

# People and Forests -An Introduction

E.Vikram,  
ADG, ICFRE

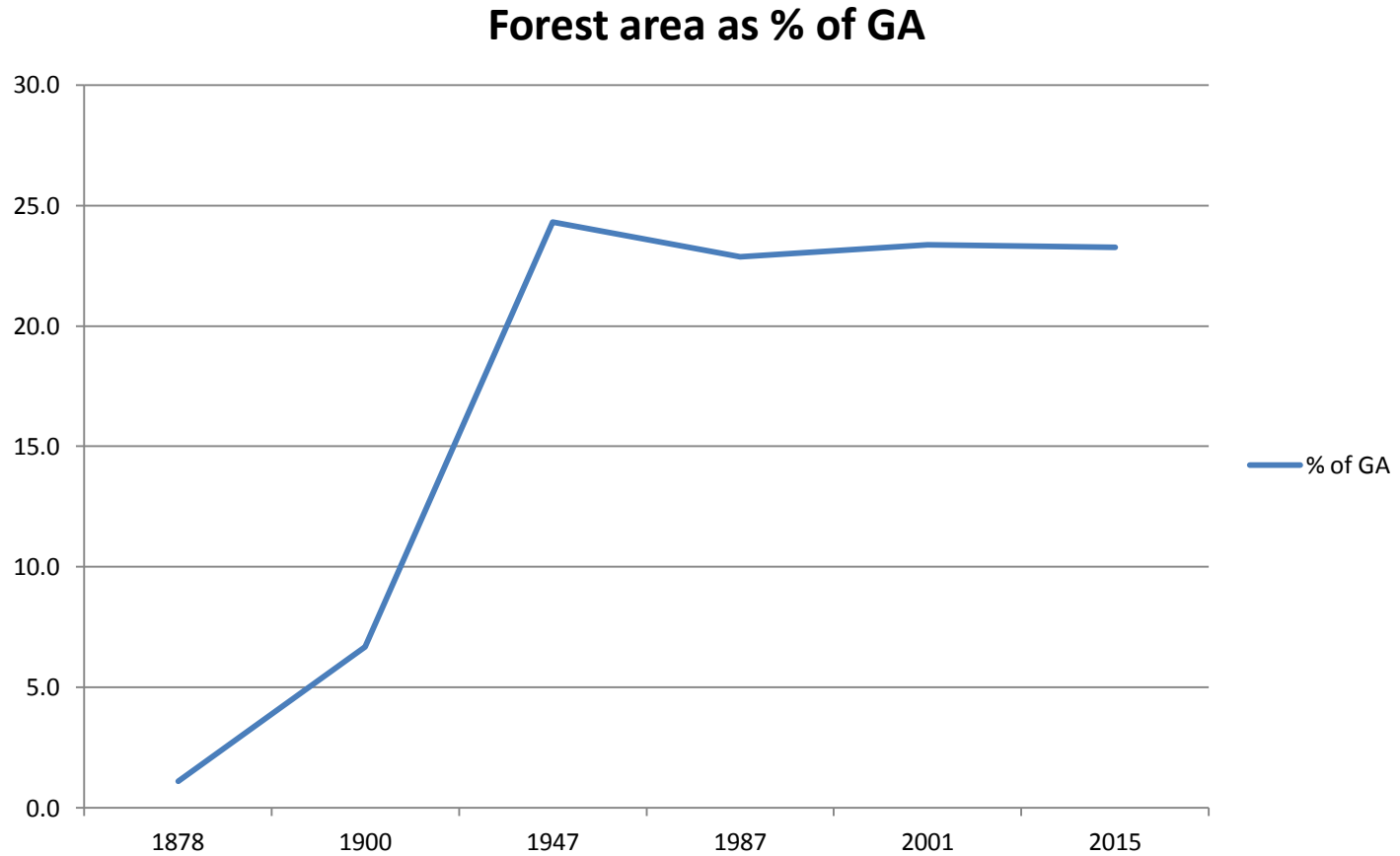
# People and Forests- Indian context

- 91 eco-cultural zones inhabited by 4,635 communities speaking 325 languages
- Very strong indigenous knowledge base both codified and uncoded
- Heavy dependence of most tribes and rural communities on forests
- Increasing environmental consciousness among common people and also increasing pressure due to economic development
- Global imperatives and national commitments

# P&F - Stakeholders

- Community
- Forestry Institutions
- NGOs
- Activists
- Forest Industries
- Courts and Tribunals

# Trends in Government Ownership



# Origin of JFM in India

Pre JFM days..

- Participatory forest management involving communities existed since ancient times
- Various Self initiated forest protection groups (SIFPG) in Odisha, Bihar, HP etc.
- Movements against industrial/contractor lobby post independence during 1970s
  - Chipko movement in Garwal (Uttarakhand)
- Self organized community land groups of Haryana (Sukhomajri experience)
- Various Tribal movements for self control of forests especially in Central and Eastern India

# Chipko movement

- Inspired by Sarvodaya movement and Gandhian values Chandi Prasad Bhatt established *Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh* (DGSS) in 1964 in Gopeshwar. He was awarded Ramon Magsasay in 1982 and Gandhi Peace Prize by GoI in 2013.
- Fought colonial hangover of Forest Institutions (contractor system)
- Post 1970 floods, DGSS held many protests in 1971 & 72.



- On April, 24<sup>th</sup> 1973, villagers forced workers of timber contractors to retreat from felling 300 Ash trees auctioned by SFD in Mandal village.
- Same contractors were chased away Phata and Tarsali villages, 80 kms from Gopeshwar on June 20, 1973
- Gaura Devi led 27 women to the felling site in Reni village on 25<sup>th</sup> march, 1974 and resorted to hugging of trees when loggers shouted and abused women threatening with guns.



**Gaura Devi (1925-91)**



Gaura Devi was awarded the first Indira Vrikshamitra Award by GoI in 1986



Surviving participants of the Chipko movement at Reni village, reassembled thirty years later in 2004.



# Why should People Co-operate?

- Game Theory
  - Prisoner's Dilemma
  - The iterated Prisoner's Dilemma

# Precursors to JFM

- Innovative approaches piloted by few foresters in West Bengal (Ajit Kumar Banerjee and Subhabrata Palit)
- Some view JFM as the inevitable result of re-emergence of social movements for increased autonomy on forests
- Another interesting view is that the West Bengal-Subordinate Forest Employees Association vocally sought for increased participation of villagers fearing safety of staff



# “Socio economic project”

## -The Arabari Experiment

- In early 1970s, Dr AK Banerjee, DFO Silviculture in West Bengal FD faced failures in the silvicultural trials of Arabari range in Midnapore district due to grazing and theft of timber by locals.
- 612 families were organised to manage 12.7 square kilometers of forests classified as "degraded" (Bon-O-Bhumi Sanskar Sthayee Samity)
- Employment and 25% of profits from the forests were shared with the villagers, **unofficially**
- This concept later received the approval of Government and the “ Socio-Economic Forest Scheme”

**USUFRUCT RIGHT FOR ARABARI SOCIAL ECONOMIC PROJECT**

No : 1110-For/D/6M-76/65  
Calcutta, the 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1987

From : The Joint Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal  
To : The Chief Conservator of Forest, West Bengal  
Sub : Arabari Social-economic forest complex allowing usufructory rights to fringe population.

Ref : Correspondence resting with his u. o. no., 13255/CS/29-630

1. The Forest Department raised an experimental plantation since 1971-72, under the name and style "Socio-economic forest complex" on the 1250 ha. of degraded forest lands in Arabari Research Range in the District of Midnapore. A special feature of this programme was the association of the fringe population with all this process of raising, maintaining and protecting the plants. The participation of those local people has resulted in the spectacular achievement of regeneration of completely degraded sal forest sites which are prone to a very high degree of biotic interference. In order to forest in the public a feeling of attachment for the forests for the purpose of conservation, the Govt. has already decided to share 25% of the produce from the RDI plantations raised under the Social Forestry Project. The Government now deems it fit and proper to offer some incentive to the villagers whose efforts are responsible for the unique success of the project at Arabari on the new technique of forest management with people's support.

2. After careful consideration of the matter, the undersigned is directed by order of the Governor to say that the Governor has been pleased to decide, as a special case, that twenty five per cent (25%) of the yield of first harvesting of standard crops (sal and fast growing species) will be distributed free among the identified beneficiaries of this scheme (61 families) as usufructory benefits subject to the following terms and conditions :

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- i) That usufructory benefits @ 25% of the harvested yield will be allowed from first year's harvesting only pending a review of the matter after the distribution is completed.
- ii) That such usufructory rights will be restricted only to standard crops (sal and fast growing species) ;
- iii) That usufructory benefits will be distributed free of cost from the net profits (i.e. after deducting the fringe population's share from the net profits) ;

- v) That the list of beneficiaries comprising 618 families will have to be vetted by the Bon-O-Bhumi Sanskar Sthayee Samity of the local Panchayat Samiti. The said samiti will also supervise distribution of usufructory benefits.
- 3. The Chief Conservator of Forests, west Bengal is requested to submit a detailed to submit a detailed report to the state Govt. on completion of distribution of usufructory benefits showing therein the names of the beneficiaries, quantum benefits against each of them, State's share of net profits deposited to public fund and percentage of recovery of plantation and harvesting cost etc. for assessment and review.
- 4. This order issues with the concurrence of the Finance Deptt. Vide their u.o no. Group Aff/5456 dt. 23.87 and No. 5485/Gr.A/II dt 23.2.87.
- 5. The Accountant general, West Bengal is being informed.

Sd/-Joint Secretary to the Govt. of west Bengal.

- As per the notification dated 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1987, twenty five per cent (25%) of the yield of first harvesting of standard crops (sal and fast growing species) was distributed free among the identified beneficiaries of this scheme (618 families) as usufructory benefits subject to the certain terms and conditions

# Purulia experiment

- Sh.Palit, DFO, Purulia urged villagers to form FPC in order to ward off the illegal timber loggers with political backing.
- No offer of harvest or employment was made.
- Even before JFM notification of 1990, hundreds of FPC were operational in WB.

# JFM experience

- JFM notification of 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1990
- MoEF suggested to all the State Governments vide their Circular Gno.6-12/89-FP dated 1<sup>st</sup> June 1990 for protection and development of **degraded forest areas** through the involvement of the local village communities.
- Government of India instructed all State Governments to make statutory **provisions to share the usufructs** and the biomass between the people in the participating village and the Department vide letter No.1-23-91-MML dt. 18.1.91

# **Stages in JFM**

**I- Formative stage (1990-93)**

**II- Transition stage (1997-2002)**

**III- Mainstreaming Stage (2002-2012)**

**IV- Transition stage (2012 to present)**