UNDERSTANDING LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN INDIA AND NEPAL

WORKING PAPER NO 4

Participatory Forest Management in ANDHRA PRADESH: A Review of Policies and Implementation



V. Ratna Reddy, M. Gopinath Reddy, Velayutham Saravanan, Madhuusudana Bandhii and Oliver Springate-Baginski

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Andhra Pradesh
APFD	Andhra Pradesh Forest Department
BC	Backward Castes
CCF	Chief Conservator of Forests
CFM	Community Forest Management
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CM	Chief Minister
CPR	Common Pool Resources
CWS	Community World Solidarity
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
EFES	Energy Forests Environment Science
EFS & T	Environment of Forest Science and Technology Department
FCA	Forest Conservation Act
FD	Forest Department
GCC	Girijan Cooperative corporation
GoAP	Government of Andhra Pradesh
GoI	Government of India
GPCMS	Girijan Primary Co-operative Marketing Society
ITDA	Integrated Tribal Development Agency
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MFP	Minor Forest Produce
MNC	Multi National Company
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Produce
PCCF	Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
PESA	Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas
PMU	Project Monitoring Unit
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
RF	Reserved Forest
SC	Scheduled Caste
SF	Social Forestry
ST	Scheduled tribe
TDP	Tribal Development Plan
VSS	Vana Samrakshana Samithi
WLPA	Wild Life Protection Act

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SUMMARY

This paper traces the recent emergence of the new participatory forest management regime in Andhra Pradesh (Joint Forest Management and Community Forest Management). This paper is based on the existing literature on forest policies, the historical context (pre-colonial, colonial and post independent India), and impact studies. The paper considers the contemporary developments in India in shaping the forest policies in AP. At the same time it considers the significant role played by donors and civil society. The process and quality of implementation, and the impact of the programme on local communities and resources are also examined.

Andhra Pradesh ranks fifth in India in terms of geographical area (275,068 sq km), and third in terms of forest land area (63,813 sq km or 6.38 mha), which constitutes 23% of AP's total land area. *Actual* forest cover is 4.42 mha accounting for 16% of the geographic area of AP (based on satellite data 1999, of which 2.41 mha are dense forest, 1.96 mha are open forest and 0.03 mha are mangroves. The forest cover differs from the forest land area because of forest degradation, deforestation and the reservation of non-forest land.

There are 26,586 villages in Andhra Pradesh, of which 19% have 'forest' as a land use. The forest area in these villages is 2.57 mha (22% of the total forest area). With a total population 10.67 million they represent about 22 per cent of the total rural population. The mean forest area for villages having forest as a land use is 506 ha.

Some 65% of AP's forest area is spread over 8 predominantly tribal districts in the northern part of the state. These tribal populations are particularly dependent on the forest for their livelihoods for forest product collection and cultivation on forest land. Historically the relationship between these tribals and the government agencies, particularly the Forest Department, has been very poor, with numerous uprisings, including most recently so-called 'Naxalite' movements. Tribal people claim that their customary podu cultivation (long rotation forest fallows cultivation) is being labelled 'encroachment', whereas it is the Forest Department who has historically grabbed the land criminalised its historic users. Many of these lands are disputed due to inadequacies in the legal processes by which largely tribal lands were declared state forests.

In 1956, on the formation of Andhra Pradesh from Telangana and parts of the Madras Presidency, the pre-existing forest management regimes from the two distinct areas were harmonised by the Law Commission, leading to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Act, 1967. Initially the states forest department continued with a policy of commercialisation and revenue generation. However with a growing crisis of forest degradation participatory approaches were introduced

The Government Order for JFM in AP was issued in 1992, although implementation didn't start until 1994. Joint Forest Management has built on the roles played by both local forest users and the forest department staff. Funding to the Forest Department to promote JFM has come from both the World Bank and from centrally funded schemes, such as the Employment Assurance Scheme.

Formation of VSS began slowly after the Government Order, although 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. (We lack figures on how many of these groups are actually functional.). The largest numbers of VSS are concentrated in the tribal areas of Adilabad, Visakhapatnam, and Khammam

The pattern of implementation and the outcomes is extremely complex, partly because of the wide variety of local conditions, ethnic and caste composition and local livelihood uses of forest land. The limited devolution of power which has occurred though VSS formation have however certainly been popular in many areas, because they have given local people endorsement to protect 'their' local forest resources, upon which they depend for livelihood product flows. Some employment opportunities have also been provided and some shares of revenues from forest product marketing are promised. Evidence suggests that the VSS have been successful in many areas in terms of regenerating degraded forests, with over with an increase in 1,1,42 ha of dense forest being recoded by the Forest Survey of India between 1993 and 1999.

However there have been many criticisms of the JFM programme so far, most fundamentally focussing on the issues of power and land tenure. Because the FD has held almost complete discretionary power over the scheme and its implementation, the JFM process has inevitably reflected their objectives. Whilst many foresters have espoused very progressive ideas and concepts, in practice the implementation of the scheme has often furthered forest management according to silvicultural norms, rather than local livelihood-oriented practices.

The conflict over land use and the willingness of the FD to prevail over local livelihoods is exemplified by the Podu issue; the FD has sought to stop this indigenous livelihood practice all together, and has used JFM where other measures failed:

> 'The FD succeeded in stopping podu and its further spread after forming the VSS. Fresh conversion of forest land into podu has almost stopped throughout the state. So far 38,158 ha of podu land have come under JFM ...' Mukherji p.66 in Bahuguna et al 2004).

On the ground, this has meant thousands of tribals have been alienated from large areas of land previously used to support their subsistence. This has been achieved by VSSs being formed and given rights to neighbouring villages' forest land, along with encouragement to take it over. This has often led to inter-village conflict and violence, particularly in Visakhapatnam district.

In the context of a fundamental power asymmetry between the FD and the VSS., there has been little empowerment of local communities to take their own decisions with respect to forest management. This is most obviously seen in forest management plans. Whilst local people would like to see livelihood oriented forest management regime (ie. regular product flows, shorter term rotations, multiple product mixes) the forest department has tended to prioritise its conventional forest management practices, often involving long rotation timber stands. The micro-plans commonly fit within wider divisional working plans. Livelihoods security could be increased if the forest resource were under a management plan which actually prioritised local needs and opportunities.

Institutional sustainability is a major problem in AP with many VSS becoming defunct due to conflict lack of interest, or lack of funds. Where participation has been based on substantial funding flows, when the funds stop the motivation to participate reduces drastically. The institutional linkage between the VSS and the panchayat raj institutions has not been developed, which could ensure not only long term sustainability, but also empowerment and legal independence of the local institutions.

NGOs have been largely excluded from the implementation of JFM, other than the initial 'service-provision' role of forming VSS. In practice, because NGOs don't wish to threaten this can be a highly manipulative relationship between FD, NGOs and local people. NG

This paper consists of six sections. The first section introduces the policy challenge of reconciling forest management with local livelihoods, and elaborates the linkages between forests, livelihoods and policies. Section two analyses the trends in forest resources in AP. Section three reviews the

forest polices in AP in a historic perspective, including JFM. The fourth section reviews the impact of JFM in AP, and the final section reviews the advent of CFM in Andhra Pradesh along with a comparison between CFM and JFM.

1 FOREST MANAGEMENT AND LIVELIHOODS IN INDIA

Forests are a crucial link in the ecosystem. In addition to the direct use values, forests resources protect the environment in different ways, such as watershed protection, nutrient cycling, pollution control, micro-climatic regulation, and carbon sequestration. Depletion and degradation of forest resources lead to serious wider environmental consequences, not only at the local and regional level but also as is increasingly apparent at global level. The consequences of degradation are being felt in terms of the declining productivities of inter-linked natural resources such as land, water, and grass lands.

The problems are of particular concern at the regional level, and hence this paper addresses forest policies and management in Andhra Pradesh, with the hope that understanding can lead to improved policy formulation and field practice. Unless effective measures are adopted to arrest degradation, achieving sustainable development will remain a distant dream.

1.1 The Pre-Colonial Period

In earlier historical periods, people used forest resources with little intervention by the rulers, in different parts of the sub-continent. The rulers controlled only limited areas, the remaining resources were used by the people without restriction. For example, Tipu Sultan controlled only the sandalwood in Mysore region. There is debate in the environmental history literature over the extent to which deforestation had already occurred in the pre-colonial era. Of course large areas were cleared for agricultural expansion, pastoral use and strategic purposes in different parts of the country during the pre-colonial period (Parasher, 1998; Guha, 1996). Until the last quarter of the twentieth century, the colonial accounts which prevailed (mainly from the pens of colonial administrators) sought to locate the extension of colonial control over forest resources as part of a historical continuity. While detailing the forest resources of the subcontinent, imperial forest historians concluded that denudation of forests predated the commencement of colonialism, neglecting intensive working of forests by colonialists. For example, Stebbing claimed that a very large proportion of the forests which originally covered vast tracts of the country were destroyed during the period between the invasion of the Aryans and the advent of the English as rulers (Stebbing, 1982). He claims further 'For a long period before their arrival, timber had been exported in large quantities to Arabia and Persia' (Stebbing 1982). Imperial forest historians like him held the view that commercial exploitation of forests in the sub-continent was widespread before the eighteenth century.

Scholarly works were found wanting on issues concerning forests and forest-dwellers during the period. Forest and related environmental issues have been discussed extensively over the last quarter of the twentieth century. Guha initiated the scholarly debate, and argued that the British colonial government had denuded the vast forest cover for commercial and strategic needs of the empire, in disregard of the rights of forest dwellers and users (Guha, 1983; 1986; Guha and Gadgil, 1989). Prior to the colonial regime, commercial exploitation of forest produce was largely restricted to specific products such as spices like pepper and cardamom, and ivory, where extraction did not pose a serious threat to either the ecology of the forests or customary use, and ensured renewal and sustainability (Guha and Gadgil, 1989). Scholars also cite the numerous conflicts over land, pastures and forests, often appropriated by the more powerful strata in different parts of the country during the pre-colonial period, from the Mauryan period (Baker, 1991; Guha, 1996; Guha, 2002).

1.2 Colonial Forest Management and Customary Forest Rights

The commercialisation of forests during the colonial period resulted in large-scale degradation. Since the eighteenth century, the colonial rule established the commercialisation of forests for different in

different parts of the country, and large areas of forests were denuded for commercial purposes during the pre-Forest Act period. (Saravanan, 1998, 1999). In the early nineteenth century, large quantities of sandalwood were exported to foreign countries. Coffee and tea plantations were established in the hill areas during the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Saravanan, 1999). British iron-making industries also extracted huge number of trees from the forest. Also during the second half of the century, forests were denuded in a large-scale for establishing the railways. The colonial agrarian policy also envisaged the expansion of cultivation, which led to the denudation of the forests.

Heavy destruction of forests along the coast of Malabar down south for the timber and sandalwood had occurred during British occupation of India in the latter part of the 18th and early part of the 19th century (Saravanan, 1998; Thakur, 1984). Shortfalls in the availability of timber began to be felt, leading to the first teak plantations in Nilambur (Kerala) in 1842.

The colonial rulers became concerned by the 1850s that insufficient control over timber extraction was threatening fulfilment of growing demand for timber for strategic needs. This concern led in 1855 to Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor-General of India, to proclaim a forest policy for the first time which asserted imperial ownership over forests, and emphasised their regulated use for the imperial requirements: 'timber standing on State forest was State property and private individuals had no rights or claims over it' (Chaudhry 1984). To consolidate and implement this policy, Dr. Dietrich Brandis was appointed as the first Inspector-General of Forests in 1864, and the first Indian Forest Act was drafted in 1865. Subsequently in 1866, the Forest Department of India was created, and the Indian Forest service was organized, to exercise exclusive rights to exploitation of the existing forests. Its chief duties were to develop the large timber forests such as the *Sal* forest of 'Dudh' and 'Deodar' forest of Himalayas and the forests of the Western Ghats (Randhwa, 1984).

The revised Indian Forest Act came into existence in 1878 and was made operational in most of the provinces. It is under this Act that the Forest Department has taken over the forest under its control. The Act restricted the traditional / customary rights of the tribals and forest users in the forest by introducing reserved and protected forest categories. Differences however emerged between the different presidencies in how they implemented the Forest Act. For example, The Madras Presidency had a different opinion altogether in terms of recognising the people rights (Guha 1990: 65-84; Sangwan 1999:189). Subsequently several forest acts were initiated, although they by and large curtailed the rights of the tribals and other forest users.

The first Forest Policy of 1894 highlighted intention of the state to recognize forestry as a land use distinctly different from agriculture, and earmarking areas for such land use had the major objective of timber production, ignoring the needs of the local people. This Policy paved way for legislation and the process of settlement of rights that followed the reservation of forest areas. The Policy provided for state ownership and regulation but very little for the local communities. During 1927, the Act of 1878 was consolidated to regulate the law relating to forests and forest produce.

Subsequently the Indian Forest Act 1927 (IFA) further envisaged the importance of conservation and restricted the forest use further during the colonial period.

Although India had a long history of forest policy, the livelihoods of forest-dwellers and forest-dependents are not recognised until recently in policy. It is predominantly tribal lands which have been declared state forests, and this has resulted in continuing conflicts and contestation and the tribals losing access to their livelihood resources. Reservation of forests by the Forest Departments has been part of the long term historical process of indigenous tribal communities being pushed deeper into the forests by the appropriation of tribal lands by non-tribals (despite some laws being

meant to prevent this). The state has appropriated large areas of Schedule V (tribal majority) area lands as state forests, without recognising customary rights, particularly of shifting cultivators.

The forest policies led to the appropriation of extensive areas of tribals land with the objective of increasing and maintaining 'forest cover', and imposed restrictions on their use. The official claim has been that the tribals are responsible for forest degradation but this is highly contested both by the tribals and by sociological-historical-anthropological studies. There is found to be a strong relationship between tenurial and livelihood security and environmental sustainability, which contrasts with the results of the FD views of 'managing' people for conservation objectives without taking their livelihoods or tenure into account. There have been several tribal revolts against these processes of tribal ancestral lands being appropriated by the Forest Department in many parts of the country, for example the Rampa rebellion in Godavari district (1922-24) and the Gond Revolt in Adilabad (1940).

The colonial government thus asserted control over extensive forest lands, resulting in the decline in traditional conservation and management systems around the forests (Gadgil and Guha, 1992). The degradation of forests by the middle of the 20th century has been partly blamed on the accelerated fellings performed during the crises of the two world wars (Sitaram 1979). Gadgil and Guha (1992) are of the same view because the tree felling during the war period was so severe that it seemed far beyond sustainable limits in many cases. Moreover, forest based industries had expanded in numbers during after the two World Wars.

1.3 Post Colonial Forest Management

After independence, the main tasks of the Forest Departments were consolidation and unification of forest laws and extension of scientific management on a reasonably uniform basis, subsequent that is to the taking over of most of the uncultivated lands/forests under Zamindars and Princely rulers. The post-independence land acquisition often did not follow the legal procedures for settling the rights of pre-existing users and occupants, besides bringing even local community forests, earlier set aside for meeting local needs, within the ambit of a national asset to be managed for meeting 'national' needs, (predominantly supplying industrial demand and generating revenue). In the early fifties most States enacted new legislation affecting land tenure systems, whereby large areas of privately owned forests were transferred to the Forest Departments. In 1950 the 'Vanamahotsava', 'National Festival of Tree Plantation', started, intended as a measure for the wildlife and soil conservation across India. More substantially, the commencement of the 'National Plan of Development' in 1951, followed by Five-Year plans, initiated the move toward felling natural forests on an unprecedented scale, replacing them with artificial and man-made forests for 'enhanced productivity'..

The early post-colonial forest policy differed little from the colonial period. The National Forest Policy 1952 did not consider the needs of the local people, its aim being to supply timber for industrial needs. Commercialisation of forests was emphasised, like the colonial regime, at the cost of the local people. Independence did not help these groups of people as they suffered due to the National Forest Policy 1952. The same policy continued to be practised till 1976.

The post-colonial government, in the Forest Policy of 1952 continued to envisage the commercial exploitation of forests, now for the 'national' rather than 'colonial' interest. The operative law continued to be the IFA, 1927, later additionally adding the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, both further restricted forest-users rights.

The National Commission on Agriculture (NAC, 1976) further emphasised the commercial importance of forests alleging that rural communities as the main culprits for its destruction. But despite insisting on the primacy of ensuring timber supply for industries, it at least recognised

subsistence forest product needs, and proposed alternative arrangements; wood-lots and farm forestry from the outside of the forest. The new concept of Social Forestry was introduced in order to reduce the local population pressure on the forests. But, social forestry could not become a real substitute for product supply from the natural forests, and was unpopular in many areas, leading to conflict between local communities and the Forest Department triggering the process of further degradation. The disillusionment with Social Forestry was clearly reflected in the rapid withdrawal of almost all foreign aid for this in the late 1980s and early 1990s. While Social Forestry had not achieved its stated objective-basic needs provision through participatory communal silviculture on non-forest wastelands, the huge success of farm forestry made possible a new policy of taking industrial wood production out of forest areas (Kumar et al., 1999).

Recognition of the importance of forests at the policy level is reflected in enshrining in the Constitution 'a commitment to environmental protection and improvement' (Kashyap, 1990). A direct reference to forest protection and improvement was introduced in the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1977, interjecting a new dimension to public responsibility by obligating the Union Government to protect and improve environmental sustainability. Article 48A makes a specific reference to forest protection as an obligation of the State. This article states: 'The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country'. Constitutionally, it has been enjoined upon every citizen of India as a fundamental duty: 'to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures' (Article 51 A (G), (1990)).

By the late 1980s across India the Social Forestry programme was becoming recognised as being fundamentally flawed, in that it did not address management of forest areas. Amid widespread civil society mobilisation, policy response came in the form of the 1988 forest act. Subsequently the Joint Forest Management initiative emerged from the centre, encouraging states to form local institutions to undertake protection activities on degraded state forests (Sundar and Jeffery 1999).

Prior to 1988 forest policies focused mainly on the productive and profit making aspects with the focus on timber for industrial requirements. More over, they had restricted the local communities of using the forests (GoI, 1952). This effectively represented heavy subsidies flowing towards industry, and the alienation of forest dwellers and dependents adversely affecting their livelihoods. Till 1988, the post-colonial Forest Policy mainly focussed to supply the forest resources mainly to the industrial requirements and other commercial purposes, claiming that supply of forest resources to these purposes was in the 'national interest'. But this policy led to extensive deforestation in different parts of the country. These policies have not considered the needs of forest-dwellers and users as legitimate but in effect branded them as criminals and destroyers. This kind of approach led to several conflicts. The government became forced to reconsider its policies in the face of social unrest, and ineffective control of deforestation by the Forest Department. This led to a reorientation from the commercial-oriented forest policy to a more 'people-oriented forest policy' leading to the introduction of Joint Forest Management

The new Forest Policy of 1988 is considered as a watershed in the history of forest policy. The salient features of the new policy were preservation and restoration of ecological balance, conservation of the natural heritage of the country by preserving the remaining natural forests and protecting the vast genetic resources for the benefit of prosperity, fulfilling the basic requirements of the rural and tribal people residing near the forests and maintenance of the intrinsic relationship between forests and the tribal and other poor people living in and around forests by protecting their customary rights and concessions on the forests.

Since the late nineteenth century, large area of forest has been brought under reservation in different parts of the country, and several acts have curtailed the forest-dwellers and users' rights therein. The forest resources had declined over the post-colonial period, even though the forest administrators and staff have increased in number. The Forest Department have not been able to control the deforestation and degradation, and this has primarily been because of this alienation of the forest dwellers from their Common Pool Resources (CPRs) through state appropriation. As we shall see the Joint Forest Management policy is a tentative step to reverse this alienation.

There have been significant changes in overall land utilization in India between 1950-51 and 1998-99. The area under forest cover accounts for about 19 per cent of the total geographical area of the country, there is a marginal decline of 0.69 million hectares of forest area between 1988-89 and 1999. The proportion of forest area varies widely across states, reflecting serious ecological imbalances (Reddy, et al., 2002). Of the total forest area dense forests with crown density of above 40 per cent account for 59.22 per cent while open forests with crown density between 10–40 per cent occupy about 40 per cent.

2 TRENDS IN FOREST RESOURCES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

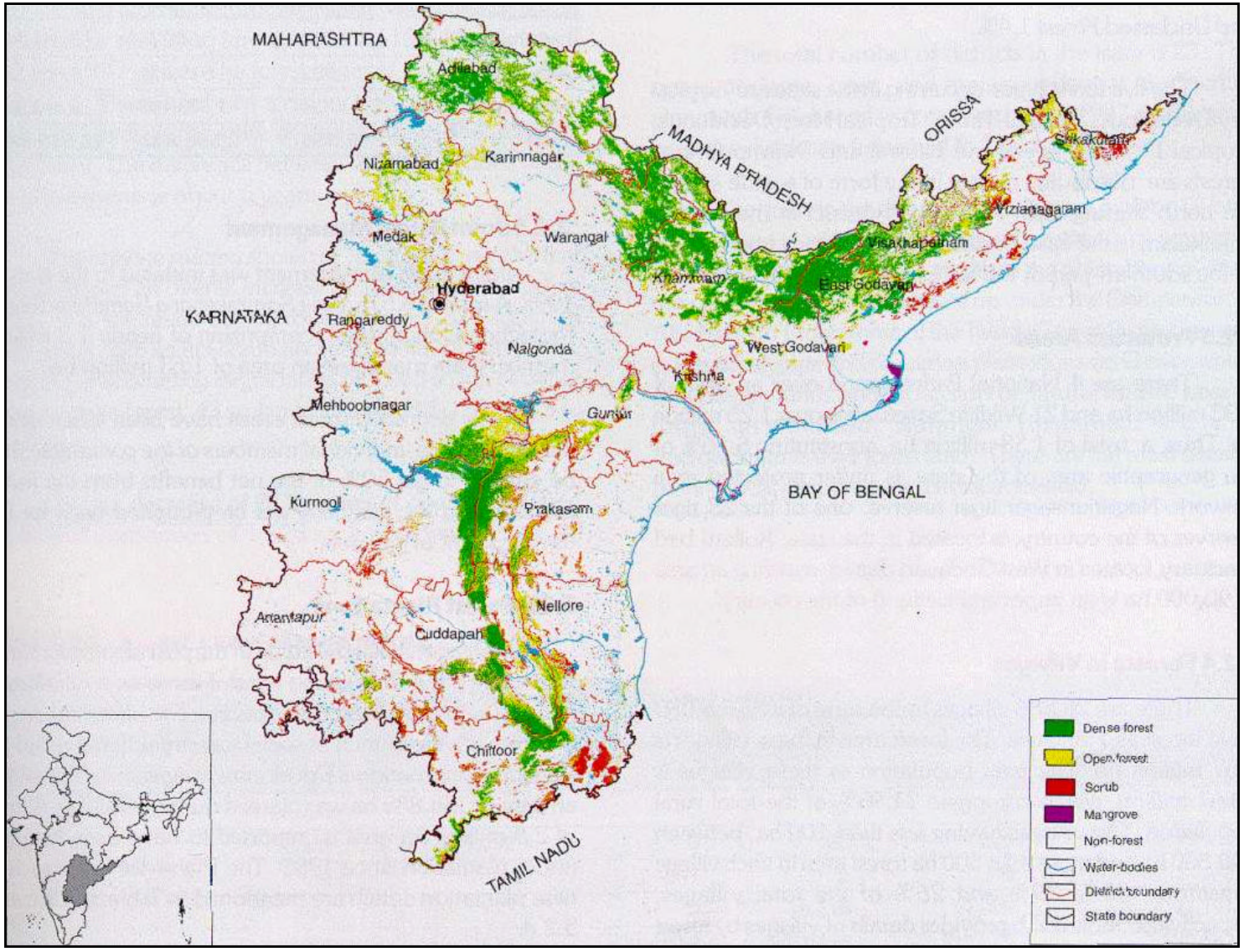
2.1 Forests in Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh, 5.66 mha had been declared state forest by 1955-56 and this has increased to 6.19 mha in 2001-02 (Economic Survey 2002-03). The total recorded forest area is currently 6.38 mha. The forest cover of Andhra Pradesh is of course different from the forest land area because of both deforestation, and the reservation of non-forest land. Based on satellite data (November 1998 to January 1999), it is 44,229 sq. km (or 4.42 mha) accounting for 16.08% of the geographic area, of which 24,190 sq.km are dense forest, 19,642 sq.km are open forest and 397 sq.km are mangroves. Despite a long period of argument over the veracity of the statistics, there appears to be emerging agreement between different estimates of forest cover (Reddy, et al, 2001).

The five forest types in the State are Tropical Dry Deciduous, Tropical Thorn, Tropical Moist Deciduous, Tropical Dry Evergreen and Littoral and Swamp forests. The forest area is distributed in two main strips. One is a wide East-West strip in the North of the state: running from Nizamabad district in the West to Srikakulam in the East. A belt also runs North-South from central to the southern part of the state in the Nallmalai hills. There are 4 National Parks spread over an area of 0.33 million ha and 21 Wildlife Sanctuaries over 1.25 million ha. A total of 1.58 mha, constituting 5.76% of the geographic area of the state, is under the protected area network. Nagarjunsagar tiger reserve, one of the 23 tiger reserves of the country, is located in the state. Kolleru bird sanctuary covering an area on 90,000 ha located in West Godavari district is an important wetland in the country.

In addition to the colonial government forest acts, post-colonial central government has also enacted FCA & WLPA acts to protect the forests. Further, the Sate government also enacted several acts and implemented several afforestation programmes. Although according to official statistics the area of state forestland has increased over the period, the actual forest cover has not increased for the same period. Besides, the official statistics often over-estimate the area under forests and other common pool resources and under-estimate the net sown area as the pre-existing occupation of lands under other uses which have been declared state 'forest' and illegal encroachments are not reflected in official data.

Map 1: Forest Cover of Andhra Pradesh, according to Forest Survey of India 1999



Nineteen percent of the 26,586 villages in Andhra Pradesh have 'forest' as land use. The forest area in these villages is 2.57 mha. With a total population 10.67 million they represent about 22 per cent of the total rural population. The villages having less than 100 ha, between 100-500 ha and more than 500 ha forest area in each village constitute 35%, 39% and 26% of the total villages respectively. The mean forest area per village is 506 ha. It is to be noted that nine districts viz. Most of the forest area in the state is accounted for by Adilabad, East Godavari, Khammam Mehboobnagar, Prakasham, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Warangal and West Godavari.

Table 1: Details of Forest Land Use in the Villages of Andhra Pradesh

No. of Villages in AP	**No. of villages with Forest as Land Use**	**Forest area in these Villages** (Million ha)	**Total Population in these Villages** (Millions)	**% of Total Population in the State**	**% of Villages with Forest Area < 100 ha**	**% of Villages with Forest Area 100 - 500 ha**	**% of Villages having Forest Area > 500 ha**
25, 586	5,080	2.57	10.67	21.95	35	39	26

Source: GoI, (MoEF).

2.2 Changes in Forest Land Use

Changes in land use are highly controversial and contested; just as the boundaries of states are even fought over, so line agencies of the state, like the forest department, are very stringent in overseeing their objectives within their territory, and are much more willing to increase area under their domain, than to relinquish it.

There are a number of ways land under Forest Department management may be re-allocated to another use. For instance area allotted for the rehabilitated persons due to projects, area occupied for the different government projects, area 'alienated' or 'encroached' by local people, irrigation projects, and so on., These kinds of activities have increased over the post-independence period. For example, between 1950s and 1983-84, 2.07 lakh hectares of forestland were lost of which, two-third were diverted for rehabilitation and agricultural purposes. However much of this loss has not been reflected in the official forest statistics.

The Forest Department claims over the nature and extent of 'encroachment' are increasing disputed by civil society groups and academics, and we must exercise caution in considering these figures, as by now it is abundantly clear that many of these lands fall under the 'disputed' category due to inadequacies in the legal processes by which largely tribal lands were declared state forests. According to official estimates, the total 'loss' of forestland had increased to 2.36 lakh hectares by 1991-92 (Table 2), and about 29 thousand hectares of 'encroached' forestland had been regularised by 1994. The area 'lost' due to encroachments has remained constant because only legalised encroachments are recorded here, while the illegal encroachments far exceed the legalised encroachments.

Much of the forest area lies in Schedule V areas of the state, in which the Constitution requires the protection of tribal rights, identity and culture through a different form of administration. However the Forest Department has not yet acknowledged the need to subordinate forest management practices to these constitutionally more important objectives. Neither has it acknowledged that much of what it classifies as 'encroached land is actually land under customary tribal 'podu' forest fallows management. This conflict between foresters' conventional views of what constitutes 'proper' forest management for timber production against indigenous livelihood-oriented forest management practices remain a long term theme in AP.

The area lost due to rehabilitation activities between the periods accounts for the second largest component of the forest area lost; both development activities and the ineffectiveness of the prevailing forest management regime has led to the loss of forest areas in Andhra Pradesh.

Table 2: Loss of Forests in Andhra Pradesh (in hectares)

Purpose	Up to 1983-84 (ha)	% to total area lost	Up to 1991-92 (ha)	% to total area lost
Rehabilitation	66,759	32.18	66,767	28.30
Agriculture	87,289	42.07	104,902	44.47
Non-agriculture	18,816	9.07	19,154	8.12
Singareni colonies	5,461	2.63	15,907	6.72
Encroachments	29,160	14.05	29,160	12.36
Total	***207,485***	***100.00***	***235,889***	***100.00***

Source: GoAP 'Facts and Figure's 1999, Forest Department.

Despite neglecting the underlying conflicts between conventional forest management and local livelihood priorities, the post-colonial AP Forest Department initiated several measures to further extend forest resources during the 1970s and 80's. Afforestation was attempted with the launch of the Social Forestry scheme aided by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), under which an area of 136,885 ha was planted during 1983-90. Additionally, plantations were taken up along riverbanks to prevent sand drift, along coastal areas as a windbreak and for fuel wood and fodder purposes. A total of 2.5 mha area is reported to have been brought under plantation since 1951 (although it is not clear how much of these planted areas survived).

2.3 Changes is Forest Condition

Not only have the forest areas declined but also the quality of the forest (forest cover) has declined in different regions of Andhra Pradesh: the extent of the degraded forests has been increased remarkably. According to the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), about 38 percent of the forest area in Andhra Pradesh was degraded in 1988-89. (Table 3) the extent of degradation was very high in AP when compare with the national level (24 percent). Although these statistics are challenged by many civil society groups as being misleading they suggest the ineffectiveness of the Forest Department in controlling the forest degradation in Andhra Pradesh.

Forest degradation is not uniform in different districts of the state. In some districts, the extent of degradation was very low than that of the other districts. The nature and extent of degradation has reflected on the revenue generation of the forests. The degradation of forests was mainly on the ineffectiveness of the Forest Department or non-cooperation of the people to protect the forest.

Table 3: Extent of Forest Degradation in Andhra Pradesh

District	Total Forest Area (ha)	Forest Area as % of land use	Degraded Forest area (ha)	% Forest Area	Population
Srikakulam	69,000	(11.9)	39,997	59.20	2,528,491
Vizianagaram	119,000	(18.3)	71,319	76.61	2,245,103
Visakhapatnam	441,000	(39.4)	132,417	32.69	3,789,823
East Godavari	323,000	(29.9)	51,571	17.44	4,872,622
West Godavari	82,000	(10.5)	22,831	25.96	3,796,144
Krishna	66,000	(7.6)	42,563	72.57	4,218,416
Guntur	162,000	(14.2)	136,847	91.11	4,405,521
Prakasam	442,000	(25.1)	85,335	19.25	3,054,941
Nellore	252,000	(19.2)	174,606	71.34	2,659,661
Chittoor	451,000	(29.9)	301,197	66.96	3,735,202
Cuddapah	502,000	(32.6)	141,852	28.05	2,573,481
Kurnool	351,000	(19.8)	89,337	29.58	3,512,266
Anantapur	197,000	(10.3)	129,765	79.09	3,639,304
Mahaboobnagar	303,000	(16.5)	68,933	23.46	3,506,876
Ranga Reddy	73,000	(9.7)	63,071	87.30	3,506,670
Medak	91,000	(9.4)	66,179	93.84	2,662,296
Nizamabad	181,000	(22.6)	78,097	46.30	2,342,803
Adilabad	723,000	(44.9)	178,837	25.67	2,479,347
Karimnagar	250,000	(21.2)	87,465	38.04	3,477,079
Khammam	843,000	(52.7)	145,461	18.52	2,565,412
Nalgonda	84,000	(5.9)	79,689	95.79	3,238,449
Warangal	371,000	(28.8)	108,316	29.37	3,231,174
Andhra Pradesh	*6,376,000*	*(23.2)*	*2,295,685*	*38.02*	*75,727,541*
All India	***65,710,815***	***(19.99)***	***16,274,270***	***24.77***	***1,027,015,247****

Source: NRSA, & Census of India 2001

Notes: Figures in brackets are percent of forest cover of the respective districts.

This NRSA data reflects more general problems with forest data in India: it doesn't pertain to 'legal' state forests but to actual forest cover over all land categories together. The all India figures of forest area do not agree with MoEF figures. There is an underlying need to improve the accuracy and conceptual clarity of forest data, to be based on the legal status of the land involved.

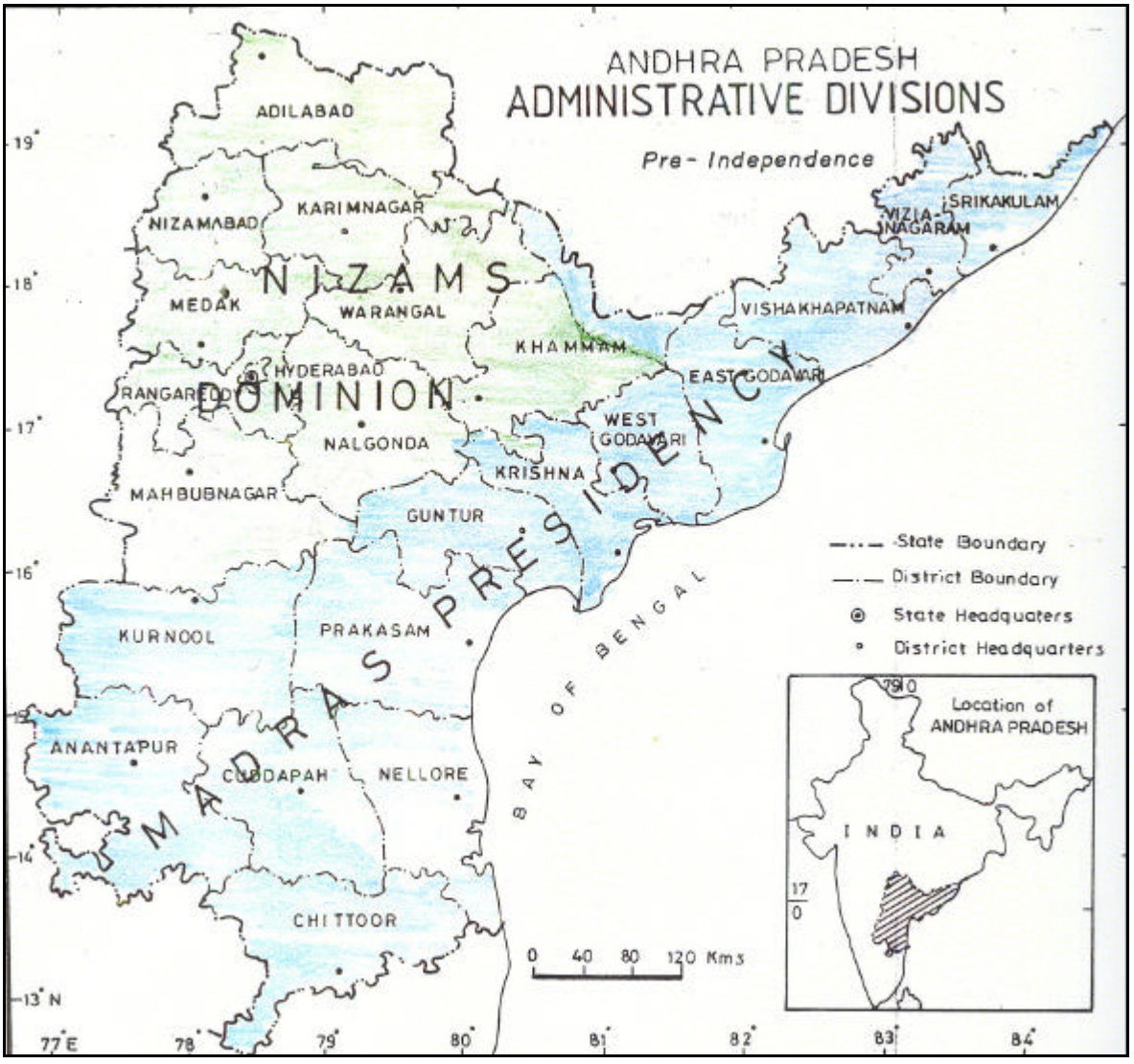
Only by the 1980s did the government begin to concede that without the co-operation of the people, who are using the forest resources for subsistence, forest conservation is virtually impossible. Consequently, Joint Forest Management (JFM) was introduced in the early 90s. By early 2000 the AP Government even moved on to introducing 'Community Forest Management' (CFM) in an attempt to improve upon JFM, (although the extent to which this change is presentational rather than substantive will be discussed below).

3 FOREST POLICIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

3.1 Introduction

Since the late nineteenth century, the present State Andhra Pradesh came under two different systems of rule: one part ruled under the British-administered Madras Presidency, the other by the Nizams of Hyderabad. Hence, the former part of the state (consisting of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Eluru, Machilipatanam, Ongole, Godavari, Kistna, Anantapur, Kurnool, Cuddapah, Nellore, Chittoor and Guntur) was following the Forest Acts of the Madras Presidency the other part under the Nizams (Adilabad, Karimnagar, Medak, Khammam, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Mahaboobnagar and Warangal districts) (see Map 2 below). The forest policy of present Andhra Pradesh must be understood by looking at both the Madras Presidency and Nizams' regime during the late eighteenth century till the formation of the current linguistic state.

Map 2: Administrative Divisions of Andhra Pradesh Pre-Independence



3.2 Forest Policy in Madras Presidency

As already discussed above, the Madras Presidency had taken a more considerate line in respect of local people's forest rights from the Indian Forest Act, manifested in the Madras Forest Act of 1882. This was followed and continued in Andhra Pradesh when the State of Andhra Pradesh was formed on the 1st November 1956; the laws in force in the respective territories before 1956 were continued by virtue of section 119 of the States reorganisation Act, 1956. There were two enactments in force, namely, Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Area) Forest Act 1882 (or Madras Forest Act 1882) and Andhra Pradesh (Telangana area) Forest Act 1915 (or Hyderabad Forest Act, 1915).

3.3 Forest Policy in Nizam's Domain

Under the Nizam rule, the forest resources were not managed separately, but along with the revenue administration, till the mid of nineteenth century. Under the revenue administration, forest resources were exploited through the permit system. Permit holders were allowed to cut down the forests without restriction. At the same time, customary rights of the local people were recognised. In other words, although the forest resources were allowed for commercial purposes, community needs were respected until the early nineteenth century. However, this did not create any conflict as long as the available forest resources were sufficient to meet both demands.

Although a separate department was established for forest management by the Nizam in 1857, it did not control the entire forest region, but only thirteen species. Except these, all other species were under the control of the revenue administration. Further conservation of forest was envisaged only in the last decade of the nineteenth century (1890). Under this Act, all the species were brought under the Forest Department. The role of Revenue Department in forest lands was completely withdrawn. The forest was classified into two categories viz., reserved forest and open forest.

While introducing the reserve forest, the Nizams never accommodated the tribal method of cultivation. The tribals were cultivating the land under a communal tenure system, in which they didn't have private ownership rights. Consequently, many tribals were forced to evacuate reserved forest lands during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to this, introduction of the communication facilities into the hill areas led to the non-tribal settlement and alienation of the tribal land during the same period in different parts of the Nizams territory.

Earlier in 1867 when a separate department was created during the premiership of Sir Salar Jung, the forests in Hyderabad State were considered subservient to the interest of agriculture and were thus administered by the District officials. It was placed under non-professional officers for 20 years and its work was only to protect and sell eight or nine valuable species of trees, designated as 'reserved' or *'irsali'* timber under a set of simple rules, while the rest of the produce and administration remained in the hands of the district officials. As a consequence, there existed dual control over the management of forests, which proved to be a failure. There was no regard for environmental balance because revenue officers cleared lakhs of acres of forests for agricultural purposes thus wiping out valuable timber. However, in 1887 the government secured the services of the trained European IFS officer, Mr. Ballantine, from Berar. He served in the domain of Nizam till 1893 during which period he was able to arrest forest abuses of unrestricted felling under *darkhast* (application) system and selected several tracts for reserves.

Later in the year 1893 the government declared vast tracts of forest as protected forests and placed them under the charge of Forest Department. The Government issued definite circular instructions for the administration of these protected areas. The Forest Act was enacted to obtain legal control over the forests in 1900 to consolidate over the instructions embodied in government circulars. The number of reserved timber species was increased in the non protected areas. The efforts of the department was directed mainly towards: survey and reservation of forest areas, introduction of

felling schemes and works of improvement, systematic exploitation of forest produce, development of a sustained revenue and consolidation and conservation of big valuable forest estate. The Forest Act of 1900 was found inadequate for the growing requirements of the Forest Department. It was, therefore superseded by a revised Forest Act of 1916, which laid the foundation for the establishment of a more substantial forest administration. This Act was again superseded by the Hyderabad Forest Act of 1945, which was modelled on the lines of Indian Forest Act (Gogia, 2002).

3.4 Forest Policy in Andhra Pradesh from 1956

With the formation of Andhra Pradesh after independence from Telangana and parts of the Madras Presidency, the Law Commission of Andhra Pradesh examined the integration of the two different laws. They discussed the provisions of the two enactments and examined corresponding laws in force in Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Mysore and Kerala. The Andhra Pradesh Forest Act, 1967 was thus drafted and passed by the legislature and it is in force from April 1967 (Gogia, 2002, Sunder et al., 2001). Various acts and rules were later introduced to complement and strengthen the existing forest policies. Under the A P Forest Act of 1967, forest offences rules (1969) were introduced describing in detail how forest officers can carry out the compounding prosecution when they combat the offence and the procedure for booking and fixation of penalty to the offender. Similarly, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Produce Transit Rules, 1970, were introduced to halt illegal movement of forest produce from or within the state unless it is accompanied by a permit issued by the government of the state from where such produce is imported and the said permit shall be valid only for the transport of such produce and such quantity to the destination specified therein.

A particularly significant change for local forest-dependent communities has been the introduction of the Andhra Pradesh Minor Forest Produce (Regulation of Trade) Act, 1971, introduced with regard to *Abnus* (Beedi) leaves, to ensure revenue to the government, creating a state monopoly in trading of forest produce in the state. It was accordingly decided to undertake legislative measures and drop the previous provisions where the contractors had much scope for manipulating their contract. Under this regulation the government or an officer or an agent appointed for a unit were identified for sale or purchase or cure or otherwise process or collect or store or transport any minor forest produce. Penalty was to be imposed for the violation of the Act. The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas Minor Forest Produce (Regulation of Trade) Regulations, 1979, was introduced to make provisions for the trade of certain minor forest produce by creation of a State monopoly in such trade in the scheduled areas of the State of Andhra Pradesh. The scheduled areas meant the areas, which have been or may be declared scheduled areas by the president under sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 6 of the fifth schedule to the constitution of India for safeguarding tribal rights and interests. It contained restrictions on purchase or transport of minor forest produce i.e., no person other than the corporation shall sell or purchase or cure or otherwise process or collect or store or transport any minor forest produce to which this regulation applies. The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas Minor Forest Produce (Regulation of trade) Rules, 1990, provide the definition of the 'accused' clearly along with the 'minor forest produce in transit', which includes produce stored in any place or in the margin of any public road or carts or other vehicles or not and the minor forest produce found in any river, canal or water weather in rafts or not. All these acts were aimed to create state monopoly in dealing with the forest produce although the constitution requires protection of tribal rights in Schedule V areas.

The State owns and manages almost 6.4 million hectares of forest land (effectively 23 percent of its area), a large part of which falls within scheduled areas. Earlier management strategies had focused on timber production and commercialisation. The formation of the Forest Development Corporation in AP reflected the revenue orientation of forest management regardless of forest dwelling communities. Government-enforced management has failed to reverse the trend of forest

degradation, and has even increased it, through the failed reforestation schemes, where clearance of natural forests for plantations of timber and pulp species has failed.

Social forestry programmes were introduced in the 1980s, in which plantation activities were encouraged on private and community lands by supplying planting materials through nurseries. These were set-up to promote fuel wood plantations on communal lands and tree growing on farms, but did not involve forest land. Canada India Development Assistance (CIDA) assisted the project (Venkatraman and Falconer, 1998, Gopal and Upadhyay, 2001).

3.5 Tribal Livelihoods, Rights, and Uprisings

3.5.1 Tribal Livelihoods

Some 65% of the forest area of AP is spread over 8 predominantly tribal districts in the northern part of the state. These areas are amongst the least developed in AP, and indeed in the whole of India. Historically, tribal communities have depended on forests for their livelihoods, both for cultivation and forest product collection. Many tribals engage in cultivation in upland forests, called Podu. Podu cultivation involves the clearance of small patches of hill forests for subsistence cultivation (e.g. various crops including sorghum, millet). After a few years the cultivators move on to another area. A cultivator household may have customary tenure to a long rotation cycle of plots over perhaps 10 years or more, and move between them.

3.5.2 Forest Reservation and Tribal Uprisings

Tribals were severely affected during the colonial period by reservation of forests, and have strongly resisted the erosion of customary rights in the forest. The relationship between these tribals and the government agencies, particularly the Forest Department, became very stained, and there have been both political movements and armed struggles by tribals to regain control over their lands, with numerous risings, including most recently the 'Naxalite' movements. .

Alluri Sitaram Raju had led an uprising during 1922-24 against tribals being forced to lay roads with free labour. By the close of 1832, disturbances in the Zamindari of Kasipuram, Payakaraopet and Palakonda of the present day Srikakulam district resulted in passing of Act XXIV of 1839 wherein the collector was vested with extraordinary powers. The implementation of this Act led to upsurges in many other areas. The disturbances, which started with the passing of Act XXIV of 1839, continued into the 20th century, which saw Rampa Rebellion in Godavari District when tribals were barred from entering into forests. The Gond Revolt of 1940 in Adilabad district started because of the influx of outsiders and land alienation following the new forest conservancy laws. In the post-independence period several heavily forested districts in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have witnessed armed rebellion by the so called Naxalite Movement directed against the state (Saxena, 2000). The Naxalite movement erupted initially in the Srikakulam district during 1968-70 due to exploitation by the sahukars (Rao and Rao, 1982; Arnold, 1982).

3.5.3 Tribal Welfare

The issue of tribal welfare was an urgent one for the Nizam, partly due to the tension and periodic violence between administrator and tribals. The Nizam appointed the anthropologist Furer-Haimendorf to study the issue of tribal welfare and make recommendations, which led to the 'rehabilitation' of tribals on forest land, and in Adilabad alone it is estimated that over 45,000 ha were provided to them. In other areas Tribals continued to challenge the reservation of forests they had customarily used, and this led in 1972 to the regularisation of 27,952 ha of land (land under podu prior to 1964).

Over the 20th Century, with increasing tribal populations and reducing forest extent and rights, podu rotations have been reducing. A further recent issue exacerbating tribal tensions was the political decision in 1977 notifying lambadas ethnic group as scheduled tribes (ST). This affected the Telangana region and resulted in an increased influx of lambada families from neighbouring districts of Maharashtra state. This also increased the pressure on forests and further loss of the indigenous Gond tribals' lands to the more aggressive lambadas.

There is intense argument over labels and definitions in terms of tribal rights. Tribals claim their customary use of forest land for podu cultivation is being labelled 'encroachment' by the Forest Department whereas they say it is the FD who has historically grabbed the land and is now criminalising its historic users. Indeed many of these lands do fall under the 'disputed' category due to inadequacies in the legal processes by which largely tribal lands were declared state forests. . Foresters on the other hand commonly argue that regularisation of podu land has only encouraged tribal podu to expand, led to immigration, and strengthened popular demands for further regularisation.

The debate has remained an intractable dilemma for many years. One might have hoped that the implementation of Joint Forest Management could mark a turning point in this dilemma, although we will see it has only exacerbated the friction to date.

4 JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT IN ANDHRA PRADESH

4.1 Local People's Participation in Forest Management

Over the past few years, national and state-level policies that support the rights and needs of rural communities to forest resources have been formulated, beginning a reversal of century-old trends (Poffenberger and Betsy McGean, 1996). Communities, on their own and through voluntary organisations, have brought pressure on policy-makers to recognise that they are also interested in conservation and that they ought to be involved in forest management (Bhatt, 1987). These pressures have contributed to changes in policy, which have accommodated community participation in forest management. Iyengar and Shukla (1999) have argued that prior to JFM the problem of Forest Department was essentially a problem of failure in implementing a centralised regulation policy. The ethical codes evolved by the communities over a long period for the use of collectively owned common property resources were far more binding on the members in regulating their use.

Even before the introduction of JFM in India, community-based forest management was practised in different parts of Andhra Pradesh (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 Andhra Pradesh had introduced people's participation in forest management in 1983; the Forest Department 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 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, nd). Leasing out forest lands to weaker sections for raising fuel wood plantation was taken up with CIDA assistance. Many people could not access these entitlements, as the Forest Conservation Act 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 Upadhyaay, 2001).

4.2 The Department of Forests' JFM Implementation Strategy

As in other parts of India, forests in Andhra Pradesh by the early 1990s were recognised to be under serious threat. Although the number of staff in the Forest Department had increased during the post-independence period, the area under forest cover had declined, due to an assortment of causes: failed reforestation, timber smuggling, overexploitation by industry, fires, agricultural encroachment, and unregulated use for firewood and other basic needs.

The government realised that to protect the forest cover people's co-operation was essential. In 1972, participatory forest management was initiated on an experimental basis in Arabari in Midnapore district of West Bengal, and based on these experiences the Government of India accepted the concept of Joint Forest Management in a notification in 1990. Subsequently 27 of the state governments adopted this programme. Currently there are estimated to 84,632 village forest protection committees functioning in the country managing over 17.3 mha (or 22%). of the countries' forests. Around 83 lakh families associated with the JFM of which, over half of them belong to the Scheduled Castes and one-third Scheduled Castes (Bahuguna et al 2004).

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 Andhra Pradesh framed a revised State Forest Policy in 1993. Under this, Vana Samarakshana Samithis (VSS) was established to protect the forest resources, mainly in the hill areas.

SD Mukherji, previously the Principle Chief Conservator 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 social forestry plantations of fuelwood and fodder outside the 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.' (Mukherji in Bahuguna 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 Vana Samarakshana Samithis (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-plains 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 micro plans 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 Forestry Department formally minutiae the duties, functions, and entitlements of everyone involved (Venkatraman and Falconer, 1998).

The micro plans 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 Forest Department 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.

Vana Samarakshana Samithis (VSS) were entitled to 50 per cent (no rights granted to date) of the 'net incremental value' of forest produce such as NTFPs, grasses and dry fuel-wood besides a 50 per cent share from the final harvest in lieu of forest protection. In 1996, the village communities became entitled to 100 per cent of the 'net incremental value' of the usufructs compared to lower percentages

in other states. However, the GCC retains monopoly rights over most NTFPs and at least 50% or as much as is required of the VSSs income must be re-invested in the JFM forest.

To generate income from degraded forests takes time. The Forest Department also seek to motivate the members by addressing social needs; in some cases developing and supporting the village development through women's thrift groups, drinking water is 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 Forestry Department, now attempting to present itself as integrating the conservation and development aims of the government in forest areas.

Although JFM was introduced in early 1990s, the growth in numbers was very slow till 1995-96. From a mere 133 VSS (Vana Samrakshana Samithi) 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. Around 13 lakh people, including 6 lakh women are involved. Funds from the World Bank aided Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project, the Employment Assurance Scheme and other centrally sponsored schemes have being 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.

Table 4: Progress Of Joint Forest management Implementation in Andhra Pradesh: 1994/95-1999/2000

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

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). We lack figures on how many of these VSS are actually functional.)

The number of VSS and areas under JFM in different districts are shown in Table 5 below. The largest number of VSS concentrated in Adilabad, Visakhapatnam, Khammam districts, those districts with both high forest cover (see table 3 above) and coincidentally those where podu has been seen as a major problem by the FD. .

Table 5: Number of VSS/EDC in Districts of Andhra Pradesh 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
Cuddapah	236
Kurnool	228
Anantapur	215
Mahaboobnagar	291
Ranga Reddy	132
Medak	235
Nizamabad	216
Adilabad	978
Karimnagar	332
Khammam	506
Nalgonda	118
Warangal	243
Andhra Pradesh	***6,557***

Source: Sharma, P.K (1999) `Joint Forest Management: The Andhra Pradesh Experience' p.105.

The Andhra Pradesh 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 to attract investments
(c) encouragement to Social Forestry, 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 Andhra Pradesh - 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 government order laid down certain rules for the VSS formation, its roles and responsibilities along with that of the Forestry Department and elucidated the benefit-sharing policies. Andhra Pradesh'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 percent or as much as required of this revenue should be ploughed back for the management

or enrichment of the forests. 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 GCC at it's rates (despite the fact that PESA endows gram sabhas in schedule V areas with the ownership of all 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

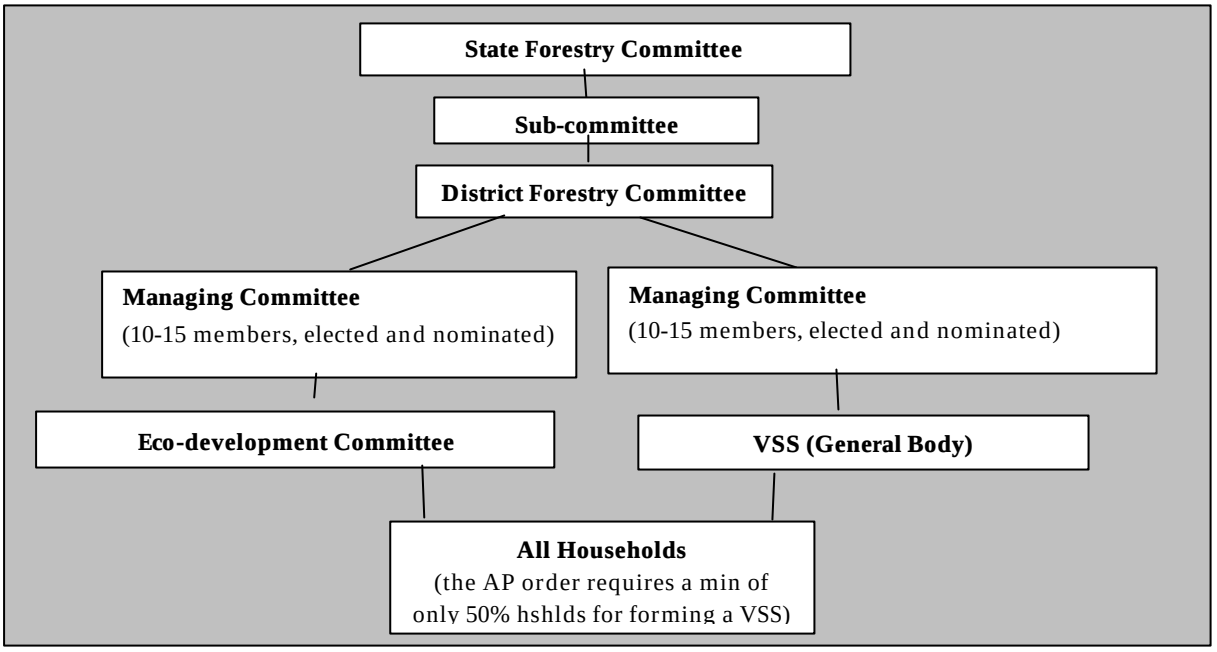
There are a number of committees related to JFM operate at the state, district and village level in Andhra Pradesh, which are as follows:

State Level JFM Committee

The state level committee consisted of Principal Secretary of EFES&T as its chairman, Principal Secretary of Social Welfare or his nominee, Managing Director of Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation Limited, Commissioner of Tribal Welfare, Director/ Commissioner of Agriculture Department, Managing Director of Girijan Co-operative Corporation 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 concept.

In order to strengthen the JFM further various government orders were enacted in Andhra Pradesh. 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 Andhra Pradesh 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 Forest Department as per the rules and the guidelines issued thereon by the Government of India (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 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, Project Officer of Integrated Tribal Development Agency, 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 of the Headquarters of Territorial Division as Convenor Member. The function of the committee was 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 Andhra Pradesh 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 Integrated Tribal Development Agency 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-divisional Forest officer/Divisional Forest officer 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 Andhra Pradesh 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 Forest Department to gain almost total control over 'tribal development'.

Village Level Committee

The works and funds of the VSS are handled jointly by the chairperson 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. Their responsibilities include bringing awareness, motivation, help in preparing micro-plans, 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 Joint Forest Management plan in coordination with the forest range officer and in consultation with all sections particularly women and other disadvantaged sections of the community. The Joint Forest Management Plan should be approved in the general body of the VSS. The Forest Department assists the VSS in selection/demarcation of the forest area to be covered under JFM, in preparation of micro-plan, approving the micro-plan, 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 micro plan 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 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 general body elects a managing committee (MC) of 10 to 15 members, 33 per cent of whom must be women, who in turn elect a chairperson 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 chairperson'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 general body 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.

4.3 State Government and the Role of the Chief Minister

In 1995, the Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu, saw the potential in JFM in creating employment to rural youth and women if scaled up in to a state-wide programme. Through his personal involvement he tried to turn the strategy into a 'mass movement' programme by focussing the attention on ensuring access to resources, and (according to Venkatraman and Falconer, 1998) and also to creating wage labour opportunities. He initially envisaged a design wherein small groups could be formed and allotted land for afforestation, although but his 'brainchild' could not take off

because the forest officials were of the view that such a move would contravene the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act as well as go against the spirit of JFM. Therefore, on January 1996, Vana Samarakshna Udyamam (Forest Protection Movement) was launched seeking to expand vast area under JFM, mobilising funds from rural development schemes already in operation in the state, such as the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (Mukherji, 1998). Amusingly the resources available under the World Bank funded AP forestry project are much more than the CM's JFM, sometimes causing apprehensions of jealousy between villages. Naidu's keen interest and enthusiasm has given the JFM scheme in Andhra Pradesh an advantage in the sense that he has raised its profile, and ensured that central funding has been pursued.

JFM has therefore been implemented through a number of different funding schemes, as is shown in the table below. The World Bank supported AP Forest Project has led to the largest number of group formations (as will be discussed below). The EAS and NABARD support have also both led to significant numbers.

Table 6: VSS Formation by Scheme (2000)

Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project (World Bank)	Centrally Sponsored Scheme	*Beedi* Leaf	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)	Compensatory Afforestation	Andhra Pradesh Hazard Mitigation;	Employment Assurance Scheme	Total
2,910	411	306	918	75	26	1,956	6,602

Source: Mukherji in Bahuguna 2004

4.4 Donor Roles

The World Bank started discussing an AP Forestry project in 1991, when the AP FD 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 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. When a new PCCF tried to change these principles, the Bank was able to have him replaced with a person of their choice. About 30 per cent 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 World Bank for loan included restructuring of the Forest Department, 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 Forest Department 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 per cent. Civil society activists interpreted this as quite a coup for the FD with the Bank's help (Rangachari and Mukherji, 2000). The financial support extended by the World Bank in 1994 for the first phase, which ended successfully in September 2000 (Nanda, 2002

4.5 NGO roles

NGOs must be distinguished into advocacy groups and service providers. One of the most unfortunate aspects of the JFM implementation is the way many NGOs have been co-opted by the Forest Department into a passive service-provision role. NGOs are paid thousands of rupees to provide services such as VSS formation. This has meant that they have had a vested interest in delivering placid and cooperative local VSS groups to the FD. This is generally where their involvement ends. Many VSS visited in the course of the current research project complained that they had only met NGOs for PRA activities during formation, and since then the action plans had been forgotten and the NGOs had not been seen. Privately NGO staff complain of feeling compromised by the power and financial leverage of the FD. In other rural development schemes ,such as watershed development, NGOs have played the role of implementing agent over the several the scheme has proceeded, giving hem an ongoing relationship in the village. IN JFM the FD itself has monopolised this role, giving NGOs very little to do.

There are a small number of very active advocacy groups in Andhra, primarily engaged in defence of tribal rights and land tenure, including YAKSHI in Hyderabad and Adivasi Akya Vedika in Paderu. They have been amongst the strongest critics of the JFM programme, their position based on grass-roots experiences. Their views are reflected in the following sections.

4.6 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, social forestry, farm forestry, minor forest produce, 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.

There is thus an underlying contradiction between JFM and the Panchayat Raj act. Because the Panchayat Raj act is a law whereas the JFM scheme is based on administrative orders, the former must take constitutional and legal precedence over the later, it is asserted by many.

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 per cent 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 social forestry and farm forestry and minor forest produce 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 Ministry of Environment and Forests 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).

5 IMPACT OF JFM IN ANDHRA PRADESH

The following paragraphs present both positive as well as subdued impacts along with the shortcomings of the JFM programme 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. In the second section we consider the evidence that local people have not been empowered, and that benefits have not been entirely equitably distributed.

5.1 Positive impacts

Evidence suggests that the swift expansion of JFM in Andhra Pradesh has led to regeneration of forests and the resulting economic gains of local people. Additional benefits have been the reduction of forest land conversion for agriculture, reduction of illicit timber felling, and additionally improved safety for forestry staff. However many of the glowing 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 has been used as a show-case example: it was where JFM was launched in AP on May 23, 1993, and became the first VSS in Andhra Pradesh to win official recognition. The 'village committee' comprised of 50 per cent 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 Rs0.36 millions from the sale of teak poles, the first round of thinning in an 80 year teak management rotation. A number of non-timber forest products (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).

5.1.1 Resource Improvement

The primary aim of JFM has been to improved 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.

Table 7: Change in Forest Cover in AP 1993 to 1999.

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

Furthermore a number of case studies bear out the claim that 'better protection of forests has been the greatest achievement of JFM' (Mukherji p.66 in Bahuguna et al 2004) give the same story. Here is a selection of examples:

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 progress. Not stopping here the VSS also indulged in 'pasture development and Community hall building' (Muralidharudu, et al., 1997).

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.

5.1.2 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 Maydukar Mandal in Cuddapah district. A PRA exercise was undertaken in 1996 and a micro plan 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 Chintakommadinne mandal in Cuddapah 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 Forest Department 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 Mukherji, 2000).

The data from 120 VSSs accounting for 5 percent 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. 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.

5.1.3 Community Development

Mallett (2000) citing the example of Adilabad district in Andhra Pradesh 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 Mukherji (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.

5.1.4 Gender Issues

Coming to gender issues, AP is one of the states, which has promoted the 'women self-help group's known as 'Mahila Podupu Sangam 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.

5.2 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:

5.2.1 Asymmetric Power relations between VSS and Forest Department

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 the 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 into plantation on state forest lands, on the pretext of 'fund crunch' (i.e. lack of funds). The idea was seen as a design against the very interests of the 'tribal' in particular and 'environment' in general, and under pressure from NGOs, human rights activists and opposition political parties the government backtracked (Mahapatra, 2000).

5.2.2 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 finding 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 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.

5.2.3 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'. Currently the villagers cannot claim on the 'old growth' (existing stock of trees).

Of even more fundamental concern is breach of faith by the Department on the matter of 'profit sharing and compounding fees', since it is understood by the authors that at present no VSS has received such expected benefits, leading to mistrust and anger.

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 Andhra Pradesh.

5.2.4 Forest Boundary Conflicts

Some other studies found that disputes over forest boundary due to the ignorance of Forest Department 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.

5.2.5 Timber Smuggling and Nexus with Forest Department Staff

Checking degradation from smuggling of timber is a much claimed achievement of the JFM, but in many places this statement negates the reality. For instance, smuggling of timber was openly taking place in broad day light in Srikakulam district. There are claims of the NGOs having seen the timber being stacked and transported illegally in the very presence of the MRO and other revenue staff in Dommingivalasa.

5.2.6 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 Forest Department (Rangachari and Mukherji, 2000) Whilst this is viewed as a success by the forest department 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 have 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. Unfortunately in spite of resolutions available on this issue nothing concrete is coming up. Therefore 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 Forest Department and the World Bank in reclamation of forestland under Podu.

According to SAKTI, a local NGO, the Forest Department 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 Forest Department 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 (Kameshwar Rao et. al., 1995-96).

5.2.7 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. 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 & 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 general body, 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) study found that women were playing very little role in the management of JFM in Paderu of the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.

5.3 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. A lack of non-clarity of these terms leads to serious confusion (Jeffery and Sunder, 1999). as has been the case with benefit sharing

5.3.1 Power Asymmetries

A further lacuna in the provision of VSS is the asymmetrical power relationship between the Forest Department and the villagers. Participation of the village people in the planning process of JFM has in practice been ignored by the Forest Department. The micro-plan 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. The second copy is with the ranger, which is never shown.

Another aspect which are 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.

5.3.2 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 (Joint Forest Management - A Critique, Study). 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.

5.3.3 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 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 management

committees and those few who know about it are unsure of their roles, in such circumstances it becomes immaterial whether stipulated 30 per cent quota of filling the management committee 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.

5.3.4 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 subcommittees 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).

5.3.5 Livestock and Livelihoods

The recent grazing policy, drafted in the backdrop of Mr. Naidu's 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. The reintroduction of indiscriminatory grazing fees for livestock (as high as 40 rupees 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 World Bank to benefit the local elites and 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 are 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 Andhra Pradesh that the JFM was successful in those villages where there is considerable alternative employment generation such as the 'food for work policy'. 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 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 BCs in honing their leadership positions through reservations especially in the minor forest produce 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.

6 COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT: A NEW FOREST POLICY OF AP?

With the evolution of the JFM policy in AP, more recently the World Bank has promoted a new model, that of 'Community Forest Management' – the change in label meant to denote a change in emphasis to the further empowerment of local communities. Whether this has been the case or not in practice, we consider in this section.

6.1 Vision 2020 and Forest Management

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has issued a 'vision statement' in 2001, entitled 'Vision 2020'. The document, drafted with the help of a team of US management consultants unfamiliar with India let alone the rural development challenges in AP, has been greeted with alarm and derision by commentators and civil society groups, concerned by its somewhat fanciful assortment of programmes, many envisaging a corporate-oriented agrarian transformation likely to further marginalise large sections of rural society. The document incorporates a vision for the main sectors, including for the forestry sector, which follows the approach envisaged for the development of forests by the National Forestry Action Plan:

(a) protecting the existing forest resources,
(b) improvement of forest productivity,
(c) reduction of total demand for forest products,
(d) strengthening of policy and institutional framework and
(e) expansion of forest area,

The focal theme of the vision for the State forest sector is sustainable management of forest resources through a 'participatory' approach, emphasising the protection and regeneration of forests and forestland to ensure the environment and its sustainability for the future generations. The strategies evolved are in tune with the National Forestry Action Plan and vision for the state. They specifically address the various areas of forestry and provide direction for future planning and development such as (a) conservation and improvement of the quality of existing forests, (b) strengthening social forestry activities, (c) streamlining forest management strategies, (d) encouragement to people's participation in forest management, and (e) conserving biodiversity and genetic resources.

The reality of the participatory rhetoric is revealed in the livestock policy, and as regards traditional tribal podu cultivation practises. The present policy of free grazing in the forests is seen as detrimental to regeneration and establishment of vegetation, and in this area there are envisaged coordinated efforts with the animal husbandry department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to (a) improve quality of livestock in forest fringe areas so that number of cattle heads will be rationalized duly enhancing their yields and (b) to augment fodder resources both inside and outside designated forests to cater to growing demand for fodder. A separate policy statement to address the above will be issued after deliberating with stakeholders.

Podu cultivation is also specifically addressed, with insensitivity to the complex issues of tribal rights and customary livelihoods frequently displayed in the bureaucracy. The tribals are to be 'educated' about its 'adverse effects' and will be 'motivated to take up viable alternative land use practices' on such lands. This will be ensured through close co-ordination with the agriculture development and Tribal Welfare initiatives of the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Extending forestry activities to non-traditional areas outside notified forests to augment the forest resources is also forwarded as another important policy (remarkably reverting to the 'Social Forestry' argument regardless of its failure). It is intended to provide generation of biomass outside the designated forests for meeting the needs of local people and reduces dependence and pressure on the

forests. The activities like farm forestry, afforestation of village common lands why, if they are meant for grazing and pasture? The activities like farm forestry, afforestation of village common lands and tank foreshores, afforestation around urban agglomerations in the form of green belt, avenue plantations along roads, railway lines and canal bunds, aesthetic plantations in urban and semi urban areas, afforestation on temple / endowment lands, etc, will be taken up to meet the objective.

The Forest Department envisages for itself an increasing multi-dimensional role, and institutional reform is planned to accommodate this, involving decentralization through delegation of more administration / financial powers, administrative reforms, reorganization of forest areas, and redeployment of staff as per emerging needs, providing adequate skills and equipment to the lower staff at cutting edge, etc. The policy will also address financial constraints faced by the different stakeholders including the local communities by creating revolving funds, levying user charges and recycling revenue for forest development.

Different departments work in the same villages, with similar objectives, but in isolation or sometimes at cross-purposes will be specially looked into for better results with efficient utilization of available resources by coordinating and integrating with appropriate agencies and mechanisms, for this purpose, coordinating mechanisms will be developed at village, ITDA, Forest Division, District and State levels through multidisciplinary committees. At the Village level such committee will function under the overall guidance of village Sarpanch. At all the other levels they will be headed by bureaucrats of appropriate level and will compose of representatives of all concerned departments, NGOs, VSS and members. Separate order will be issued on their composition, duties and responsibilities.

6.2 Community Forest Management

The positive response to the JFM policy in AP encouraged policy makers, with support from the World Bank, to refine the approach to manage the forest through 'Vana Samrakshana Samithies' on the lines of Community Forest Management (CFM). This approach aims to upgrade the initiatives taken under JFM. While JFM has been a partnership between the forest-dependent communities and the Forest Department, 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).

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 joint forest management. 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 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 micro-plans 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.

6.3 Shortcomings of CFM Policy

Some apprehensions are expressed by some commentators with regard to the latest CFM policy.

6.3.1 Exclusion

Sarin (nd, Critique, AP CFM Project) 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.

6.3.2 Lack of Local Management Planning

Although in theory a valuable tool for ensuring forest management reflects local needs, in practice the 'micro plan's have generally conformed to the prescriptions of the wider FD working plan, rather .

6.3.3 Lack of Representation

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.

6.3.4 Benefit Entitlement

Although VSS are supposedly entitled to all NTFPs, due to the GCCs monopoly VSSs are still expected to get NTFP permits from the DFO.

6.3.5 Land rights

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 Forest Department 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 Forest Department by 1994, over 327,742 hectares of forest land 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 (nd, Critique, AP CFM Project) questions the reclamation of the podu land from the tribals by the Forest Department 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. The matter came to a head with the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) issuing 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 Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, 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 right s 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 Community forest management 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 GPCMSs (Girijan Primary Co-operative Marketing Society) 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. More over 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).

6.1 The Difference between JFM and CFM

Community Forest Management is envisaged as distinct from JFM in a number of ways (see table 6 below). 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 Forest range officer 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 Forest Department role as project implementer with the help of VSS community. But CFM envisages Forest Department 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.

In the light of all the Government Orders on JFM and the proposal put up by the PCCF of Andhra Pradesh 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 of 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 Forest Department 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 Community Forest Management Project).

Table 8 Contrast Between JFM and CFM

	JFM	CFM
implemented	GO 173 of December 1996	GO 12 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 Forest range officer 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
Forest Department 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

6.4 Continuing Tension between Tribal Groups and the Forest Department

In a letter written by 13 NGOs to Edwin R. Lim, Country Director, The World Bank 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. Linn 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). 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.

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APPENDIX

Figure 2: Flow chart depicting CFM Project Monitoring Unit Organisation chart

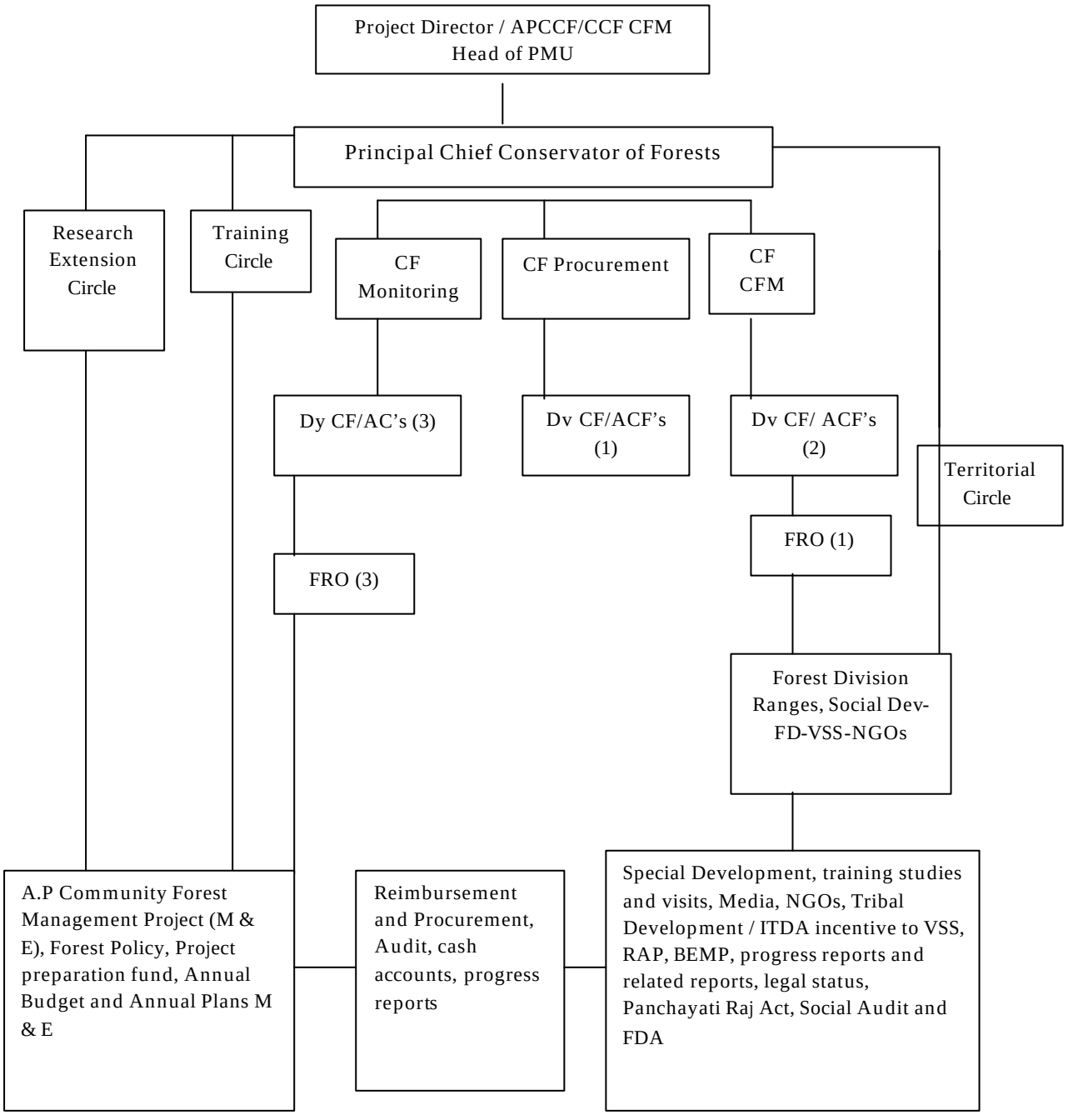

Figure 3: Flow Chart of CFM Depicting the Linkages in Planning, Implementation and Monitoring System of the Tribal development Plan, System of Resettlement Action Plan and Reporting Channel

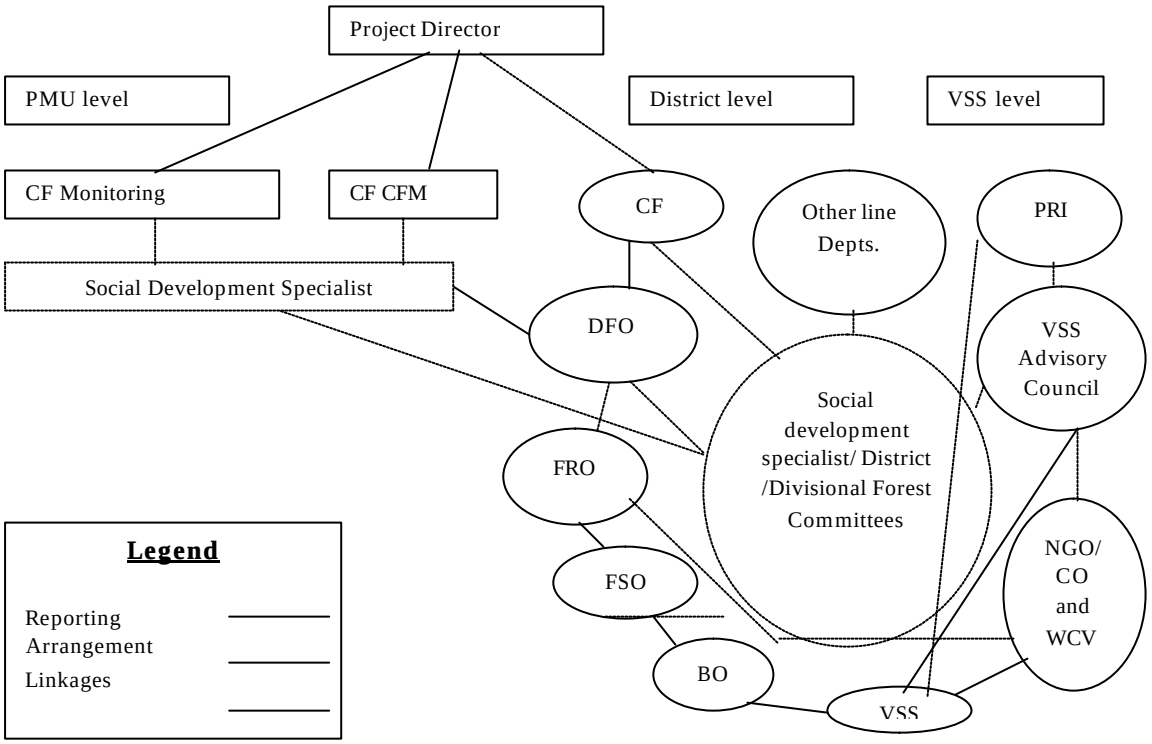

Figure 4: Flow chart depicting CFM Process

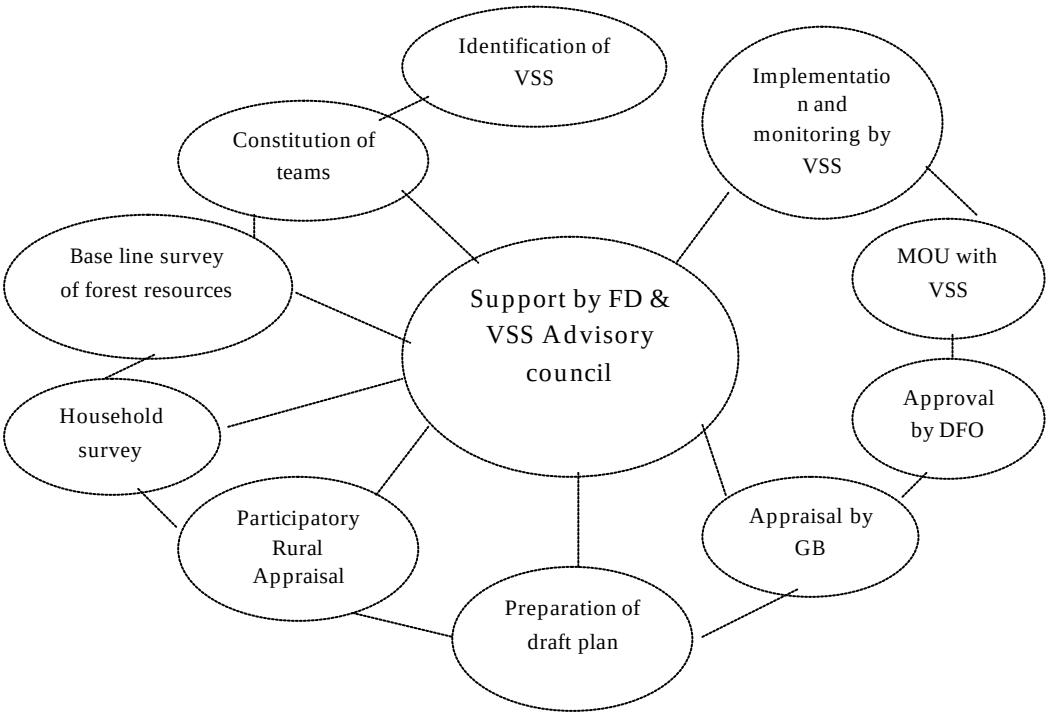

Figure 5: Flow Chart of CFM Depicting Details of the Mechanism of Fund Flow to VSS

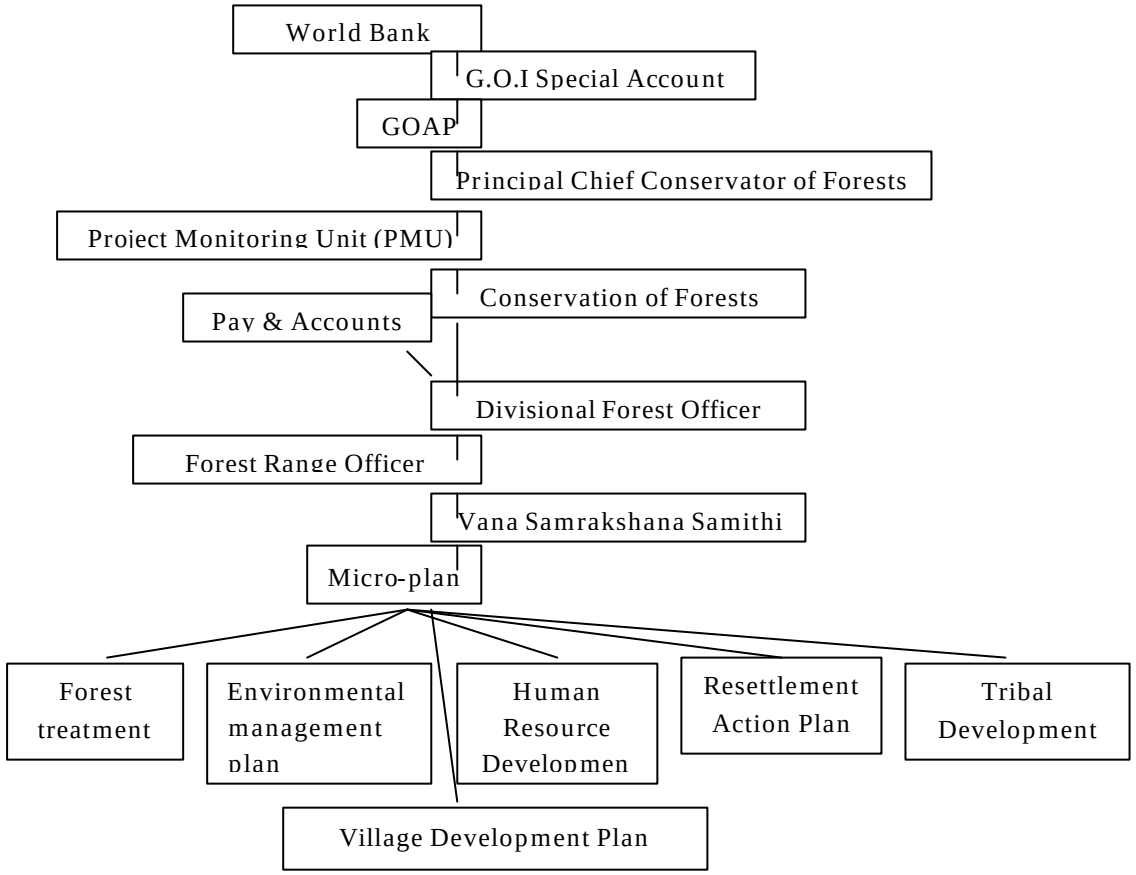

Table 9: Inter-Sectoral Co-ordination Envisaged under CFM

Level	Responsible Agency	Product document	Role of Forest Department	Linkages	Coordinate Structure
Community	VSS	Micro plan	Formation, administrative, technical and financial support	Other village plans from other resource based SHGs.	Janmabhoomi G.P meetings
ITDA	ITDA	Tribal development plan	Technical Budgetary	APFD, DRDA, DPIP, VTDA, SHGs	ITDA level committee
Forest Division	APFD	Working plan	Preparation and implementation	Technical issues Micro-plans	Division level coordination committees
District	District Collector	Annual plan and allied subjects	Technical support	Line departments, NGOs, VSS, other stake holders	District level coordinate committees
PMU	APFD	Annual plans performance	Technical, Budgetary, Administrative	Other stakeholders environmentalists, NGOs, VSS	PMU
State Govt.	GOAP	Vision 2020, state forest policy, Budget support	Budgetary Administrative, Policy	Other line departments, stake holders,	State Forestry Committee

Source: A P Community Forest Management Project