

Proceedings of the JFM Nodal Officers Meeting

5th December 2001

Van Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi

List of Abbreviations

AP: Andhra Pradesh
CF: Conservator of Forests
CCF: Chief Conservator of Forests
DCF: Deputy Conservator of Forests
DFO: Divisional Forest Officer
DFID: Department for International Development
FDA: Forest Development Agency
FPC: Forest Protection Committee
HRMS: Hill Resource Management Societies
IBRAD: Institute of Biosocial Research and Development
JBIC: Japan Bank for International Cooperation
JFM: Joint Forest Management
JFMC: Joint Forest Management Committee
JFPM: Joint Forest Planning and Management
MoEF: Ministry for Environment & Forests
NAEB: National Afforestation and Ecodevelopment Board
NGO: Non Governmental Organisation
NTFP: Non-Timber Forest Produce
PCCF: Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
PRI: Panchayati Raj Institution
RUPFOR: Resource Unit for Participatory Forestry
SHG: Self-Help Group
SIDA: Swedish International Development Agency
SIG: Self-Initiated Group
UP: Uttar Pradesh
VFC: Village Forest Committee
VP: Van Panchayat
VSS: Van Sanrakshan Samiti

Proceedings of the Joint Forest Management (JFM) Nodal Officers Meeting

5th December 2001

Van Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi

Agenda

To:

- *review the progress of JFM in different states*
- *to collect state and division level data on various monitoring parameters*
- *inform JFM Nodal Officers about Resource Unit for Participatory Forestry (RUPFOR) and its role as a neutral Stakeholders' Forum on JFM*
- *explain and discuss the Forest Development Agency (FDA) concept*
- *discuss problems faced while implementing JFM*

MORNING SESSION

(Chaired by Mr. D. C. Sud, *Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Rajasthan* and Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, *Deputy Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) and Member Secretary, JFM Network*)

I. Member Secretary's Welcome Remarks

By Dr. V. K. Bahuguna

All participants in the JFM Nodal Officers Meeting were welcomed. *Dr. Bahuguna* reiterated the importance of the MoEF's JFM Cell in monitoring JFM activities at a national level and the need for different State Forest Departments to appoint JFM Nodal Officers to foster better coordination between the MoEF and State Forest Departments.

Dr. Bahuguna also emphasised on the critical importance of gathering JFM monitoring information and expressed hope that the meeting would help provide the same.

A special welcome was accorded to *Mr. D. C. Sud*, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Rajasthan, who was requested to chair the session and express his views on the importance of monitoring JFM and how state JFM Nodal Officers could help the MoEF in this process.

II. Remarks by Mr. D. C. Sud

Main points made by Mr. Sud were as follows:

- There are around 3000 Forest Protection Committees (FPCs) in Rajasthan, which can be broadly classified into three categories based on their degree of activeness - active, average and inactive. Around 40-50% of the FPCs are inactive there is a need for policy-makers to identify and analyse the reasons for this.

- JFM can not be implemented overnight and it will take some time to establish itself.
- Main role of JFM Nodal Officers is to keep in touch with the FPCs and interact with the communities on a continuous basis. This would then enable them to provide reliable feedback to the rest of the Forest Department and also involve the people to make the JFM process a truly sustainable and productive one.
- There is a need for Nodal Officers to co-ordinate amongst themselves, and share their respective state-wise experiences - successes as well as failures - with each other, for a comprehensive and balanced national level JFM monitoring.

III. Introduction of Participants

(List of Participants given at Annex 1)

IV. Presentation on the need for monitoring and role of Stakeholders' Forum

By Dr. V. K. Bahuguna (Deputy Inspector General of Forests, MoEF)

Outlining the need for national-level monitoring for JFM, the first part of his presentation focused on the following broad themes:

- Overview of JFM in India
- Role of FDAs and the pilot scheme of the National Afforestation and Ecodevelopment Board (NAEB)
- The future JFM strategy to involve communities more directly and move ahead with the '*care and share*' philosophy
- Need to monitor JFM given the lack of information and detailed studies
- Elements of a good monitoring system
- State-level JFM monitoring form developed by MoEF
- Division-level JFM monitoring form developed by MoEF
- Key monitoring factors

The second part of his presentation focussed on the need to have a neutral Stakeholders' Forum comprising various stakeholder groups such as the MoEF, State Forest Departments, Government Institutions, Donor Agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), etc. The salient features covered were:

- Need for a neutral forum to openly discuss and disseminate JFM related information
- The Stakeholders Forum to act as a bridge between the Forest Department and various other stakeholders and be a feedback mechanism for Nodal Officers in order to help the MoEF in policy formulation
- The forum will also carry out need-based research, provide research support and act as a repository for new ideas on JFM

Open House Discussion on Dr. Bahuguna's presentation:

Mr. Rakesh Sinha, Conservator of Forests (CF), West Bengal while expressing his support to the Stakeholders' Forum said that it would go a long way in promoting JFM. He then enquired about how the funding and manpower requirements of such a forum would be met.

Dr. V. K. Bahuguna in response to this query explained the origins of this forum. Initially the forum is supported by the Ford Foundation and housed in Winrock International India. The Government of India had also agreed to support the Stakeholders' Forum through the JFM Cell within the Forest Fire Division of the MoEF. He added that Donor Agencies would also be approached for this purpose and that therefore he did not foresee any problem with regard to funding or manpower for the next 3-4 years. From the long-term perspective too, *Dr. Bahuguna* expressed his hope that all the State Forest Departments would provide some grant to support this venture.

Mr. Abhijit Ghosh, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Rajasthan asked for a clarification on whether there was a mechanism in place to ensure the involvement and participation of forest dwelling communities in the Stakeholders' Forum.

Dr. Bahuguna welcoming the idea of community participation in the forum as an excellent one, clarified that the forum would be open to all stakeholders and there would be slots within it for members of JFM committees, for young Forest Officers in the field and also for NGOs. He further added that an arrangement could be worked out whereby some of the travel expenses of the participants coming from long distances could be met so as to encourage their involvement.

Mr. Ghosh recalling the recent events at Harda, Dewas and Udaipur expressed his concern about certain people assuming the role of judges and maligning forest department. He hoped that MoEF would not support such activities.

Mr. Sud supporting Mr. Ghosh reiterated that JFM was still an evolving process and that there were both types of areas - where it was working very well and where it was not so effective. He said that more time should be given to the forest department to show results, and that unfair questioning of officers involved deeply in JFM would only be counterproductive at this stage.

Dr. Bahuguna reacting to the above points reassured the participants that the MoEF would not support such misinformation campaigns aimed at damaging JFM. However, he clarified that Stakeholders' Forum was a neutral body, where the forest department as well as other stakeholders can discuss JFM related issues in a healthy and open environment.

Mr. Sinha, CF & Project Director, Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal building on *Mr. Ghosh's* earlier query on involvement of forest communities, enquired as to what sort of a

mechanism could be worked out to ensure their participation in the Stakeholders' Forum, both at the State and Central levels.

Dr. Bahuguna suggested that JFM Nodal Officers should identify and nominate forest/forest-fringe dwellers to the central Stakeholders' Forum and also create state units of the forum in their respective states.

Mr. R. K. Sharma, CCF, Chattisgarh informed the participants that a forum to give voice to the community members was recently convened in Chattisgarh in which around 1500 FPC members participated. A seminar titled '*JFM samitis: aspirations and expectations*' brought together these FPC members where problems such as sustainability of FPCs after withdrawal of external funding and reasons for inactiveness of some FPCs were discussed. An important outcome of this seminar was that the FPCs themselves expressed the need to formalise a confederation/forum at the state level and organise regular meetings to solve these problems.

Mr. Sushil Saigal, Co-ordinator RUPFOR requested *Mr. R. K. Sharma* if he could provide a copy of the proceedings of that seminar, which the latter agreed to.

Dr. Bahuguna then requested *Dr. Kinsuk Mitra*, Vice-President Winrock International India to make a few comments on the role of Winrock International India in supporting RUPFOR as the neutral Stakeholders' Forum.

Dr. Mitra giving a brief introduction of Winrock International India reiterated Winrock's commitment to supporting the JFM network and in assisting the JFM Cell of the MoEF to monitor JFM activities throughout the country. He emphasised that given the vast requirements of JFM, it was necessary for bodies outside the MoEF too to come together and support this process. Outlining the role of RUPFOR as a neutral Stakeholders' Forum in this, he said that RUPFOR would assist the MoEF in organising meetings and in collecting and disseminating information on JFM through its website, etc.

Mr. Saigal further elaborating on the role of RUPFOR, explained that:

- RUPFOR's role as a Stakeholders' Forum would help policy makers get latest up-to-date field information on JFM
- It would assist in cross-state learning and help in bridging the gap between the different states on JFM
- The online newsletter INFORM already reached out to 393 people and a comprehensive website on JFM resources was currently being developed
- RUPFOR would carry out specific need-based research on critical issues emerging in the JFM debate, such as its linkages with Panchayats, issue of encroachments, etc.

III. State Department Presentations

(i) Andhra Pradesh Forest Department

Mr. Narpat Singh, CF, Andhra Pradesh (AP)

The broad themes covered in his presentation included:

- Status of JFM in AP such as basic data on total area under JFM, number of *Van Sanrakshan Samiti (VSS)*, etc.
- Sources of funding for supporting JFM
- Role of NGOs in encouraging healthy competition among various VSS groups
- The crucial support obtained under the World Bank supported project, which covers over 50 percent of the JFM area in AP
- The completed state and division-level JFM monitoring forms of the MoEF
- Increased forest cover of 60,000 hectares in AP is to a large extent due to the JFM program

Discussion

Mr. Sud while stating that Rajasthan had borrowed the AP Model, first enquired about the mechanism through which the AP Forest Department was ensuring the implementation of the proviso that 50 % of the 100 % usufruct rights which were given to the VSS had to be ploughed back into the forests. Secondly he asked how the AP Forest Department succeeded in increasing 60,000 hectares of forests through the JFM program.

Mr. Singh replying to the first question, answered that implementation of the proviso was a basic conditionality that the Forest Department had placed before the VSS, before providing any sort of support. As regards to the success of JFM in increasing forest cover, he said that the main regeneration had occurred in areas which had been under *podu* cultivation. In such areas full protection had been provided by the VSS and this factor alone had been responsible for the tremendous increase in regeneration.

Mr Jagdish Prasad, Assistant (Plan) to PCCF, Gujarat enquired as to how AP identified the Self-Initiated Groups (SIG) which were protecting the forests prior to the JFM program.

Mr. Singh noted that such SIGs were predominantly located in tribal areas, which had a history of people's movements for protecting forests.

(ii) West Bengal Forest Department

Mr. K. C. Gayen, CCF, West Bengal

The broad themes covered in his presentation included:

- Pioneering role of West Bengal in JFM - *Arabari*, etc.

- Basic JFM data in West Bengal
- Sample monitoring of JFM done only and no comprehensive monitoring carried out till date
- Participatory monitoring of JFM activities

Discussion

Dr. Bahuguna enquired about the role of NGOs in monitoring JFM in West Bengal.

Mr. Gayen replied that NGOs like IBRAD and Ram Krishna Mission, though not directly connected with JFM, were involved in awareness generation activities. Elaborating on the importance of having adequate monitoring mechanisms for JFM, Mr. Gayen suggested regular meetings of Range and Beat-level committees to sort out co-ordination problems, biannual Division-level meetings and annual Circle-level meetings. He also noted that in West Bengal too, as in other states, the performance of JFM was mixed with around 40% of the FPCs being very good, 40% being average and the remaining 20% being inactive.

Mr. Sinha spoke of the vital importance of eco-development activities to communities dwelling in Protected Areas, and also of the importance of Self-help Groups (SHG) in empowering women. He drew special attention of the participants to the fact that there was a stakeholders' committee in Buxa Tiger Reserve to ensure participatory monitoring of JFM and its impacts within the reserve.

Mr. Saigal enquired as to how successful the incorporation of ecotourism activities within JFM in West Bengal had been, to which Mr. Gayen replied that it was indeed working well and generating funds.

Mr. S. K. Pandey, Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), Tripura enquired as to what impact political influences had on JFM in West Bengal.

Dr. Bahuguna enquired as to why the usufruct share of communities within JFM in West Bengal did not cross 25 %, even though many states had moved beyond that.

Due to lack of time, these two questions could not be discussed in detail.

(iii) Chattisgarh Forest Department

By Mr. Rakesh K. Sharma, CCF, Chattisgarh

The broad themes covered in his presentation included:

- Basic JFM monitoring data
- The new JFM-centred State Forest Policy 2001
- The new JFM Resolution with well-defined responsibilities for the FPCs and forest officials respectively
- Various income generating activities and the accumulation of Rs. 10.5 crores as village funds at the end of October 2001

Mr. Sharma also requested the MoEF to come out with a uniform usufruct distribution scheme for JFM nation-wide.

(iv) Dadra and Nagar Haveli Forest Department

By Dr. Ravinder Kumar, DCF, Dadra & Nagar Haveli

The salient points of this presentation included:

- No formal JFM resolution in Dadra and Nagar Haveli
- However since 1999-2000, JFM being implemented informally in 791 *teram* plots located within reserve forest areas
- 300 ha of land presently under JFM with fruit bearing species like *Mahua, Imli, Amla*, etc

(v) Uttaranchal Forest Department

By Mr. Rajender Singh Bisht, DCF, Uttaranchal

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Long tradition of community forestry in Uttaranchal in the form of *Van Panchayats* (VP)
- Announcement of new *Van Panchayat* Rules 2001
- Power of declaring any forest to be a village forest is being decentralised to the level of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) instead of the state government
- Village Forest Committees (VFC) to be a sub-component of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) in areas other than Van Panchayat areas
- More than 6 lakh hectares under JFM
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation of JFM through VFCs at DCF level
- Designed own performance and monitoring parameters
- Total implementation control in hands of the VFC
- Major constraint faced in JFM efforts is lack of continuity of fund flow

Discussion

Dr. Bahuguna asked *Mr. Bisht* to respond to the allegations by some that the institution of *Van Panchayats* was being destroyed by JFM.

Mr. Bisht replied that this allegation was a misinformation campaign being carried out by certain activist groups who had their own vested interests. Defending the Forest Department's position against the activists who claimed that the department should not have any role in village forests at all, he said that forestry involved technical aspects for which the forest department was very much required.

Dr. Bahuguna further enquired that since JFM was basically a 'care and share' concept, why were *Van Panchayats* being forced to adopt JFM if they were against it.

Mr. Saigal in a related point posited that often the claim of the activists was that provision of World Bank money for JFM was being dangled as a carrot by the Forest Department for *Van Panchayats* to adopt JFM thereby providing perverse incentives for the same.

Mr. Bisht clarified that that *Van Panchayats* were not being forced to adopt JFM anywhere. They were only provided the option of coming under the JFM umbrella, which they could very well decide against if they wanted to. If the *Van Panchayats* were not willing to convert to JFM, they could continue to function as before. *Mr. Bisht* further clarified that JFM would continue to be promoted both in *Van Panchayat* areas (either through JFM or VP) and also in non-VP areas, and that it would also be linked to the Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) as a sub-committee of the latter.

Dr. Bahuguna while appreciating the fact that *Van Panchayats* were not being forced to adopt JFM, expressed serious reservation against the idea of including JFM and VPs within the Panchayati Raj structure, and said that it would politicise the entire concept of JFM endangering forests in the process. He strongly advised *Mr. Bisht* to convey his concerns to the Government of Uttaranchal.

Mr. Bisht also informed about the government's initiatives to discuss various issues with the people. He stated that two workshops had already been held so far for this purpose and one more was being organised at the Forest and *Van Panchayat* Training Institute, Haldwani on the 8th and 9th December, 2001, which he invited members of the Stakeholders' Forum to attend.

Mr. Narpat Singh asked for a clarification on whether there were any legal implications of the DFO being given the power of declaring any forest to be a village forest.

Mr. Bisht clarified that this was compatible with the existing forest legislation and there were no legal problems.

(vi) Gujarat Forest Department

By Mr. Jagdish Prasad, Asst. (Plan) to PCCF (Gujarat)

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Background of forestry in Gujarat and long history of co-operative movement
- Salient features of the JFM policy especially provision for formal registration of the FPC
- Role of NGOs defined and women's participation ensured
- 100 % benefit sharing of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) and fuelwood
- Status of JFM in Gujarat and state-wide monitoring of progress
- Division-wise and village-wise monitoring of JFM impacts

- Formation of FDA in four districts
- Suggestions to improve FDA functioning

Discussion

Mr. Ghosh responding to *Mr. Prasad's* suggestion that fund availability to each FDA should be known in advance, said that the very purpose of the new FDA approach was that it was demand-driven and that fund availability would be made as per what each FDA requested for.

Dr. Bahuguna fully supported *Mr. Ghosh* and thanked him for providing this clarification.

(vii) Uttar Pradesh Forest Department

By Mr. S. K. Upadhyay, CF, Uttar Pradesh

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Objectives of JFM in Uttar Pradesh (UP)
- JFM scenario in UP including region-wise number of microplans, area covered, etc
- Amount of funds in Village Development Fund and expenditure incurred by VFCs
- Salient features of UP JFM Rules, 1997
- Importance of developing marketing channels and value-addition at local levels
- Need for evolving participatory monitoring mechanisms to make JFM sustainable
- Building linkages to micro-financing through SHGs

IV. NAEB Presentation on FDA

By Mr. Arvind Kumar, Senior Assistant Inspector General of Forests, NAEB, MoEF

In his presentation explaining the concept of FDA to the JFM Nodal Officers, the following main points were covered:

- Although JFM approach has been an integral part of all NAEB schemes for several years, it was found that often it JFM was being reduced to paperwork alone and nothing much was being done actually in the field. It was found that there was wide variation in the extent and quality of JFM work in different parts of the country.
- There was also delay in allocation of central funds by the state governments and lack of uniform representation of JFM and effective people's participation in the country.
- Consequently, a new approach has been adopted for the last 2 years of the 9th Plan period through the concept of FDA. Under this approach the NAEB no longer releases central funds to the state governments. Instead the funds are to be channelled directly to the FDA, which is to be registered under the Societies Act 1860 and constituted at each territorial/wildlife forest division in the country. Each FDA would comprise village-level Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC), which would in turn, be registered with the respective CF (Territorial/Wildlife) of that division.

- 20 state governments have already accepted the policy guidelines of the MoEF with respect to the FDA, and projects have started being accepted by the NAEB for funding in the pilot phase.

Open House Discussion on Mr. Kumar's presentation:

Mr. Ghosh enquired that if the JFMCs were not registered under Societies Act, what accountability would they have with regard to the funds that they received.

Mr. Kumar noted that the JFMCs needed to be compulsorily registered with the CF, and even if they were registered as societies, they still needed to be certified by the CF's office. Also at the JFMC level, the account would be controlled solely by the Beat Officer/Forester who would be the member secretary of the respective JFMC. Thus accountability of government money would lie with government officials and not with the local communities directly which could lead to politicisation.

Mr. S. K. Upadhyay, CF, Uttar Pradesh asked for a clarification as to whether joint accounts would be allowed to operate in such cases, to which *Mr. Kumar* replied in the negative.

Dr. Hemant Kumar, DCF, Himachal Pradesh raised a concern that there were already a number of existing schemes and multiple nomenclature like VFC, FPC, etc., and yet another new scheme with a new nomenclature of JFMC could send the wrong message to the field.

Mr. Kumar clarified that in the pilot period, there would be enough flexibility to resolve these teething problems as they arose and that from the 10th Plan onwards there would be just one JFMC nomenclature operating uniformly through out the country.

Mr. S. K. Ramalinge Gowda, CCF, Karnataka voiced his apprehension as to why the NAEB was insisting on the compulsory and sole inclusion of a forest department functionary in handling the accounts, while the MoEF's stand was that JFM should be promoted through greater peoples participation. He pointed out that both stands were contradictory. He also registered his doubt as to whether the FDA concept would succeed in states such as Andhra Pradesh, where the existing VSS institutions had already become very independent and strong.

Mr. Kumar reacting to *Mr. Ramalinge Gowda's* apprehension, replied that while the NAEB and MoEF were indeed committed to strengthening peoples participation in JFM, the main objective of the FDA in particular was to change the existing fund flow mechanism. He clarified that since large amounts of central government funds were involved, and since this was only the pilot phase of this scheme, it was necessary to adopt a precautionary and conservative approach initially by compulsorily including forest department functionaries in the management of these funds.

Mr. K. C. Gayen, CCF West Bengal asked for a clarification as to whether the FDA funds would be accounted for in the Divisional Accounts. He also enquired as to what would happen in case forest divisions other than the Territorial & Wildlife divisions were implementing JFM.

Mr. Kumar clarified that the FDA is akin to a governmental NGO which would have entirely separate accounts of its own and moreover it could raise funds from any source whatsoever, and not just from the government alone. To the second part of the question, he replied that so long as the government certified that those divisions had some territorial jurisdiction, it would not pose a problem.

Dr. Bahuguna while concluding the discussion, thanked *Mr. Kumar* for clarifying all the queries raised and requested all the JFM Nodal Officers to expedite the process of sending FDA compatible project proposals to the MoEF from their respective states. He reiterated *Mr. Kumar's* assurance that in the pilot phase most such proposals would be considered favourably and that there would be a lot of flexibility allowed.

It was requested that RUPFOR should obtain FDA guidelines and checklist from NAEB and send a copy to all those present.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Chaired by Dr. V.K. Bahuguna)

V. State Department Presentations (Continued)

(viii) Haryana Forest Department *By Mr. D. S. Barak, CF, Haryana*

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Pioneering role of Haryana in JFM through the *Sukhomajri* Model
- 54 fully-independent societies working without interference from forest department/NGOs
- Key finding that many village institutions created under externally assisted projects become dysfunctional once funding is withdrawn
- Role of NTFPs in generating income to Hill Resource Management Societies (HRMS) using an usufruct sharing mechanism

(ix) Tripura Forest Department *By Mr. S. K. Pandey, DCF, Tripura*

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Overview of forestry in Tripura
- Causes of forest degradation

- Progress of JFM in the state
- Monitoring data regarding number of JFMCs, area covered, families involved, etc.
- Impact of JFM
- Issues identified with implementation of JFM
- Potential linkages between FDA-Panchayats
- Policy and legal issues
- Steps to strengthen JFM: amendment to existing 1991 resolution, registration under Societies Registration Act 1860
- Representation of women
- Involvement of JFMCs in bamboo resource development

(x) Himachal Pradesh Forest Department

By Dr. Hemant Gupta, DCF, Himachal Pradesh (HP)

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Origin of JFM in HP through Department for International Development (DFID) funding
- Various projects supporting JFM
- JFM order and JFM monitoring information
- Total of 1047 committees under different nomenclature
- Existence of two-tier working groups comprising a state-level consultative forum which has the Forest Secretary as the chairman and includes state-level NGOs; and a circle-level forum with CF as chairman including district and division-level NGOs

Discussion:

Ms. Vanita Suneja, Programme Officer, Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development expressed her appreciation of the latest HP JFM Order, saying that it was a very progressive order which took into account the needs of various stakeholders and was a good model for other states to follow.

(xi) Tamil Nadu Forest Department

By Mr. Bhagwan Singh, CF, Tamil Nadu

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Origin of JFM in Tamil Nadu through Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) support
- Features of the Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project
- JFM progress - total of 999 VFCs till date
- Watershed is the basis for implementing JFM in villages
- Integrated development strategy adopted
- Selection of 200 new villages per year and fund flow of Rs. 6 lakhs per village over 3 years
- Mobilisation of NGOs

- Regular 100 % monitoring of JFM at DFO level in co-ordination with VFC president/members
- Transparency of all activities is maintained
- Achievements and impacts from 1997-2001
- Formation of SHGs, implementation of social fencing, etc

Discussion:

Mr. Ghosh asked for further clarification as to how JFM actually being implemented including the cost break-up etc.

Mr. Bhagwan Singh replied that villages surrounding degraded forest areas were targeted and around 250-300 hectares were identified using the watershed area as the basis of an integrated management plan for development. Of the Rs. 6 lakhs allocated per village for entry-point activities, Rs 3 lakhs was spent in year 1, Rs 2 lakhs in year 2 and Rs. 1 lakh in year 3 respectively for buffer zone activities, employment generation and community development projects.

Mr. S. K. Ramalinge Gowda enquired as to how the target villages were selected given that a huge amount was being invested, and how the Forest Department was resisting political pressure in the selection process. He also asked whether investing so much money in entry-point alone activities was justified.

Mr. Bhagwan Singh replied that though political interference could not entirely be denied, the impact was not as much. Of about 3000 villages that surrounded degraded areas in Tamil Nadu, 1000 villages were being targeted under this project, so there were not many being left out. Moreover, regarding the size of investment, he said the state government considered the investment of Rs. 6 lakhs per village as a very important component of JFM and said that the overall investment of Rs. 60 crores was very much justified.

(xii) Rajasthan Forest Department

By Mr. Abhijit Ghosh, CCF, Rajasthan

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Scenario of JFM in Rajasthan
- Various JFM resolution revisions over the years
- Main elements of the JFM resolution including women's participation, sharing of usufructs and linkage with panchayats
- Monitoring of progress under JFM
- Categorization of committees as Very Active, Moderate and Less Active on basis of certain performance indicators
- Competition among VFCs by instituting the prestigious *Amrita Devi Award* with cash prize of Rs.50000/- with citation
- Critical review of JFM

- Human Resources Development and capacity building
- Welfare activities under JFM
- Incorporation of FDA in two districts
- Innovation by communities such as social fencing through traditional methods such as *Kesar-chhanta*

Discussion:

Ms. Vanita Suneja enquired as to why the Rajasthan Forest Department had arbitrarily changed the usufruct sharing percentage between communities and the forest department from 80:20 to 60:40 in certain cases after it had already been agreed upon earlier.

Mr. Saigal further commented that such incidents could send the wrong signals to the local communities.

Mr. Ghosh said that these issues had arisen only in certain specific cases and should not be generalised.

(xiii) Karnataka Forest Department

By Mr. S. K. Ramalinge Gowda, CCF, Karnataka

The salient points of his presentation included:

- History of JFM in Karnataka
- Karnataka Government Orders and Guidelines on Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) in Karnataka
- Monitoring data on JFPM progress in the state
- Impacts of the JFPM program
- Constraints in implementing JFPM such as non-uniform spread of NGOs, lack of linkages with PRIs, Watershed Committees etc
- Future plans including promotion of SHGs
- Changing role of Forest Department
- Future areas of concern
- Projects submitted under the FDA scheme

Discussion:

Dr. Bahuguna asked the participants to seriously examine the scope of carbon sequestration as a mechanism for generating funds for JFM and forestry work. He also announced that additional funding for JFM projects would be allocated under the heads for Forest Fire Protection and Infrastructure Development.

In reacting to the linkages of JFM with PRIs, *Dr. Bahuguna* once again strongly emphasised that JFM committees should retain their independent identity but at the same time work towards getting the co-operation and patronage of PRIs. Otherwise, he feared

that linking FPCs to PRIs would result in politicisation of JFM and lead to the destruction of natural resources.

(xiv) Madhya Pradesh Forest Department

By Mr. Shabaz Ahmad, CF, Madhya Pradesh (MP)

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Status of JFM in MP
- MP Government circulars and resolutions regarding JFM
- Salient features of MP Government JFM Resolution October 2001
- Details of JFM Manual
- Monitoring and Impact of JFM in MP
- New challenges before JFM such as co-ordination of JFM committees with the *Gram Sabha*
- Need for having a Village Resource and Eco-development Institute in each state
- Completed state and division-level JFM monitoring forms as per MoEF format
- FDA activities through JFM in MP

Discussion:

Mr. Ramalinge Gowda made the comment that one of main reasons why JFM was so successful in states like MP and AP was because of the able political leadership in each of those states. He wondered whether anything could be done to encourage the same elsewhere in the country.

Dr. Bahuguna while accepting that this was indeed so, remarked that in a functional democracy, good work on the ground would automatically be translated into votes and that this had been realised by the political leadership in AP and MP.

Mr. R. K. Sharma expressed his apprehension that in those JFM areas which had valuable timber such as teak or sal, once all the benefits accrued from clear felling were given to the communities, they would no longer be interested in protection since there would be no earning incentive left for them until the next felling cycle.

(xv) Manipur Forest Department

By Dr. R. B. Lal, CCF, Manipur

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Penultimate state that issued a JFM resolution
- Historical background of forestry in Manipur
- Traditional role of tribal communities and uniqueness of the existing land tenure system; Forest Department is the junior partner
- 78% forest cover: rationale of implementing JFM in good forests

- Usufruct sharing ratio amongst communities, village council and forest department is 60: 20: 20 in unclassified forests and 30: 30: 40 in reserve and protected forests
- Latest monitoring data on JFM
- Finding that even without JFM people have been traditionally managing their forests in Manipur
- Both Central (MoEF and NAEB) and State government schemes have focussed on promoting JFM

(xvi) Punjab Forest Department

Mr. R. K. Chaudhary, CF, Punjab

The salient points of his presentation included:

- Forestry overview in Punjab
- JFM being practised mainly in Shiwalik Hill tract, where most of the block forests - both government and panchayat owned exist
- 73,500 hectares covered under JFM and other JFM monitoring data
- Details of JFM notifications including the latest notification of September 2001
- Assigning of duties and responsibilities to FPC members
- Details of entry-point activities

(xvii) Meghalaya Forest Department

Mr. V. K. Nautiyal, CCF, Meghalaya

Meghalaya is the only state in India that is yet to adopt a formal JFM resolution though it is expected to do so soon. However, as Mr. Nautiyal pointed out there were already other JFM type schemes that were being implemented by the Meghalaya Forest Department.

(xviii) Nagaland Forest Department

Mr. S. P. Tripathi, CF, Nagaland

The main features of his presentation included:

- The existing JFM guideline requires the member-secretary of the FPC to be a non-governmental member. However this has to be changed in view of the latest FDA requirements
- The Forest department has no control on forests in private areas, except when forest goods are in transit

(xix) Jharkhand Forest Department

By Mr. A. N. Prasad, Resident Commissioner, Jharkhand

The main points covered in his presentation included:

- JFM has been in force in Jharkhand since 1990
- State government has issued a revised JFM resolution in September 2001

- Main change is that now all types of forests are included in JFM whereas earlier it was limited only to degraded forest areas
- 1380 committees covering around 4350 square kilometres and other latest JFM monitoring data
- Need for a basic facility for value-addition of timber products
- Need for people to be empowered
- Need for an effective marketing and storage system for forest products to be put in place

VI. Briefing for the Director General and Special Secretary, MoEF by Dr. Bahuguna

Dr. Bahuguna welcomed *Mr. S. K. Pande, Director General Forests and Special Secretary, MoEF* to the Nodal Officers meeting and thanked him for attending the same. Briefing him on the deliberations of the day, *Dr. Bahuguna* summarised some of the important issues that came up.

There is a need for:

- a neutral Stakeholders' Forum
- involving local communities in the Stakeholders' Forum
- having stakeholder forums at the state/local levels following the example of the Buxa Tiger Reserve
- uniform central guidelines for sharing of usufructs
- countering misinformation campaigns about JFM
- giving greater powers to FPC members e.g. FPCs being declared as forest officers in UP/Uttaranchal
- integrating JFM with rural development
- wider dissemination of FDA guidelines/checklist
- gathering baseline information for monitoring JFM
- training of the field-level staff
- recognising good efforts e.g. *Amrita Devi Award* in Rajasthan
- avoiding target-oriented VFC formation
- expanding JFM to all forests near villages whether degraded or not
- motivating the political class as in MP and AP
- effective linkages with PRIs
- recognising and utilising SHGs
- developing performance indicators
- regular and detailed monitoring e.g. Tamil Nadu is carrying out 100% enumeration for monitoring impact of JFM
- participatory monitoring as in West Bengal

VII. Remarks of Mr. S. K. Pande and Open House Discussion

Mr. S. K. Pande, Director General and Special Secretary, MoEF joined the discussions in the concluding session and congratulated *Dr. Bahuguna* for taking a proactive role in

creating the Stakeholders' Forum for wider sharing of experiences and learning. He welcomed the JFM Nodal Officers from all over the country participating in the meeting. He also assured the Ministry's full support to the Forum. Recalling the earlier meetings of the JFM Network, he reiterated that having such an open forum was of utmost relevance for ensuring cross-state learning, throwing up of new ideas, problem solving and *inter alia* effective monitoring of the progress of JFM in the country..

He stressed the increasingly important role of SHGs in empowering people, especially women, in various states, and cited the example of AP in this regard.

He also enquired about the effectiveness of JFM in Protected Areas and said that the model of participatory monitoring in Buxa Tiger Reserve, which was presented in the meeting was a welcome and innovative approach.

Dr. Kinsuk Mitra informed that participatory monitoring was being practised with good results in Midnapore as well.

DGF also enquired from *Mr. Shabaz Ahmad*, CF Madhya Pradesh about the recent controversy highlighted in the press about Harda and Dewas Forest Divisions.

In response to a query from *Mr. Sushil Saigal* whether it was a good idea to pump a lot of money into JFM, as was being done by some of the externally aided projects, DGF admitted that outside financial support had limited utility in sustaining the JFM process. The long term sustainability has to come from the economic stakes of the various interested parties in the JFM process.

He also appraised the house that increasing the forest cover of the country to 25% and 33% (of the land area) by the end of the 10th and 11th Plan respectively has been made a monitorable target by the National Development Council. This would not only require high level of investments in the forestry sector but also vigorously pursuing JFM and tree planting on non forest lands through farm forestry and agro-forestry schemes. In view of the overall resource crunch, he said that JFM would be the most cost-effective instrument for rehabilitation of forest areas which are under increasing biotic pressure of human and livestock populations.

VIII. Vote of Thanks

Mr. Sushil Saigal delivered the vote of thanks.

List of Participants

1. Mr. Shahbaz Ahmad - Conservator of Forests, Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal
2. Dr. V. K. Bahuguna - Deputy Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, New Delhi
3. Mr. D. S. Barak - Conservator of Forests, Haryana, Chandigarh
4. Mr. Rajender Singh Bisht - Deputy Conservator of Forests, Uttaranchal, Dehradun
5. Ms. Mamta Borgoyary - Program Officer, RUPFOR, Winrock International India, New Delhi
6. Mr. R. K. Chaudhry - Conservator of Forests, Punjab, Chandigarh
7. Mr. K. C. Gayen - Chief Conservator of Forests, West Bengal, Kolkata
8. Mr. Abhijit Ghosh - Chief Conservator of Forests, Rajasthan, Jaipur
9. Mr. S. K. Ramalinge Gowda - Chief Conservator of Forests, Karnataka, Bangalore
10. Dr. Hemant Gupta - Deputy Conservator of Forests, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla
11. Mr. Arvind Kumar - Senior Additional Inspector General, NAEB, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, New Delhi
12. Dr. Ravinder Kumar - Deputy Conservator of Forests, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Silvassa
13. Dr. R. B. Lal - Chief Conservator of Forests, Manipur, Imphal
14. Dr. Kinsuk Mitra, Vice President, Winrock International India, New Delhi
15. Mr. Sanjay Moharir - Assistant Conservator of Forests, Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal
16. Mr. V. K. Nautial - Chief Conservator of Forests, Meghalaya, Shillong
17. Mr. S. K. Pande - Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, New Delhi
18. Mr. S. K. Pandey - Deputy Conservator of Forests, Tripura, Agartala
19. Mr. Neeraj I. Peters, Program Officer, Winrock International India, New Delhi

20. Mr. A. N Prasad - Resident Commissioner, Jharkhand
21. Mr. Jagdish Prasad - Assistant (Plan) to PCCF, Gujarat, Ahmedabad
22. Mr. Sushil Saigal, Co-ordinator (RUPFOR) & Senior Program Officer, Winrock International India, New Delhi
23. Mr. Sandeep Sengupta, Program Officer, RUPFOR, Winrock International India, New Delhi
24. Mr. Bhagwan Singh - Conservator of Forests, Tamil Nadu, Chennai
25. Mr. Narpat Singh - Conservator of Forests, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad
26. Mr. Rakesh Sinha - Conservator of Forests and Project Director (Buxa Tiger Reserve), West Bengal
27. Mr. R. K. Sharma - Chief Conservator of Forests, Chattisgarh, Raipur
28. Mr. D. C. Sud - Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Rajasthan, Jaipur
29. Ms. Vanita Suneja, Senior Program Officer, Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development, New Delhi (*Special invitee*)
30. Mr. S. P. Tripathy - Conservator of Forests, Nagaland
31. Mr. Anoop Upadhyay - Senior Additional Inspector General, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, New Delhi
32. Mr. S. K. Upadhyay - Conservator of Forests, Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow