



NEWSLETTER

SUSTAINABLE CATCHMENT FOREST MANAGEMENT (SCATFORM) PROJECT



MESSAGE FROM CEO & PD

Continuing with our efforts to share about the various components of SCATFORM Project through our newsletter, we are sharing the activities done towards Joint Forest Management component of the project in this issue. This issue of the newsletter is going to present to the readers about the challenges of JFM and their training requirement. During implementation of JFM both Forest Departments and the villagers, the two partners of JFM face a number of problems at ground level which are required to be addressed with equal value because the success of the project depends largely on the success of JFM activities. All the issues are critical and requires brainstorming of all the user groups. They are equally significant for the facilitators groups who facilitate the formation of JFMCs, setting their mission, vision and activity plan for sustainable development of village, biodiversity and forest eco-system. It has been identified that proper awareness development is necessary otherwise clarity among the community lacks active community participation. The managers and policymakers must think about the grave issue of sustenance of JFMCs in the post project era that requires scientific planning, repetitive training on vagaries aspects followed by monitoring and evaluation.

It is hoped that readers will appreciate our endeavors and provide feedback and suggestions on things related to projects and about this newsletter. Do write to us.

Dr. Avinash M Kanfode, IFS
Chief Executive Officer & Project Director



JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES - MAJOR PILLAR OF THE PROJECT SCATFORM

The project SCATFORM has four major components namely, 1) Sustainable Forest Management, 2) Soil and Moisture Conservation, 3) Livelihood Development, and 4) Institutional Strengthening, but the joint forest management is intrinsically related to all the components and their subcomponents. In the current issue of the Newsletter the JFM activities are described in detail under the above four different components. It is to be understood that the various activities and components of the SCATFORM project invariably have JFM and livelihood components associated with it. Further, all the activities conducted under various components of the projects such as sustainable forest management, soil moisture conservation and livelihood development are inherently linked with each other.

As per the National Forest Policy of 1988, the State Forest Fringe Communities are to protect and manage forests and share benefits from the forests with them. The key element in JFM is that communities are empowered and motivated to

sustainably manage the use of forests by members, control over the justifiable and non-destructive exploitation of floral and faunal biodiversity including NTFP and their equitable sharing of benefit. The project has targeted establishment of new JFMCs as per revised JFM Resolution 2001 in selected villages and it has also envisaged revival of JFMCs where the old ones are already defunct. But the entire operation depends mainly on the villagers' willingness to form a committee which again requires the community's clear perception about project mission, visions and benefits. The sustenance of the JFMCs is still a major challenge that awaits a long-term solution.

Awareness development is the first and most important stair for JFMC formation. The Forest Department as per resolution will constitute the committee with the willing villagers only and on the other hand, villagers, until they have a very clear understanding, cannot express their willingness for any project. It is not a target-oriented job only and unless the villagers have a clear understanding of the mission, vision and benefit from the project (be it economic or ecological). At least 50% of the total number of villagers should express their willingness and then only JFMC should be formed.



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FORMATION OF GENERAL BODY (GB) AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC)

- * Identification of all groups, sections of the community who are dependent on the forests.
- * All eligible adults in the demarcated JFMC area can be the members of the JFMC while their spouses automatically become the member of the JFMC.
- * Inclusion of socially and economically marginalized groups like Schedule Caste (SC), Schedule Tribe (ST), Other Backward Class (OBC), and women headed vulnerable families.
- * Active participation of women in both EC and GB where in EC women should hold 33% and in GB it should be 50%. The attendance of at least 1 woman in an EC meeting where the total number of members is 9 makes the quorum in the EC meeting.
- * Regular community organizing and JFMC formation will be undertaken in shifting cultivators (Jhumias) while the revised Resolution suggests exclusion of jhumias from the JFMCs.
- * The division of work under different sub-groups is also another suggestive measure in order to increase the performance efficiency of the JFMCs.
- * The tenure of EC is one year. The GB members will elect EC through the process of election held in Annual General Meeting every year where Member secretary or

Beat officer should function as the Election Officer and Range Officer shall be the observer and Member Secretary.

Duties of the JFMCs include (a) Plantation as per directives of the Forest Department, (b) Maintenance for at least 3 years, (c) Sustainable harvest of NTFPs and collection of fuel-wood and (d) Generation of livelihood by creating self help Groups (SHG) and agro-forestry groups etc.

The committees have to create a bank account to operate as it has to receive fund and expend for village development activities. The bank account is also required for providing loans to SHGs. The bank account is needed even for depositing membership fees, fines from illegal activities in the forests, sales of forest produce, plantation and maintenance, funds from grant of Forest Dept., Panchayats, convergence, etc. Competent and capacitated JFMCs as registered society may apply for grants from different funding agencies.

Current Status: The Project is being implemented in 7 districts namely North Tripura, Unakoti, Khowai, West Tripura, Sepahijala, Gomati and South Tripura (148 Forest Beat areas including 3 Ranges and 13 Forest Beats of Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary) covering under 36 Forest Ranges (16 Forest Sub-divisions). The target would be 450 new Joint Forest Management Committee and 1350 SHGs (3 SHG in each JFMC, on an average). So far, in Tripura 138 JFMCs have been approved in the SCATFORM project and the figure also include 13 Eco-development Committees (EDC) of Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary.

JFMCs have been established under different projects in Tripura since inception of JFM Resolution in 1991. The updated status of JFMCs in the state under different Projects namely, NAP, GIM and JICA are summarised below:

Sl. No.	Name of FDA*	Project under which JFMC formed (In No.)			Total (In No.)
		NAP [^]	GIM [#]	JICA [@]	
1	Ambassa	54	--	--	54
2	Manu	56	--	--	56
3	Dharmanagar	25	--	9	34
4	Kanchanpur	57	--	32	89
5	Gumti WLW	40	--	--	40
6	Sadar	2	24	--	26
7	Mandwi	26	8	9	43
8	Kailasahar	9	--	12	21
9	Kumarghat	12	--	54	66
10	Khowai	6	--	18	24
11	Teliamura	20	--	38	58
12	Sonamura	27	--	9	36
13	Bishalgarh	8	--	22	30
14	Sepahijala	11	--	--	11
16	Trishna	49	--	26	75
17	Bagafa	24	--	39	63
18	Sabroom	23	--	24	47

19	Amarpur	24	10	53	87
19	Udaipur	81	--	40	121
20	Karbook	17	--	54	71
	Total	571	42	439	1052

The figure 1052 includes 83 EDCs (Trishna 60 + Sepahijala 11 + Gumti Wild life 19 + Karbook 13)

*Forest Development Agency; ^ National Afforestation Programme; #Green India Mission; @Japan International Cooperation Agency.

(Source: forest.tripura.gov.in/joint-forest-management-committees)

Challenges: A number of challenges is being encountered during managing of JFMC while implementing the projects including JICA, NAP, GIM etc. Some of these may be mentioned as under :-

- i. Irregular meeting of General Body
- ii. Lack of participation of women in the EC and GB
- iii. Conducting election for Executive committee
- iv. Inadequate educational base of the EC members especially treasurer
- v. Maximum load of work on member secretary
- vi. Sometimes lack of clarity about the project among the members
- vii. Lack of encouragement for women folk in their active participation in the EC and GB
- viii. Irregular fund flow in JFMC (mainly in SFDA)
- ix. Registration of committee under Society Registration Act 1860 and
- x. Lack of leadership in both the genders
- xi. Conducting regular financial audit
- xii. Collection of royalty from traders
- xiii. Active participation in Microplan exercise
- xiv. Equitable distribution of benefit sharing
- xv. Problem of maintaining records and registers
- xvi. Lack of capability in documentation
- xvii. Lack of coordination between JFMC, Panachayat and Biodiversity Maintenance Committee (BMC)
- xviii. Proper demarcation of RoFR land and its registration
- xix. Lack of participatory approach in species selection for plantation under different models
- xx. Inclusion/exclusion of Shifting cultivation areas in the JFMC area

Above all, the sustenance of JFMC is the most serious challenge and that depends mainly on regular inflow of funds and that would happen when the JFMCs can act as a non-profit registered organization and formulate their own project proposal and drag funds from vagaries of resources.

Training plan: SCATFORM Project Management Unit (PMU) has already prepared a comprehensive training plan for the JFMC members to capacitate them in various aspects of sustainable forest management and allied aspects and the most prioritized of them are as follows:

- I. Orientation
- ii. Financial management and sharing of benefit
- iii. Technical skill development
- iv. Nursery management
- v. Leadership development
- vi. Microplanning and PRA exercise
- vii. Gender-based training on project management and leadership development
- viii. Record keeping, accounting procedure, loan disbursement and repayment
- ix. Sustainable harvest of forest produce
- x. Afforestation techniques and maintenance of the plantations created and participatory monitoring

A special section in the Forest Department (like a JFM Cell) should coordinate the entire JFM affair in the state which keeps all updates in the arena of JFM activities under the domain of diversified projects. The state Forest department can efficiently manage and control the JFMCs and their village development accomplishments under ecology and biodiversity on one hand and economic aspect on the other may be the sustenance of JFMCs may get a long-term solution as the cell will be concerned about their legal backup and build

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NEWSLETTER

We request and encourage you to share your experiences under the Project. You can highlight activities and achievements of the Joint Forest Management Committee. We can also consider inspiring stories of individuals who are doing good work which needs to be shared with other people in the state. This will provide recognition to individuals and provide opportunities for other people to learn from the experiences. You can share your experiences with our field personnel / JFMC.

You can also write to us at : tripurajica@gmail.com

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