After one decade, AP Government has modified the JFM under the name of the Community Forest Management (CFM), promulgated in 2002. CFM had proposed several innovative policy interventions to facilitate active involvement of local communities' participation in forest management. CFM in AP was projected as an innovative scheme, credited to have gone beyond the JFM to community-centered forest management scheme. CFM is termed as 'break with past' (from JFM to CFM) in terms of peoples' participation in decision-making related to forest management. The basic difference between JFM and CFM is that while people's participation in JFM was used as a means to improve degraded forests, CFM has envisaged improving both health of forests and livelihoods of forest dependent people. Under CFM, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (APFD) was expected to play only facilitator's role and the communities role was envisaged to transform from protectors to managers. However, it is argued here, based on our filed study that CFM could not bring desired impact and has certain inadequacies found in the implementation process.

The present study is an attempt to document the policy and practice of mid-course impressions of CFM in Andhra Pradesh. The study documents the gap between policy and practice of CFM and identifies the constraints that had undermined the objectives of the scheme. Specific objectives of the study Include:

To assess the policy pronouncements in CFM, which proposes a greater degree of devolution of decision-making powers to local communities, are implemented at ground level, in terms of participation, accountability, transparency, efficiency, etc.

- To understand how communities have responded to the concept and practice of PFM in reality.
- To undertake a comprehensive review of the studies on JFM / CFM focusing on progress of implementation and its impact.
- To understand how the institutional structures envisaged in CFM are functioning at local level.
- To also understand how peoples livelihoods are being influenced under CFM initiatives.

II Approach & Method

The study is based on intensive filed study of nine Vana Samrakshana Samithis (VSS) spread over in the three regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh (Table 1). These VSSs were studied for JFM phase (see Appendix I and II). The revisit was to test how the JFM policy initiatives were carried forwarded by CFM and assess the nature of impact on the governance and livelihoods of people. The approach followed in the study is mainly qualitative viz., focused group discussions (FGD's) with various stakeholders such as different sections of villagers, women, youth, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), forest officials and employees of various government departments, semi-structured and personal interviews with Forest Department (FD) officials and local leaders transact walks, etc. Besides, government orders, reports and other publications, and reports on CFM by government and NGOs were reviewed.

Table: 1. Sample Villages for study

District	VSS Villages
Adilabad	Pandhirlodhhi Sainagar Thanda Heerapur
Kadapa	Ramachandrapuram S.R.Palem Mudireddypalle
Visakhapatnam	Sobhakota Gudlamveedi Nandivalasa

The report is organized in the following manner: part one explains the policy changes incorporated in CFM; second part focuses on the institutional aspects of CFM implementation process and various dynamics of it in our sample

VSS villages; impact of CFM on livelihoods assessed in section three; fourth section analyses the usufruct rights and equity issues and fifth sections deals with social and ecological impact of CFM scheme and final section makes some concluding observations.

III Participatory Forest Management in Andhra Pradesh: A Review

JFM in AP

Even before the introduction of JFM in India, community-based forest management was practiced in different parts of AP (and indeed in several other states), on a small-scale. For example, in Karimnagar district this system has existed since 1982-83 (Venkati Madari, 1997). The Government of AP had introduced people's participation in forest management in 1983; the FD leasing out the degraded forestlands on 'tree *patta*' to the weaker sections of the society for raising fuel wood plantation with a view to improve the performance under Social Forestry (SF) Programme. This was modified as reforestation of degraded forests under the 'Family Assistance Method'. This scheme granted tree *pattas* for raising block plantations to the weaker sections of the society. However, this programme has not produced the expected results (Reddy, 2000). Leasing out forestlands to weaker sections for raising fuel wood plantation was taken up with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) assistance. Many people could not access these entitlements, as the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) 1980 did not permit leasing out of forestland to private individuals, authorities or agencies without the approval of the central government. As a way out, the scheme was modified into the 'Reforestation of Degraded Forests with family Assistance Scheme but when this scheme was referred to the central government for approval it was rejected. The central government said that the scheme could not be allowed on forestlands. The efforts of the poor to seek livelihoods received a setback and they could not savour the fruits of their efforts (Gopal and Upadhyay, 2001).

JFM Implementation Strategy

JFM was implemented in AP from 1992, consequent to the issuance of the first Government Order (GO). Later, this Order was changed several times to incorporate pro-people measures, resulting in the GO No. 173 of December 1996. In consonance with the National Policy, the Government of AP framed a revised State Forest Policy in 1993. Under this, VSS was established to protect the forest resources, mainly in the hill areas.

SD Mukherji, previously the Principle Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) in AP, and an enthusiast for JFM, describes the initial scenario:

‘The most difficult part of JFM was to change the mindset of the Foresters and restore trust between them and the people. Most foresters genuinely believed that JFM would bring an end to whatever little forest was left due to their protection. They were also of the strong view that people’s need of forest produce, if any, should be met from SF plantations of fuelwood and fodder outside the Reserve Forest (RF) area. They were also afraid of loosing their power and authority over the people. On the other hand the people refused to come to the Foresters even for a discussion. They would not believe the foresters because of their past experience when the latter used to visit the villages mostly to book cases against the people for ‘forest offences’ such as collection of fuelwood, bamboo and timber, grazing of cattle ... The people, living either by *podu* or by selling fuelwood and timber, were afraid of loosing their livelihood. It was difficult for them to believe that the FD could think of doing any good to them. Similarly, the FD had no idea of the role of NGOs either and did not trust them. The NGOs also believed that the Foresters were anti-people and corrupt.’ (Mukherjee, in Bahuguna et. al, 2004).

As observed above it is clear that FD enjoyed complete command of the RF. People entering the RF without the permission of the FD were trespassers and liable to be prosecuted. The *Khaki* uniform was a symbol of policing power and equated with police. They were there to protect the forests and people had to pay, officially or unofficially, for use of the forest in any form. The fear of imposition of fine or prosecution in the court of law for the use of forests kept the forest fringe communities in constant fear. People used to run away seeing a uniformed forest officer entering the village. This relationship of fear and distrust had developed over a century of forest management. It was therefore a difficult task, for both the forester and the people, to shed the mind-set and feel free to discuss matters regarding forest development in a participatory manner. Initial period of JFM saw difficulties in communication between the people and FD. But each following year bridged the people and FD and brought closer to each other, thanks to JFM. Now people have no more fear of FD mainly because of regular interaction

and mutual interests in forest protection and development. Visits by senior officers to enlist the cooperation of the people in the development of forests has imbued the confidence in the people (Mukherjee et. al, 2004).

Clearly the poor relationships would be difficult to change. The basis for envisaged working relationship between the FD and local people was through VSS or village forest protection committees. The basic purpose of the VSS is to protect the forest from encroachment, grazing, theft, and fire. The VSS would have the right to enjoy the usufruct from the adjacent forest, and share of revenue flows from it. Later, as funds became available forest management plans, known as a 'micro plans' were prepared for longer term management planning.

The guidelines for drawing up local micro-plans (MP's) specify the following the current stages: Through a method of 'participatory appraisal with regard to initiation to under take the work is discussed, where all the members get a chance to air their views. After this the Department of Forest surveys the forest adjoining the village and demarcates boundaries, using the conclusions of the initial discussions as a framework. The committee and the forester then prepare a detailed micro plan for forest development. Thereafter, annual programmes are worked out and submitted to the Forestry Department for approval. The MP's are premeditated to ensure the protection and restoration of the forest's productive capacity in a shortest possible time. Finally, the VSS members undertake the planting, silvicultural operations, and soil conservation works for which they are paid out of project funds. A legal memorandum of understanding between the VSS and the FD formally minutiae the duties, functions, and entitlements of everyone involved (Venkatraman and Falconer, 1998). The MPs are ostensibly developed to ensure the protection and restoration of the forest's productive capacity in the shortest possible time. However, in practise it is generally the FD staff writing the plan and ensuring their objectives are prioritised. The extent to which villagers have a genuine say in decision-making is widely questioned.

To generate income from degraded forests takes time. The FD also seeks to motivate the members by addressing social needs; in some cases developing and supporting the village development through women's thrift groups, drinking water facilities, water storage facilities, community halls, fishponds, household biogas plants are built and low-cost smokeless ovens, and small-scale irrigation facilities are provided to the villagers. These "entry point"

activities are sometimes provided through project funds, but mainly the foresters must seek the assistance of other government departments or NGOs to facilitate this broader rural development. In many instances, this experience has encouraged the government to assign foresters the task of coordinating rural development assistance within their localities. This trend illustrates the apparent transformation of the FD, now attempting to present itself as integrating the conservation and development aims of the government in forest areas.

Table 2: Progress of JFM Implementation in AP: 1994-95 to 1999-2000

Year	No. of VSS formed	Area Covered (in lakh ha)
1994-95	133	0.67
1995-96	447	2.51
1996-97	1,722	6.44
1997-98	3,812	9.28
1998-99	6,527	15.46
1999-2000	6,575	16.52
2000-01	6,726	16.82
2001-02	6,726	16.89

Source: Economic Survey, 2000-2001, 2002-2003, p.38

Although JFM was introduced in early 1990s, the growth in numbers was very slow till 1995-96. From a mere 133 VSS during 1994-95, it has gone up to 6,726 VSS in 2001-02 in the State managing 16.89 *lakh* hectares of forest area, of which about 7.85 *lakh* ha of degraded forests have been treated through these VSS (Table 2). Around 13 *lakh* people, including 6 *lakh* women are involved. Funds from the World Bank (WB) aided AP Forestry Project, the EAS and other centrally sponsored schemes have been utilized for implementation of JFM. The availability and pooling of funds, apart explains the sudden increase in the number of VSS during the above years. By 2004 the official number stands at 7,245 VSS, managing 1,886,764 ha, (or over 29% of state forest land) and involving 611,095 families (Bahuguna et al 2004). The number of VSS and areas under JFM in different districts are shown in Table 3. The largest number of VSS concentrated in Adilabad, Visakhapatnam, Khammam districts, those districts with both high forest cover and coincidentally those where *podu* has been seen as a major problem by the FD.

The AP Forest Policy 1993 laid down broad guidelines for future forest management. It encouraged participation of local village communities in forest management through JFM, by organizing them into VSSs. The initiatives in the policy were

- (a) abolition of forest contracts and encouragement of departmental working,
- (b) establishment of Forest Development Corporations (FDC's) to attract investments
- (c) encouragement to SF, Agro Forestry and Farm Forestry,
- (d) bio-diversity conservation and enactment of a special Act for the purpose and
- (e) widening the scope of Forest Laws to cover specific issues such as timber in transit, regulation of tree felling in private lands, regulating of saw mills and timber depots in private sector, etc (Government of AP - Abstract).

There is however a total absence of mechanisms for addressing and resolving the serious conflicts related to people's rights over lands declared state forests.

Determining the policies and procedures for the joint action, the GO laid down certain rules for the VSS formation, its roles and responsibilities along with that of the FD and elucidated the benefit-sharing policies. AP's benefit sharing policy is apparently the most liberal of all the states in India, although the contentious issue of people's entitlement only to the 'net incremental value' after the initiation of JFM effectively reduces entitlements considerably. Initially, in 1992 the membership of the VSS was promised complete access to non-timber forest products in the JFM areas, 25 per cent of the timber and one-third of the revenue from the sale of the non-timber FP. Under the revised order of 1996, the VSS is entitled to 100 percent of the 'net incremental value' of timber and bamboo harvested after deducting costs, with a condition that at least 50 per cent or as much as required of this revenue should be ploughed back for the management or enrichment of the forests. Benefit sharing arrangement of 100 per cent share in the incremental value of the produce is further amended. Now VSS are entitled to full harvest of timber and bamboo from natural forests vested with them in addition to Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs) and yield in proportion to period of management by them in respect of timber from plantations (Communication from Mr.

Kalaghatgi, PCCF). The VSS is entitled to all non-nationalised NTFPs. Although *de jure* only three items (ie *sal* seeds, bamboo and *Tendu* leaf) are specified as 'nationalised' while the villagers have only collecting rights in their area over the nationalised ones and have to sell to the *Girijan* Cooperative Co-operation (GCC) at it's rates despite the fact that Panchayat Extension Act to Scheduled Areas (PESA) endows *gram sabhas* in schedule V areas with the ownership of all Minor Forest Produce (MFP). Some changes have been made to other provisions as well, such as the composition of the executive committee and the right of the VSS to apprehend offenders. There are a number of committees related to JFM operate at the state, district and village level in AP, which are discussed below:

Table 3: Number of VSS/EDC in Districts of AP in 1999

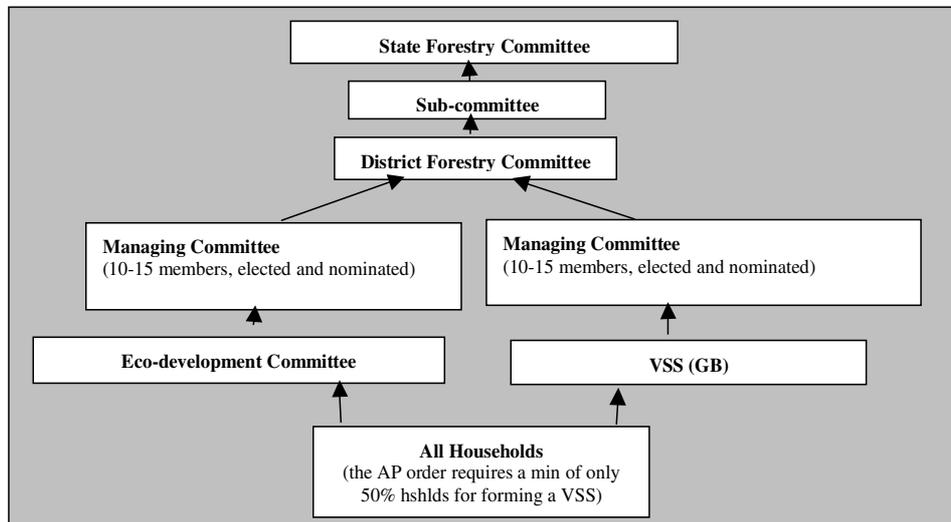
District	No. of VSS/EDC formed
Srikakulam	225
Vizianagaram	189
Visakhapatnam	913
East Godavari	368
West Godavari	207
Krishna	75
Guntur	167
Prakasam	125
Nellore	144
Chittoor	406
Kadapa	236
Kurnool	228
Anantapur	215
Mahaboobnagar	291
Ranga Reddy	132
Medak	235
Nizamabad	216
Adilabad	978
Karimnagar	332
Khammam	506
Nalgonda	118
Warangal	243
AP	6,557

Source: Sharma, P.K (1999) 'JFM: The AP Experience' p.105.

State Level JFM Committee

The state level committee consisted of Principal Secretary of Energy Forests Environment Science and Technology (EFES&T) as its chairman, Principal Secretary of Social Welfare or his nominee, Managing Director of AP Forest Development Corporation Limited, Commissioner of Tribal Welfare, Director/ Commissioner of Agriculture Department, Managing Director of GCC Ltd., Nominee of Secretary (Finance), Director of Women and Child Welfare, Two representatives of NGOs, a representative of MoEF (GoI) as the members and PCCF as member convenor. This committee was to meet quarterly to submit its report to the government and co-ordinate among various departments of the State government connected with the implementation of JFM.

In order to strengthen the JFM further various GOs were enacted in AP. These are mostly in the nature of incentives for forest protection. One such GO is regarding sharing of compounding fees to the tune of 25 per cent (agreed during the second State level committee meeting held on 26.8.1995) with the VSS members for better forest protection and prevention of smuggling of forest produce. The order contained directions to constitute 'three member committee' consisting of Principal Secretary of EFES&T (FOR. VI) Department, Secretary of Finance and Planning Department and PCCF of AP to scrutinise the cases apprehended by the members of VSS and recommend the award to be given to such VSS. Further changes were made to the earlier orders to give more incentives to the members of the VSS with respect to sharing of benefits from the reserved items like 'Beedi leaves'. The order also mentions about prohibition of 'horticulture' in the name of JFM and the emphasis was on the maintenance of bio-diversity. The order also speaks about ensuring the local people's interests before starting the JFM programme at a given location by laying emphasis on places where good leadership is available or NGOs are active enough to provide interface between the government and people, association of an officer not below the rank of a 'Range Officer', monitoring of the programme to provide for the local people's requirements and their wishes in the planning process and provision for frequent review to identify the shortcomings to steer the course of events towards positive outcome by amending and regulating the rules. The order also specifies for the constitution of VSS of the local village communities, and a direction for the already existing VSS to carry out forest programme jointly with the FD as per the rules and the guidelines issued thereon by the GoI (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Organisational Arrangements for JFM

The Forestry Department organises and provides the assistance in technical and administrative skills for the VSS by carefully selecting the villages that are on the fringe of the degraded forests. Although due to most areas falling under schedule V of the constitution, the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) are supposed to be responsible for these areas.

District Forest Committee

The 'District Forestry Committee' is constituted to implement JFM at the district level. The committee comprised of District Collector as its Chairman, Project Director of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Project Officer of ITDA, Joint director of Agriculture, Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, Deputy Director of Social Welfare, All Territorial Divisional officers in the District, three NGOs active in the district and Five representatives of VSS as selected by the collector respectively as the members and Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the Headquarters of Territorial Division as Convenor Member. The function of the committee is to ensure co-ordination between the various departments of the government at the district level involved in the implementation of the JFM and refer matters to AP State Forestry Committee as and when necessary, apart from meeting quarterly to send its report to the PCCF and the government regularly.

To co-ordinate and facilitate the implementation of the concept of JFM in the tribal areas a Sub-committee was formed with Project officer of the ITDA as its Chairman, two NGOs to be nominated by project officer of ITDA, ten members from VSS in the Agency area, again to be nominated by the project officer of ITDA as members and Sub-DFO/DFO in ITDA Headquarters as member/convenor. This Sub-committee was to address themselves to the problems in carrying out the deliberations and the decisions of the AP State Forestry Committee and District Forestry Committee at the field level. The Sub-committee was also responsible to implement JFM concept within its jurisdiction and meet at regular intervals (at least quarterly) and send the report to the Conservator of Forests of the District at regular intervals. The implementation of JFM in tribal areas has been strongly challenged by civil society groups as a means for the FD to gain almost total control over 'tribal development'.

Village Level Committee

The works and funds of the VSS are handled jointly by the Chairperson (CP) of the VSS and the Forester who acts as the Secretary (Venkatraman and Falconer, 1998). NGOs are involved as facilitators to promote the formation of VSS and Eco-Development Committees (EDC). Their responsibilities include bringing awareness, motivation, help in preparing MP's, help in conducting training of local communities for capacity building, leadership skills, gender sensitisation, etc.

The members of the VSS, individually or jointly, are responsible to a) ensure protection of forest against encroachment, grazing, fires and thefts of forest produce, b) carry out development of forests in accordance with the approved JFM plan, and improve the awareness regarding forests among rural communities. The members of the VSS have the powers to apprehend the offenders and handing them over to the authorities. The authorities have the responsibility to report back the action taken against the offenders.

The managing committee shall meet at least once in a month. The managing committee prepares the JFM plan in coordination with the Forest Range Officer (FRO) and in consultation with all sections particularly women and other disadvantaged sections of the community. The JFM Plan should be approved in the General Body (GB) of the VSS. The FD assists the VSS in

selection/demarcation of the forest area to be covered under JFM, in preparation of MP, approving the MP, drawing of the budget for the plan and getting the budget approved. The department is responsible to transfer the skills of sound silvicultural treatment and soil conservation to the members of VSS and to guide JFM MP implementation.

The formation of VSS is performed with the ostensible intent, according to FD and donor project literature, of bringing socially marginal groups into the fold of each VSS. Persons from all households are eligible to become members, particularly those from the most disadvantaged sections of the society, the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Tribes. Generally, two people from each household can become members, and one of them must be a woman. Most VSS range in size from 75 to 150 members. This GB elects a Managing Committee (MC) of 10 to 15 members, 33 per cent of whom must be women, who in turn elect a CP to oversee and manage the affairs of the VSS. Elected representatives shall not be less than six members. The number will increase by one for every fifty households or fraction over and above the base of 150 households. And the maximum members are restricted to ten. President of the gram panchayat is a member of the MC. Besides, the concerned forest guard, an officer nominated by the project officer Integrated Tribal Development Area, the local NGO actively involved in the formation of the VSS and the village development officer are also members of the VSS. The concerned forester / Deputy Range Officer is a member secretary of this committee. The forester and the forest guard shall not have voting rights. The CP's term is co-terminus with MC i.e., 2 years. In the ITDA areas all the elected members should be tribals. In the case on non-tribal areas at least 1/3rd of the members shall be reserved for SCs and STs. Non-elected members have no voting rights. On the similar lines an eco-development committee will be constituted with an elected managing committee. A GB meeting of the VSS shall be held once in every six months to review the action taken regarding the JFM plan and review the performance of managing committee.

Role of Donors

JFM has been implemented through a number of different funding schemes. While the AP Forestry project of the WB was the major contributor (2910 VSSs), other programmes like EAS (1956 VSSs), NABARD (918 VSSs), centrally sponsored schemes (411 VSSs), etc. also account for substantial number of VSS. The WB started discussing an AP Forestry project (APFP)

in 1991, when the APFD wanted guns and ammunition, more staff, subsidized distribution of seedlings for farm forestry, research and so on. The Bank initiated a process of reform for the Andhra Pradesh FD (APFD), hiring Indian consultants who had experience of the way the West Bengal Government had developed participatory approaches. After workshops in 1992 with FD staff and NGOs, visits by AP staff to see what was happening in West Bengal, the principles of the project were agreed between the Bank and FD staff. About 30 percent of the project base costs are reserved for Integrated Forest Management (IFM) related components (Participatory forest rehabilitation, JFM and Tribal Development Special Action Programmes). The AP Forestry Project, sanctioned for six years from 1994 to 2000 at the overall project cost of US \$ 89.10 (Rs. 3536.5 million) of which the bulk consisted of a loan from CIDA (Sunder et al., 2001).

The major conditions put up by the WB for loan included restructuring of the FD, policy reforms open to the sectors of private initiatives and overseas training. But the local NGOs observe that this proposal would reduce the employment generated in the project and the possibility of giving away good forestland situated near industries for plantation instead of degraded land (Centre for Environmental Concerns, 1995). Initial progress was slow, and the Bank expressed some concern over the quantity and quality of VSS formed. There were also problems of co-ordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and the FD over who would implement the Bank-initiated Tribal development Plan (TDP), to provide alternative income to those adversely affected by the closure of the forests. It was finally decided that the FD would implement both JFM and the TDP, and that TDP would be implemented in all VSS with a tribal population of over 15 percent. The financial support extended by the WB in 1994 for the first phase, which ended successfully in September 2000 (Nanda, 2002).

Role of NGOs

NGO working exclusively in JFM were almost non-existent when this programme was started, but they have emerged off late to play a very significant role in the affairs of the PFM, evolving PFM policies in AP. Their role is significant in safeguarding the interests of forest communities. They have contributed positively towards bringing awareness among NGOs and VSSs regarding JFM and CFM, and strengthening the local networks. The networks could also stall some of the anti-people policies like involvement

of industries in VSS through effective lobbying and campaigning. Though, there are issues that need to be addressed in order to make these networks effective. They are the issues relating to poor implementation of CFM and the involvement of NGOs at the VSS level.

On the whole, networks have evolved and spread along with PFM in AP over the last decade. They have played an important role in designing and improvising the PFM policies. Their main contribution is making the FD sensitive to the needs of forest communities. Networks and FD worked together during the transition phase of JFM to CFM. Even the FD has no hesitation in saying this though they had some unpleasant experiences between them. In fact, FD has provided them support, which helped them evolving into formal institutions and capacity build themselves. Over the last ten years their coverage has increased to 50 percent of the total VSS in the state.

The history of PFM network in AP is as old as JFM. The first NGO network was formed during the year 1992, two of the networks active and effective in their role in policy making at the state level and coordinating the groups at the local level are: i) AP NGOs committee on PFM, and ii) Vanasamakhyia. Both these networks vary in their size, structure, activities, strategies, etc., while working towards the common goal of enhancing the benefits to user groups or communities. These networks not only join hands in pursuing number of issues they have established horizontal as well as vertical linkages. While they have their own structure of vertical linkages with the NGOs and user groups at the regional and sub-regional level, their horizontal links include: Center for World Solidarity (CWS), Center for Peoples Forestry (CPF), Oxfam India Trust, SAMATA, Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development (SPWD), Action for Food Production (AFPRO), Inter Corporation NGO programme- AP (SDC-IC), Bread for the World (BFW), Action Aid, and the FD at the state and district levels.

AP NGO's Committee on PFM

The AP NGO's committee on PFM was informally initiated in 1992 with 37 NGOs. It took a formal institutional form in 1994 in the name of State committee on JFM with over 100 NGOs coming together in Anakapalli of Visakhapatnam district. Centre for World Solidarity (CWS), Oxfam India Trust and AFPRO have facilitated the formation of the network.

Presently the network has 300 NGOs spreading in 16 districts and supported by district level networks in 14 districts. These 300 NGOs cover 3000-4000 Vana Samrakshna Samithis (VSS) in the state. That is the network covers about 50 percent of the total VSS in the state. These NGOs are coordinated at the state level with the help of a secretariat based in Hyderabad. Over the years the network got financial support for its activities from various organisations like Oxfam India Trust, CWS-NOVIB, AFPRO, SDC, BFW, Christian Aid, Action Aid and the FD.

In the year 1999 the GB recommended and elected a steering committee to take the responsibilities of the secretariat. Further, the GB recommended and authorised the secretariat to register the network under the societies act. Accordingly the network was registered in December 2001 with a new name viz., AP NGO'S Committee on PFM. Presently, Inter Co-operation (IC) and Oxfam provide financial support while the AP FD, CWS, AFPRO, Action Aid provides short-term activity based support.

Major initiatives and Achievements

The network played a critical role in evolving the JFM strategies in the initial stages. Apart from creating awareness among the communities about JFM it lobbied for pro-peoples policies at the policy level. Specifically, the network was involved in resolving the problems or conflicts pertaining to demarcation of boundaries of VSS, VSS records, C-fee (Compounding fee), EDC etc. Besides, the network has spread and strengthened itself during the period 1992-96. The network gained momentum and recognition at the policy level. As apart of its efforts NGOs were made members of the state forestry committee, district forestry committee, ITDA committee, and VSS management committee (MC) (GO No. 173, 1996).

Prior to the initiation of CFM in 2000, the major achievements of the network at the policy level include: a) getting the NGO representation into the policy making bodies at various levels, and b) enhancing the usufruct rights of the VSS to 100 percent. These are achieved through consultations at various levels i.e., VSS, district and state level with various stakeholders like communities, NGOs and foresters. The campaigning and lobbying for clarity in the net incremental value of use rights continued till January 2004 when further modifications are added to the earlier GO (see box 1 and also below).

Box 1: Lobbying for Usufruct Rights

AP's benefit sharing policy is apparently the most liberal, thanks to the effective lobbying of the networks. Under the revised order of 1996, the VSS is entitled to 100 percent of the 'net incremental value' of timber and bamboo harvested after deducting costs. The VSS is entitled to all non-nationalised NTFP. This is further revised in January 2004 (G.O.Ms.No. 4) to bring clarity into the 'net incremental value'. According to this, the VSS shall be entitled to the following forest produce obtained from forests managed by them.

i) All NTFPs, ii) all intermediate yields obtained from silvicultural operations in natural forests, iii) all timber and bamboo (including bamboo plantations) except in case of plantations, iv) in the case of teak plantations within VSS area, whose age is known, twice the proportionate yield harvested (including yield from thinning) with reference to age of the plantation and the period of maintenance by the VSS, v) in the case of other plantations, whose age is known, 50 percent of harvest (including thinning) of the period of management of plantation by VSS is less than 50 percent of the rotation period and 100 percent of volume harvested if such period of management by the VSS is more than 50 percent of rotation period of the plantation, and vi) all the timber obtained from second and subsequent rotations of all plantations.

The major campaigns carried out by NGO Committee were one against GO 112, regarding involving private industries in managing forest. The NGO groups have seen this as a WB ploy to privatise forest areas in the long run jeopardising the interests of the forest communities. A collaborative campaign was launched at various levels. An exclusive forum called forum against Privatisation of Forests was formed. Public consultations, discussions and hearings were held at various levels. Media was roped in to give wide coverage and debate the issue. Two, regarding provision of Legal Status to VSS and educate the VSS members on the controversial legislation called the JFM and VSS rules, 2000, as an addition to its AP Forest Act (APFA) of 1967. This bill was opposed on the grounds that it will strengthen the FD's control over VSS rather than giving more powers to the VSS. As per the new bill 'the DFO shall have powers to remove any member who is found guilty of having committed offence under any of the forest acts and rules... or found guilty of any other offence punishable under any law'. Further, 'in the event

of disagreement between the DFO and the VSS, the DFO's decision shall be final.' And marketing of the surplus has been made the monopoly of the government. Three, was regarding Incremental Value in Usufruct Rights and R & R Policies: The network along with Samata initiated the dialogue with the WB and the FD regarding the issues of clarity on usufruct rights for VSS and Resettlement and Rehabilitation policies. The committee has stressed on transparency and information sharing at VSS level regarding R&R policies. Considering the demand FD agreed to make the necessary changes by bringing in an addendum regarding usufruct rights (see box 1).

Vanasamakhya

Though *Vanasamkhya* is a relatively small and young federation, it has its roots in PFM since 1992 as a JFM wing of CWS. The wing - CPF- was promoting JFM activities with 32 NGOs in 12 districts since 1996. CPF has become independent in August 2002 and formed as an autonomous, non-profit and non-governmental organisation. The partners (VSS networks) of CPF were working effectively on issues of availing records, cashbook, estimation copies, etc.

Major Initiatives and Achievements

Though CPF has many initiatives and achievements¹, it is not fair to attribute them to *Vanasamakhya*, which is still in its infant stage. One of its major initiatives is the news letter is being brought out successfully. So far six issues of the newsletter are published. The first meeting of the VSS members with the Chief Conservatory of Forest (CCF)-JFM and the memorandum submitted had evoked positive response. Some of issues/problems raised in the memorandum were addressed immediately by giving instructions to the field staff. These include (CPF, 2002):

- Cutting order and permit to sell bamboo in the Kittalpadu VSS, Pathapatnam range, Srikakulam district.
- Records, bank passbook, estimation copies were made available to the VSS of Salur range in Vizianagaram district and also in Narsapur range of Medak division.

¹ CPF is one of the main partner in most of the campaigns and achievements of the AP NGO network on PFM. Moreover, it had played the key role in organising the stakeholder's consultations on CFM. CPF is very strong in research and documentation. And it works in close association with FD in capacity building and policymaking.

- Action has been taken on the issue of Deputy Range Official (DRO) assault on the local VSS members.
- Land grabbing in Tellapadu VSS of Kavali range, Nellore district was addressed.
- The issue of parallel network formation by the local FD officials in Anantapuram range in Anantapuram district is resolved.

This has boosted the confidence of the members. Another indicator of the achievement of the samakhya is the credibility it has received from the forest officials in a very short span. More importantly, it has created gender balance and followed pro-women approach in its structure. The FD officials are confident that they can work together with the federation in a meaningful manner in future and ready to provide the necessary support. Though this could be due the good rapport between the CPF and FD, it certainly is a positive achievement.

The successes or achievements of these Networks cannot be attributed to any one particular network, as they work in close collaboration with one another on most of the issues. Though a particular network might have taken the initiative on a specific issue, the ultimate success is due to the collective efforts. In the present case, the AP NGO network² operates through the local NGO networks, while the Vanasamkhya works more directly with the VSS representatives. While the former is more oriented towards campaigning, lobbying and pressure groups, the later is strong in advocacy, capacity building and alliances. As a result Vanasamkhya³ has relatively closer linkages with FD. This is mainly due to the reason that its promoters-CPF and CWS- believe in strategies of alliance with different communities like researchers, activists and policy makers. On the other hand, the AP NGO network is relatively aggressive in its strategies. This is reflected in the differences in the stands taken on the issue of Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) policies. While the AP NGO network has demanded for stopping of CFM implementation till the R&R issue is resolved, CPF has argued for the CFM implementation in the 60 percent of the VSS where there is no R&R problem. But in the case of the issue on handing over VSS to private industries, both have taken an

² Here network is used interchangeably with the committee on PFM.

³ Here we are reflecting on the CPF strategies, as Vanasamkhya is still evolving. Moreover, both of them operate from the same platform.

aggressive stand. While it is difficult to judge which strategy is better, the experience indicates that issue based strategies yield better results. More importantly, the success of the networks in AP is due to the combination of these two strategies rather than due to either of them. This is reflected in the changed approach of the FD: all the networks and their partners have become part of the PFM policy-making process in AP. This in itself, we consider, is a great achievement.

As in most cases no success story is perfect. Though the PFM networks in AP have made significant strides in bringing about people centred PFM policies, there are still problems that need attention. One of the main problems is the gap between policy and implementation. This is mainly due to the reason that the attitudes of the lower level forest officials remain unchanged. As a result, implementation of CFM is largely unsatisfactory, as far as MPs, execution of works, benefit sharing, etc⁴. Nexus between VSS presidents and officials and the resulting corruption⁵ continues to be the major hurdle for effective implementation of CFM. As a result, some of the local NGOs (network members) are not very happy with the networks impact on implementation issues. Some of the partner NGOs has also expressed the view that ‘networks are ineffective as far as implementation problems are concerned’. Some of these problems could be resolved with the expansion of network to more VSS. One reason for the slow expansion process is that NGO involvement in CFM is still marginal in some of the districts. This is mainly attributed to the attitude of the local FD officials. The issue of R&R remains to be resolved in an acceptable and amicable manner.⁶

Stake holder’s role and CFM

Before initiation of CFM, there was a lot of debate on the possible changes and impending effects on the forest dependent people in general and VSS members in particular. When the AP FD thought of going ahead with phase II of AP FP in the name of CFM there were varied perceptions among various stakeholders. If NGOs were for more decision making powers to the

⁴ Some observers feel that micro plans are by and large are farce.

⁵ In some places corruption is as high as 40 percent of the VSS funds.

⁶ Some of the partners NGOs do not agree with the R & R policies. They demand allocation of land rights to podu cultivators. And there are also problems regarding arriving at a cut-off date for giving the land rights. Though this is an important and nagging issue, there is no clarity among the stakeholders.

communities in respect to planning, utilisation of available funds, collection of fines from forest offenders, etc. the role of the FD was expected to be one of facilitating and guiding. Whatsoever, the role played by the CWS is laudable in holding Consultations with Stakeholders at the Regional and State level which included WB Team, NGOs, Academicians and FD officials before passing GO 13 with wider scope for “Communities” and defined role for the “NGO”s. The consultation has influenced in reservation of either of president or vice presidents position to women members in MC, women member as one of the signatories in the joint account, VSS’s empowerment to levy fines in forest offences and enabling the ‘communities’ with more powers in decision making process and plummeting the FD’s role to one of “facilitators” etc. (Suryakumari, 2001,b).

Local Governance: The Panchayat Extension Act to Scheduled Areas (PESA), 1996

Under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the Panchayat has emerged as one of the key potential stakeholders in forestry management, and the sharing of benefits derived from it. Under this act panchayats may now be empowered by state governments to decide on matters and functions specified in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution (although most of the states are yet to devolve the powers to the panchayats, including AP). This pertains directly to JFM, and throws up a fundamental contradiction. This amendment includes items relating to forests (land improvement, soil conservation, watershed development, SF, farm forestry, MFP, fuel and fodder), although the management of state forestlands are *not* as yet included. Furthermore, extension of this Act to Schedule V areas has wider implications on forest resources in tribal areas (as specified in the Fifth Schedule). The *Gram Sabha* or the Panchayat is endowed with the right of ownership of NTFP, granted to meet the bona fide requirements of the local community. The Act empowers the *gram sabha* of traditional communities to manage its community resources in accordance with its customs and traditions.

Nationally, *gram sabhas* have been conferred forest usufruct rights, in order to improve the economic well being of the tribals. Out of the net surplus available from all the MFP, at least 25 percent should be transferred back to the *Gram Sabhas* through the agency responsible for MFP trade. Another 25 percent should be utilized for community development through the agency and the balance 50 percent should be given to individual collectors in

proportion to the value of the produce collected by them. Under the XI Schedule of the constitution, panchayats can be empowered to implement plans relating to SF and farm forestry and MFP and fuel (Pathy, nd).

However these measures have not been conferred in AP yet. The Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment has asked the MoEF to initiate action on the Extension Act, conferring ownership rights over MFP to Panchayats / *Gram Sabhas* and to incorporate appropriate provisions under its own acts and rules for implementation of the decision. The latter constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of Shri C.S. Chaddha in October 1997, which decided that villagers were generally incapable of managing NTFPs sustainably, besides feeling that the definition of MFPs was not given. In A.P, it is claimed that the PESA is followed in terms of returning profits from NTFPs to the village committees (by a 1999 order, 50 per cent of the net revenue from *tendu* leaves collected in the area goes to the VSS but almost all other MFPs remain under the monopoly control of the GCC) (Sunder et al, 2001).

Impact of JFM in AP

In the absence of systematic state wide studies or even effective monitoring we rely here on small-scale studies and anecdotal reports. These indicate a range of benefits from the programme, the most obvious being improvement in forest conditions. Additional benefits have apparently been to local peoples livelihoods, where the evidence is that local people have not been empowered, and that benefits have not been entirely equitably distributed.

Positive impacts

Evidence suggests that the swift expansion of JFM in AP has led to regeneration of forests and the resulting economic gains of local people. Additional benefits have been the reduction of forestland conversion for agriculture, reduction of illicit timber felling, and additionally improved safety for forestry staff. However, many of the reports have been presented either by donor-project staff or by foresters themselves, and so are not entirely objective. The discussion of a number of different case studies here is illustrative of the sort of benefits possible, rather than attempting a conclusive weighing up of positives and negatives.

Behroonguda VSS in Adilabad, where JFM was launched in AP on May 23, 1993, and became the first VSS in AP to win official recognition. The 'village committee' comprised of 50 percent women members in a 97-member body, was headed by a women member. In 1998, Behroongooda also became the first VSS in AP to reap the fruits of forest protection. It generated income to the tune of Rs 0.36 millions from the sale of teak poles, the first round of thinning in an 80 year teak management rotation. A number of NTFP have also re-emerged due to better protection by the VSS. From the point of employment the labours were kept busy in 'coppicing shoots' for which they were paid Rs. 40–50 per day; a better deal than agricultural wage. At the same time out-migration has been reduced. In terms of income, the VSS families earned Rs. 1000 each per year apart from the 'usufruct benefits' (D'Silva and Nagnath, 2002).

Resource Improvement

The primary aim of JFM has been to improve forest condition through improved protection. Evidence, both statistical and field case studies seem to bear this out. The Forest Survey of India have been collecting forest cover data, and comparing their 1997 (in fact 1993) and 1999 data shows a slight improvement in forest cover in AP, apparently a change from scrub areas. Furthermore a number of case studies bear out the claim that 'better protection of forests has been the greatest achievement of JFM' (Mukherjee, in Bahuguna et al; 2004) give the same story. The VSS in Hottebetta, a hamlet in Rolla Panchayat in Rolla Mandal in Anantapur District, came into existence on 1996, with an initial focus on the development of grasslands. Subsequently in 1996-1997 fodder development was taken up in 30 hectares of land. In the same year 5 rock-fill dams, 3 check dams were constructed and 20,000 saplings were planted afresh, which have gone up to 61,540 by the year 1998. In other matters, the VSS resolved to develop 20 hectares into 'horticulture land' with an intention of serving as source of independent income for sustaining the people's action, this scheme also met with significant progress⁷. Not stopping here the VSS also indulged in 'pasture development and Community hall building' (Muralidharudu, et al., 1997).

⁷ OM Consultancy in its evaluation report has had recommended 'horticulture' in a region with highly degraded forest for sustenance because gestation period for usufruct is relatively longer in these areas (OM Consultancy, 1998).

Table 4: Change in Forest Cover in AP 1993 to 1999 (Area in Sq. Kms.)

	Dense Forests	Open Forests	Mangroves	Scrub	Non-forest	Total 1997
<i>1997 Assessment (data Oct 1993)f</i>	23,048	19,859	383	11,191	220,587	275,068
<i>1999 Assessment (data Nov 1998-Jan 1999)</i>	24,190	19,642	397	9,559	221,280	275,068
<i>Net Change</i>	+1,142	-217	+14	-1,632	+693	-

Source: Forest Survey of India, 1999

Naginayana Cheruvu, a remote area adjoining forests in the District of Anantapur was able to protect the natural re-growth of plants in the forest land, from 10 to 15 percent cover initially up to 80 percent cover, resulting, it is claimed, in substantial increase in the groundwater levels. There were also sharp increase wildlife populations in the area. The developments in Naginayana Cheruvu indicate a positive surge in forest growth, thanks to taking people into confidence and without compromising on their basic needs (Biswas et. al., 1997).

Reddy et al (2000) in their study of VSS in the villages in Anantapur district have found 'natural regeneration of forests' in all but one *thanda* (hamlet), while the growth of plant species was relatively better than that of bushes and fodder. The reasons for such drastic change are control of fire, prevention of illegal felling of trees and prevention of cattle grazing. As a result, the way was paved for the recovery of wild life populations. As regards income, JFM has left a telling impact on the living conditions of the locals by generating additional income and reducing the dependence on moneylenders. The increase in economic status facilitated children's education, particularly girls, active involvement of women in VSS, etc. The seasonal migration (except one *thanda*) was checked and the general health improved and showed an encouraging signs towards following family planning policy by the people. This was again possible due to different works undertaken by the VSS in the area.

At the VSS in Juttadapalem protective measures were undertaken to develop contour trenches, and several thousand trees were planted and two hectares of fodder grass raised. Chandrayyapalem repaired a well for drinking water and constructed a small check dam to harvest rainwater. In Kannaram and Vandrujola illicit felling of trees, grazing and firewood collection was successfully contained. In Konnaram 'palm tree' fence was developed around the forest to protect it from the smugglers and cattle.

Income Generation

Among the areas studied by Reddy, et al (2000) two VSS of Kannaram and Chandrayyapalem were able to generate good employment and income in view of the fact that in these areas the commercially important species like tamarind, soap nut, honey, gum and *beedi* leaves were grown. However, the people here obtain firewood from other unprotected forests leading to degradation of these forests (Kameshwar, et al., 1995-96).

Gopal and Upadhyay (2001) have reported on the formation of a VSS in 1995 in Sugali *thanda* a tribal hamlet under the Muddireddipalli Panchayat of Maydukur Mandal in Kadapa district. A PRA exercise was undertaken in 1996 and a MP prepared to address livelihood needs. A two-pronged strategy was implemented: one was to provide the vulnerable families with improved facilities to carry out agriculture, and the second was to provide continuous employment opportunities in the forest. Over a period of 4 years it is claimed the annual average family income rose from Rs 3,800 to Rs 4,700. The key factors for the success were identified as three years of continuous awareness and motivation, provision of identity cards to all the members, improved savings during JFM and improved employment and income generating activities. It may be guessed that the most crucial of these was the provision of funds for employment generation, and returning of revenues from timber marketing to the community.

With the formation of VSS in 1995 in Ippapenta a hamlet consisting of 35 Harijan families located in Chintakommanne mandal in Kadapa District, were able to persuade the neighbouring villagers to stop their illegal activities in the forest. They were successful in convincing the rich farmers not to collect firewood and timber from the forest patch allotted to the SC colony and to restrict their cattle from grazing in the protected patch. The efforts of VSS bore fruits, as hundred hectares of forest has already been treated for

rehabilitation. In 50 ha area fruit bearing trees, including mango, blackberry, cashew, etc, were planted along with cleaning and singling operations. VSS members with technical and financial support from the FD have constructed contour trenches, rock-filled dams, concrete check dams, etc. Agave suckers have been planted along the contour lines. Protection of the forest from grazing and controls on firewood collection has resulted in increased hill-brooms growth. During the year 1997-98, the VSS members earned a sum of Rs 9,975 from the sale proceeds of broomstick (Gopal and Upadhyay, 2001).

The data to gauge the forest cover carried out using satellite data in the districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad, Kurnool, Khammam, Visakhapatnam and Warangal during the years 1996 to 1998, revealed that not only the forest area under VSS has improved but also the adjoining forests for which the entry was through the VSS. The dense cover also improved in the JFM area compared to non-JFM areas and the degradation process has also stopped (Rangachari and Mukherjee, 2000).

The data from 120 VSSs accounting for 5 per cent of the total in the State formed before 1998 showed that except for Anantapur district, which is the driest in the State with heavy incidence of grazing there has been an overall improvement in 'growing stock' (i.e. timber trees). The data is also supported by the change in forest cover based on satellite data. With regard to NTFP production the decline before JFM for various reasons is thwarted after the introduction of JFM with the revival of people's interest in NTFP and plantation of NTFP species in most of the VSS such as tamarind, *usiri*, *neradu*, *seethaphal*, etc. These species were also enthusiastically recommended for the better regeneration of forests and consistent livelihood by OM Consultants who came to this conclusion based on their evaluation of JFM in AP (OM Consultancy, 1998). Besides, raising some high yielding eucalyptus clones on demonstration plots for people to see and understand the economics of growing plantations in place of cultivating forestland. Similarly, medicinal plants of certain identified species such as the *aswagandha*, *senna*, *rabhi*, *pippalu*, etc., are being grown on an experimental basis with the help from people.

The regeneration and species diversity has boosted overall forest bio-diversity. Other ecological benefits like increase in water table is very appreciable because the increase ranged from a minimum of 0.13 metres to a maximum

of 13.92 metres contingently improving the agricultural yield to the extent of 51.7 percent.

Community Development

Mallett (2000) citing the example of Adilabad district in AP illustrates how the people who were suspicious of JFM are now eager to participate, as the fruits of JFM could be seen in the district where 45 percent of the forest was lost to agricultural encroachment between 1983 and 1993. Ever since JFM was launched this trend has been reversed, and there have been no reports of forest loss in any areas managed by the VSS'. Not confining to mere forest activities the development works like community halls, check dams, drinking water structures, roads, etc, was also taken up under JFM. It also goes to show that where there is earnest participation from the people and the government it is possible to have fruitful results. The area where JFM policy least expected to bring any sort of positive results was that of countering the 'Naxalites', which came as a 'godsend', according to the Forest Secretary and the PCCF, in Adilabad, one of the strongholds of the people's War Group: 'today the forester feels safe to visit the once *Naxalite*-infested localities because of the protection by VSS members' (Rangachari and Mukherji, 2000).

According to Venkatraman and Falconer (1998) and Rangachari and Mukherjee (2000) the degraded forests came back to life with the stoppage of timber smuggling, control over cattle grazing and virtual stoppage of encroachment. Village labour is now gainfully employed, and out migration has declined. Women participate in all VSS affairs as equal partners and get the same pay as men. The soil conservation works have resulted in higher water tables in many areas, leading in turn to improvements in agricultural production. There is a general improvement in the flora and fauna of the area. Rangachari and Mukherji (2000) are of the opinion that bringing people and forest officials together in itself was a tremendous breakthrough given the hostile conditions between the two parties existing earlier in this region. The co-operation and trust is increasing with every passing day.

Gender Issues

AP is one of the states, which has promoted the 'women self-help group's known as '*Mahila Podupu Sangham* or *Awal Thrift Group*' on a large scale. As observed by Gopal and Upadhyay (2001) the women in Maktha Masanpalli, located 75 km from Hyderabad are quite active, which could be

seen from the three thrift groups, which are functioning effectively. SC colony women were restricted to religious and marriage ceremonies until the formation of VSS, when the women started participating actively in village welfare activities. Though women here have to walk more distance than before to collect the fuel wood but now the forest guards do not stop them. The quarrying for sand and stone by neighbouring villages has also declined with the efforts of VSS.

Subdued Impact

While the proceeding review highlights the positive aspects of JFM, the following narration brings out the other side of the story. The JFM has had much more limited benefits, as well as negative aspects in many parts of the state due to different reasons, according to different studies:

Asymmetric Power relations between VSS and FD

Although JFM claims to be 'joint', control over resources and decision making is not 'joint', but rather the 'Department' maintains asymmetric power over the VSS. This is illustrated by many cases where the VSS wishes have been ignored. For instance, there have been cases of VSS area handed over for bauxite mining. There was even an attempt in 2000 to bring in private industries (GO 112) into plantation on state forest lands, on the pretext of 'fund crunch' (i.e. lack of funds), wherein the private companies like Reliance, Bhadrachalam Paper mills, etc., were to invest in growing remunerative species in collaboration with the VSS in degraded forests with a revenue sharing arrangement with the VSS. The plan was to form a tripartite of industry, VSS and government representatives to oversee the scheme. It was assured that the revenue from such an attempt to the VSS would be much higher than what they are earning now. The idea was seen as a design against the very interests of the 'tribal' in particular and 'environment' in general. Under pressure from NGOs, human rights activists and opposition political parties the government backtracked (Mahapatra, 2000).

Poor Institutional Sustainability

The most positive feature of the JFM programme, it is claimed by forest officials, is that in all the VSS areas JFM appears to be the most actively implemented government programme at the village level, no other government department has built up this kind of community institutional structure.

However, this claim is contradicted by a number of sources. Simply from field visits it is quickly realised that many VSS are in fact non-functional, and the ones that are functional face particular problems when the period of funding support ends. Commonly their activities are also far reduced. Local people appreciate that they have been given legal endorsement to protect the local forests from cutting by outsiders. However, beyond this livelihood benefits such as employment have been dependent on inflows of funds, and when this stops the motivation to be involved in VSS activities is reduced. Poffenberger et al in a recent study in Adilabad found that women's independent Self Help Groups (SHGs) are more dynamic and self-sustaining, whereas many of the VSSs have gone into hibernation at the end of phase I of the Bank project, without further funding flows.

Corruption and Lack of Transparency regarding Funds

Funds are transferred to VSS to fund their forest works and employment generation. The system is not transparent, and irregularities in fund allocation are rampant: there are widespread anecdotal reports that the distribution of funds system set up allows the Forestry officials to embezzle funds in collusion with the VSS treasurers and committee. A set rate of 25% of the total going back to FD staff is even talked about openly in committees. There is even wastage of money on non-forestry activities like publicity material, to camouflage the real intent and purpose of JFM by the groups with vested interests.

Most of the general members are not aware of this. D'Silva and Nagnath (2000) pointed out that there is ambiguity and confusion at the grass root level over JFM funds, particularly with regard to 'final harvest' and the confusion over 'incremental benefits'. Benefit sharing arrangement of 100 percent share in the incremental value of the produce is further amended. Now VSS are entitled to full harvest of timber and bamboo from natural forests vested with them in addition to NTFPs and yield in proportion to period of management by them in respect of timber from plantations (Communication from Mr. Kalaghatgi, CCF).

Sunder et al (2001) found that wage discrimination between the JFM committees also discouraged the JFM activities. The wage rate is as low as Rs 20 and Rs 25 to women and men respectively, a very discouraging sign considering prosperous condition in other parts of AP.

Forest Boundary Conflicts

Some other studies found that disputes over forest boundary due to the ignorance of FD of the traditional village boundaries and demarcating the VSS area. In many areas the Department has not thought of maintaining the balance between population and extent of forest area, but made arbitrary boundaries, sometimes trespassing into other villages. Artificial boundaries have taken over traditional village '*polimeru*' causing most of these problems. As a result in many instances the aggrieved villagers have cut down the entire plantation (e.g. R. K. Nagar VSS - Araku Mandal, Vizag District Burnt down). This has been a particular problem in Paderu area, where tribals felt the FD was trying to set one village against another, by giving rights to the benefits from one village's forest to a neighbouring one, on condition that they stop *podu* cultivation in the forest. Sunder et al. (2001) found that boundary disputes and NTFP conflicts are demoralising the people to give up joint management.

Tribal Development Vs. Forest Development

The 'encroachment' of forestlands is reported to have been stopped, with no fresh cases of encroachments reported under VSS jurisdiction because of people's participation. The most significant development in many of the VSSs especially in the districts of Visakhapatnam and Adilabad, has been the return of about 24,000 hectares of land, which was under *podu* cultivation to the FD (Rangachari and Mukherji, 2000). Whilst this is viewed as a success by the FD it in fact indicates that land has been taken out of use for livelihood support of tribals. This is the main reason why in the predominantly tribal Paderu division, tribals and their organisations (e.g. the *adivasi aikya vedika*) have rejected CFM out of fear of losing more *podu* land.

There has been severe repercussion of the JFM on the 'indigenous tribals', whose very survival and sustenance is under threat, because they are forced to do away with their traditional stay in the forest and discouraged from '*podu*', their traditional form of shifting cultivation. Although the intention of the government to halt '*podu* cultivation' claims justification from the point of the environment, it is the responsibility of the government to rehabilitate and compensate them. In spite of resolutions available on this issue nothing concrete is coming up. The perception of the tribals in many affected areas is changing negatively towards the schemes of government. Hence, many commentators have come to see the implementation of JFM in

tribal areas as an anti-poor plot by the FD and the WB in reclamation of forestland under *Podu*.

According to SAKTI, a local NGO, the FD will not protect the rights of the tribal people who are part and parcel of the ecosystem. Instead, the JFM programme exploits the tribesmen in the name of forest and socio-economic development. The NGOs feel that recognition from the State FD will motivate the tribes to protect their forests efficiently and allows the community to benefit from other programmes, such as support from the Integrated Tribal Development Authority and other allied government agencies, which give special reference to those communities that, are involved in JFM activities although, the tribals are entitled to these irrespective of JFM. In fact, JFM enabled the FD to take over even the ITDA's role in tribal areas (Rao et. al., 1995-96).

Gender Equity

Women are the predominant collectors of fodder, fuel wood and NTFPs and were supposed to benefit considerably from JFM but are, in fact, neglected in most areas (Farrington and Bauman, 2002). The role of women in JFM is found to be negligible in spite of their substantial membership in the VSS. As Sarin et al (1998) points out, even where the one man and one woman per household rule is adopted for membership in the FPC (as in AP), large number of disadvantaged women are still excluded as formal membership means little unless the women are empowered to participate in decision making on the basis of ready access to information and alternative management options. In several villages women are unaware that they are members of a GB, let alone of the executive committee. Not only have women been excluded from community decision-making bodies by tradition, but JFM rules, in the name of protection, give further power to elite men to exclude poor forest dependent women from the forests. Hence, ensuring women's informed participation in the decision making process has to be the essential first step towards equal participation of women in community forestry management institutions (Kameshwari, 2002). Empowerment of women in JFM has not ensured in different regions of the state. Sunder et al., (2001) found that women were playing very little role in the management of JFM in Paderu of the Eastern Ghats of AP.

Shortcomings of JFM in AP

As we have seen there are several problems emerging from the field implementation of JFM. Although JFM undoubtedly represents a change in the state's approach to forest management, problems may be distinguished into two sets of issues (Saigal et. al., 1996). The first set is *conceptual*, for instance, the extent to which communities have economic, as opposed to subsistence, rights to forest produce. The second set of issues relate to the *practical* problems of managing the JFM programme including the assigning of forest areas to communities, developing systems for conflict resolution, dealing with different administrative and forest boundaries, and increasing women's participation and their active role. We need to understand whether the problems are arising from poor implementation or from poor policy and conceptual structure.

At the conceptual level one area of problems is the ambiguity with regard to terms used; like 'community', 'participation', 'benefit sharing' and 'stakeholders' as used in the National Forest Policy and also in the resolutions on JFM issued by the State Governments. Lack of non-clarity of these terms leads to serious confusion, as has been the case with benefit sharing (Jeffery and Sunder, 1999).

Power Asymmetries

A further lacuna in the provision of VSS is the asymmetrical power relationship between the FD and the villagers. Participation of the village people in the planning process of JFM has in practice been ignored by the FD. The MP is framed in the forest office; and rarely does it reach the villagers. People are rarely aware of the budgetary allocations and the budget plan for their village. Ideally the VSS should be in possession of a copy of the budget plan but that rarely happens (Farrington and Bauman, 2002). The second copy is with the ranger, which is never shown. Another aspect which is adversely affecting the performance of JFM in some areas, are the supposed elections to executive committees after every two years, which in practice are often not being conducted, leading to undemocratic practices by the 'elites' (Reddy et al, 2000). The majority of the ordinary members are not aware of the funds being released to their VSS.

Coordination

In tribal areas the success of JFM requires the support of other departments working for the development of tribals and rural development, but their response is lukewarm and is not coordinated. In practice the work, which the ITDA used to do has been transferred to the FD, supposedly for better coordination (Anonymous, nd). In the opinion of Jodha (2000), the ultimate goal would be that the people become independently able to look after tribal development their own. Yet there is little sign that their independent capacity is being built up.

Equity and Gender Issues

Baviskar (1998) stresses the importance of sensitivity to the tribal community and their internal dynamics before drawing up policies. He recommends powers and decision-making roles in JFM should emphasise greater decentralisation and devolution (an issue frequently raised in relation to the JFM movement, e.g. Jodha, 2000). Jodha specifies: more explicit and equitable sharing mechanisms for tribals, landless labourers (particularly women) and for those who have been deprived of their traditional earning options following the introduction of JFM and workable means to empower women, e.g., by raising their number at all levels of forest service (Jodha, 2000).

Thousands of women will need to be inducted into the Indian Forest Service (IFS) and the state cadre. This would present an immense challenge for recruiting and training. Furthermore, the organizational environment of forest agencies should be reoriented to allow women to participate equally with their male counterparts. Working groups, diagnostic studies, new monitoring systems, and feedback loops that enable emerging experiences to be channelled into policy-making will transform these institutions, making them accountable to their staff and the public that they serve (Poffenberger and McGean, 1996). Exploring the women's involvement in JFM in three regions of AP, Suryakumari (2001) has found that women in general are unaware of the programme, though they participate in the meetings. Even worse the women committee members themselves are unaware that they are in the MC and those few who know about it are unsure of their roles, in such circumstances it becomes immaterial whether stipulated 30 percent quota of filling the MC is carried out or not. On the wage front they are discriminated against even when the nature of work is same, since the decision on wage rates is the prerogative of VSS mostly dominated by men.

Local Governance

There is clearly a need to resolve the contradiction between the VSS and the panchayat structures, by placing JFM Committees in the overall context of decentralisation promoted through the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution. *Panchayati Raj* institutions are in the process of becoming empowered as custodians of rural affairs and natural resources, and in order to minimise conflicts between JFM Committees and Panchayats and improve their mutual effectiveness the VSS must become articulated as sub-committees of the PRIs, as gradually happening in other states (Jodha, 2000). The undemocratic set up of VSSs strongly indicates the need for the empowerment of Panchayats (PESA) to oversee their functioning.

Gopal and Upadhyay (2001) have found that in Ampali village in Dharur Mandal of Ranga Reddy, there are no conflicts between the VSS and Panchayat simply because there is no income from the forests. On the other hand in Eliminedu village and its hamlet Malluguda the one Panchayat in Ibrahimpatnam Mandal in Ranga Reddy District experienced conflicts related to common property resources, forests and between the *Panchayati Raj* and the VSS. In Guvvalacheruvu, a heterogeneous village at the foothills of Palakonda tracts of the Nallamala hills, there have been good NTFP earnings but population growth has meant the poor have not escaped poverty yet.

The legal and policy frameworks surrounding JFM need more clarity because the provisions of the executive order governing JFM often conflict with the Forest Conservation Act, and don't acknowledge that the poor depend upon forest products (fuel wood, fodder, small timber and non-plant extractions) to attain their livelihoods. Policy makers must acknowledge this and accept local livelihood forest use within the context of forest management rather than see it as an obstacle to management (Gopal and Upadhyay 2001).

Livestock and Livelihoods

The recent grazing policy, drafted in the backdrop of Mr. Naidu's (The Chief Minister) statement in the AP Assembly that 'goats are the enemy of environment and forests' on 1st April 2001, is seen as anti-poor, anti-low caste, pro-land owning caste, and anti-livestock in general and anti-goat in particular. Evaluations of AP JFM, carried out by Om Consultancy too have come up with a finding wherein drastic curtailment of 'goats' numbers is established (OM Consultancy, 1998). The reintroduction of indiscriminatory

grazing fees for livestock (Rs. 40 per goat per annum), prohibition of grazing on the interior protected forests, creation of 'paddocks' for grazing and delegation of 'permission authority' to the VSS chairmen in the VSS areas has given the impression that government is acting hand in glove with the WB to benefit the local elites and Multi National Companies (MNCs) from Australia and New Zealand to further their interests in the Indian meat market with their 'boneless meat'. Holding goats and their herders solely responsible for the destruction and deforestation is implausible, since historically they have always been depending on forests and forests have been their source of survival and its conservation is their own survival (Ravinder, 2003).

Short-term livelihood impacts have strongly influenced the performance of the JFM scheme. Tribals outside the scheduled areas find the JFM programme and its development works a great boon, since it has provided valuable wage employment in comparison to the past (Farrington and Bauman, 2002). Borgoyary (2002) has found in her study of five selected VSS in Visakhapatnam in AP that the JFM was successful in those villages where there is considerable alternative employment generation such as the 'food for work policy'. The employment generation has such a bearing on the success of Participatory Forestry Programme could be well understood by the fact that the moment funds stopped until "food for work" supplemented the cause in October 2001. The people had lost interest during this period of one year in the JFM programme. The funding under APFP closed in September 2000 (Mukherjee, 2004). The tribals who voluntarily evicted from the '*podu* land' had their private lands for their sustenance and those who are facing forced eviction in plain terrain where *podu* cultivation has almost become permanent cultivation and where application of fertilizers and other High Yielding Variety (HYV) has led to high yields, need to be facilitated with irrigation, fertilizers, etc. Where local people have their forest use disrupted by the introduction of JFM, particularly the landless, alternative livelihood options, are essential to make JFM universally successful.

In the overall context of VSS and benefits to the marginalized sections of the society, an interesting observation is made by Suryakumai (2001a) wherein she has found VSS to be helping SC, ST and Backward Castes (BCs) in honing their leadership positions through reservations especially in the MFP areas, but in VSS areas where there is high value timber in the forest, the dominant communities take leading roles in the VSS and exclude the

marginalized, for instance by prescribing high membership fees and proposing voluntary labour which the poor can not afford.

CFM: New Forest Policy of AP

The positive response to the JFM policy in AP encouraged policy makers, with support from the WB, to refine the approach to manage the forest through 'VSSes' on the lines of CFM. This approach aims to upgrade the initiatives taken under JFM. While JFM has been a partnership between the forest-dependent communities and the FD, CFM claims to be a more democratic process, through decentralising and delegating of the decision-making process, planning and implementation, with the APFD acting more as facilitators and providers of technical and infrastructure support (see figures in appendix-III).

The CFM initiative makes many claims: it balances the local needs with external and environmental needs through increased productivity of the forest resources, reduced dependence on forests through substitution of demand and alternate livelihood opportunities, up gradation of living standards and above all inculcating a sense of ownership and pride among the forest dependent communities engaged in CFM. Community and farm forestry programmes carry out the basic objectives by strengthening local leadership, promoting participatory approaches and testing new approaches to JFM. The primary beneficiaries are the small forest farmers and landless people of forest areas (Papia Roy, 2001).

The legal backing for CFM has come through a package of supporting changes: the relaxation under Forest Conservation Act (FCA) for medicinal plants cultivation by VSS, the liberalization of the state monopoly of NTFP, conformity of Panchayat laws with CFM regulations. Further areas which the programme plans to give special attention include conflict resolution among stakeholders and traditional rights, consistency of MP's with working plans. Other enabling issues like poverty alleviation through skill up gradation and income generating activities, training and capacity building, empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups, NGO's participation, will also receive attention it is claimed.

Shortcomings of CFM Policy

Some apprehensions are expressed by some commentators with regard to the latest CFM policy. Sarin (Critique, AP CFM Project, nd) comments that although CFM is claimed to be 'community driven' and 'for the benefit of poor' it is not, because the GO overlooks the interests of the perhaps 50% of households who may be unwilling to join the VSS. Similarly exclusion of other members apart from the 2 from each household from the membership is questionable.

Although in theory a valuable tool for ensuring forest management reflects local needs, in practice the 'MP's have generally conformed to the prescriptions of the wider FD working plan, rather. There is no VSS representation in the State Level Committee unlike the case in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The nomination of VSS representatives for District Forest Committees by the collector is undemocratic. Although VSS are supposedly entitled to all NTFPs, due to the GCCs monopoly VSSs are still expected to get NTFP permits from the DFO.

The 1988 Forest Policy spoke about the state government's right to permit shifting cultivation up to a period of 3 years and provide for the alternative, later JFM was recognized as one of the ways to provide this livelihood but nothing concrete has materialized which is proved by the admission of the FD that, thousands of *adivasi* lands traditionally cultivated by them are not regularized until 1995 and continued to be under dispute and unsettled (APAAV, 2003). According to the FD by 1994, over 327,742 hectares of forestland was under illicit cultivation and encroachment. Newspapers reported FD figures of encroached land in the districts of Adilabad (94,000 ha), Khammam (75000 ha), Visakhapatnam (33,000 ha), Warangal (13,500) and East Godavari (7200 ha). Out of the estimated 46,725 families who might have encroached forestland assigned to VSS, the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) under the CFM project provides for rehabilitation grant and livelihood opportunities to an estimated 11680 families (Madhusudhan, 2003). Sarin (Critique, AP CFM Project, nd) questions the reclamation of the *podu* land from the tribals by the FD depriving the tribals of their livelihood because the poor are neither being provided any secure rights to land and forest produce nor being empowered to make their own decision about how to use and manage their forests in accordance with their own priorities.

Sarin (2003) also highlights the plight of the tribals who survived on the *podu* land for their livings and about the forests, which were never on the ground and were only in records or paper but later declared to be encroached by tribals and evacuated. OM Consultancy (1998) evaluation report also indicates this aspect and stresses to consider technicalities while constituting the VSS. The matter became too serious for the Ministry of Environment and Forest (GoI, MoEF) resulting in issuance of a directive on May 3, 2002 to summarily evict “all illegal encroachment of forestlands in various States / Union Territories” before September 30, 2002, citing the Court’s concern over the matter. This order totally ignored a framework for resolution of disputes related to forestland between tribal people and the State, which had been worked out in 1990 by the Union Government, but lies unimplemented. A set of six circulars, issued on September 18, 1990, by MoEF itself clearly make a distinction between ‘encroachments’ on forest land, and ‘Disputed Claims over Forest Land arising out of Forest Settlement’ and Disputes Regarding *pattas*/leases/grants involving forest land. The May 2002 circular only refers to ‘encroachments’ overlooking disputed claims, it was feared that 10 million *adivasis* and other forest dependent communities would be displaced, threatening their very existence. Mr B D Sharma, former Commissioner for SCs & STs, pointed out that the MoEF order represented a violation of Article 338(9) of the Constitution. With the issue being brought to the notice of the Prime Minister and Parliament, MoEF was compelled to issue a clarification order that the framework for resolving disputed claims over forest lands remained in force (Sarin, 2003).

One issue that remain to be resolved under CFM is the rights over marketing of NTFP items; an issue that is critical to the livelihoods of the tribal population. Under JFM it is mentioned that VSS members have 100% rights over marketing of NTFP. This is in contradiction with the stated policy, that *Girijan* Co-operative Corporation (GCC) has “monopoly rights” for marketing of about 25 NTFP items. In a study titled “VSS sustainability and the Role of GCC in connection with CFM programme in AP”(June, 2003), it is mentioned that with the formation of VSS, and providing for 100% benefits out of MFP to the members, the primary stakeholders in respect of NTFP constitute two categories Viz., the tribal members of *Girijan* Primary Co-operative Marketing Society (GPCMSs) and the VSS members; of whom also there are tribal members to the tune of 30% across the state (out of 13 *lakh* VSS members 4.15 *lakh* are tribals). It is often felt by VSSs and the people exclusively

working with the VSS i.e., the FD and some NGOs that they could get remunerative prices if they could go to private traders instead of GCC. This may be true for some items and in some areas but it is not true everywhere and for every item. Moreover the influx of forest produce into the state is coming in the way of GCC offering remunerative prices to the collectors (CWS, Draft Report, 2003).

On the other hand integration and convergence of other governmental agencies with VSS is highly spoken about under CFM but it does not appear to be easier to do because on the similar issue the government had to burn its finger when the GO 78 was opposed vehemently by the VSS members with the active support of the NGOs on the ground that the existing VSS will be dis-empowered. This GO issued by Environment of Forest Science and Technology (EFS and T) on 17 –10 – 2003 was to converge “VELUGU” (District Poverty Initiative Project) with CFM.

The Difference between JFM and CFM

CFM is envisaged as distinct from JFM in a number of ways (Table 5). In JFM, a forest official was the member secretary of VSS managing committee; in CFM the member secretary is from the managing committee. VSS in JFM has one president position, which is often represented by the male member, but under CFM there is provision for two, that is for president and vice-president either or both should be women. With regard to the bank account JFM has only one, while CFM has a provision for two, one for project / government and the other one for VSS benefits, for which the forest official and the president are the signatories in JFM, but in CFM both president and vice-president are signatories of both the bank accounts, for project account the third signatory is forest official. In financial matters, in JFM the funds from DFO to VSS go through FRO and section officer, but in CFM the funds are directly deposited in the account of VSS. The Panchayat has no relation with JFM while CFM has a panchayat president in the VSS advisory council and also chairs the council meetings. JFM has no provision for VSS to levy and collect fines from forest offenders, while CFM do collect fine up to 100 rupees for the same. JFM envisaged FD role as project implementer with the help of VSS community. But CFM envisages FD role to that of facilitator, while VSS has to prepare and implement plans. Finally CFM has a defined role for the NGOs whereas JFM has not any for them.

Table 5: Contrast between JFM and CFM

	JFM	CFM
Implemented	GO 173 of December 1996	GO 13 of February 2002
Member secretary of VSS managing committee	forest guard	from the managing committee
President position	one, which is often represented by the male member	two, (president and vice-president) either or both should be women
Bank account	one	two, one for project / government the other for VSS benefits
Signatories for bank account	forest official and president	president and vice-president signatories of both the bank accounts, for project account the third signatory is forest official
Financial matters	the funds from DFO to VSS go through FRO and section officer	funds are directly deposited in VSS account
Panchayat	no relation	panchayat president in the VSS advisory council and also chairs the council meetings
Collect fines from forest offenders	no provision	collect fine up to 100 rupees
FD role	project implementer with the help of VSS community	facilitator, while VSS has to prepare and implement plans
Role for the NGOs	not any	Defined

In the light of all the GOs on JFM and the proposal put up by the PCCF of AP to refine the 'JFM' into 'CFM', the government after careful consideration decided to modify all the earlier orders issued on the 'JFM' to pave the way for the implementation of the 'CFM' in the State with immediate effect.

Further, the government directed the local 'village communities' be constituted into VSS and for the already existing 'samithies' to carry out the forest programmes jointly with the FD as per the latest rules. This GO will be put to practice for one year and learning from experience of implementing this Order and refining the concept further, suitable amendment to the Forest Act 1967, (which provides legal authority to forestry in AP) will be brought about (A P CFM Project).

Continuing Tension between Tribal Groups and the FD

In a letter written by 13 NGOs to Edwin R. Lim, Country Director, The WB and c.c to the H. S. Brahma, Principal Secretary, EFS and T department, GoAP and Principal, CCF, Hyderabad raising the issues pertaining to tribal rights, *podu* land and inadequacies in CFM project have highlighted a study undertaken by Samata (a NGO) in 1999 in North Coastal Andhra on the impact of JFM as it was found that of the 1500 acres of *podu* lands in 29 VSS only 520 acres are with the people after the formation of VSS. The rest of the *podu* lands have been taken away under the JFM programme exposing the government's claims as being empty. On the other hand, Dr. Lim replying to the letter has assured the NGO members with a promise to attend to their grievances, while the PCCF has strongly condemned the accusations, as he believed there is no coercion of any sorts against the tribals by the government. Moreover, he contended that the lands evicted under *podu* were never the lands of those tribals who were occupying them since they never had legal rights because the govt simply took over their lands without recognising their rights.

Reacting to the poor status of the evacuees he responded that because of poverty they had switched to *podu*. He refuses to buy the argument that his department dishonoured the shares and benefits. However, at the Bank's insistence, a consultative process for discussing the RAP was followed with the assurance that no resettlement would be undertaken in tribal areas till the process is completed. The revised RAP is not yet available but in areas like Paderu, where the *adivasis* are better informed and organised, they are said to have rejected bringing their *podu* lands under CFM in the fear of losing it altogether.

IV Community Forest Management (CFM): Context

JFM in AP was introduced in 1992. In 1994, WB had sanctioned funding to this scheme. The funding period was completed in 2000. But FD, WB and NGOs identified that the objectives expected from JFM could not be fulfilled due to various factors. Even WB accepted based on the findings of the certain field studies that JFM scheme performed poorly in Andhra Pradesh. The main reasons attributed for the inadequate performance of JFM were: active people's participation in decision making process was not forthcoming due to various constraints; JFM did not focus on livelihood oriented approach, rather it concentrated on regeneration of forests and lack of autonomy to communities in forest management (Samatha, 2005).

In order to take forward the PFM initiatives more effectively and focusing on the livelihoods of forest dependent communities FD officials and NGO networks have participated and the process have put forth a proposal for extending the JFM for another five-year period. The Government of AP had succeeded in acquiring fund from WB for the second phase of PFM with several changes in policy structure. Consequently JFM was renamed as CFM and several flexible rules were incorporated in to the policy framework. A total of 8412 VSS were covered under CFM. Of these 5000 VSS are being funded by the WB, 1357 by the FDA and 2055 VSS by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The present study, however, focuses on the VSSs covered under the WB funding.

The Project covers 14 districts in Andhra Pradesh, which account for 77% of forest area in the state. This project aimed to cover 5000 VSSs, covering 3.26 lakh families living below poverty line. The project also aims to benefit Schedule Tribes (30.50 percent) and Scheduled Castes (19.50 percent). And nearly 50 percent of the members are women. The area targeted for treatment is 0.315 million hectares of forests.

The project intends to upgrade the initiatives of Joint management to Community centered management system. The basic difference between JFM and CFM is that while JFM was more a partnership between the forest dependent communities and the GoAP (Government of Andhra Pradesh), CFM envisaged a more democratic process through delegation of the decision making process and focuses on empowering communities to take active part in the process of planning and implementation of forest management schemes. The main object of the CFM is: "to reduce rural poverty through improved

forest management with community participation” (Andhra Pradesh Government, 2002). The project also pronounces that ‘communities will be empowered to become more autonomous and self-sufficient regarding the management of forest resources assigned for them’ (Project Monitoring Unit, 2002). Thus, grater participation of communities by devolving more powers in forest management to communities was envisaged in the CFM policy

Table 6: Major Policy Level Changes from JFM to CFM

JFM	CFM
<p>Management Committee (MC)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Total members 10 2) Women membership 30% 3) Attendance of women, no specific number 4) Tenure two years 5) President and forest officials were members of MC. <p>Financial transactions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). One account called joint account was provided. <p>MP Preparation</p> <p>MC and Range Officer prepared JFM plan.</p> <p>Role of FD</p> <p>FD played crucial role as a partner in guiding VSS in forest management. Forest advisory committee existed at village level</p> <p>Usufruct Rights</p> <p>NTFPs were divided into reserved and unreserved, and communities have rights only on selected items. Initially share was 50% to FD and 50% VSS, on forest products excluding the NTFP items for GCC monopoly.</p>	<p>Management Committee (MC)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Total members 15 2) Women membership more than 50% 3) 50% women should attend. 4) Tenure three years 5) Only elected members consist of MC. <p>Financial transactions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Dual account system i.e. joint account and VSS account were created. <p>MP Preparation</p> <p>MC and in consultation with VSS members prepare CFM MP. No official interference was sought.</p> <p>Role of FD</p> <p>FD is a facilitator and technical adviser Forest advisory committee from village to state level, elaborative advisory committee, were mentioned</p> <p>Usufruct Rights</p> <p>All NTFPs (100%) and 100% incremental volume of timber.</p>

Sources: Government of Andhra Pradesh Orders issued from 1992 to 2004.

The rules incorporated in the CFM policy were aimed at converting the JFM scheme into CFM by devolving greater degree of autonomy in the management of forest resources to local communities (Table 6). The CFM rules also aimed at transforming the JFM in to a partnership between the

Forest department and communities. Communities are not only equal partners in CFM but also are given leading role in the management of forest resources. CFM is expected to strengthen the democratic institutional structures that were created under the JFM scheme for better management of forests resources by facilitating active involvement of people. Important changes in CFM policy are transparency in financial matters by creating dual account system, encouragement for women participation and 100 per cent of usufruct rights, etc. The District wise spread of VSS along with the area covered under the WB scheme is presented in Table 7.

Table: 7 Number of VSS Covered under the World Bank Funding

Sl. No	District	APCFM (Number of VSS)	Area (in Ha)
1	Adilabad	1015	327608
2	Warangal	205	83663
3	Karimnagar	371	111905
4	Khammam	355	210339
5	Nizamabad	202	58133
6	Medak	202	43740
7	Mahabubnagar	233	67503
8	Srikakulam	241	35115
9	Vizianagaram	189	38941
10	Visakhapatnam	876	100810
11	East Godavari	466	152343
12	Nellore	148	28633
13	Chittoor	245	82605
14	Kadapa	252	38524
	Total	5000	13,79,8612

Source: *Facts and Figures*, 2005. Andhra Pradesh Forest Department

Financing of CFM

The total outlay of the CFM Project is Rs. 653.97 Crores or US\$ 125.61 million (Table 8). Out of the total outlay, Rs.115.53 Crores are allocated for creation of enabling environment for the project, Rs. 120.89 Crores for Community development including Indigenous People's Development Plan

and resettlement action plan and the balance amount of Rs. 417.55 crores will be spent towards forest management in AP. The funds are to be spent between 2002-03 and 2006-07 at an increasing rate (Table 9).

Table 8: Fund Allocation on Different Components under CFM

Component	Outlay (in Crore Rs.)	Outlay (in million US\$)	% of cost
Creation of enabling environment	115.53	22.19	17.66
Forest management	417.55	79.86	63.58
Community development	120.89	23.57	18.76
Total cost	653.97	125.61	100

Source: Project Monitoring Unit, APFD, 2002.

**Table 9: Year wise schedule of financial outlay is given below :
(in million US\$)**

Project Year	Total outlay (in Crore Rupees)	Total outlay (in million US \$)	% of total outlay	% of cumulative outlay
2002-03	99.684	20.47	16.29	16.29
2003-04	156.721	31.22	24.85	41.14
2004-05	186.727	35.77	28.48	69.62
2005-06	135.787	24.92	19.84	89.46
2006-07	75.052	13.24	10.54	100
Total	653.971	125.61	100.00	

Source: Project Monitoring Unit, APFD, 2002.

V CFM: Implementation Process

Good rapport between project implementing agency and people is an important factor, which would facilitate programme launching in a smooth way. Entry point activities under JFM / CFM were aimed at creating rapport between FD and the local communities in PFM programmes. In our sample villages, FD undertook entry point activities in the form of building community halls, temples, and other constructions that were useful for the community (Table 10). These activities created cordinal environment for

implementing the programme. In most cases, community halls were constructed as entry point activities. In Tribal pockets of Adilabad and Visakhapatnam temples were built as per the choices of the people. Community Halls are also used for Angunwadi school purposes in Kadapa district. As most of these constructions were built hurriedly, within short span of time these structures are weak and not in good shape with in a short period.

Table 10: Entry point activities undertaken by FD

District / VSS	Other implements
Kadapa MR Palle SR Palem RC Puram Adilabad H. Pur S N Thanda P. Lodhhi Visakapatnam S. Kota G. Veedi N. Valasa	Construction of Community Hall Construction of Community Hall Construction of Community Hall Construction of Community Hall Community hall and construction of Temple Construction of Community Hall Community Hall and Construction of Temple Construction of Temple Construction of Community Hall

Awareness Generation

For any participatory programme, awareness about the program is an essential component. The sample VSSs were created during JFM and continue to function till the advent of CFM. In CFM, the initiatives to form VSS are taken mainly by FD, and NGOs and educated people in villages facilitated the process. But apparently, FD took leading role in conveying information on CFM scheme to villagers. However, in Kadapa and Visakhapatnam districts, NGOs played an active role in information dissemination on CFM to villagers.

Table 11: Different Actors Participating in Dissemination of Information on CFM

Name of the VSS	Name of the District	NGOs	FD	Others*
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	✓	✓	
Heerapur	„		✓	
Sainagar Thanda	„		✓	✓
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	✓	✓	
Sri Rangaraju Palem	„	✓	✓	
Mudireddy Palle	„	✓	✓	
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	✓	✓	
Gudlamveedi	„	✓	✓	
Nandivalasa	„	✓	✓	✓

* Others: school teachers, VAOs, and educated members of villages

FD mainly did awareness building among people on CFM in the sample villagers (Table 11). NGOs role in this regard was observed only in Kadapa district. The main problem with this sort of dissemination spearheaded by FD is that beneficiaries were not provided unbiased information. In the sample villages, FD officials highlighted the benefits of CFM to convince and involve people in the programme. It was observed in the sample villages that people have not got the benefits that were highlighted by FD at the outset of scheme.

After CFM, FD officials went to VSS villages and conveyed details about CFM provisions. Mostly, FD officials used public meetings for creation of awareness among people regarding the policy changes under the CFM. In Kadapa district, NGOs with various means like songs on CFM, small street plays and discussions with various groups imparted details on CFM. However, majority of the people were not aware of the policy changes taken place in CFM. Only MC members and some educated persons were aware of the policy changes from JFM to CFM (Table 12).

Table 12: Villagers Perceptions on CFM and its Benefits

Name of the District	Landless	Small and Marginal Farmers	Women
Adilabad			
Wage Employment	100	100	100
Forest protection	60	75	70
Livelihood improvement	40	65	60
Village development	40	60	50
Kadapa			
Wage Employment	100	100	100
Forest protection	50	60	50
Livelihood improvement	35	50	40
Village development	40	50	40
Visakapatnam			
Wage Employment	100	100	100
Forest protection	40	55	30
Livelihood improvement	50	65	50
Village development	40	60	40

Most of the people, cutting across all sections, perceived that CFM is a wage employment programme rather than a livelihoods improvement initiative (Table 12). The main reason for this is that while imparting details on CFM, FD officials, besides several benefits promises like granting pattas and loans, projected CFM as wage generation scheme to gain popular support from people. It is evident that while majority of landless and women are unaware of the role of CFM in improving livelihoods, small and marginal farmers felt that it would play an important role in improving livelihoods by generating income from forest products. Regarding the role of CFM in forest protection and village development awareness among landless and women is less in comparison with landed. It shows the difference of understanding within the communities. While land less and women are mainly interested in wage employment, small and marginal farmers are aware of importance of CFM in improving livelihoods due to the fact that they utilize the grass and wood. In general communities mainly understood the CFM as a wage employment scheme and foresters as providers of wages in critical seasons. This resulted in continuation of the FD preponderance in VSS activities.

Constitution of VSSs and Nature of GB Meetings

No works were undertaken in the VSS after JFM in 2000 for two years. It is reported that during the intervening period, neither NGOs nor FD officials visited the VSS and monitored the activities. In 2002, when the WB extended fund to AP FP, FD and NGOs again renewed their interaction with the communities. Unfortunately, It shows that entire programme is linked to external funding sources rather than internal commitment.

Under the CFM, as per the guidelines, FRO convenes meeting with villagers to constituting GB for VSS management. The quorum for GB is fixed at 50 percent of the total households of the village. It is reported that the process of GB formation was done smoothly in all the sample VSS. There was no problem of quorum for constitution of VSS. The main reason for this was that people were keen to get the wage employment, which is expected with the advent of CFM (Table 13).

The awareness building exercise of the FD appears to have aimed at convincing communities by projecting various benefits associated with VSS management (Table 13). While landless were mainly interested in wage employment and landed were attracted by *pattas* and irrigation facilities, loans, etc. In GB meetings, FD often assured of adequate wage employment for people at the time of agricultural lean season and other initiatives. But promises were not kept. For instance, in Adilabad district, encroachment of forestland by tribes has been a problem for long. Without legal titles, they have been cultivating the lands for about 30 years. At the time of GB, FD officials promised them in helping the process of granting *pattas* for their land. In Kadapa, land less people were assured of loans on small and big ruminants, and small and marginal farmers were promised of bore wells. In Visakhapatnam district, besides wage employment, people were promised of high income from high value commercial crops like coffee, vanilla, and other species and legal *pattas* to their podu lands. Hardly any of these promises were fulfilled, as the FD and CFM programme are not empowered to grant *pattas* to VSS members, loans on livestock, etc. Subsequently, people's attendance in GB meetings has declined and reported to be poor. Extent of participation is also linked to VSS works, as the participation in GB meetings tend to be more during the time of VSS works. During other times, people generally do not show interest to participate in GB meetings. Women participation is reported to be low in most of the VSS, especially in tribal areas.

Table 13: Reasons for participation of people in GB Meetings

Name of the District / Reasons	Landless	Small and Marginal Farmers	Women
Adilabad			
Wage employment	100	100	100
Loans on small and big ruminants	60	80	80
Issue of pattas, construction of irrigation sources	60	80	60
Supply of valuable NTFPs and other livelihood activities	60	75	60
Entry point activities	70	70	60
Kadapa			
Wage employment	100	100	100
Loans on small and big ruminants	80	80	75
Issue of pattas, construction of irrigation sources	40	60	50
Supply of valuable NTFPs and other livelihood activities	50	65	50
Entry point activities	60	65	50
Visakapatnam			
Wage employment	100	100	100
Loans on small and big ruminants	65	60	50
Issue of pattas, construction of irrigation sources	75	90	60
Supply of valuable NTFPs and other livelihood activities	80	80	80
Entry point activities	65	60	50

Management Committee (MC)

The number of MC members has been increased from 10 in JFM to 15 in CFM. Out of which, eight should be women. Another change was creation of vice-chairperson (VCP) post in the management committee. During JFM, management committees MC in all our sample villages were unanimously elected. In CFM, competition for VSS CP and VCP and MC membership

has increased and in some of the sites elections for MC membership and Chairperson posts. In Kadapa district, serious conflicts for MC membership and CP posts were conducted. In our study sites CPs were changed in few places, but in general, the competition for MC membership has increased during CFM. This is mainly due to the competition among the village elites to acquire control over MC for the reasons: a) money that is involved in VSS management, and b) VSS CPs and VCP posts are considered as first steps in the political ladder for political aspirants in the villages.

MC is a representative agency to carry out and supervise the VSS works in the village. Thus, MC supposes to be a democratically elected institution with the consent of entire village. It is observed that the locally dominant groups to whom FD generally extends its support control the election of MC. Though FD plays a crucial role, local political and power relations mainly influence the process. In CFM, leadership conflicts for CP posts were prominent in our study sites. In JFM, most of the MC members were unanimously elected without major disputes, but in CFM, there were severe conflicts around leadership issue that resulted in election and change of CP. In the study districts, newly created VCP post remained insignificant and allotted to women.

The noticeable change in the institutional aspects of CFM is that wide spread conflicts within the communities for MC membership in general and VSS CP posts in particular. Out of nine filed studies, six had experienced conflicts (Table 14). It is observed that for MC posts, dominant sections within village have fought. The main reason for this is that provision of wage employment and bringing infrastructure to village became not only a prestige symbol, but also became a means to patronize their group members to enhance political status.

Table 14: Conflicts for Management posts

Name of the VSS	Name of the District	Occurance of conflicts	Nature of Conflicts
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	Yes	Fight between two rival groups
Heerapur	„	Yes	Caste conflicts between ST and BC
Sainagar Thanda	„	No	—
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	Yes	Conflict within STs
Sri Rangaraju Palem	„	Yes	Caste Conflicts between STs and BCs
Mudireddy Palle	„	Yes	Conflicts With in SCs for MC posts
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	Yes	Conflicts within STs for MC posts
Gudlamveedi	„	No	—
Nandivalasa	„	No	—

Though most of the MCs in our sample villages were unanimously elected during JFM as well as CFM, there was a change in the leadership positions during the CFM phase (Table 15). New members and office bearers are brought in to address the competition and conflicts for MC positions. The existing political structures in the villages reflected in VSS elections. The numerically dominant communities on one hand and politically articulate and influential communities on the other acquired control over MC. In our sample villages most of CP's belong to economically or politically dominant groups in the village. In tribal areas, dominant clan groups have captured the MC posts, and in mixed population villages, numerically dominant groups acquired CP posts (Table 16). This elite capture of the VSS management institutions prevented wider participation of people in the decision-making process regarding management of forest resources.

Table 15: Status of MC and Nature of Election from JFM to CFM in the Sample VSS Villages in the Districts

Name of the VSS	Name of the District	Status of MC continued/ (changed) From JFM -CFM	Reasons for change	Unanimous or Election
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	Changed	Chance to youth	Unanimous
Heerapur	„	Changed	Leadership dynamics	Unanimous
Sainagar Thanda	„	Continued	-	Unanimous
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	Continued	-	Unanimous
Sri Rangaraju Palem	„	Changed	Elite capture	Unanimous
Mudireddy Palle	„	Changed	Social dynamics	Election
Sobhakota	Visakha-patnam	Changed	Leadership dynamics	Election
Gudlamveedi	„	Continued	-	Unanimous
Nandivalasa	„	Changed	Chance to other G B members	Unanimous

Source: Data from filed survey

All CP's hail from socially and economically dominant groups in the village. In tribal areas like Visakhapatnam, it is observed that dominant sections within the STs captured the CP posts. Out of nine sample VSSs, five VSS presidents during JFM got reelected, indicating that dominant sections were able to retain their power in VSS management. In some cases, though people wanted to change the VSS CP, FD officials deliberately prevented such change by postponing elections. For instance, in Nandivalsa VSS in Visakhapatnam, people wanted to change VSS CP, it is observed that FD officials pursued villagers and averted election.

Table 16: Socio-Economic and Political Profile of the VSS President of the Sample VSS Villages in the Districts

VSS	District	Sex	Age	Education	Social Status	Size Class	Political Affiliation	Membership In other Groups
Pandhir/odhhi	Adilabad	Male	25	9th	Gond (ST)	SF	-	-
Heerapur	, ,	Male	47	3rd	Palle Kapu (BC)	SF	-	VSS, JFM President
Sainagar Thanda	, ,	Male	50	5th	Lambadi (ST)	LF	TDP	VSS, JFM President
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	Female	60	Just Literate	Lambadi (ST)	LL	-	SHG Leader, VSS, JFM President
Sri Rangaraju Palem	, ,	Female	35	7th	Lambadi (ST)	MF	-	VSS, JFM, MC Member
Mudireddy Palle	, ,	Male	34	SSC	Harijana (SC)	LL	Cong.	-
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	Male	39	7th	Bagata (ST)	SF	TDP	-
Gudlamveedi	, ,	Male	48	5th	Konda Kummari (ST)	SF	-	Rytu Mitra Group (RMG) Leader
Nandivalasa	, ,	Male	33	10th	Nuka Dora (ST)	SF	Cong.	VSS, JFM President

Note: LL= land Less; SF= Small Farmer; MF= Medium Farmer.

At the same time, bitter struggle for CP posts took place in Mudireddy Palle (MR Palle) of Kadapa district between Madiga and Malas communities (sub-castes in SC community) for MC posts. In this village, 51 families belong to Madiga and 25 belong Mala communities. The Malas are numerically less but economically dominant community. Out of 15 MC posts, 9 were own by Malas and 6 by Madigas. Though the Malas constitutes only 32 percent of the total population of the village they secured 60 percent of MC membership and the Madigas account for 67 percent of village population could secure only 40 percent representation in MC membership. This process indicates two aspects regarding competition within SC community for MC posts: on one hand, mala sub-castes, which are economically dominant and articulate, though they are minority, they could secure high representation in MC. On the other hand, though Madigas secured only six posts in MC, due to political backup by the local leaders could secure CP post. It attests the fact that economically dominant section secured more membership in MC while politically powerful groups occupied CP posts. It results in constant struggle over decision-making process in MC.

FD often had to go with the dominant political pressure. For instance, though majority of members in MC were from the Mala community, the Madiga community secured CP post. It shows how politically powerful groups influenced the election process in CFM. These unequal power relations had an impact on VSS functioning. For instance, due to numerical strength in MC committee, the Mala community members constantly opposed the MC decisions. In fact, for one year no MC meetings were conducted and no VSS works were undertaken. Interestingly, FD made an informal compromise under which CP and VCP swap positions every year. That is, one CP from the madiga community acts as CP and the next year the VCP who belongs to the mala community would act as CP. It reflects the intra community conflicts within the SC community, though SC community appears to be homogeneous, the sub-caste conflicts affected the VSS functioning. It also shows that FDs attempt to satisfy both numerically dominant communities and politically powerful sections. But it is clear those politically powerful communities able to occupy MC posts.

In SR Palem, VSS of Kadapa district, a woman belonging to Sugali tribe was elected as CP and VCP post was also occupied by the same community. This community is numerically dominant (out of total 87 families, 50 are Sugalis and 37 are BCs). Sugalis in this village constitutes 61 percent of the

total population and have 46 percent of representation in MC, BC constitutes 45 percent in total population but have 53 percent of representation in MC. But VSS CP post both in JFM and CFM occupied by STs only. It shows that FD followed clever policy that socially dominant sections were provided more memberships in MC and at the same time, numerically dominant sections, in this case, STs occupied important MC posts. It was observed that BC members though numerically more in MC, are not called for MC meetings and wage works related to VSS, in spite of several complaints, FD officials did not solve this problem. It shows how dominant group nexus with FD captured the VSS functioning and excluded other communities from getting benefits.

Heerapur in Adilabad district shows that numerically dominant community (BCs) dominated both in MC membership and CP posts. It is observed that due to absolute majority in MC, BCs exclude ST members from benefiting from CFM scheme. Consequently, frustrated ST members engaged in breaching VSS rules and regularly grazed their cattle in VSS area. In other two sites of Adilabad district, though the entire population belongs to STs, explicit inequalities and favoritism of MC towards certain groups is observed. MC in Sainagar Tanda and Pandhilodhhi, in Adilabad district occupied by dominant families within the tribal communities. It was observed that MC gives preference to their relatives and their group members in VSS wage works. In Visakhapatnam district also socially/economically dominant sections within the tribal society occupied VSS CP posts. For instance, in Sobhakota, it is observed that CP favored people from his group in VSS works, in Gudalam Veedi, the *Konda Kapus* are dominant tribes and other tribal clans are not called for wage employment in VSS works. In multi caste village, politically and economically dominant group acquired control on decision-making process and excluded other groups in decision-making process and in VSS wage works. As a result, they did not participate in VSS works, and continue to graze cattle in the VSS areas. Any objection from MC led to conflicts within the sections of the village. For instance, BCs in SR Palem in Kadapa and STs in Heerapur in Adilabad district violated the rules by not only grazing cattle inside VSS area but also breached rules of MC. In homogeneous tribal communities like Visakhapatnam, dominant tribal sections excluded the other groups from participation in VSS. Thus, social-economic inequality is a bottleneck for general participation in VSS activities and gain benefits.

MP preparation and Implementation

Micro Plain (MP) is a blue print for management of VSS activities. It registers the agenda to be followed in VSS works by incorporating local needs in forest management. The objective of MP is to incorporate the various requirements of people into forest management. In CFM policy, emphasis is given on involvement of various actors like Panchayat, NGOs and FD, after conducting the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

MP preparation is an important activity that determines the nature of functioning of VSS. In JFM, MC, NGOs and FD prepared MPs, after conducting the PRA. CFM policy proposed that MC should conduct PRA with the help of NGOs and FD should act as a facilitator. MP facilitates the identification of appropriate species, other models for VSS works, etc., through the participation of people in forest management activities. It is observed that FD and NGOs mainly formulated MPs and peoples' participation remained superficial.

Though PRA was conducted at the time of MP preparation, it is observed to be a mere formality. In case of species selection, design of various works and other decisions, FD officials played dominant role in MP preparation. The drafting of MP has received lot of criticism from civil society in CFM because, though it is supposed to be prepared with participation and involvement of GB, in practice the FD staff played an influential role rather than a facilitator. In our sample villages, FD officials prepared MP models. In Adilabad district, FD officials played dominant role in the preparation of MP and in Visakhapatnam, MPs were prepared under the instruction of FD. But in Kadapa due to the presence of strong NGO network, NGOs were involved in MP preparations. However, in Kadapa district FD officials dictated the MP prescriptions to NGOs. It is observed that NGOs could not resist FD officials and hence compromised with them as they receive financial assistance. In all the three districts, it was the FD staff, in collusion with a few influential persons of the village decided the species for the plantation and other works of VSS. CP of MR Palle of Kadapa district informed that all VSS works are decided by the FD officials and CP and people do not have a say in that design. In some of the field sites in Visakhapatnam and Adilabad women members were not aware of the PRA and MP preparation process.

MPs are manuals of works to be undertaken by VSS MCs. But it is observed that there is a wide gape between MC plan and its implementations. It is ironical that some VSSs like Gudlamveedi and RC Puram do not have MPs with them. However, in our sample villages, people revealed that in CFM, due to insufficient funds, MP targets could not be achieved. Even foresters informed that in CFM, MP targets are falling short due to delay and insufficient funds.

According to DFO of Paderu, there is confusion within the FD on the kind of approach to be adopted in CFM works. Approaches like extensive plantation of timber trees, or income-generating activities were debated within the FD official circles. However, it is decided that CFM should focus on livelihood-oriented activities. Thus, there is a wide gap between MP objectives and implementation. In our field sites people informed that implementation of MP process is far from reality. Especially in CFM, they informed that implementation of MP has fallen short due to inconsistent allocation of funds on one hand, and delay of funds on the other. MC members informed that in CFM, they received insufficient funds to implement MP objectives.

CFM policy has created dual account system for better financial transactions. First account is a joint account operated jointly by FD and VSS members. Government funds sanctioned for VSS works come into this account. Second account is named as VSS account, where money generated from the resources of VSS are deposited into this account. It is observed that the financial flows to VSS works were inconsistent in CFM. This is due to the pattern of fund flow that is prescribed in the policy. In JFM, large amount of money used to be deposited in the joint account and with the permission of FD, MC could draw money towards VSS works. Under CFM, GB / MC is expected to undertake the estimates of works to be undertaken in VSS area. It is general phenomenon that the estimates done by GB/MC are often turned down by FD and frequently less amounts than estimated funds were allotted to VSS.

It is observed that while estimating VSS works, FD officials play crucial role, especially with the technical measurements with which villagers are not familiar with. At the same time, in CFM, VSS MCs were allowed to undertake works and funds were sanctioned after completion of works. It is observed that often, FD officials sanction lesser amount than the actual amount

spent by MC. CP of MR Palle in Kadapa district informed that while he spent Rs 20000 on SMC works, FD sanctioned only Rs. 15000 and eventually he had to pay less to wage workers. It is reported that sanction of funds to VSS works is often delayed in CFM. FD took generally one and half to two months to sanction money for VSS works. Consequently, people constantly pursued the CP for their wage. Due to this CP's are forced to frequent the FD offices. This situation resulted in dominance of FD and widespread corruption. Thus, FD plays a dual role i.e. while estimating works and sanctioning funds to VSS. It shows that FD dominance has increased in CFM. At the same time, due to irregular works and delay in payments, people are not very keen to take part in the VSS works.

Decision-making process in VSS works

After the preparation of MP, which is a blueprint for the nature of works and schedule to be adapted in VSS, MC expected to carry out the works. CFM policy laid greater emphasis on involvement of people in decision-making related to VSS works. But it is observed that there are several constraints undermining the potential of actual decision-making process by MC. In general the frequency of MC meetings has declined in the CFM.

According to CFM policy, GB should assemble at least once in six months and MC meeting should be conducted every month. In our sample villages it was observed that in all study sites, frequency of meetings has come down in CFM. In some cases like Mudireddy Palle SC colony, MC meetings were not conducted for more than one year due to conflicts in the village. People were of the opinion that there is no need for GB/MC meetings when they do not have funding for VSS works. It is also observed that foresters do not visit villages in the absence of VSS works. This shows that people's participation in the programme is linked with funding. GB meetings are held whenever fund arrives and MC meetings are conducted while initiating VSS works and sharing wages from VSS. Thus, VSS institutional functioning takes place generally during March-April. Once wage works in singling, digging trenches are completed, no other activities in forest take place.

The nature of the role played by different actors in decision-making process related to VSS management indicates that all important decisions of VSS management in our study area like the forest area to be given to VSS for management, identification of works, species selection, supervision of works,

management and conservation models to be adopted by VSS and other important decisions are taken by FD (Table 17). This indicates that the envisaged devolution of powers and decentralization has not taken place in CFM. It also shows that MCs could not take independent decisions in managing VSS works due to the fact that the money for VSS works comes through the FD.

In Adilabad and Visakhapatnam districts the FD is directly involved in the preparation of MPs. But in Kadapa district due to strong NGOs network they are involved in preparation of MPs. However, in this case also FD Officials succeeded in dictating the terms in the matters of MPs preparation to which the NGOs could not resist and ultimately compromised with the FD officials. The main reason behind the FD dominance can be attributed to the nature of the relationship between NGO and FD (as NGOs depend on FD for financial assistance). Therefore, in all our sample villages it is observed that FD plays an important role in the preparation of MPs either directly or indirectly. Thus, decentralized governance for management of forest resources given to communities was jeopardized by the dominant role played by the FD in decision-making process related to VSS management.

MC consists of elected representatives of GB in the village. It is expected to represent the interests of the entire village. But the efficiency in delivering equitable benefits has been affected by two factors: one, MC CP and VCP posts are mainly occupied by village elites and dominant sections, and second, FD officials prepare nature of works and forces the MC to accept their proposals. Thus, there is less scope for MC to take independent decisions on the VSS works, due to this fact the nature of works were pre-determined by FD officials.

MC is being constituted to execute VSS works on behalf of GB members. FD conducts election for MC members. Often election of members is carried out in tune with existing local political equations. FD had followed an array of strategies in election for MC posts. Some times, though numerically less but articulate communities are provided unequal share in MC membership (case of MR Palle in Kadapa district). If communities are both numerically and politically strong, MC membership and key posts are allotted to them. However, for CP posts, FD always supported numerically and political

dominant persons. This process resulted in increased dominance of elite (political or other wise) over VSS management on the one hand and the fund flows through FD created an atmosphere for nexus between FD and CP.

Table 17: Nature of the Decisions Taken in VSS Functioning

Functional Aspects	VSS	FD	Other, NGO
1. Organisation of meetings (GB/MC)	✓	✓	✓
2. Selection of Forest areas for VSS		✓	
3. MP preparation	✓	✓	✓
4. Identification of works		✓	
5. Species selection		✓	
6. Carrying out of works		✓	
7. Supervision of works		✓	
8. Estimating the costs		✓	
9. Funds allocation		✓	
10. Distribution of harvesting income		✓	
11. Distribution of forest products	✓		
12. Entry point activities	✓	✓	✓
13. Minute writings	✓	✓	✓
14. NTFP value Additions		✓	
15. Distribution of livelihood enhancement activities		✓	
16. Marketing of forest products		✓	
17. Selection of training programme		✓	

Source: Data from Field Survey

As FD plays crucial role in fund allocation, CP's became accountable to FD rather than to local people. In Kadapa district, it is observed that RC Puram and SR Palem CP's, behave like spokespersons of FD. In fact, all CP's in Kadapa district hail from elite background. For instance, in SR Palem, women CP is the wife of school headmaster, RC Puram CP is also from rich background, as her son with his family went to Gulf and in MR Palle the CP works in Bangalore as a driver and his father is a RTC driver. It is also observed that, in MR Palle, three MC members were from the same family. Similar situations are observed in Visakhapatnam and Adilabad districts as well. It reflects the fact that CP's elected for VSS are from dominant sections with whom FD has access. Thus, elite domination in nexus with FD officials had narrowed down the scope of benefits that were envisaged in the CFM policy.

It is observed in our sample villages that people show apathy to participate in VSS works. In fact, people did not follow the forest protection rules formulated by VSS. In Visakhapatnam, members graze cattle in VSS areas for grazing, which destroy young plants and other trees. In Kadapa district, several trees felled without permission by none other than the members of MC in the VSS area. All this indicates that decentralized institutional structures that were installed by CFM policy are not catering to the needs of larger community interests. As a result, villagers do not follow the rules and regulations that are being created by VSS.

MC is a vehicle to carry out CFM and peoples' participation. The implementation of CFM objectives is dependent upon the decisions taken by MCs. As for CFM policy, MC meeting should be conducted once in every month. Though MC meetings were regularly conducted in all districts, FD officials and their choices mainly influence the decisions. Members' attendance in MC meetings is reported to be poor. The community halls that were built for MC meetings were used as storerooms of CP's and MC members' belongings. MC meetings were not conducted in them. Most of the time, MC meetings were conducted in VSS CP's house and as a result, CP, VCP's and their group members in MCs dominated decisions related to VSS works. For instance, in Sainagar Thanda of Adilabad district, MC meetings were reported to have conducted in VSS CP's house, similar things are observed in Visakhapatnam and Kadapa districts as well.

Thus, MC meetings are often a close door affair even for its members. For instance, in Visakhapatnam district, it was found that women members were not invited for MC meetings. Even when they attend, their views were not taken into consideration. In Adilabad district, women members do not even know when the MC meeting takes place. One of the women members of MC in Kadapa district informed that on many occasions, she was not invited for MC meetings. In SR Palem of Kadapa and Heerapur of Adilabad district, BC community members were not called for MC meetings. In Visakhapatnam, and Adilabad districts, though tribal communities are more homogeneous, dominant clans within the tribal society dominate the MC meetings. CP's on most occasions hail from dominant sections that associated with local politics and had access to government machinery.

Thus, decision-making process related to VSS management in MCs has been dominated by politically dominant groups in nexus with FD (Table 18). In

important decisions like species selection, identification of works, the FD officials in MC meetings are taking decisions on allocation of funds for works. FD officials and VSS CP mostly take the decisions related to VSS works. It is also observed that women and other members of MC do not participate in decision-making process related to VSS works. In marketing of VSS harvesting products, FD plays monopolistic role. It shows that MC decisions are influenced by FD intentions. This phenomenon has proved detrimental to peoples' participation in VSS activities. For instance, when teak harvesting was done in some of the field sites in Adilabad district, many MC members were not consulted at the time of its marketing. It is observed that after harvesting the teak, FD officials without proper information sold it in the market. People complained that they received only Rs. 400 per family and moreover they complained that there was no transparency in teak wood marketing by FD.

Table 18: Decision making Process in MC Meetings

Aspects/issues	CP/ VCP	Other MC Members	Women	FD	NGOs
1. Species selection	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2. Identification of Works	✓			✓	
3. Nature of allocation of funds to works	✓			✓	
4. Harvesting sharing	✓			✓	
5. Sharing forest products within VSS members	✓	✓	✓		
6. Selection of NFFP, value addition.	✓			✓	
7. Marketing of harvesting products	✓			✓	
8. Wage rates in VSS works	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9. Imposition of fines	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10. Estimating costs	✓			✓	

*CP=Chairperson, VCP= Vice-chairperson.

It is observed that in MC meetings FD officials influence decisions like nature of works, season of works and estimates. In fact, FD officials drafted most of the minutes; especially Forest Section Officers (FSO) play a crucial role in MC decisions. Young CP in MR Palle in Kadapa district informed that: "MC meetings are hardly conducted, and the nature of works to be taken up by VSS are decided by forest officials in consultation with CP. Members of MC are never consulted". Moreover, it is reported that in CFM, MC meetings are not conducted regularly. Only during the time of VSS works season MC meetings are conducted, particularly during March-April. After this season, no MC meetings are held in all sites of Adilabad district.

Women Empowerment

CFM policy laid down greater emphasis on women participation at all levels of VSS management. The object of the policy was to enable women to participate in decision-making process related to VSS management. In this connection it is important to mention that CPF put in lot of efforts to push for pro women measures through an elaborate advocacy work (1999, 2001) as well as consultation process during 2001. As laid down in the CFM policy, women representation in the MC has been implemented in our entire sample VSS. In CFM policy, VCP post has been created. In our sample villages, in seven out of nine VSS were headed by men CP, while two by women and vice versa in the case of VCP (Table 19). However, in most occasions, VCP post remained nominal in the decision-making process.

It is generally observed that in plain areas like Kadapa district, women are active, thanks to SHGs promoted under Velugu and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) schemes that have created awareness and improved the confidence levels. It is observed in RC Puram and in SR Palem women CP's play an active role in VSS management. However, there are complaints on the style of functioning of the women CP's. In our group discussions, it was observed that village women did not have easy access to the CP. In RC Puram, it is reported that CP behaves arrogantly and don't even inform the decisions taken in MC meetings. Thus, elite capture of CFM pervasive even in the case of women leadership and prevents greater women participation in the programme. FD Officials often dominate the women CP's and prevent them from taking any independent decision. For instance, a villager from R.C Puram viewed that "we hardly know when the MC meetings take place. In fact, many members of the management committee do not

know what decisions were taken in meetings. Forest officials and NGO members come to village and talk to CP and launch the works. Villagers are informed about VSS works only after the decisions are taken”. Back seat driving by husbands or sons of women chairpersons is also prevalent in the sample VSS. In RC Puram of Kadapa district, CP’s son takes most of the decisions on behalf of his mother.

Table 19: Women Representation in MC

District /VSS	NO. of MC Members	CP	V. C P
Kadapa			
MR Palle	8	Male	Woman
SR Palem	8	Woman	Male
RC Puram	8	Woman	Male
Adilabad			
Sai Nagar Thanda	8	Male	Woman
Pandhirllodhhi	8	Male	Woman
Heerapur	8	Male	Woman
Visakhapatnam			
Sobhakota	8	Male	Woman
Gudalemveedi	8	Male	Woman
Nandivalasa	8	Male	Woman

MC= Management Committee CP= Chairperson, VCP= Vice-chairperson

In tribals areas of Adilabad and Visakhapatnam districts women participation remained at a superficial level. Practically, men decide the nature of works and all decisions relating to VSS works. A woman from Adilabad district informed that: “All decisions related to VSS works are being taken by men and after the decisions are taken they inform us, practically we do not have any role in VSS functioning”. Thus, at one level numerically women participation has increased, at another level very little has changed in practice. At the same time, women involvement in decision-making process is deteriorating in GB and MC.

Table 20: Reasons for poor participation of women

Name of the VSS	Name of the District	Nature of participation	Reasons for week participation
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	Moderate	A2, A3, A4, A5
Heerapur	„	Bad	A1, A2, A5
Sainagar Thanda	„	Bad	A1, A2, A4, A5
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	Moderate	A4, A5
Sri Rangaraju Palem	„	Moderate	A4, A5
Mudireddy Palle	„	Moderate	A4, A5
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	Bad	A1, A2, A4, A5
Gudlamveedi	„	Bad	A2, A3, A4, A5
Nandivalasa	„	Bad	A2, A3, A4, A5

Note: A1: lack of information; A2: men dominate meetings; A3: GB and MC timings do not match with their work; A4: they were not given opportunity to express views; A5: their suggestions were not taken into consideration.

The poor participation of women in MC meetings, especially in tribal areas, is due to lack of information (Table 20). FGDs with women groups revealed that they were not called for MC meetings. At the same time, in decision making- process, women were not given any priority. Some of the important constraints for women participation are, many women felt that in GB and MC men dominate and their views have not taken into consideration. In Kadapa district, women participation is better in comparison with tribal areas where, women participation reported to be poor. Consequently women choices are excluded from decision-making process related to VSS management.

Conflict Resolution

In CFM, community is central for decision-making process. It is expected to take leading role in protection of forests assigned for its management. In our filed sites, it is observed that protection aspect has become weak due to several factors like conflicts within the village and outside village, and lack of adequate financial incentives. Conflicts within villages arise mainly due to competition for MC CP and VCP posts (Table 21). MC posts have become prestige symbols for village elite to patronize their group members by providing wage employment and other incentives and to enhance their control over village. Due to these conflicts, rival groups did not follow the rules and regulations on protection of VSS. They graze cattle and goats in VSS areas

Table 21: Nature of Conflicts within village

Name of the VSS	District	Is there conflict	Nature of Conflicts	Consequence of it
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	No	—	—
Heerapur	”	Yes	Between BC and ST regarding positions in MC committee	STs don't abide MC rules and send cattle and get forest predicts
Sainagar Thanda	”	Yes	Case booked against killing animals	For one year VSS works are halted
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	No	—	—
S R Palem	”	Yes	Caste conflicts between BCs and STs over MC positions	BC send goats and cut logs and fuel wood from VSS area
Mudireddy Palle	”	Yes	Sub-caste conflicts within SCs	One section of sub-caste remove trees illegally, and collector
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	Yes	Conflicts with in STs on Management positions	Rival members send goats and cattle to VSS and cut trees for housing and fuel without permission
Gudlamveedi	”	No	—	—
Nandivalasa	”	No	—	—

and take wood without permission. In Heerapur VSS in Adilabad, villagers send goats inside the VSS areas causing degradation.

At the same time, there are some inter-village conflicts, which had effected the management of VSSs in our filed study. Out of nine sample VSSs, five had frequent problem with neighbouring villagers (Table 22). Though JFM/CFM demarcated forest landscape for each village, often VSS committees found it difficult to control neighboring villagers and their forceful entry into VSS area, particularly during NTFPs season. Villagers in our sample villages informed that though they complain to FD, no action was taken to control it. NGOs also did not do anything to mitigate this problem. In fact, there are no conflict resolution mechanisms inbuilt into the programme, which need to be pushed quite strongly by the policy makers.

VI CFM: Accountability and Transparency

Accountability is a regulatory mechanism on the pattern of VSS management and functioning of MC. Accountability also imposes checks and balances on the MC in financial transactions and decision-making process. CFM policy envisages that MC is a legitimate and accountable body answerable to the GB. But it is observed that instead of downward accountability (to people), MC shows adherence to FD. People in Kadapa district informed that MC meetings take place in CP's house and decisions were taken without informing many MC members. In tribal areas of Visakapatnam people felt that MC meetings and decision-making process related to VSS management is a close door business. In Adilabad district, it is reported that MC prepares estimates of VSS works without any information to GB members. This all shows that accountability of MC to GB members on the pattern of management of VSS seems to be lacking. In plain areas like Kadapa district, awareness level of people is considerably high. Some times they questioned the functioning of MC and even moved resolutions to impeach CP. But in tribal areas like Visakapatnam and Adilabad, CP's do not show any accountability to GB members. This resulted in poor transparency in VSS management by MC.

Transparency in financial transactions and management aspects is an important prerequisite in any developmental programme to achieve success. In our sample village it was observed that people were being dissatisfied with the transparency issues, particularly with allocation of funds to the VSS works (Table 23). There is a change in nature of fund allocation for VSS

Table 22: Nature of Inter Village Conflicts

Name of the VSS	District	Is there conflict	Nature of Conflicts	Consequences
Pandhriodhhi Heerapur	Adilabad ”	No Yes	Neighbouring villagers send goats and cattle	— In spite of vigilance, goats of neighbouring village enter into VSS area and destroy young plants and other trees.
Sainagar Thanda	”	Yes	Neighbouring villagers forcefully enter in VSS areas for collection of tendu leaves and other forest products	Neighbouring villagers enter for collection of tendu and indiscriminately destroy other young teak trees.
Ramachandrapuram Sri Rangaraju Palem Mudireddy Palley	Kadapa ” ”	No No Yes	— — Upper caste neighbors send cattle to VSS areas	— — Upper caste send cattle to VSS area, resulted in destruction of young plantation of Usiri and destruction of trees for leaves for goats
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	Yes	Neighbouring villagers enter into VSS area and collect NTFPs	At the time of adda leaves and broom grass collection, villagers frequently enter conflicts with neighbouring villagers, resulted in loss of valuable NTFPs.
Gudlamveedi Nandivalasa	” ”	No Yes	— Neighbouring villagers often taken NTFPs	— Due to constant entry of neighbouring villagers, NTFPs availability became scarce.

works in CFM. In JFM, money was deposited in Joint Account and whenever VSS works were conducted, money was withdrawn from account. In CFM, villagers are instructed to prepare detailed estimates of VSS works. According to some of the MC members, FD officials trim the estimates of money required for VSS works done by villagers and grant less amount. Moreover, sanction of funds was often delayed in CFM. According to the villagers, sanction of money, some times takes two to three months. As a result, villagers are not willing to take part in the VSS works.

In our sample villages all passbooks, muster role registrars, copies of estimates and other documents were not given to VSS MC Committees (Table 23). They were kept with the Range Officers. Community Extension Worker (CEW) for Sobhakota VSS in Visakhapatnam informed that in entire Paderu Range no VSS has their documents with them. CP of Ramachandra Puram informed that FD officials took their documents and for the past six months they did not give them in spite of several requests. And several times VSS people complained to DFO but no action was taken so far. It was informed that at the time of inspection of forest officers, local forester brings VSS documents and taken them away after the officers left the VSS.

In case of money that is spent on VSS works, GB members in our study sites expressed doubts. In Mudireddy Palle SC colony, people informed that estimates of works and sanction of money for works was not informed by MC to people. In our sample villages, women and youth informed that VSS CP and FD Officials with understanding misappropriate money. Interestingly, VSS CP in MR Palle, informed that estimates of works and sanction of money is mainly know to VSS CP and FD Officials and GB/MC members are hardly aware of these transactions.

Table 23: Financial Transparency in CFM

Name of the VSS	Name of the District	Does financial transparency exist ?	Reasons for existence and non/existence of Transparency	Does VSS has Pass book and other documents on VSS works ?
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	Yes	CP is dynamic and accounts of fund and works are published in community hall	No
Heerapur	„	No	CP and FD officials has close nexus and misuse VSS money	No
Sainagar Thanda	„	Yes	GB members are informed of expenditure and fund details promptly	No
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	No	Majority people felt, VSS CP and FD misuse money and no accounts of VSS funds and expenditure are maintained	No
Sri Rangaraju Palem	„	No	Funds are not adequately spent by MC, and shows fake accounts of works	No
Mudireddy Palle	„	No	Fraction of sanctioned money was spent on VSS works and money is misused by CP with the support of FD.	No
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	No	MC committee don't shows accounts of VSS works	No
Gudlamveedi	„	Yes	CP is honest and put up works of CFM in community hall	No
Nandivalasa	„	No	MC led by CP misuse money for their personal gains.	No

In Sai Nagar Thanda and Pandhirlodhhi VSS in Adilabad district, villagers informed that people do not know anything regarding marketing and price of teak. Some of them viewed that FD sold the teak at cheaper rates than existing market value. In Visakhapatnam people informed that wage works in CFM have come down when compared to JFM. The CP of Nandivalasa informed that FD asked them to do works in VSS and took long time to sanction money for them, moreover, estimated money was not sanctioned. Consequently, villagers accused MC for not paying wages in time. Though in some VSS like Pandhirlodhhi and Gudlemveedi are in better position in terms of financial transparency, due to the personal initiatives of CP's, in remaining VSSs people informed that MC in nexus with FD officials is misusing funds. CP of Mudireddy Palle SC colony informed that FD Officials demand bribe to sanction money for VSS works.

VII CFM and Inter-sectoral Coordination

Integration with allied sectors and departments is an important component for success of any programme. CFM policy sought an effective inter-sectoral coordination among various departments associated with rural development. To achieve it, advisory bodies at state, district, divisional and village level were created. At the VSS level, for every four VSS there is an advisory committee comprising of lower forest officials, the Gram Panchyat Sarpanch, representative of tribal development agency, VAO and local NGOs. The District Forest Committee consists of District Collector, all heads of departments like tribal development, GCC, agriculture and DFO, and the state level committee coordinates the CFM implementation. It consists of principle secretaries of Environment, Forests, Science and Technology, Social Welfare or his nominee, Panchyati Raj and Rural Development Departments, the Commissioner Tribal Welfare, Director of Animal Husbandry and others. But convergence of various development programmes and coordination among the departments has not been viable in our study districts. In all the districts, villagers informed that Panchyati presidents did not take any interest in VSS activities.

In our filed sites, except in Visakhapatnam district, where ITDA and FD worked together in distribution of fruit bearing plants, coffee plants and housing equipments, in other study sites there was no interdepartmental coordination for strengthening CFM programme. At the district level, the advisory committee meetings became a mere ritual. The main reason

according to DFO of Paderu was that there was no clear opinion among the top level bureaucrats of FD. Initially, FD Officials focused on plantation activities and later they shifted towards livelihood-oriented income generating activities in CFM. It resulted in lot confusion within FD on CFM implementation.

VSS and Panchyats

VSS is a parallel institution, which does not hold any accountability to local elected panchyats. At policy level, local panchayats were not given any control over VSS, resulting in poor accountability of VSS to democratically elected bodies. Though Panchayats President is the CP of VSS advisory board at the village level, she/he does not have control over VSS activities. In our sample villages, it was observed that there is no cooperation between VSS and Panchayats in all aspects.

In all the sample sites it is found that Panchayati Sarpanch don't take any interest in VSS activities (Table 24). All groups in village informed that VSS village advisory meetings were never conducted in their village. At the time of conflicts, whenever villagers approached the village president for resolution of conflicts, they never attended to that. However, the main reason for this is, president and the village panchayat do not have any controlling powers on the activities and expenditure of VSS. So village Presidents perceive interference in VSS activities as unwanted and unnecessary burden. Some of the village Presidents informed that VSS members don't consult them for any advise. Thus, relation between VSS and local Panchayat remained ineffective.

CFM policy envisages greater participation of NGOs to disseminate the participatory ideas and facilitate active participation of people in VSS management. However, it is observed that NGOs have proliferated in tune with the increasing number of VSS after the WB funding in Andhra Pradesh. For conducting PRA, each NGO receives Rs. 3,000. Educated unemployed youth perceived the CFM as an employment-generating agency for NGOs. Thus, local NGOs generally go by the FD orders as they get financial assistance from it. In Kadapa, it is observed that, while PRA was conducted in CFM, NGOs were given only four days time to complete task. And FD officials frequently changed the MP prepared by NGOs. Of late, the role of NGOs has significantly reduced and NGOs are asked to perform different

roles after creation of awareness for two years. In 2005, CEW, who are directly answerable to FD, replaced NGOs role in VSS management. The objective of this policy change seems to be aimed at reducing the influence of NGOs in VSS functioning. Thus, the Government of Andhra Pradesh adapted the adhoc approach towards involving NGOs in the CFM work. Consequently, in CFM, NGOs do not take any interest in imparting training and providing information to VSS.

Table 24: Nature of Relations between VSS and Panchayats

Name of the VSS	Name of the District	Whether advisory board meetings conducted	President visits, but do not take interests in VSS	President neither visits nor takes interest in VSS
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	No	Yes	—
Heerapur	„	No	Yes	—
Sainagar Thanda	„	No	—	Yes
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	No	Yes	—
Sri Rangaraju Palem	„	No	—	Yes
Mudireddy Palle	„	No	—	Yes
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	No	Yes	—
Gudlamveedi	„	No	Yes	—
Nandivalasa	„	No	Yes	—

Source: Field study

Role of NGOs

In the sample villages, PRAs were conducted both by NGOs and FD. In CFM, MPs were exclusively prepared under the direction of FD. It is observed that in spite of strong NGO network in Kadapa, FD could push its agenda by forcing NGOs to prepare MPs according to the modal it wanted. Thus, the FD is able to push its agenda of forest management through NGOs at lower level. However, Andhra Pradesh NGO network has played a significant role in influencing the CFM policy. They could push the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) to the *podu* victims. FD was forced to pay compensation to the *podu* victims.

Foresters and People

A notable contribution of PFM in AP is improved relation between people and FD. Before JFM, while people considered forester as enemy and forester perceived people as thieves. This sort of relationship has undergone change in the context of PFM and a cordial relation between people and foresters has evolved over the period. This is really heartening and a great achievement on the part of FD. In our sample villages, people informed that they have good relations and friendly atmosphere (Table 25). However, relations between FD and people are getting strained mainly due to the fact that FD is unable to keep some of the promises it had given at the beginning of programme.

Table 25: Reasons for good relations between FD and people

Name of the VSS	Name of the District	Nature of relation	Reasons for good relations
Pandhirlodhhi	Adilabad	Okay	A1, A4, F5
Heerapur	„	Good	A1, A3, A4
Sainagar Thanda	„	Okay	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5
Ramachandrapuram	Kadapa	Good	A1, A2, A3, A4,
Sri Rangaraju Palem	„	Good	A1, A2, A4.
Mudireddy Palle	„	Okay	A1, A2, A3, A4.
Sobhakota	Visakhapatnam	Okay	A1, A2, A3, A4.
Gudlamveedi	„	Good	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5
Nandivalasa	„	Good	A1, A2, A3, A4

Note: A1: Frequent interactions with foresters; A2: Foresters treat them with dignity; A3: Entry point activities; A4: FD provide wage employment in critical seasons; A5: FD plays an important role in distribution of harvesting benefits.

Frequent interaction of FD officials with the villagers after JFM has contributed for better relations (Table 25). A women in RC Purma in Kadapa district narrated that ‘ When we were children, we were very much afraid of FD Officials, we shiver whenever forester enters the village, after JFM we are not afraid of the forester, rather we are good friends’. In a similar vein, DFO of Paderu division stated that ‘earlier we went with sticks and guns to tackle people in forests, now we are going with helping hands to improve peoples’ livelihoods’

VIII CFM and Livelihoods of People

In Andhra Pradesh, according to latest estimates, about 14 per cent of the population that is mainly SC/ST and poor is critically dependent on forests for their livelihoods. Besides, sizable population depended on forest resources for domestic requirements like firewood, grazing and wood for domestic products. The CFM programme, aimed at creating the enabling environment for reducing the rural poverty through creation of local community institutions for people's participation in forest management.

Table 26: Pattern of Livelihood Dependency in Study Sites

District/ VSS	Own cultiva- tion of HH	Farm activities Labour % HH	Non farm activities, % HH	Forests/ NTFP/ podu %	VSS Works	Migration %	Total %
Kadapa							
MR Palle	10	45	30	5	5	5	100
SR Palem	*	60	10	15	10	5	100
RC Puram	*	20	25	45	5	5	100
Adilabad							
Heerapur	10	20	30	10	5	25	100
S N Tnanda	50	20	10	10	5	5	100
P. Lodhhi	60	20	-	15	5	-	100
Visakapatnam							
S. Kota	10	25	-	55	10	-	100
G. Veedi	15	15	-	60	10	-	100
N. Valasa	20	20	5	45	5	5	100

Source: Filed Study

* All HH in these villages are landless

In Kadapa district, majority of the people depended on agriculture labor (Table 26). However, forest dependency of people is influenced by the proximity to market and demand for forest products. For instance, in RC Puram village represents high dependency on forests, especially firewood selling is the main occupation of the people. Thus, peoples' dependency on forests depends on geography and proximity to market. We could see high variation in the plain areas. For instance, the share of forests in the household livelihoods ranges

from 60 per cent (Gudlamveedi, Visakapatnam district) to 5 per cent (MR Palle, Kadapa district) across sample sites. In Adilabad, people mainly depended on farm and non-farm activities (own cultivation, farm labour and non-farm based wage labour) while only about 10-15 per cent of the people depend on forests. Visakapatnam marked highest dependency of forests by tribes due to the practice *podu* cultivation. The income from VSS ranges from 5%-10% in all our study sites. This information establishes the fact that for tribes, forests are the main source of sustenance. Even non-tribes like SCs dependent on neighboring forests for various livelihood activities.

It is observed in our sample villages that there was no significant change in terms of livelihood dependency on forests from JFM to CFM. But in some places, it is observed that due to insufficient wage employment in CFM, people are tending to fall back on forests for survival. For instance, in SR Palem, frequent unauthorized felling of trees was reported in recent times. In Visakapatnam, people complained that they would restart *podu*, as employment in VSS has come down and their livelihood requirements could not be met.

Table 27: Equipment Supplied by FD

District/ VSS	Other Implements
Kadapa	
MR Palle	Iron implements and smoke less stoves
SR Palem	Iron agricultural implements
RC Puram	Iron agricultural implements, smoke less stoves
Adilabad	
Heerapur	Iron agricultural implements
S N Thanda	Iron wheels and implements
P. Lodhhi	Iron wheels and implements
Visakapatnam	
S. Kota	Roof tiles are distributed to all families
G. Veedi	Iron implements and tiles
N. Valasa	Agricultural implements and roof tiles

Basic thrust of the CFM is to reduce the dependency of people on forests. In CFM, FD distributed agricultural implements and alternatives to firewood in order to reduce the pressure on forests. Distribution of iron implements to people in Adilabad had good results in terms of reduction of people's dependency on forests. Distribution of roof tiles in Visakhapatnam district provided better housing to tribals. However, smokeless stoves distributed to people to reduce peoples' dependency on firewood had minimal impact on firewood extraction. According to people in Kadapa, smokeless stoves are useful only for cooking small quantity of food. However, people in Adilabad district informed that their dependency on forests for fuel wood, wood for agricultural implements has declined due to alternatives provided by FD on the one hand and by general development like distribution of gas, alternative to roof, etc. But, the income from VSS protection and wage employment is quite inadequate. Though wage employment works are provided in critical season, they were available for not more than one month, and that too for only one family member. As a result, poor peoples' dependency on NTFPs like firewood had not come down. For instance, in Ramachandra Puram of Kadapa district, people continued to depend on firewood selling. Thus, forest degradation is shifting from VSS areas to other parts of forests.

Employment and Livelihood Activities

In all our sample villages it was observed that employment generation in the form of wage works, CFM falls short of its objectives. Foresters in Adilabad informed that most of the treatment practices that involve labor-intensive works were completed under JFM itself. Hence, FD wanted to focus on income generation activities in VSS rather than providing wage employment. As a result, wage works have not been undertaken in CFM. This resulted in reduction of wage employment. All sections of the population are dissatisfied with the employment generated in CFM. As stated above, labor component in VSS works has come down, and whatever limited wage works are sanctioned were halted in some of the VSSs due to internal conflicts. For instance, in MR Palle of Kadapa district, due to conflicts between Mala and Madiga communities, no works were being undertaken for about one and half years. In Sai Nagar Thanda of Adilabad district, for one year no works were launched due to a case filed against MC by a neighbouring village. In Sobhakota of Visakhapatnam, VSS works were not launched due to conflicts in leadership in CFM.

At the same time, harvesting income from VSS areas was insignificant in most of the VSS. Thus, inadequate incentives to communities in CFM resulted in widespread discontent on programme. There is a major change in the case of disbursement of wages in CFM. It is observed that in CFM, payments of wages were not being given properly. In JFM, wages were given immediately after the works. But in CFM, people informed that wage payments were given, some times, after two to three months. As a result people were not interested in partaking in VSS works.

Table 28: Wage employment in CFM during 2003-05

District/ VSS	No days of employment, 2004-05	Time taken for payment, days
Kadapa		
MR Palle	—	—
SR Palem	30	40
RC Puram	35	45
Adilabad		
Heerapur	20	40
S N Thanda	—	—
P. Lodhhi	35	35
Visakapatnam		
S. Kota	25	45
G. Veedi	20	40
N. Valasa	30	35

Source: Field Survey Data

Villagers informed that amount of fund allotted to VSS works is insignificant in CFM. Due to this, not many villagers had an opportunity to partake in VSS works. In CFM, not only the number of wage employment days has decreased, but also time taken for payment of wage was a delay process (Table 28). MC members in MR Palle of Kadapa informed that FD officials' sanctioned insufficient funds to the estimated works in CFM. People in Heerapur village in Adlibbed district reported that wage works in CFM are insufficient and provided employment only to few.

Since treatment practices have come to an end, FD attempted to undertake income generating activities with diversified strategies like NTFP value addition initiatives, honey bees, preparation of vermy compost, supply of leaf plates machinery, harvesting of valuable wood and other initiatives. These are meant for generating income from forest products under the supervision of VSS MC Committee. However, our interviews with FD officials in Adilabad and Visakapatnam revealed that these experiments were not successful, due to lack of conducive environment. On the other hand, CFM prohibits goats and other animals into VSS resulting in large-scale decline in small ruminants.

Table 29: Income generating Initiatives Undertaken in CFM

District/. VSS	Nature of Initiative	Results
Kadapa		
MR Palle	_____	_____
SR Palem	<i>Bodha</i> processing machine	2000 loses to MC
RC Puram	_____	_____
Adilabad		
Heerapur	Biodiseal plantation	Result not yet known.
S N Thanda	_____	_____
P. Lodhhi	Honey bees hives	Processing not yet started
Visakapatnam		
S. Kota	Leaf plates preparation machine	Experiment going on
G. Veedi	Honey bees hives	Result not yet known
N. Valasa	Leaf plate machine	Experiment going on

Source: Field study

The income generation initiatives undertaken in CFM still in the formative stages. Some of them are just introduced and results are not yet known (Table 29). But, some of the foresters revealed that most of these initiatives were not going to generate revenue as they face multiple problems. FD officials themselves are not aware of some of the market mechanisms. For instance,

FD invested on *Bodha* grass oil machine in SR Palem in Kadapa district. But, MC members informed that they were not given information of market of the *Bodha* oil and its marketing is exclusively done by the FD. With regard to honey hives, our FGD with MC members of Pandhirlodhhi informed that FD officials did not give them training on how to protect the hives and extract honey. As a result, honey hives are getting spoiled. Thus, the initiatives taken in the CFM to generate income are neither backed by proper capacity building nor rooted in deep understanding of local conditions, nature of works for tribes' concept and livelihood patterns.

Migration

Both JFM and CFM had some positive impact on migration pattern in our sample villages. Migration of people during agriculture lean season has existed mainly in Kadapa and Adilabad districts. It was one of the important survival mechanisms adopted by people for survival at the time of agricultural lean season. People who migrate for work mainly work as construction labour. It was found in our sample villages that CFM does not have any influence on short-term migration (Table 30). People in Kadapa district revealed that in JFM, due to availability of VSS works at least for one and half months, migration level was found to have come down. But in CFM in the absence of sufficient employment in VSS (not more than 20 days and for limited members) short-term migration in the agricultural lean season reappeared. In MR Palle, migration has increased during CFM due to lack of sufficient works in VSS. It is observed that employment in VSS works was confined to relatives and group members of CP and VCP and other influential group members.

Table 30: Migration Pattern in the Sample VSS Villages

District/ VSS	Kharif	Rabi	Summer	No of days per year/ HH Male	No of days per year/ HH Female	Total days Migrated per year/ HH
Kadapa						
MR Palle	—	40	—	40	40	80
SR Palem	—	—	—	—	—	—
RC Puram	—	—	—	—	—	—
Adilabad						
Heerapur	45	100	100	245	245	490
S N Tanda	—	—	—	—	—	—
P. Lodhhi	—	—	—	—	—	—
Visakapatnam						
S. Kota	—	—	—	60	—	60
G. Veedi	—	30	—	—	—	30
N. Valasa	100	90	100	290	—	290

Source: Filed study

In Heerapur village of Adilabad district, it was observed that migration to neighboring town has increased during CFM. Villagers informed that, in JFM, they were getting reasonable wage employment in the agricultural lean season. And in CFM, due to insufficient funding allotment, VSS could not provide employment resulting in increase in migration level in this village. This phenomenon shows inappropriateness and flawed design of participatory forest management. After ten years of treatment of VSS, FD could not develop the modal of generating income to villagers. It shows the natural capital that was invested in VSS was not directed in a proper way to strengthen and sustain peoples livelihoods.

In JFM, due to extensive treatment practices, migration has declined in some of our study sites (Reddy, et.al., 2004). In CFM, it is observed that migration has increased mainly due to decline in wage works in VSS. In each district we have one village where migration takes place. In Kadapa district, it is in MR Palle. FGD in this village informs that, during rabi season they do not

have agriculture works and in CFM they don't have VSS works, so they were forced to migrate to neighbouring towns in search of employment. However, both male and female migrate in same proportion. In Heerapur of Adilabad district, massive migration has taken place, as villagers do not have agriculture works. In JFM, during agriculture slack season they used to get reasonable employment in VSS works. But in CFM, VSS works were not undertaken in many places. At the same time, income from NTFP, (brumes and tendu leaves) was not sufficient to have a square meal. This factor forced them to migrate for survival. In N.Valasa of Visakapatnam district, migration among tribes was widespread. However, only youth and male migrate from this village. Thus, due to non-availability of VSS works and lack of income from forests results in increased vulnerability of poor people. There is a clear bias in terms of wage rates for women. In all our sties, women wage is less than at least ten rupees of that of male wages. In fact, only at the time of singling operation women are called for works. In works like bunding, constricting dams, etc women are not called for works.

Access to Forest Produce

Regarding the availability and access to forest products, it is observed that there is noticeable change. Due to restrictions imposed by MC on wood collection villagers are not allowed to collect firewood in VSS areas. Conservation of forest areas allotted to VSS has not improved the availability of NTFPs. People in Kadapa, mainly depended on firewood selling informed that there is no change in the availability of firewood after VSS and they continued to depend on deep forests for firewood collection. In other districts also similar opinions were expressed.

Women in Adilabad district informed that, at the time of singling operations, they are allowed to collect wood. But they revealed that there is no significant change in case of availability of firewood and grazing after CFM, and they continued to depend on firewood collection in the locations beyond VSS area. However, there are some positive out comes in CFM. People in Kadapa district informed that after VSS formation, the availability of Bodha has increased. This is due to protection of VSS area from outside collectors. In Visakapatnam, people revealed that due to restrictions on neighbouring villagers, availability of Adda leaves (plate leaves) has improved. But, in general people opinioned that there is no significant change in case of availability of forest products in CFM.

Even the mid term assessment report commissioned by the FD mentioned that no change has occurred in NTFP availability in CFM. In CFM, FD undertook some of the value addition interventions in NTFP marketing in some places. In SR Palem of Kadapa district, FD had installed a Bodha (lemon grass) oil-processing machine. Noticeably, Bodha grass had considerable demand in the local markets. However, members of VSS were asked by MC to sell grass to MC, which will process the grass. But not many people are interested to sell Bodha to MC due to the fact that they pay lower price when compared to the open market rate. At the same time, MC members informed that FD had not given clear information on Bodha oil marketing. During the last year, MC committee invested Rs. 20,000 on Bodha processing, but able to get only Rs. 17,000 resulting in a loss of Rs. 3,000. Thus, NTFP value addition interventions were not yielding desirable results.

Two reasons for the low productivity in NTFPs in our sample villages can be pointed out: one, forest allocated to VSS management are chronic degraded forests and do not have conducive atmosphere for NTFPs growth, and second is improper management models formulated in MC. Though the CFM documents emphasized on trade-off between livelihood concerns and environmental protection, MPs often reflected the protectionist prescriptions prepared by FD. For instance, in Adilabad district, most of the forest areas allocated to VSS have been converted into teak timber zones assuring the recurrent financial benefits. In our field study, villagers informed that conversion of VSS areas as teak plantation zones prevents sun light into forests. As a result, grass and Tendu trees (Beedi leaves) could not grow. Consequently, collection of beedi leave and fodder were adversely affected hurting the livelihood interests of the local communities. It is observed in some of the villages in Adilabad, after formation of VSS people were forced to go 5-10 KMs for cattle grazing and goats were completely prohibited. Thus, diversified livelihood options haven been affected due to CFM.

In Visakapatnam district, FD, in order to increase green cover, has promoted Silver Oak trees. This exotic plant, undermine the growth of native plants. As a result, availability of traditional NTFPs like broom grass, adda leaves and other NTFPs became scarce. It is observed that, grazing access to cattle was ceased after formation of VSS. Villagers complained that after VSS their cattle were put to hardship and they were compelled to travel further for grazing. Thus, livelihood options were jeopardized by the CFM. After

CFM, substantial podu lands were brought under VSS management. It threatened the livelihood security of tribes. As a result of it most of the tribes are not happy with CFM. They often breach VSS rules and send cattle to VSS areas.

In Visakapatnam district, Adda leaves (plate leaves) processing machines were supplied in Sobhakota and Nandivalasa villages. Training camps were conducted in CFM. In our filed study, it was observed that this experiment had not given desirable results due to three factors: one, training that was given to village youth and women was inadequate and hence they could not acquire proper expertise on the use of machinery; second, people do not want to sell adda leaves to MC, which offer lower price than open market moreover, with a gap of ten days to one month, instead they prefer to sell them in open market where they get immediate payment; and third FD did not ensure viable and reliable market structure for Adda leaves marketing. As a result, the leaves marketing continued to be individually carried out.

After formation of VSS, grazing continued to be a problematic issue. As in JFM, CFM also continued to have negative impact on grazing of small and big ruminants. In none of our study sites, people accustomed to stall-feeding practice. Still people take their cattle out for grazing. In MR Palle and SR Palem most of the poor were compelled to sell out their goats, which are an important source of income in drought prone areas. It resulted in significant loses of income to the households. In some cases FD warned the villagers not to keep goats. However, in Heerapur, villagers revealed with determination that they would continue to have goats, which provide substantial supplementary income to their households. VSS Chairperson of this village informed that villagers, in spite of vigilances send goats and cattle into VSS areas and destroy plantation.

In Visakapatnam district, tribals have critically dependent on both small and big ruminants for various agricultural activities. It is observed that traditional access to grazing was restricted and cattle maintenance became a burden to them. They have to spend much time and labour. People in Sobhakota village of Visakapatnam inform that stall-feeding they don't do because it would not only consume their time but also weakens the cattle health.

Forest Dependency

The main aim of the PFM is to reduce the dependency of people on forest resources by providing alternatives to forest products. In CFM, iron agricultural implements, smokeless chulas, roof tiles and other alternatives to wood were provided to people to reduce their dependency on forests. In Kadapa district, in all villages, smokeless chulas (stoves) were distributed to all households. Some of them are even given gas stoves under velugu programme. In Adilabad and Visakhapatnam districts, smokeless stoves were distributed to households in VSS villages. Several demonstrations were conducted for introducing these stoves to villagers. But it was observed that women do not prefer to use smokeless stoves for two reasons: one, they were designed for limited cooking and cooking take more time on them. As a result villagers continued to use firewood.

Though VSS wage works provide employment to villagers, in CFM wage employment came down resulting in dependency on forest products as usual. For instance, in RC Puram of Kadapa district, villagers still depended upon firewood selling as a main occupation. In Visakapatnam district, people depended on NTFPs like Adda leaves collection, broom stick selling and others, particularly podu. It is observed that when they were receiving wage employment in JFM in the agricultural slack season, they were not depended on forest produce collection, as wage employment came down people's dependency on forests has increased. It shows the vulnerability of people who live in forest fringe areas. In case of Visakapatnam, most of the podu lands were brought under JFM plantation by FD with the assurance of wage employment to tribes. But in CFM, employment has come down, and their income and food security was under threat due to loss of podu. As a result, they shifted back to podu for survival.

IX CFM and Ecological Issues

The midterm report of FD reports marginal increase in the overall density of forest cover from 36 per cent to 37 per cent. In our filed sites, forest cover has to some extent, increased due to protection by VSS committee. Teak trees in Adilabad and Silver oak in Visakhapatnam have improved due to protection. However, there is no significant improvement in Kadapa district. Due to proximity to roads, VSS MC's could not control illegal tree felling. At the same time, due to internal conflicts, some of the members engaged in illegal cutting of green trees. Some of the MC members are accused of theft

cases in VSS areas. In Heerapur of Adilabad district, due to conflict within MC, VSS protection has become weak and people graze goats and cattle inside VSS area, which resulted in degradation of existing forests.

Plant species

The main object of FD in promoting PFM is to increase green cover and reduction of the extent of degraded lands. This objective, some times, over enthusiastically pursued. For instance, in Visakapatnam district, FD in order to increase forest cover promoted silver oak trees. However, local people do not prefer them, as it undermines the growth of locally grown plants, which are important for them. In the name of promoting coffee plantations, FD promotes silver oak trees. Similarly, due to extensive promotion of teak forests in Adilabad district, people informed that availability of wild fruits and tendu leaves has become a problem.

Ground Water

Substantial funds are being allocated for construction of soil moisture conservation and rainwater harvesting structures in CFM works. However, people gave contradictory testimonies on the relation between forest conservation and groundwater. In Kadapa district, Mudireddy Palle people informed that due to SMC (Soiland moisture conservation) structures their neighboring tank is not getting sufficient water as feeder channels are obstructed by SMC structures. FGD with people in RC Puram, SR Palem and MR Palle in Kadapa district and Pandhirlodhhi of Adilabad district revealed that SMC structures and water harvesting structures are not useful, as they don't have own land to use groundwater for their benefits. At the same time, people in Heerapur of Adilabad district, informed that water levels in the wells and tanks has improved due to water harvesting structures undertaken in their VSS. People in Visakapatnam district also felt that water flows from feeder channels has improved after SMC and water harvesting structures in their area. The mid term report also testifies that ground water table has improved after CFM. But it is difficult to attribute the increase of ground water level to improved forest conditions. For, AP received good rainfall since 2004, which is a significant factor in improving ground water table.

Biodiversity

Protection of the biodiversity depends on the judicious mix of the policy intervention to bring a tradeoff between conservation and livelihood concerns. However, it is observed that people are not showing much concern for biodiversity; rather they want commercial species, which would yield revenue to them. So commercial species like coffee, teak, eucalyptus, are preferred by some section of the population. But poor people, who depended on firewood and wild fruit collection, opted for protection of native species. However, due to the thrust for revenue from forests, protection of biodiversity is at stake in some of the ecologically fragile regions like Visakapatnam.

Fire controlling mechanisms

In some of the places, FD undertook training for villagers in fire controlling techniques. It is reported by FD officials that VSSs in Kadapa district are doing fairly well in controlling seasonal fires. Though people did not form a separate sub-committee for fire control, whenever fire accident happened they seem to have acted collectively due to the fact that fire may destroy young plants. FGD with women revealed that FD officials demonstrated them on how to control fire. They informed several times that they participated in fire-control operation. Thus, it is one of the positive outcomes of PFM in Andhra Pradesh. People developed the sense of belongingness towards forests. In Visakapatnam, incidents of fire-accidents reported to have come down, due to protection of VSS MC. People narrated the incidents of peoples' participation in controlling fire in the forests allotted for their protection.

Wildlife

Increased density of forests and creation of water harvesting structures in some VSS resulted in increase in frequent visits of wild animals. People in Sainagar Thanda, VSS in Adilabad district informed that animals invasion to fields has increased and became a cause of concern. SR Palem VSS people informed that existence of Jackal, fox, rabbit, wild bore and other animals are found due to water and shelter in forests.

X Sustaining CFM

Sustainability of CFM programme mainly depends on people's cooperation and participation in forest management. It is also linked to continuous revenue from forest resources. In our study sites except in Adilabad, where high value

teak forests exist, there seems to be limited scope for sustainability of VSS in the post programme period. The main reason for this was that JFM did not follow livelihoods approach, so it had not undertaken systematic planning for revenue generation from forests. As a result, JFM remained as a wage employment programme. Even CFM did not follow livelihood approach to forest management in the initial stages. Only 2005 onwards income-generating activities (IGA's) like value addition to NTFPs, distribution of Beehives, vermi compost, bamboo products and other activities are undertaken. But no proper training to VSS members was given. Consequently, these activities also could not generate tangible revenue to local communities. However, in Adilabad district, due to the existence of teak plantations people have shown interest in protecting forests. It shows that PFM programme lack vision on sustainable forest management. Some of the pertinent issues in this regard are discussed below.

Rights and Equity

PFM policy in AP perceived that local forest protection committees not only would develop a sense of ownership for efficient management of forest resources around them but also ensure equitable distribution of resources and benefits. Though 100 percent usufruct rights were given to local communities, except in Adilabad district, where teak harvesting was done, there were no tangible financial benefits to communities, except wage employment. The main reason was that there was poor design of VSS works, which were not aimed at proper planning on income generation activities. People do not take interest in management of forests, as they perceive CFM mainly a wage employment, rather than revenue generating programme. The reason could be that FD still plays a major role in VSS works and fund sanction and other things. People perceive FD as provider of wage employment in critical season and could not push their choices into MP and its implementation. NGOs are supposed to play an important role in creating awareness on rights and provisions that are proposed in CFM. It is observed that local NGOs, which are mainly managed by local educated are mainly confined to mobilisation of people whenever forest officials come and writing of minutes and other things. They do not seem to impart awareness on people's rights on forests.

There are no apparent and serious conflicts in terms of sharing forest products by communities, like sharing money on wood from singling operations, other products. Due to fear of losing the funding, villagers do not reveal the internal conflicts in case of sharing forest products and money though we have instances of conflicts in accessing forest products. In case of teak harvesting in Adilabad district, FD played active role in marketing. A part of the amount realised from teak harvesting was allotted to build a temple in Sainagar Thanda and Pandhirlodhhi villages and the remaining money was distributed among GB members. Though some sections claimed that MC in nexus with FD, misappropriated the money. By and large no serious conflicts are reported in case benefit sharing.

Podu and Encroachment

Podu cultivation issues exist mainly in Visakhapatnam district. Tribal people in this district still substantially depended on podu for survival. According to Mamata (2000) about 28000 hectares of land under podu cultivation was reclaimed by FD for JFM. Though it claimed as voluntary surrender, we were informed that FD used three methods for reclaiming podu land for VSS management: a) FD officials promised tribals of continuous wage employment; b) tribals were persuaded / forced to abandon their podu lands and c) FD distributed coffee plants to replace podu cultivation. It is observed that about 15 percent of total income was lost due to restriction on podu lands.

Some of the tribal youth informed that since wage employment has come down in CFM, they could not live without doing podu. However, AP government has formulated the Resettlement Action Plan to rehabilitate the tribals who lost podu land. Under this each family would be given Rs.25000, which would be spent on development of community tanks and irrigation facilities, land development activities and other village infrastructure. But not cash is given to the households. Now the selection of beneficiary list has been going on.

Incidence of forest encroachment is widely existed in Adilabad district. In Pandhirlodhhi village, most of people do not have pattas to their lands and have been cultivating for more than thirty years. Though they are fighting for legal titles government do not pay any attention to this problem. In Heerapur village, fresh encroachments of forests have been reported. It is interesting to know that lower revenue officials encouraged encroachment by promising

regularization. CFM policy in Adilabad district was aimed at restricting further encroachments by bringing adjacent forestlands under VSS management.

Training

Capacity building (CB) for community to acquire better forest management skills was one of the important objectives of CFM policy. Trainings are conducted to enhance the management potential of communities. Training for different stakeholders i.e., VSS members, lower FD officials and NGO members are being offered in CFM. In a mid-term report it is mentioned that stipulated money on training has not been spent by FD till 2006. Trainings are offered on bookkeeping, minutes writing, fire-controlling, forest management and other skills. Training had two important dimensions: one, imparting knowledge required for forest management and second is to use the acquired knowledge in the field.

In our field study it is observed that in CFM, so far only once training programme has been conducted for VSS members. It is also noticed that the members selected for training are some times too old in Kadapa to understand training. It is also noticed that competent members were not selected for training. Particularly, in NTFP value addition activities like Bodha grass oil extraction, using leaf plate making machine, honey bee keeping, making broom sticks and other things community members have not received adequate training. Villagers in Pandurluddi VSS in Adilabad district informed that though they were given honeybees, they were not given adequate training in keeping them. Since there was no financial assistance to NGOs they do not take keen interest in imparting training and information to villagers. In case of book keeping and writing of minutes, though some of the VSS members were trained, in most of VSS, MC still depends on NGO members or CEW's.

Value Addition

Besides wage employment, income from harvesting timber and NTFPs are expected to generate continuous income to communities that would bring sustainability to CFM programme. There was a separate account created for VSS MC to deposit money earned from harvesting. But it is revealed in the mid term appraisal of CFM that NTFPs and their productivity did not improve as much as expected. Though NTFP products are important component of livelihoods of forest dependent people, they are available only in particular

seasons. In Kadapa district, Amla and Bio-diesel (pongamia) trees are being planted. But these are still young and take some time for yielding. Important NTFP in Kadapa district is Bodha grass (lemon grass). Traditionally it is used for thatching purpose. It provides employment for people for about one month between November-March. Under CFM, FD launched the Bodha oil extraction machines. The oil found to have cosmetic and medicinal value.

In our study sites in Kadapa district, SR Palem has the Bodha oil machine. FD officials projected Bodha oil as one of the potential NTFPs that would give continuous income to VSS. It is estimated that one ton of bodha (green) grass gives 3 liters of oil on an average. Each liter of oil costs about Rs. 275. Thus, for 3 kg oil grass income is Rs.825, cost of labour and processing charges costs Rs. 350. Thus, net revenue comes to Rs. 475 per ton. Each day two tones of grass can be processed which gives Rs. 950 per day. About 150 working days in the season from November to March gives Rs. 1,42,500. It is also estimated that in addition to revenue to VSS, it also provide continuous employment to 25 members for grass collection and 4 members for distillation for about 150 days in a year. Having this estimates in projection, SR Palem unit started functioning.

The practical story of Bodha grass extraction presents a different story. Individual male and females do the collection of bodha grass. VSS committee has decided to pay Rs.15 on each bundle of bodha grass, as against the market price of Rs. 25. Hence, people prefer to sell bodha grass in the open market rather than to VSS. Consequently, VSS could not collect the expected quantum of grass. At the same time, due to lack of experience VSS members kept grass for long time without crushing. It resulted in decline in quantum of oil from grass. As a result, VSS in SR Palem managed to get only Rs. 18000 against an investment of about Rs. 20000 and incurring a loss of Rs. 2000. VSS members are also not familiar with bodha oil marketing. FD does all the marketing business. However, this value addition process is still in formative stage and requires some time for community to acquire proper knowledge.

Bio-diesel plantation (Pongamia), has acquired importance in CFM plantation activities. In Rajempet forest division in Kadapa district, FD had undertaken large-scale bio-diesel plantation. Three factors contributed for this: one, Rajempet degraded forests are suitable for these plantations; second Rajempet traditionally had market for pongamiya seeds and third factor is that in recent

times, government encouraged the alternative fuels in order to reduce expenditure on oil imports. In this context FD encouraged the bio-diesel plantation as remunerative to VSS communities. In our study sites, SR Palem in Kadapa district and Heerapur and Sainagar Thanda in Adilabad district have been selected for plantations. As per FD, it would take four to five years for pongamia yield and revenue generation. So future would tell about the viability of bio-diesel plantation in generating income to VSS.

Under CFM, trainings were conducted in Nandivalasa and Sobhakota villages for machine oriented stitching of adda leaves (leaf plates). In spite of initial technical problems it began to fetch better economic returns for people in the season of 2006. However, the problem with these value addition schemes is that people prefer to collect NTFPs individually, rather than giving to VSS community. The main reasons being: people want immediate returns for their produce and VSS committees offer lower prices than that of market prices. In the absence of peoples participation, value addition activities could not achieve the expected targets.

XI Conclusions and Policy Pointers

The preceding narration on CFM governance and livelihood impacts helps us drawing some concluding remarks on the overall nature of the programme and the way forward. Important conclusions are:

- 1) The lands given to local communities for management are degraded forests and exposed to chronic degradation and unsuitable tree growth or any other remunerative NTFP products. Consequently, the harvesting benefits are significantly low in most of the VSS sites. This would have a bearing on the post-programme sustainability of CFM.
- 2) The envisaged decentralization and institutional mechanism to enhance the efficiency in management and equitable distribution of forest resources has not been achieved for two reasons: one, the FD which supposed to play a facilitator's role had dominated the decision-making process related to VSS management. It is observed that works design, estimates and other management models are simply designed by FD and local communities do not have role in them. As results of it, forest management models unable to generate revenue to local communities. Second, the homogenized models in creating local communities without segregating primary and secondary stake holders resulted in elite capture, which resulted in the lack of interest on the part of people critically dependent on forest.

- 3) Decentralized institutions created in CFM could not live up to the expectations. Representative committees created for VSS management don't represent peoples' interests; rather they developed a tendency to toe the FD line for more gains. This resulted in new forest elite consisting of MC members and FD officials that dominates the decision-making process.
- 4) VSS MC's are occupied by politically dominant sections excluding other groups in villages in sharing the benefits generated by CFM. Accountability on the part of VSS MC's is absolutely lacking. Democratically elected local panchyats were not given any control over VSS MC functioning. Decision-making process is mainly dominated by MC that consists of rural elite and FD without consulting majority of people. Thus, VSS management is mainly accountable to FD rather than to the democratic institutions like panchyats. It is observed that VSS MCs do not represent interests of the majority of needy people.
- 5) The issue of transparency is lacking in VSS management. Accounts books, Muster Registrars, even MP are not kept with VSS, instead they are found in the office of FD. GB is not informed in the case of work estimates and sanction of funds. In fact, frequency of MC meetings has come down, which jeopardized the wider participation of all stakeholders.
- 6) Livelihood based approach to participatory forestry initiated in CFM is mainly benefiting the dominant groups who acquired control over equipment that was supplied by the FD, and reduction in wage employment kept land less poor away from any benefit.
- 7) Reclamation of podu lands under JFM/CFM and reduction of wage employment increased the vulnerability of poor tribes. This has resulted in threat to livelihood security of tribes in Visakapatnam district, in the absence of effective rehabilitation policy.
- 8) Though women representation in all spheres of VSS management has increased in CFM, their role in decision-making process appeared to have not improved especially in tribal areas.
- 9) There is no inter-sectoral coordination that is essential to the success of CFM.
- 10) Local communities were not provided information on market possibilities to forest product and value addition activities.

11) The relation between FD and people appear to have improved in the context of CFM, it is very much linked with availability of funding.

Policy Pointers:

- a) Genuine decentralized arrangements are to be pushed forward to make CFM efficient. The role of FD needs to be considerably reduced and the role for forest dwelling communities in the management of VSS needs to be substantially increased.
- b) The accountability and transparency dimensions and gender participation in the forest management need to be made real and robust in CFM thus increasing the efficiency and trust worthiness of the CFM programme.
- c) The funding pattern under CFM needs to be continuous and reliable so as to make programme more sustainable.
- d) In case of value addition activities backward and forward linkages need to be worked out seriously in order to make VSS members to get tangible economic benefits from the value addition initiatives.
- e) The issue of elite capture needs to be squarely addressed in order to make CFM a genuinely people centred programme.
- f) The role of NGOs needs to be made much more pro active and the onus of making NGOs more active squarely rests with FD.
- g) The livelihoods based approach needs to be made central focus of the CFM programme to make people genuinely interested in the programme rather than traditional silvi cultural orientation of the FD.
- h) Lastly, there needs to be genuine change of mindset of the FD towards making people as central to CFM.

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Appendix

Approach and Method:

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used for eliciting information. Under quantitative methods, a three level sampling procedure was followed. First, three districts from the three agro-climatic and political regions of the state viz., Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana were selected. These three districts namely Visakhapatnam, Kadapa and Adilabad were selected on the basis of two criteria viz., VSS concentration in the respective regions and the coverage of area under forests based on the data provided by the FD. Except for Kadapa, the remaining two districts have the concentration of Tribal population in the districts. Three VSS along with three Non-VSS villages that are in the vicinity to the VSS village, were selected from each district.

Second, based on the secondary data collected from the FD was used to identify the VSSs that are in operation since the inception of the programme. All those VSS villages are arranged in order of their performance on the basis of the 'GRADES' given by the FD considering the parameters in terms of (a) vegetation Improvement (b) other works taken under VSS (c) improvement in Income level of VSS and (d) Social Indicator. The villages with longest inception period i.e. 1996 batch VSS were selected from the three different 'Ranges' of the sample districts. The VSS villages were selected from each range of the respective district by drawing three lots based on "Simple Random Sampling" method. The two extra lots were drawn as stand-by for replacement in case of the VSS villages not fitting in to the study criteria. These criteria include:

- a) VSS village should reflect the grades given by the FD.
- b) VSS village should be representative and not nurtured as 'models' either by Forest Department or NGOs.
- c) VSS village should be big enough to have a minimum of 25 households necessary for our study. And
- d) Any other unforeseen reasons like non-cooperation, civil strife, etc.

Appendix – 1: The details of the sample villages:

Range	VSS Villages			Non-VSS Villages
	<i>Lot – 1</i>	<i>Lot - 2</i>	<i>Lot – 3</i>	
Visakhapatnam District				
PEDHABAYULU	Sobhakota*	Kondapada	Kumada	Bangarumitta
PADERU	Daligummadi	Gudlamveedi*	Bandiveedi	Nimmaveedi
ARAKU	Nandivalasa*	Malivalasa	Demuduvalasa	Madala
Kadapa District				
KADAPA	Saibabanagar	Ippapenta Y.Colony	Ramachandr- apuram*	Markudupalle
RAJAMPETA	S.R.Palem*	Shikaripalem	Chinchulaksh- mipuram	Balarajupalle
PRODATTUR	Muddireddypalle*	Ravindranagar	Chittimittichi- ntala	T.Kothapalle
Adilabad District				
ADILABAD	Pandhirlodhhi*	Kothur	Jhari	Chinnachin- chughat
NIRMAL	Adelli	Sainagar*	Burugupalle	Thurrati
SIRPUR KAGAZ'NGR	Mandwa	Nayakpur ankoda	Heerapur*	Kannapalli

* Sample VSS Villages.

Main reasons for choosing from 2nd and 3rd lots include: a) VSS villages do not reflect the grading of the FD, and b) 'model' VSS villages. For studying the Non-VSS villages, conscious effort was made to find the villages adjacent to the VSS villages for better and meaningful comparison. Though most of the non-VSS villages are within the distance of 5 km. in one case a far off (22 Km in the case of Adilabad) village was selected due to non-availability of non-VSS villages. Here, we could find the matching villages only at a distance of around 22 Kms.

Third, a sample of 25 households from each VSS village and 15 households from each non-VSS village were selected randomly for the purpose of an intensive survey (Appendix-II). A total of 225 households from the VSS

villages and 135 households from the non-VSS villages were selected. Along with the household schedules, a VSS level schedule was canvassed for the entire sample VSSs i.e., a total of 9 VSS schedules. Qualitative research methods such as focus group discussions, informal interviews with senior or learned persons in the villages, VSS members and office bearers, transect walks, etc were conducted. FGDs were conducted in both VSS and non-VSS villages. In all 18 FGDs were conducted viz., nine in VSS and nine in non-VSS villages. Besides, a technical survey of the forest species and quality was conducted to assess the forest status in VSS as well as non-VSS villages. However, this was conducted only in the case of Visakhapatnam district due to the paucity of time. Prior to the initiation of the field survey, a pilot survey was conducted in seven villages in order to test the household schedule.

Appendix – II: Details of Sample Households:

Regions	Districts	Name of the VSS/FP's	Total No. of HH		No. of HH taken for Study		% of the sample of HH for particular VSS	
			VSS	Non-VSS	VSS	Non-VSS	VSS	Non-VSS
Telangana	Adilabad	Pandhirlodhi Sainagar Heerapur	37	45	25	15	68	33
			35	250	25	15	71	06
			86	200	25	15	29	08
Rayalaseema	Kadapa	Ramchandrapuram S.R.Pallem Muddireddypalle	30	50	25	15	83	30
			27	59	25	15	96	25
			73	55	25	15	34	27
Coastal Andhra	Vishakhapatnam	Sobhakota Gudalamveedi Nandivalasa	87	37	25	15	28	41
			50	47	25	15	50	32
			134	22	25	15	19	68
3	3	9	559	765	225	135	53	30

APPENDIX - III

Figure 1: Flow chart depicting CFM Project Monitoring Unit - Organisation chart

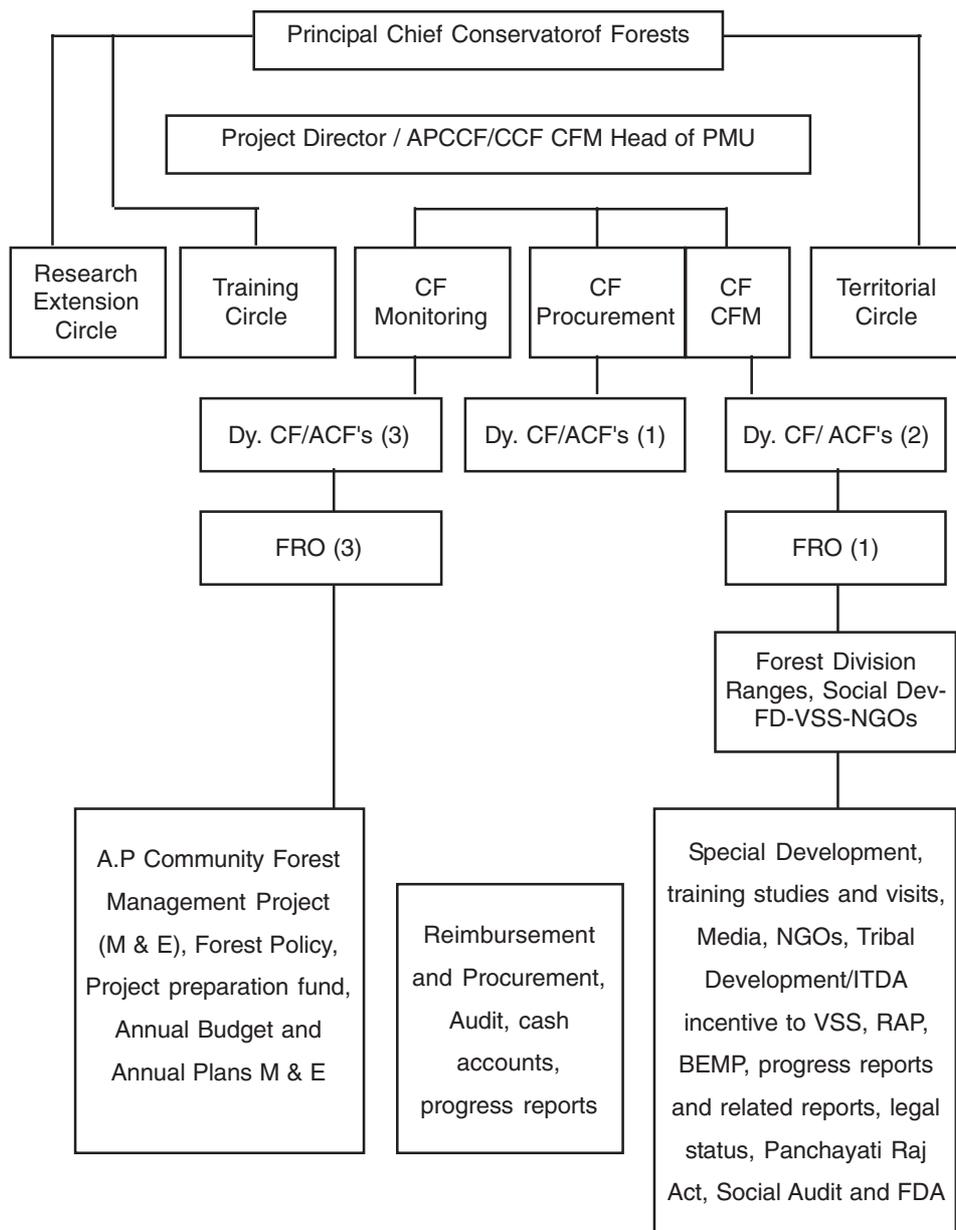


Figure 2: Flow chart of CFM depicting the linkages in Planning, Implementation and Monitoring System of the Tribal development Plan; System of RAP; and Reporting Channel

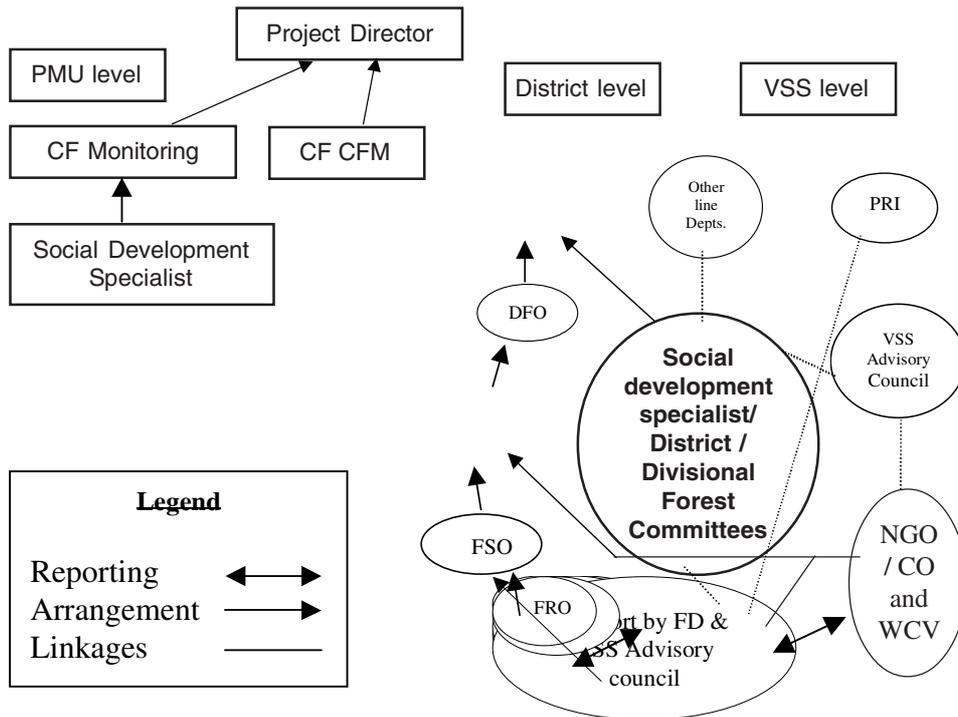


Figure 3: Flow chart depicting CFM Process

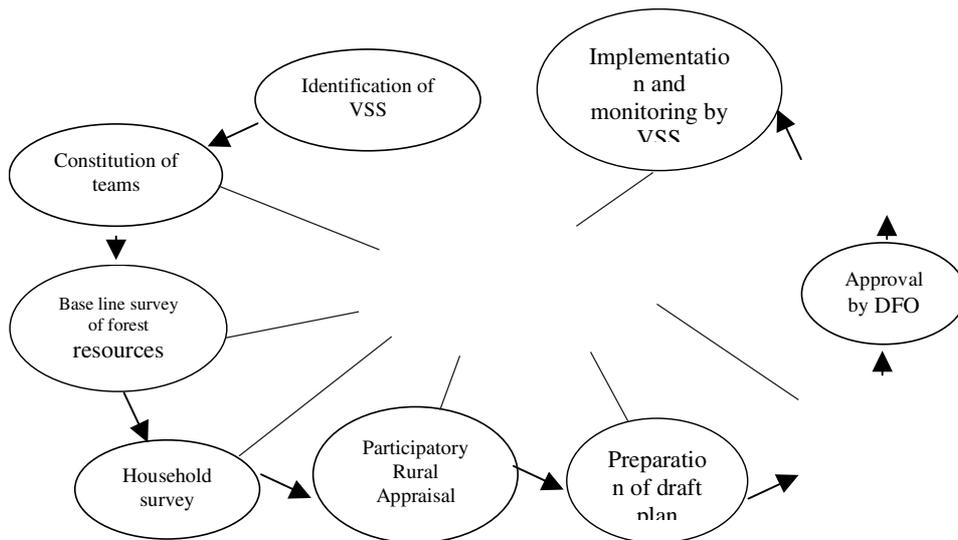
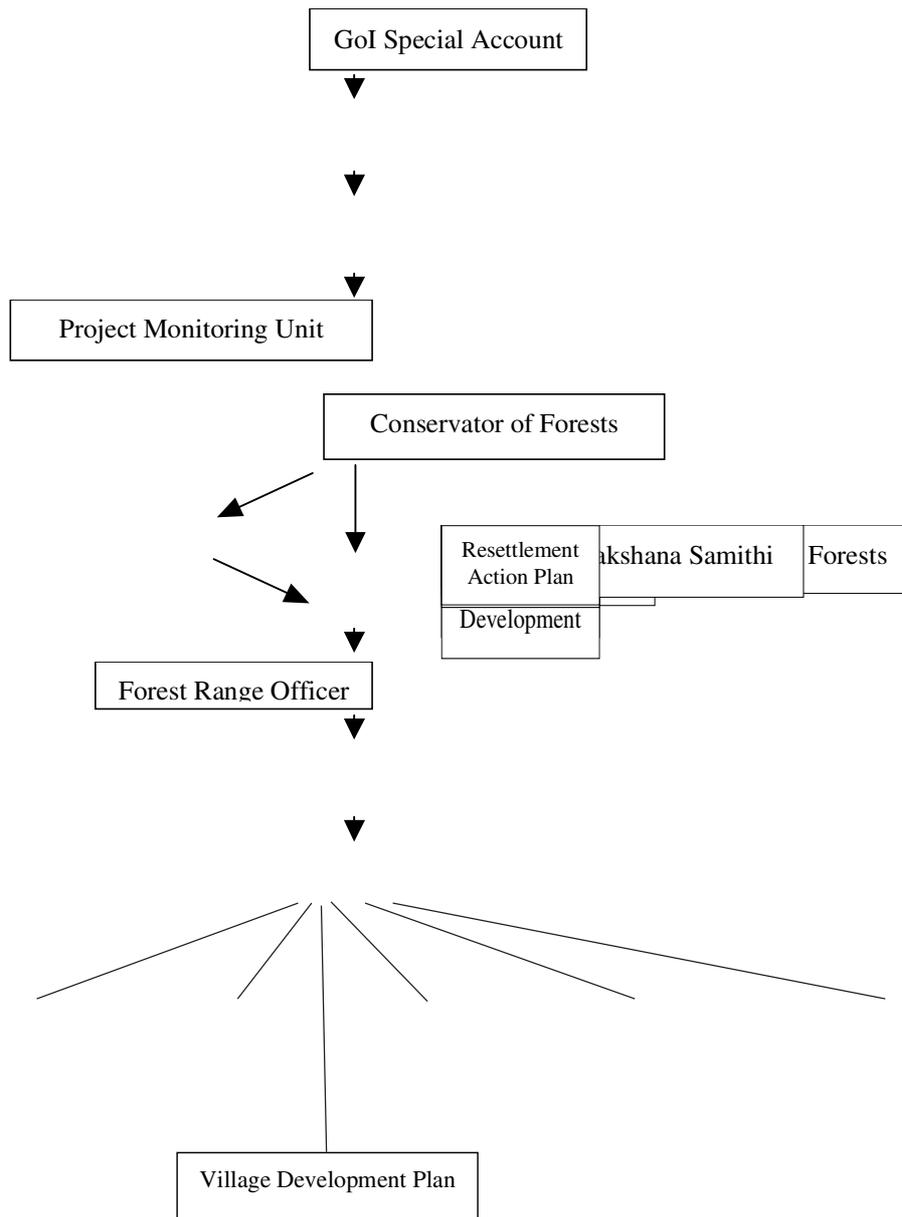


Figure 4: Flow Chart of CFM depicting details of the mechanism of fund flow to VSS



Source : A P Community Forest Management Project

About the Authors

V. Ratna Reddy is currently senior fellow at the Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad. He did his Ph.D. from the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore and Post-Doctoral from the South Asian Institute at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. He was visiting fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, UK and School of Geography at the University of Leeds, UK. Prior to joining the Centre he worked at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune; Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur and taught at the Department of Economics, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad. He has about hundred research publications in International and National journals and five books, which include “Managing Water Resources: Policies, Institutions and Technologies” (edited jointly) Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006; and “User Valuation of Renewable Natural Resource: The User Perspective”, (edited) Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York, 2001. He has been a consultant to UNDP, World Bank, DFID, European Commission, ICRISAT, etc. His research interests include: Environmental and Natural resource Economics, New Institutional Economics and Agricultural Policy.

M. Gopinath Reddy is a Professor and Senior Fellow at Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Hyderabad. A political science and public administration specialist, his current research interests include decentralized governance, livelihoods and poverty analysis, and institutional approaches to natural resource management.
Email: mgrjl@yahoo.com, mgopinathreddy@rulnr.ac.in

V.M. Ravikumar is a Lecturer in the Department of History, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow. His main research interests are environmental history and political ecology. Email: mr_vejendla@yahoo.com

M. Srinivasa Reddy is an Assistant Professor in Research Unit for Livelihoods and Natural Resources (RULNR) at Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Hyderabad. His research interests include rural development, agriculture and resource management, and recent work relates to watershed management, joint forest management and rice cultivation intensification systems. Email: sreenivasdrreddy@yahoo.com, msrinivasareddy@rulnr.ac.in