



**Forest Peoples
Programme**

Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management Project

**A preliminary independent evaluation of a
World Bank forestry project**



**Forest Peoples Programme
& Samata**

May 2005

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Cover photograph: Group discussion with VSS members
in Kannipur village, June 2004

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Acronyms

AP	Andhra Pradesh
APFD	Andhra Pradesh Forest Department
CFM	Community Forest Management
FD	Forest Department (of Andhra Pradesh)
GCC	Girijan Cooperatives Corporation
GO	Government Order
GOAP	Government of Andhra Pradesh
JFM	Joint Forest Management
LAG	Independent Advisory Group
ITDA	Integrated Tribal Development Agency
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PAF	Project Affected Families
PESA	Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (1996)
PID	Project Information Document
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PMU	Project Monitoring Unit
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
R&R	Resettlement and Rehabilitation
TDP	Tribal Development Plan
VAC	VSS Advisory Council
VSS	Vana Samrakshana Samiti (Village Forest Protection Committee)

A. *Executive Summary*

This report summarises some key findings of a preliminary NGO and community evaluation of an ongoing Community Forest Management (CFM) Project in Andhra Pradesh. The Project, which is funded by a loan of US\$ 108 million from the World Bank, has been under implementation since 2002 and is described by the Bank as a “Community Driven” intervention that aims to reduce poverty and “empower” communities to take autonomous decisions regarding forest management on lands assigned to existing village forest protection committees - *Vana Samrakshana Samithi* (VSS). Many of the 5000 VSS involved in the CFM project were established under a previous controversial Bank-assisted JFM Project (1994-2000), which was heavily criticised for involving forced evictions of tribal people who received little or no compensation. Some of the main findings of the assessment are:

- Most villagers with grievances with previous JFM project and those opposed to a further Bank-assisted project were not invited to consultation workshops during project preparation. Many of these workshops were dominated by Forest Department (APFD) staff and uncritical VSS members;
- Project design fails to address the major inequities and injustices enshrined in the national legislation such as the 1980 Forest Conservation Act;
- Revisions to the AP Forest Act are narrow and restricted to the limited objectives of the CFM project (VSS elections, revised membership, benefit sharing rules, etc.)
- The project has so far not facilitated the removal of the exploitative state monopoly on the purchase of forest produce;
- The primary goal of the CFM project and its funds under the Tribal Development Strategy (TDS) and Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) are to “reduce the dependence of the tribals on the forest”;
- The CFM project does not deal with the demands of AP social movements for legal recognition of community and customary rights over forest land and forest resources;
- In violation of the loan agreement, those families adversely impacted by the previous JFM project have still not been identified and have not been compensated;
- Land tenure problems are not resolved as very few VSS areas have been properly demarcated and most VSS boundaries do not recognise and respect traditional land tenure regimes;
- The limits of VSS jurisdictions and VSS rules continue to generate resource and land disputes within and between villages;
- VSS funds and FD influence through the VSS have often weakened customary resource management systems, undermined traditional authorities and marginalised the Gram Sabha;
- Microplans for forest management and village development are being written by the Forest Department without direct involvement or prior agreement of the communities concerned;
- There remains a serious lack of financial transparency in the management of the VSS joint account, which remains mainly in the control of APFD officials;
- The APFD is no longer a member of the VSS, but still has control through instructions given to the VSS Chairperson and Management Committee, and through APFD seats on proposed Village Advisory Committees (VAC) and District Sub-committees on resettlement and forest protection;
- Autonomous decisions taken by the VSS are routinely ignored or rejected outright by the APFD;

- APFD is putting pressure on VSS to establish plantations of eucalyptus on VSS land against the wishes of most communities;
- VSS that dare to challenge the Forest Department instructions are threatened with legal sanction and/or exclusion from project benefits;
- Benefits received to date are confined to temporary wage labour;
- Partial or late payment for VSS work remains a key grievance in some villages;
- Tribal villagers role is largely confined to work as wage labourers in Forest Department works;
- Women and landless people have so far not received targeted tangible benefits;
- The impacts of the controversial CFM Project resettlement policy on Adivasi and other forest-dependent communities in Andhra Pradesh are not yet evident as implementation of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) is only just starting in late 2004.

Many Adivasi and other forest-dependent communities in AP (between 40% and 70% by District) have opted not to take part in the CFM project as they see the foreign-aided project as an unjust “bribe” to make people give up the forest.

For their part, the communities and NGOs that opted to take part in the project say that after two years they do not feel empowered because their decisions are not respected by APFD officials. Villagers and support NGOs stress that they are disillusioned because the CFM project has not proved to be very different to the old JFM scheme. As several activists put it: “It is just old wine in a new bottle. It is just JFM with a new name”.

The report concludes that World Bank interventions in the forest sector and other natural resource sectors in Andhra Pradesh are not appropriate. These interventions are opposed by civil society organisations like Samata that work to promote respect for the rights of Adivasi-tribal peoples to their lands and natural resources. Such large scale interventions are seen as divisive and diversionary. They also abuse and distort the concept of “community participation” and “community-driven development” because in practice projects like the APCFMP continue to be top-down and still fail to address rights issue and grass roots demands.

The final part of the study makes a series of critical observations and recommendations. One immediate recommendation is that the World Bank should enable the establishment of a fully independent commission to review the forestry programme of JFM/CFM project. It is also recommended that until the emerging problems of the APCFMP are addressed in a participatory and transparent way with civil society and tribal organisations, the World Bank should refrain from planning or promoting any further natural resource projects in Andhra Pradesh.

B. Introduction

World Bank forestry projects in India have been a source of controversy for many years. In the 1970s and 1980s, World Bank support for “social forestry” in several States was criticised for failing to involve forest communities and for primarily bringing benefits to urban and commercial interests to the disadvantage of the rural poor who suffered forced relocation and lost land, fodder and forest access under the projects.¹ In the 1990s, Bank lending shifted towards support for Joint Forest Management (JFM). It was in this context that the World Bank financed JFM projects in Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The World Bank claims these forestry projects did bring some benefits to forest communities, but admits that the JFM approach did not always deliver adequate access and control to local people and sometimes the most vulnerable groups were actually left worse off. The Bank’s evaluation of its JFM project in Andhra Pradesh, for example, found that the Banks Involuntary Resettlement Policy (OD4.30) had been violated and that women, head loaders and so-called forest “encroachers” were often impoverished by APFD policies supported under the project.²

The ongoing serious negative impacts of Bank forestry-based lending have led many local and State-level protests and rallies by Adivasi and other forest communities. In 2003 and 2004, demonstrations against Bank forestry projects are increasingly being backed up by strong written statements by State-level and national forest movements opposing further World Bank loans for forestry in India.³

In response to such widespread criticisms, the World Bank maintains it is learning lessons in India, and is seeking to introduce a new “people-centred” approach to its forestry portfolio. As part of this new approach, in 2002 the Bank started implementation of a new “Community Forest Management” (CFM) project in Andhra Pradesh. In June 2004, the Andhra Pradesh social NGO *Samata* and the UK-based *Forest Peoples Programme* worked with local forest-related and development NGOs and Adivasi communities to undertake a rapid assessment of initial local experience with the AP Community Forest Management Project (APCFMP).

This preliminary evaluation was carried out through discussions with leading AP activists and NGOs working on forest issues, including “facilitator” NGOs engaged in project implementation, as well as VSS members, and non-VSS members at the village level. Field work involved visits to ten tribal villages: two in Nizamabad District and eight in the NE Coastal District – seven of which are part of the CFM project and one which has opted not to take part in the government scheme. The purpose of this report is to publicise the findings of this independent evaluation and assess the extent to which the CFM Project is - or is not - promoting forest policy reform and the empowerment of forest dependent communities in AP.

¹ Anderson RS and Huber W (1988) *The Hour of the Fox: Tropical Forests, the World Bank and Indigenous People in Central India*. Sage, New Delhi.

² Operations Evaluation Department – OED (2002) *Performance Assessment Report – Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project (Credit 2573-IN)* OED Sector and Thematic Studies Group, Report No. 24456 at pages 2 and 5.

³ *Indian Groups Ask World Bank to Withdraw* Press release, 28 April, 2004; WRM(2004) “India: oppose World Bank and Save Forests” *WRM Bulletin No. 81*, April 2004; *Mumbai Forest Initiative* - January 2004, *Khunti Declaration* - November 2003, *Jharkhand Declaration* - April 2004

C. *The Andhra Pradesh CFM project*

(1) Background

Andhra Pradesh has a surface area of 275,000 km², and a population of 66.3 million. Forests cover 23% of the state's geographical area. Adivasis make up about 6.5 percent of the population and live primarily in the forested areas.

According to World Bank documents, the CFM project is to be implemented in 5000 villages in 14 districts: Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, Nizamabad, Medak, Mahabubnagar, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, Nellore, Chittoor and Cuddapah. The project is reported to affect some 326,000 families, all of which were part of the previous World Bank-assisted JFM project (see below). It is estimated that approximately 30% of Adivasi and forest-dependent communities in the state are a part of the current CFM project.⁴

Previous World Bank-funded JFM project

The current "CFM Project" follows a previous World Bank-assisted *Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project* (Credit 2573-IN), which ran from February 1994 until September 2000. This previous Bank loan aimed to use Joint Forest Management (JFM) to regenerate forests and introduce local participation in the protection and management of "public forests". According to the World Bank's Project Information Document (PID) for the subsequent CFM loan, the preceding JFM project in Andhra Pradesh enabled the "adoption of the participatory approach (which) has facilitated the incorporation of community objectives in forest management and this in turn has contributed to a growing sense of mutual trust and partnership". In marked contrast to this positive assessment by the Bank, Adivasi leaders, activists and NGOs in Andhra Pradesh maintain that the JFM project was not successful in promoting community participation, but rather succeeded in entrenching Forest Department Control over forests and forest land [Box 1].

The AP CFM Project Appraisal Document (PAD) acknowledges that JFM did not achieve all its objectives and that most decisions and objectives for forest management financed under the project were established by the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department. The Bank claims that the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GOAP) therefore "graduated" to CFM in an attempt to address some of the issues and lessons learned arising from the JFM Project.⁵ The Project Implementation Plan states that:

"Under JFM, the APFD took the lead on both forest planning and forest related decision-making. Under CFM, the forest department will act more as a facilitator, regulator and provider of technical support, while the community will take the lead on forest planning and decision making, *subject to conservation and sustainable management regulations, National Forest Policy and guidelines issued by APFD.*" (emphasis added).⁶

⁴ Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (2002) *Andhra Pradesh Community Forestry Management: Project Implementation Plan* available at <http://www.ap.nic.in/apforest/>

⁵ World Bank (2002) *Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management: Project Appraisal Document* available at <http://www.worldbank.org> - p. 5

⁶ p 103 of the PIP

Box 1: An Independent NGO Evaluation of the World Bank-assisted Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project (1994-2000)⁷

In 2000, Samata, an Andhra Pradesh-based NGO, and CRY-net, a state-wide civil society network, published a report on World Bank-assisted JFM Project in Andhra Pradesh (AP). The objectives of the report were to assess the people's perceptions of the JFM programme, to understand the objectives of the government in introducing the JFM programme and to evaluate how 'joint' the control and management of forest resources had become through implementation of the JFM programme. Twenty-eight Vana Shamrikshana Samiti (VSS – Forest Protection Committees) were visited within the scope of the report. The study found that, as a result of the JFM project:

- * Tribals were forced to give up *podu* land for the project. The Forest Department claims that 37,000 ha of land was "surrendered" by local people under the Project in the NE Coastal District and put under JFM management. NGOs maintain that much of this land was not given voluntarily and that many Adivasi families lost land without compensation.
- * The project did not deal adequately with land tenure issues
- * Lack of respect of traditional village boundaries by the FD led to boundary disputes in almost all VSS visited. As a consequence of these conflicts, VSS members were involved in destruction of neighbouring VSS plantations, collection of NTFPs without VSS permission and wood smuggling.
- * There was a worrying lack of awareness amongst community members of the amount of funds available in their accounts, and of the amounts transferred to these accounts by the FD as wage payment.
- * Forest Department officials were involved in bribery and extortion in relation to the VSS at the expense of indigenous communities. In some villages for example, allocation of project funds was done on condition of receiving a bribe.
- * The VSS studies had seen little to no share in the profits arising from forest management or from the compounding fees obtained from patrolling the forest
- * Power and control over forest resources was not devolved to the communities or VSS, nor was genuine decision-making power transferred to VSS or communities.
- * Microplans⁸ did not meet the needs of the communities; for example, their choices of tree species for plantations were largely ignored, eucalyptus plantations being imposed instead.
- * In some villages, no baseline surveys were carried out in the VSS area to determine the diversity and extent of forest resources, which inevitably generated conflicts over benefit sharing once resources were harvested.

The Samata Study concluded that the project did not result in the empowerment of people to manage and control their forest resources. The report suggests that rather than using numbers of VSS established and amount of funds spent on the project as indicators of project success, indicators of empowerment, such as decision-making power concerning protection and regeneration of resources, should form the basis of project assessment.

⁷ Samata and CRY-Net (2001) *Joint Forest Management in Andhra Pradesh: A People's Perspective* Samata, Hyderabad

⁸ Funded under both the JFM and the CFM projects, microplans are supposed to be locally specific forest management and village development plans that developed in a participatory manner.

Controversy during preparation of the CFM Project

During discussions prior to the CFM project, there was much debate over which villages should be eligible to take part in the follow-up to the JFM phase – often referred to as “Phase II”. In the JFM project (Phase I), over 6,000 VSS had been established across AP. However, many of these (perhaps as many as 2000 VSS) involved either villages where people claimed that there were eviction problems under the project, or where there is still a high risk of eviction. Some NGOs proposed that these villages be excluded from the second phase and this proposal was welcomed by the State government and the World Bank.

However, other social NGOs complained that the Phase II project could not abandon those who had been adversely impacted by Phase I. A letter written to the World Bank by a several NGOs in February 2002 maintained that any further forestry project should include a component to compensate, rehabilitate and help people displaced by the previous JFM project.⁹ The same letter pointed serious flaws in the draft resettlement plan for the CFM project which lacked clear safeguards to prevent and prohibit forced relocation.

In response to these criticisms, the coverage of the project was eventually extended. The requirement for compensation for those displaced under Phase I was also made a condition of the loan agreement along with a requirement that the project Resettlement Action Plan be revised in consultation with the public to make explicit the need to compensate people hurt under the previous Bank project, and to address other outstanding concerns raised by civil society organisations (see below).

Concerns were also raised during preparation about the title of the project. Several NGOs insisted that the project proposal for phase II still related to a JFM framework that could not be termed “Community Forest Management”. They complained that the “CFM” terminology was being used as a “cosmetic” label to suggest a different approach, when the basic project structure remained the same.¹⁰ These concerns were dismissed, and the loan was approved by the World Bank Board of Directors in July 2002 (see below).

(2) APCFM Project Objectives

According to the PAD, the CFM project development objective is to “**reduce rural poverty through improved forest management with community participation**”.¹¹ A specific outcome of this objective would be:

“...for the poor and primarily tribal forest-dependent communities to assume full responsibility for the development and maintenance of forest areas formally placed under their stewardship. As communities assume management responsibility under the system of Community Forest Management (CFM) supported by this project, they will receive legal entitlement to incomes generated from both non-timber and timber forest products.”¹²

⁹ NGO Letter to World Bank from Samata, dated February 12, 2002

¹⁰ Operations Evaluation Department – OED (2002) *Performance Assessment Report – Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project (Credit 2573-IN)* OED Sector and Thematic Studies Group, Report No. 24456 at page 8 (Box 2: final bullet).

¹¹ P 2 of the Project Appraisal Document

¹² idem supra

The PAD (page 5) affirms:

“The CFM represents an advance over earlier JFM in that communities will be empowered to take autonomous decisions regarding the management of forest resources assigned to them. Whereas JFM was initiated as target driven process...CFM will be ...a community-driven process. The basic difference between the two is that in JFM, participation is used to improve forests, in CFM, participation would be used to improved forests and forest based livelihoods. Under JFM, state forest departments tended to lead on both forest planning and decision making, whereas under CFM the APFD would act as a facilitator.”

At the village level, the project is supposed to be implemented by the *Vana Shamrikshana Samiti* – VSS (Forest Protection Committees), many of which were established under the previous JFM project.

(3) Project Components

The PAD lists three main project components for CFM: (1) Establishing an Enabling Environment for CFM; (2) Forest Management; and (3) Community Development.

a) Establishing an Enabling Environment [budget: \$22.3 million]

Under this component, “the project would support policy, institutional changes and capacity building of the government, community organizations and NGOs. The existing institutional framework for the joint forest management would be reviewed and modified to make it more conducive to implementing community based forest management (CFM). The existing institutional framework as provided in the recent Government Order (GO) dated February 12, 2002 is to be further strengthened to make it more conducive to implementing so-called community based forest management (CFM) [Box 2]. This component of the project would support project management, monitoring and evaluation, studies and consultancies, activities of the project Monitoring Unit, staff amenities, and communication facilities, etc.”¹³ Other output indicators¹⁴ for this component include:

- Legal status for VSS through amendment of the AP Forest Act 1967
- Girijan Cooperative Corporation marketing monopolies, and restriction of value addition, relaxed and replaced with competitive marketing¹⁵
- Legal framework established to enable coordination between the Panchayat Raj Institutions and the VSS¹⁶
- Training of VSS members in silviculture, modern nursery practices, SMC activities, book keeping and financial management, and conflict resolution.

¹³ P. 7 of the PAD

¹⁴ see page 107 of the Project Implementation Plan (PIP – 2002) or Appendix 1 for the logical framework of the project

¹⁵ The Girijan Cooperative Corporation is an AP state corporation which has the monopoly of purchase and trade on Non Timber Forest Produce and Minor Forest Produce throughout the state.

¹⁶ Under the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, the Panchayat Raj Institutions in Adivasi areas were granted control of forest resources. Under the CFM project however, the control over these resources is devolved to the VSS. The language of the Project Implementation Plan, at page 9, implies that under the project the interests of the ‘local community’ are represented by the VSS, thus defining the conflict which could arise between the Panchayat Raj Institutions and the VSS. The PIP then indicates that in order to avoid such conflict, “suitable rules under the [PESA] Act, will be framed to safeguard the interests of the VSS members.”

Box 2: Summary of the Andhra Pradesh Government Order on Community Forest Management (12.02.02)

Constitution, composition and Elections – includes:

- A VSS can be constituted with the agreement of a minimum of 50% of households. (I.c)
- The VSS committee has been extended from 8 to 15 members, and half of these members must be women. (III.b)
- In Scheduled Areas, all elected members of the Management Committee shall be from Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. (III.e)

VSS Advisory Council (VAC) – Includes:

- The VSS Advisory Council will comprise of the Forest Section Officer, the Forest Beat Officer/Assistant Beat Officer, the Panchayat Sarpanch, a representative of the Village Tribal Development Agency, the Village Administrative Officer, the support NGO and the Village School Headmaster/Headmistress (VI.a)
- The Panchayat Sarpanch will chair the meetings; in his absence the FBO will chair (VI.b)
- The VAC is to review microplans and annual plans and advise the VSS on strategies and available resources for implementing them. (VI.e)

Decision making – includes:

- “The Management Committee shall be responsible to manage and implement all the decisions of the VSS” (V.a)
- “The Management Committee and members of the VSS through a participatory and equitable process including scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, women and other disadvantaged sections shall prepare a microplan and annual plan in accordance with the guidelines issued by the [FD]” (XIII .a)
- “The VSS shall decide the choice of the species for planting subject to the Forest Laws in vogue.” (XIII. c)
- “All microplans and proposed changes to microplan shall be put before the General Body for approval. Here the GB does not agree with any of the provisions of the microplan, the Management Committee shall carry out such changes as necessary (...)” (XIII.h)

Duties and Responsibilities – includes:

The members of the VSS are responsible for:

- Ensuring forest protection (II.a)
- Making other villagers aware of the importance of forests (II.b)
- Preparing microplans and annual plans in accordance with the corresponding working plan (II.c)
- Managing the forest in accordance with the approved microplan (II.d)
- Apprehend offenders of forest law and hand them over to the authorities (II.e)

Financial Arrangements

There are now two bank accounts; one held jointly with the forest department in which money for forest works is deposited, and one held by the VSS in which the latter deposits the revenue from the sale of NTFPs.

Benefit Sharing – includes:

“The VSS shall be entitled to the produce obtained from forests managed by them”:

- All NTFPs (XII.1.a)
- 100% of the incremental volume of timber and bamboo harvested from the forest, as measured from a baseline established at the time of VSS formation”. (XII.1.b)

“For offence cases handed over by the VSS to the FD, the VSS shall be entitled to a 50% of compounding fees as prescribed below”:

- The forest produce seized should not be from the VSS area (XII.2.a).
- The advance compounding fees collected should be deposited into the joint account (XII.2.c)
- The VSS shall not be paid any amount unless the Compounding Fees are collected (XII.2.e)

b) Forest Management [budget: \$79.86 million]

The largest budgetary component of the project is dedicated to forest management which aims to improve forest productivity per hectare and make investments in the protection and regeneration of forest lands. This component would focus on “improving the productivity of designated forest lands through improved planning and silviculture practices, introduction of NTFP using multiple use shrub and tree species including medicinal plants, agroforestry, common land afforestation and fodder and pasture development” (note that funds dedicated to this last activity are minimal).

Specifically, the project finances *silvicultural treatments* involving natural regeneration and conversion of scrub forest into plantations; *Forest inventory and forest management planning*; *applied research and extension*; the setting up of a computerised *Forest Management Information System* (FMIS) and the formulation of a State-wide *Environmental Management Plan and Pest Management Plan* that will be implemented through VSS microplans at the village level

The output indicators for this component¹⁷ include:

- area coverage of timber and NTFP species,
- area of community land planted,
- no. of seedlings planted through group farm forestry,
- percentage of planting material from modern nursery techniques, and
- hectares increase in dense forest cover.

The Project Implementation Plan (PIP) states that under the Forest Management Component, the project “envisages educating these farmers on the negative impacts of shifting cultivation and encourages them to take up alternative eco-friendly and sustainable vocations by providing suitable *incentives*”[emphasis added].¹⁸

c) Community Development [budget:US\$23.57 million]

This component aims to assist communities in improving their village infrastructure and livelihood opportunities through forest as well as non-forest based income generation activities. This component is also set to “support group-based economic activities targeting poor in project area villages who gave up encroached (or *podu*) forest land for forestry activities under JFM”.¹⁹ One objective of this component is to: “assist the VSS in planning and developing community infrastructure and enhance opportunities for income generation and skill development among the most marginalized groups”. This component finances a **Tribal Development Strategy - TDS** [c. \$7 million] and a **Resettlement Action Plan – RAP** [\$7 million], which target tribal households, “encroachers” and shifting cultivators (see below).

¹⁷ see footnote 3

¹⁸ p. 8 of the PIP

¹⁹ the use of the term encroachment to define people who live on or draw their livelihoods from government-designated lands and forests is not acceptable to tribal and activist movements in India but is included here as part of a World Bank citation.

The PAD (page 41-42) is quite explicit that so far as the project planners are concerned “**Community Forest Management**” under the project is limited to just two narrow activities:

- i) Microplan preparation. (note: the PAD affirms that the microplans will be prepared and approved by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer), and
- ii) Support to Facilitator NGOs and Community Organizers and Women Volunteers (to undertake Participatory Rural Appraisal and facilitate preparation and implementation of microplans)

The Project Implementation Plan (PIP) states that once legal issues are resolved at the government level, the microplans will assume a greater role in forest management. Increasing reliance on “microplans” is reportedly in line with GOAP’s stated priority to shift from commercial forest management to forest management for local use.²⁰

The microplan is to be used under this component to fund “Village Development”, including infrastructure works, which are to be financed under the project in order to “enhance community participation” and “strengthen rapport between the Forest Department and the VSS” and “engage the community on issues related to forest management” (PAD, page 42). The PAD affirms that livelihood and income generating opportunities will be financed “for those people who voluntarily surrender forest land for JFM activities”.

Under this component, the output indicators comprise:

- No. of Participatory Rural Appraisals carried out
- No. of microplans prepared
- Village infrastructure improvement works
- No. of persons trained in income generating activities (IGA)
- No. of PAFs supported under the Resettlement and Rehabilitation grant
- No. of PAFs trained in IGAs
- No. of PAFs supported for land development²¹

4) Tribal Development Plan (TDP)²²

The Tribal Development Plan (TDP) states clearly the main role of the tribal development strategy and Forest Department will be to provide “gainful employment” to tribal people and priority access to alternative income generation opportunities [2.1, page 2]. These objectives support “the underlying philosophy of the tribal component” which is “to reduce the dependence of the tribals on the forests for their economic subsistence...”²³ In fact, the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) states that the “degree of dependence on forests will be used as a criterion for allotment of funds”²⁴.

²⁰ Project Implementation Document, p.7

²¹ see footnote 3

²² The Annual Report 2003-04 indicates that the TDP is due to commence in 2004-05.

²³ APCFM Project Tribal development Strategy and Action Plan (IPP7) at pages 2 and 16.

²⁴ P. 55 of the PIP

The budget of the Tribal Development Plan is as follows:

Budget of the TDP – Activities	Total (USD) – over 5 yrs
Training and Support for economic activities	3.3M
Engaging an agency to review VSS level TDPs/RAPs	65,500
Developing Infrastructure	3.3M
Capacity building of VSS, NGOs/COs, WCV	65,500
Capacity building of FD staff and other functionaries	262,000
Exposure trips	65,500
Total (US Dollars)	7,058,500

In relation to shifting cultivation and so-called “encroachment”, the objective of the tribal development component is to involve “weaning tribals from *podu* (swidden cultivation) and ensuring alternative livelihoods and training in “improved agriculture”. It also includes the formulation of a policy to “mitigate losses to forest dependent families” and “enhance tribal participation in wage employment”. Under the TDP, “efforts will be made to educate tribals in non-traditional occupations”²⁵. It also promotes “cattle up-gradation, stall feeding and wood substitutes” and “alternate energy systems”.

At the village level, the TDS is prepared by the VSS and Forest Department is supposed to:

- i) identify tribal people in VSS area
- ii) determine the economic status of tribals (...) and their dependence on forest land
- iii) ensure that each tribal household actively participates in the VSS decision-making process
- iv) involve tribals in project livelihood activities
- v) ensure that wage employment opportunities and income generation activities under the Microplan are offered to tribals on a priority basis.

Project planners advise that the above interventions, alongside interventions to enhance Adivasi health and literacy levels, are supposed to “result in a harmonious relationship between the tribals and the forests”.²⁶

5) Resettlement Action Plan (RAP)

The Forest Department publicly maintains that it acquired 37,000 Ha of land in the NE Coastal District through the “voluntary” surrender of land by “encroachers” (and highlights this as a positive achievement in the PAD and the 2002 RAP). However, villagers and NGOs maintain that this claim is not true. They point out that the vast majority of people did not give up their land voluntarily, but were pressured to surrender their land in order that the Forest Department could reclaim so-called “encroached lands”.²⁷

²⁵ P. 55 of the PIP

²⁶ p. 55 of the PIP

²⁷ OED (2002) *op. cit.* at pages 2, 5 and 12.

The World Bank recognised that its Involuntary Resettlement Policy (OD4.30) had been violated in the JFM project, and that people were displaced without an explicit plan to provide compensation.²⁸ For this reason, the Bank required a RAP for the second project, but this document drew severe criticism from NGOs who complained that the plan did not contain adequate safeguards to prevent forced relocation and did not address the issue of people displaced under the first project.²⁹ In response to these valid criticisms, the Bank also required as a condition of the loan that the RAP be revised through “stakeholder consultation”.

Under the new revised Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), the RAP is supposed to form an integral part of the Microplan prepared at the VSS level in affected villages. VSS committees are given powers to implement ‘voluntary’ resettlement of so-called “encroachers” that the APFD deems to include anyone cultivating land outside Revenue Land. Resettlers who give up land in the VSS area will be given “wage employment on a preferential basis during the process of CFM interventions at the VSS level, including watch and ward of forest areas, plantation activities, thinning operations etc.”³⁰ Strategies, guidelines and an entitlement framework for those likely to suffer hardship under the resettlement scheme are supposed to be mainstreamed into VSS microplans. In this process, “[i]mpact assessment of adverse impacts, identification of mitigation measures, and planning and implementation of mitigation measures will be done by the VSS and incorporated into microplans.”³¹

In December 2003 the APFD estimated that 753 VSS trigger the R and R policy i.e., around 15% of the 5000 VSS involved in the APCFMP. The Forest Department estimates that the RAP will affect at least 16,190 families.³² Within each VSS village, a small sample survey undertaken by the Bank and Forest Department estimated that 28% of families are “encroachers” on VSS forest land and **that scheduled tribes “account for more than four fifths of the total encroachers...”** [7.1, page 7]. Of these so-called “encroachers”, 38% “...depend exclusively on forest land that they had encroached”,³³ while 40% of affected families earn their primary income as “head loaders” and 0.6% have dwellings on land now designated as VSS forest land. 31% of all encroachers are defined by the forest department as “landless”.³⁴

Controversially, the Forest Department estimates as many as 50% of affected families will be willing to give up their land voluntarily. This assumption clashes with assertions made in public consultations by Adivasi leaders and support NGOs that the majority of affected people will not relinquish their land to the forest department. Following public consultations on the revision of the Resettlement Action Plan held in 2003, the final RAP was amended and now contains some clearer safeguards. However, the document still features controversial elements. In particular, there are serious concerns about its flawed assumptions regarding the number of people willing to relocate and the existence of loopholes in oversight mechanisms, which are meant to ensure safeguards are properly applied [Box 3].

²⁸ OED (2002) *op. cit.* at page 2

²⁹ NGO Letter to World Bank from Samata, dated February 12, 2002

³⁰ World Bank (2004) *AP Community Forest Management Project Resettlement Action Plan* May 2004 (revised) at 11.5.1, page 13

³¹ P. 56 of the PIP

³² revised RAP: page19

³³ revised RAP, page 7

³⁴ revised RAP page 7

Box 3: Resettlement Action Plan: Consultation, Revision and Controversy

Consultations on the revision of the RAP took place in 2003 and the revised plan was finally completed in May 2004.³⁵ The revised document contains some, but not all, of the NGO and Adivasi demands to rectify the unacceptable language and content of the first RAP. With regard to safeguards against forced resettlement the RAP stipulates that:

- "The facilitating NGO or Community Organizer (CO) will ensure that lands are surrendered voluntarily and not under compulsions or coercion or pressure on the affected families" [8.1, page 7-8]
- ...the steps taken in voluntary surrender are documented. Documentation will involve a consent letter signed by the family giving up land and witnessed by the MC of the VSS and the Sarpanch or other representative of the Gram Panchayat and members of the VSS Advisory Council
- Documentation verifying the voluntary nature of relocation "...will be checked on a sample basis by an external agency that will be engaged to undertake monitoring of the R&R component of the APCFM Project" [12.1, page 14]
- No physical activity including plantation will take place unless all entitlements are extended and the process of economic rehabilitation has started [12.1, page 14]
- If any negative impacts are observed due to resettlement: "...the project will address them" [:9.3.5, page 10]
- "RAPs prepared at the village level will include arrangements (and indicators) for monitoring the effectiveness of income restoration measures, and will have provisions to modify plans found to be ineffective" [11.5.5, page 14]
- The Independent Advisory Group (IAG) in the PMU will monitor the Resettlement Action Plan and examine complaints relating the RAP [PAD page 11]
- An external agency will also monitor the implementation of the R&R policy [RAP, page 18]

The revised document affirms that the RAP "does not contemplate use of force in its implementation" and is more explicit about the requirement to identify and compensate people "adversely impacted by relocation under the first JFM phase".³⁶

However, to the anger of NGOs, the document still maintains that lands under the previous project were relinquished voluntarily. It also maintains that up to 50% of the 16,190 potentially affected families in the CFM project are expected to willingly choose to surrender their lands to the Forest Department. NGOs vigorously challenge this assertion and point out that the both public consultations on the RAP in 2001 in 2003 clearly record that the *majority* of tribal people and other forest dependent people defined by the APFD as "encroachers" will not under any circumstances voluntarily surrender their "encroached" land to the VSS.³⁷

The RAP also still contains numerous loopholes that weaken any guarantees for land-for-land compensation as the RAP affirms: land-for-land compensation will be provide wherever "government revenue or ceiling surplus land is available and acceptable".

There are also disturbing gaps regarding the grievance mechanisms to address complaints about implementation of the RAP. For example, proposed Village Advisory Committees and regional sub-committees charged with resolving conflicts maybe chaired solely by forest department staff and officials (in the absence of community leaders and other representatives).

³⁵ GOAP (2004) *Public Services – Forest Department - A.P. Community Forest Management Project – Publication of Revised Resettlement Action Plan for Information of Public Notification* G.O.Ms.No.68, 25/05/2004

³⁶ World Bank (2004) *AP Community Forest Management Project Resettlement Action Plan*. May 2004 (revised) at 7.1 page 7

³⁷ World Bank (2004) *A.P. Community Forest Management Project Resettlement Action Plan* May 2004 (revised) at para. 6.7, page 7. Controversy over application of the resettlement plan is likely to continue as its implementation started at the end of 2004.

6) Project Implementation Letter

The Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management project was officially launched on the 30th of August 2002. The Government of Andhra Pradesh's Implementation Letter (PAD, p.43-45), dated 28.05.2002, which was seemingly used in the place of an official loan agreement, defines the following set of provisions as conditions for the project to commence (See Annex for full letter):

- (i) The GOAP would provide compensation to the families who had "suffered the consequences of forced eviction from their lands under the AP Forestry Project"
- (ii) The GOAP would not implement the CFM project in areas that include 'encroached' or *podu* lands until a 'voluntary' mechanism for relinquishing land is established in consultation with 'stakeholders'
- (iii) The Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy of the GOAP would be reviewed and revised in consultation with 'stakeholders' by 30th of June 2003 [this was not completed until May 2004].
- (iv) A number of different monitoring, advisory and grievance mechanisms would be established under the project (see below)
- (v) GOAP agrees to constitute and **independent advisory group** to advise on the implementation of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP)
- (vi) An Addendum to the G.O. on CFM (February 2002) will be issued by 30th of June 2003 clarifying and simplifying the usufruct share agreement.

7) Safeguards and Monitoring

The monitoring mechanisms established under the AP CFM Project include:

- A Project Monitoring Unit (based in Hyderabad)
- Independent Advisory Group³⁸
- A third party monitoring consultant³⁹
- VSS Advisory Councils
- The Integrated Tribal Development Agency Forest Committee
- The Forest Range Officer and Divisional Forest Officer
- The Forest Divisional Committee

Project Monitoring Unit

Under the CFM project, the Government of AP has established a state-level Project Monitoring Unit (PMU), based in Hyderabad, presided by the Chief Conservator of Forests and supported by various Forest Department officials. The PMU is responsible for coordination, monitoring and reporting.⁴⁰ It should house a Social Development Unit and is supposed to employ a Social Development Specialist to oversee the tribal development aspects of the project. It is also responsible for compiling quarterly project monitoring reports and overseeing the preparation of half-yearly assessments to report on the progress of TDP activities.⁴¹

One key task of the PMU is to monitor the Resettlement Action Plan and examine complaints relating the RAP [PAD page 11]. The 2002 revised resettlement plan affirms that monitoring and planning resettlement will be the responsibility of the

³⁸ PAD at page 25.

³⁹ RAP (2004) at page 17.

⁴⁰ P. 17 of the World Bank's Social and Environmental Assessment for the Andhra Pradesh Community Forestry Management Project – available at <http://www.worldbank.org>

⁴¹ p. 21 of the TDP

Social Unit in the PMU, which is supposed to ensure “smooth implementation of resettlement activities” under the project.” [13.2, page 15]

Independent Monitoring

Project plans include provisions and budget for independent, third party monitoring which is to be undertaken by a consultant contracted by the GOAP for that purpose. This consultant is charged with monitoring project implementation, as well as the implementation of Tribal Development Plan, Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), Environmental Management Plan, Pest Management Plan, Gender Development Plan, and the implementation of micro-plans and various policy and institutional reforms to be implemented under the project in all participating VSS. The consultant is required to submit periodic reviews and evaluations. According to available project reports, a contract with the independent consultant was entered into on the 1st of June 2003.

This evaluation has learned that the independent advisory group has been established under the project, but has been unable to clarify the composition of the group or the character of its activities to date.

The VSS Advisory Council

The project envisages the formation of The VSS Advisory Councils (VAC), which are supposed to be the first body to which local grievances are addressed. The VACs also review the microplans and annual operational plans and advise the VSS on strategies and resources available for implementing them.⁴² They will also oversee the planning and implementation of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and the GOAP R&R policy.

The Council will also be expected to “help in assessing the availability of government land for families opting for land and also in accessing government schemes in the area”.⁴³

The VSS Advisory Councils are composed of:

- Forest Section Officer
- Forest Beat Officer
- Assistant Beat Officer
- Panchayat Sarpanch
- A representative of the ITDA
- The Village Secretary
- The relevant implementation NGO
- The Village School Headmaster/Headmistress

The Panchayat Sarpanch should chair the VAC meetings, but if for any reason he or she is unable to attend the meeting the Forest Section Officer or Beat Officer will preside over the VAC meeting.⁴⁴

⁴² P. 13 of the PIP

⁴³ RAP (2004), p. 15

⁴⁴ revised RAP, pages 15-16

8) Project Budget in US Dollars (millions)⁴⁵

Project component/activity	Total	% of total
A. Enabling environment for community forest management		
Capacity building of Govt. agencies	3.91	3.1
Capacity building of community and NGOs	3.64	2.9
Project management	14.64	11.7
Sub total	22.19	17.7
B. Forest management		
Forest treatment	65.30	52.1
Social forestry	1.20	1.0
Planning and inventory	5.96	4.8
Applied research	4.90	3.9
NWFP and medicinal plants development	2.50	2.1
Sub total	79.86	63.8
C. Community development		
CFM support	7.87	6.4
Village development support	3.00	2.4
Tribal development plan	7.00	5.0
Resettlement action plan	5.70	4.7
Sub total	23.57	18.5
Total	125.61	100

⁴⁵ PIP page 64-65

D. Preliminary independent evaluation of the APCFM project

In June 2004, the Andhra Pradesh social NGO *Samata* and the UK-based *Forest Peoples Programme* worked with local forest-related and development NGOs and Adivasi communities to undertake a rapid assessment of initial local experience with the AP Community Forest Management Project (APCFMP). The evaluation was carried out through discussions with leading AP activists and NGOs working on forest issues, including “facilitator” NGOs engaged in project implementation as well as VSS members and non-VSS members at the village level. Field work involved visits to ten tribal villages: two in Nizamabad District and eight in the NE Coastal District – seven of which are part of the CFM project and one which has opted not to take part in the government scheme.

This section of the report summarises some of the findings of this independent evaluation and assesses the extent to which the CFM Project is - or is not - promoting forest policy reform and the empowerment of forest dependent communities in AP.

(1) Problems in Project Preparation and Design

NGOs and Adivasi organisations complain that public consultations for the CFM project undertaken in 2000 and 2001 did not involve Adivasi leaders who are known to be against the CFM project, so critical organisations were not represented in the original consultations (Box 4). As a result, project design, priorities and associated budget provisions in the general project design and in the Tribal Development Strategy, are shaped largely by Forest Department objectives.

Adivasi leaders and critical NGOs point out that the term ‘community’ was misleading in the project design given that in VSS may be formed by just 50% of villagers in any particular settlement. Critics feared that the constitution of VSS by just half the population would inevitably generate conflicts in larger villagers regarding access to resources between VSS and non-VSS members. The design of the project was also criticised for being heavily skewed towards commercial forestry and the establishment of clonal eucalyptus plantations, which in the past had resulted in the expropriation of customary resources such as ryotwari land. The focus of the project on the provision of temporary wage labour for forest-dependent communities was likewise criticised as being unsustainable and increasing local dependence on external funds. Critics stressed that the project did not address people’s aspiration for ownership over forest lands, and would still promote overall Forest Department control over forest management through existing legal and operational mechanisms such as Forest Working Plans (see below).⁴⁶

Notwithstanding these problems, a significant number of NGOs backed the project and encouraged communities who had formed VSS under the JFM project to take part in the second phase because they were convinced by the World Bank and GOAP that the second phase would genuinely apply a different approach that would give people a say in forest management and provide much needed benefits.

Despite the flaws in the project design, several social NGOs in AP also saw the second phase as a necessary measure to try and ensure compensation and redress for the families dispossessed of their lands under the first Bank project (Section C(1) above). This same group of social NGOs and activists pressured the World Bank to ensure that the second phase would feature clear safeguards to prevent any further forced relocation. This lobbying was partially

⁴⁶ Rao, T (2002) *Community Forest Management Project in Andhra Pradesh – limitations of the project* informal briefing, LAYA, October 2002

successful in so far as the Bank did require a fully participatory revision of the Resettlement Action Plan. On paper at least, some clearer safeguards have been established as a result and the flawed resettlement component of the project was rightly delayed for over two years (Section C(5)).

Although some gains in rectifying the flawed resettlement policy have been achieved, NGOs and activists are disappointed that the revised Resettlement Action Plan released in mid-2004 still contains incorrect assumptions about peoples' willingness to surrender their traditional lands. Fears therefore remain that without careful oversight, there are risks that implementation of the RAP may still result in involuntary resettlement.

At this stage, it is too early to judge the impact of the RAP under the project as implementation only started at the end of 2004.

Box 4: Flawed Participation in Project Design and Preparation

Support NGOs and communities report that project-related consultations were largely carried out without appropriate representation of the affected people. Problems included:

- Notification for the consultations was given 1 day, or even only 1 hour, prior to scheduled meetings. Some communities were either not informed of the consultations or were informed so late that consultation within the village was not possible, and the first person found, and able to travel was taken as a representative. The same applied to support NGO representatives. In one case, a critical NGO representative received the invitation from the Forest Department after the meeting was held.
- Agendas for the meetings were not given prior to the scheduled meetings, so participants were unable to prepare relevant inputs in a coordinated and organised manner. Furthermore, essential documentation such as the Tribal Development Plan and the Resettlement Action Plan were never distributed to many support NGOs and Adivasi leaders prior to the consultation meetings.
- The consultation meetings were dominated by Forest Department Staff and uncritical VSS members. Adivasi activists and some NGOs complain that the APFD did not invite Adivasi leaders who were known to be against or critical of the CFM project, and most villagers with grievances with the previous JFM project were not invited to the consultations.



Members of community VSS in Andhra Pradesh complain that key documents relating to the World Bank-funded forestry project such as the Tribal Development Strategy and even their own village micro plans are not readily available to VSS members and other villagers

[Photo: T Griffiths]

(2) Project Implementation

The preliminary evaluation of the APCFMP carried out by FPP and Samata in mid-2004 found a series of serious implementation problems and general dissatisfaction with the project. One of the most frequent findings was a systematic lack of transparency and a shortage of key project documents among implementation NGOs and participating communities. These problems with information disclosure are discussed briefly below, before making a summary assessment of the state of implementation of the three main project components.

Lack of project transparency:

Field visits to villages and implementation NGOs in 2004 found that key project documents and information about the objectives and budget for the CFM programme are not available at the village level, nor among implementation NGOs. The roles and duties of the FD under the project are not well disseminated and most VSS have little idea about the stated difference between the old JFM project and the current so-called CFM project (e.g. Box 4). None of the VSS interviewed had received copies of basic documents such as the Tribal Development Strategy, Resettlement Action Plan (neither original nor revised), Annual Operational Plans and Annual Progress Reports. In most cases VSS and non-VSS members are not even aware that such documents exist.

Villagers or NGOs report that when they have tried to obtain specific information and have made requests for copies of project-related documents, FD officials often respond that such documentation is either confidential, cannot be copied or that communities must pay for such information.

The nine VSS interviewed as part of this evaluation had no knowledge of the formal project grievance mechanisms and third-party monitoring arrangements available under the CFM project. None of them had heard of the VSS Advisory Councils.

Unwanted and unjust top-down policies:

All VSS villages visited as part of the evaluation exercise reported that they have no knowledge of the Tribal Development Strategy goal to “reduce the dependence of tribals on the forest”. Support NGOs and activists stress that the tribal development plan under the CFM Project had not been agreed with tribal representatives in AP, but had been written by development institutions and consultants in collaboration with the APFD and the Bank.

a) Loan Agreement and Monitoring Mechanisms

As noted in Section C(6), one of the principal elements of the GOAP’s Implementation Letter of 30th of August 2002 was a pledge to compensate families who had “suffered the consequences of forced eviction from their lands under the AP [JFM] Project”. In mid-2004, Adivasi leaders and support NGOs report that this has so far not taken place. After 2 years implementation, the Government of Andhra Pradesh remains in violation of the loan agreement.

There are also indications that loan agreement requirements for regular monitoring of the project have also been violated. By mid-2004, project monitoring activities had generated little or no public information on project impacts. Other than the annual progress reports, FPP and Samata are only aware of one brief set of notes, produced by a member of the Independent Advisory Group, which were in the public domain in mid-2004.⁴⁷ This latter

⁴⁷ Available at www.ap.nic.in/apforest/

document contains just a few comments on NTFP use and a note on mini-percolation tanks (for improved irrigation), which some VSS have been digging as a part of the project.

In March 2004, the NGO Committee on Participatory Forest Management made an urgent written appeal to the PMU in Hyderabad concerning a number of alleged cases of forced eviction under the CFM. As of June 2004, the PMU had not yet replied to the letter.

After two years, the available evidence suggests that monitoring mechanisms under the APCFMP have been seriously late in becoming operational, and are defective and slow to respond to appeals made by NGOs and communities.

b) Enabling Environment

Much to the disappointment community leaders and activists who backed the second phase Bank-sponsored forestry project in AP, the CFM project does not address persistent popular demands for the legal recognition of community and customary ownership rights over forests and forest resources. The CFM project has only resulted in minor amendments to the Government Order on CFM and the 1967 AP Forest Act relating to VSS elections, VSS membership and benefit sharing rules without any treatment of fundamental rights issues.⁴⁸

NGOs stress that the project still fails to address the major inequities and injustices enshrined in the national legislation. As the 1980 Forest (Conservation) Act remains valid, the critical issue of encroachment has not been resolved. NGOs and forest activists are therefore concerned that the CFM project and its RAP legitimate a flawed land and forest classification system and unjust legal framework.

Failure to reform markets for minor forest produce

People also complain that while their shares in income from forest resources may have been increased on paper in the revised Government order on CFM, the VSS may still only sell to the Stated-owned *Girijan Cooperatives Corporation* (GCC), which gives very poor prices.⁴⁹

There is a great deal of frustration that CFM project has so far not fulfilled promises to abolish the monopoly of the GCC and people have been bitterly disappointed that the AP Forest Department has again given a new contract to the Corporation. Adivasi leaders point out that in Scheduled Areas this contract is in contravention of the 1996 PESA Act, under which tribal communities have the right to sell their produce to whoever they so wish.

As regards training and capacity building under the project, a significant number of NGOs have been trained in PRA methodologies. However, according to the project's own progress report only three VSS had received training in financial management by 2004 and most training seems so far to have mainly involved Forest Department staff and NGOs.⁵⁰

The minimal training in financial management is confirmed in villages visited as part of this review where VSS members that this component has so far not been implemented.

Lack of financial accountability:

Implementing NGOs stress that under the CFM project the VSS accounts are still not transparent in the majority of cases. Only an estimated 5% of VSS keep accounts of the sales of minor forest produce (MFP). Even fewer VSS keep records of Forest Department works

⁴⁸ Government of Andhra Pradesh – GOAP (2002a) *Forest Department – Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management Project – Comprehensive Orders Issued* G.O. Ms. No. 13m 12/02/2002; GOAP (2002b) *Forest Department Policy for Forestry Development in Andhra Pradesh – approved orders issued* G.O. Ms. No. 34, 16/04/2002.

⁴⁹ For example, the GCC pays just 3 or 4 Rupees per kilo of tamarind fruit, while the market price is 25 Rupees.

⁵⁰ APCFM Annual Progress Report at page 6.

and the funds expended under the CFM project. VSS members report that the Forest Department controls the joint account and the VSS President is just asked to sign and rubber-stamp documents. Villagers and NGOs are frustrated that the APFD repeatedly promises to make changes in the way project accounts are managed, but they so far have not done so.

c) Forest Management

An independent assessment of the scale of technical forestry-related operations undertaken as part of this project is beyond the scope of this report. According to the Project Progress report for 2003-04, however, the project had supported “treatment” of 99,530 ha of forest land. This review was unable to determine the full details of precisely what such “treatments” entailed because the relevant annex to the aforesaid report could not be obtained. Initial information indicates that treatments involved “rejuvenation” of 28,933 ha of teak forests, 18,766 of non-teak forests, 15,163 ha of bamboo forests and the provision of nearly 2.5 million tree seedlings for “group farm forestry”, among other activities. The 2003-04 report also claims that 367.13 ha of “community lands” have also been planted under the CFRM project. It is not clear to what extent these lands were planted voluntarily by the VSS or whether some VSS or non-VSS members lost land or access rights as a result of this work. The APFD claim that by 2004, 68% of scheduled funds for forest treatment had been spent.

As regards control over forest management, villagers complain that they still have little or no control over forest management decisions which are still taken by the Forest Department (see below).



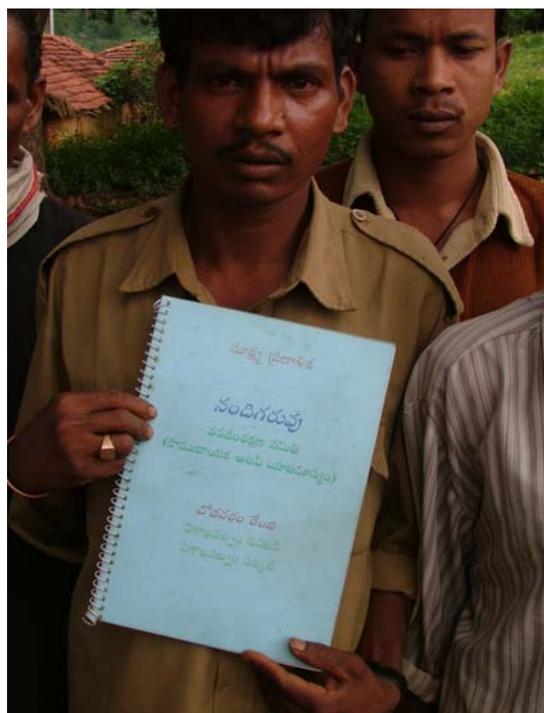
Unwanted eucalyptus plantation on VSS land in Andhra Pradesh. Protests by villagers against the plantation and requests to plant a mix of native species and fruit trees were rejected by the Forest Department, which threatened the VSS with exclusion from benefits (such as wage work) under the World Bank project unless villagers planted the trees. [Photo: T Griffiths]

d) Community Development

This preliminary evaluation has found a catalogue of problems in the current implementation of the so-called “community development” component of the APCFMP. Problems include (but are not limited to), top-down micro-planning, disempowerment of VSS members whose resolutions are rejected by the Forest Department, late or partial disbursement of project funds, failure to deal with land tenure issues, creation of conflicts within and between villages and problems with benefit sharing. This evaluation has been unable to assess implementation of the Tribal Development Strategy as most villages visited were unaware of its existence. No evaluation of the impact of the GOAP R&R policy was possible as at the time of the field evaluation in June 2004, implementation of the RAP had still not commenced.

Top-down microplanning:

The Project Implementation (PIP) Plan states that “while (Forest Department) working plans were both strategic and prescriptive in nature, new style working plans under preparation will be more strategic, leaving operational prescriptions and details to the microplan”.⁵¹ As clarified in Section 3(c) above, one stated objective of the APCFMP is to shift planning for forest management to the village level through the use of microplans. By March 2004, the Forest Department reports that 4424 microplans had been prepared, approved and adopted out of a total of 5000 potential plans.⁵²



A VSS chairperson holds a micro plan for forest management and “village development” drawn up under the World Bank-assisted CFM project. Many VSS report that their micro plans have been written solely by the Forest Department. Micro plans been adopted without prior agreement of the communities concerned and without proper attention to land tenure issues and customary resource use regimes.

[Photo: T Griffiths]

Communities and support NGOs emphasise that the number of micro-plans prepared on paper is not an effective measure to assess success in project implementation. All participating villages visited as part of the evaluation complained that the preparation of the microplans resides entirely with the forest department. NGO and community involvement is confined to the carrying out and making inputs to Participatory Rural Appraisal and the VSS and communities are not aware of their content until, and if, the microplans are handed to them. Some villages visited as part of this evaluation report that they have received no copy of the micro-plan. Initial scrutiny of micro-plans examined during the field visits indicates that

⁵¹ p. 7 of the PIP

⁵² AP CFM Annual Report 2004-2004 at page 1 (available at www.ap.nic.in/apforest/)

some community priorities for managing VSS land have not been incorporated into the micro-plan.

Box 5: Microplanning: Theory and Reality

The Project Implementation Plan:

Until now, forest management has always been carried out according to the institutionalised Working Plans. With CFM, the state government is intent on modernising its management plans to allow for local specificities and priorities within project villages. Currently, working plans in Andhra Pradesh are being revised to become more strategic, and leaving operational prescriptions to be decided at the microplan level.

The PIP states that “suitable provisions will be made (...) to accommodate any special treatment/management prescriptions (...) as per people’s aspirations and specific management objectives like management of NTFPs, harvesting for crop poles, small timber, issues dealing with thinning regime in plantations (...)”. The PIP then goes on to note that “care will be taken to ensure that these aspirations are in tune with National and State Forest Policies”.

The reality:

Participation in the micro-planning process is restricted to answering questions and providing local information for the PRA exercise. Microplans are in most cases written by the Forest Department based on its priorities for timber and pulp production and forest protection. The final contents of the microplan are not agreed upon by VSS members. Furthermore, scrutiny of publicly available microplans reveals that most constitute a detailed version of a Forest Department working plan for a forest “compartment” with a few proposals for village infrastructure works tacked on. Villagers and support NGOs criticise the FD for using the microplans to impose its own forest policy and work schedules on their VSS. Funds for forest management in the microplan are tied to APFD objectives and are not made available for forestry work proposed by the villagers.

Continued Forest Department Control over Forest Management

Communities and facilitator NGOs complain that under the CFM Project the APFD does not respect the priorities and concerns of VSS members. Resolutions passed autonomously by the VSS are routinely dismissed or simply ignored by FD officials, which still dictate forest management decisions, work plans and labour calendars of VSS members. In many instances recounted by villagers during the field evaluation, the APFD has consistently rejected VSS choice of tree species to plant on VSS land. In several cases, the APFD has physically destroyed fruit trees planted by VSS members. In other villages, the VSS resolutions to allocate portions of VSS forest land to landless families have been rejected by the APFD.

VSS that press ahead with their own work on VSS land as agreed by its members endure threats of legal action and eviction by the Forest Department. In the same way, VSS that refuse to enforce resolutions prohibiting traditional shifting cultivation (*podu*) are told that the village will not receive benefits under the CFM scheme. Villagers are angry that the APFD still primarily blames them for forest loss and degradation and the Forest Department regularly breaks agreements made with the VSS on land and resource use.

The CFM rules require women and landless people to be on the Management Committee. However, villagers point out that in most cases these vulnerable and marginal members of the VSS do not take decisions nor draft resolutions, though they may be asked to ratify resolutions. Women and landless people are therefore often members on paper only. For their part, the VSS general body are usually not involved in decision-making and are not aware of VSS resolutions. Some VSS say they have given up passing their own resolutions as they know the FD will reject them.



Women, landless peoples and headloaders are among the most marginal members in many villages. Despite new CFM regulations aimed at improving their participation and say in VSS decision-making, the tribal women interviewed for this evaluation did not feel empowered, and remain some of the most economically vulnerable in their villages. [photo E. Caruso]

In the worst cases, VSS members are not even aware that they are entitled to make their own resolutions, others than those instructed by the Forest Department. VSS members in the villages visited in Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam explain that most resolutions are passed on instruction from the APFD and relate to specific paid work for the Forest Department. Such resolutions specify wage rates, work to be carried out and the number of people to be employed.

Failure to deal with land tenure issues:

One major criticism expressed by villagers and support NGOs is that the CFM Project has failed to address land tenure issues because in the vast majority of participating villages VSS boundaries have not been demarcated (See Box 10, Box 11 and Box 12)

Community forest management or State patronage?

VSS members participating in the CFM project often explain that despite ongoing problems with the scheme and unresolved grievances, they tolerate and cooperate with the APFD and VSS structure simply because for many villages it is virtually the only source of external funds and wage labour. Villagers talked to as part of this review say that in general since JFM and CFM, although harassment of “encroachers” continues, access to the forest for fuel, fodder and timber to make ploughs and ox-carts has, more often than not, been permitted in VSS villages. At the same time, the past oppressive regime of bribes and “tax” imposed by FD staff has declined in these villages.

However, there are apparently mutual (and usually unspoken) understandings between the VSS and APFD authorities active in the CFM scheme. The Forest Department agrees to allow some forest access for villagers in return for cheap wage labour from VSS members to implement the department’s silvicultural and plantation works.

There is appears to be an understanding that VSS compliance with (highly disputed and contentious) APFD anti-shifting cultivation, anti-encroacher and forest protection policies will be rewarded with wage employment and village infrastructure works. Suffering serious poverty and the absence of basic village services, communities say they feel pressured to accept these unwanted forest policies because if they reject them they will lose a source of cash income and the possibility of obtaining World Bank funds for basic community services.

More disturbing are accounts given by VSS members that they fear that direct opposition to APFD policies and instructions would result in a backlash that would undermine their already fragile land and resource security (Box 7). Such fears are especially prevalent in Forest Villages where many households do not have land titles on revenue land and rely entirely on forest land to make a living. In two of the villages interviewed, the Forest Department had threatened the community with court cases if they did not comply with the Department's orders regarding forest management.

In short, there is an understanding that deference to the APFD will keep the Department off villagers' backs and help maintain some degree of land security and forest access. All these elements suggest that the CFM project is actually part of a system of exploitative patronage where clients receive some protection and benefits in return for service and obedience to the patron.

Box 6: Land tenure problems

Among tribal villages in Andhra Pradesh, customary areas are marked out by agreed stone or rocky landmarks and landscape features such as streams and hills. In the NE Coastal district these traditional village boundaries are known as the *polimeru* of each village. Between villages there is customarily shared resource usage regarding fruits, NTFP and grazing, while timber cutting and farming rights are usually exclusively reserved to each village.

However, VSS jurisdictions do not recognise these customary village boundaries. They are based on Forest Department forest management units (circle, division, range, section, compartment), and not on traditional village jurisdictions. The Forest Department has not sought prior agreement within and between villages before defining VSS limits. This means that VSS areas have been superimposed on traditional forest areas, community forests, forest grazing pastures and customary areas for cultivation. These superimpositions inevitably cause conflicts as customary occupiers find their land claimed by the VSS and Forest Department.

The failure to agree boundaries has also resulted in serious conflicts between VSS members and the APFD over entitlements to harvest timber and NTFPs established and cared for by the community (see Box 12). In the ten villages visited as part of the evaluation not a single village had an agreed accurate map of the VSS area. Micro-plans that have already been prepared are based on rough hand drawn sketch maps that are usually not to scale.

Communities and NGOs complain that although project funds under the CFM project have equipped most APFD staff with GPS units and the APFD now counts on an expensive GIS system, VSS demarcation is still not taking place. The APFD is either seeking to charge communities for such demarcation or it simply refuses to do the work.⁵³ In one case in the NE Coastal District, the facilitator NGO *Velegu Association* is refusing to hand over the results of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to the APFD for micro-planning, until the Forest Department carries out participatory demarcation of VSS areas and resolves existing land tenure disputes with villagers. It is an unfortunate reality that one of the principal elements of the project's PAD is capacity building for 'conflict resolution' when the project itself is the cause of most of the conflict arising within and between villages.

As is common in patron-client relations, a client's failure to abide by the rules may result in punishment and withdrawal of protection. The cooperation with the CFM Project is thus partly sustained by an undercurrent of fear. Indeed, in three of the nine villages visited, VSS members stated explicitly that they remain afraid of the Forest Department. In one case, VSS complained that they feel like the "invisible slaves" of the APFD (See Box 8 on Shrikrishnapuram Village). Support NGOs inside and outside the project likewise argue that people working for the VSS are basically employees of the APFD as their activities are not any

⁵³ A reluctance to engage in participatory demarcation on the part of the APFD may be because the government is aware that the boundaries of Reserve Forest and Protected Forests are disputed in many villages and due process for their notification was not followed by the government in the past.

different from the Forest Department. They stress this is partly confirmed by the fact that the same silvicultural practices are applied in VSS forest land as in non-VSS forest land.

Many implementation NGOs (though not all), are caught up in the same web of patronage as they receive funds, contracts and consultancies through the World Bank investment and so are reluctant to criticise the CFM project. The few NGOs involved in CFM scheme that do challenge the APFD are labelled by the government as “troublemakers” who are accused of impeding project implementation.

Box 7: Main issues in Kannipur Village, Nizamabad District

- Lack of project transparency

The villagers were unaware that the Bank was funding the CFM project in their area until mid 2004, when an NGO facilitator was appointed to work with them. They were also unaware of any differences between JFM and CFM, besides the requirement for more members, and greater gender equality, on the Management Committee.

The VSS chairman stated that he remained uninformed of the status of the joint VSS account, and that he was simply told to thumb-print the joint account-related documents when the FD required him to.

- Forest Department control

The Forest Department still maintains control over forest management in Kannipur. The VSS passed a resolution to plant Cashew nut trees, but this was rejected by the FD in favour of eucalyptus plantations, which the community is very unhappy about in light of the severe drought they have been subject to in the past 5 years.

- Problems with Microplanning

The community members were unaware that microplanning was supposed to be a participatory process, and that the microplans were supposed to represent their priorities and aspirations for forest management. The process of microplanning has only recently started in their village, so no documents were available to them.

- Problems with demarcation

As a result of un-participatory VSS area demarcations by the FD, there are land conflicts between Kannipur and its neighbouring villages, and fencing is required to keep neighbouring communities within their imposed perimeters.

Problems with benefit-sharing:

The 2002 AP Government Order on CFM stipulates that VSS members should receive a 100% share of income from non-timber forest produce sold from the VSS area (though the same instrument requires that 50% of this must be reinvested in forest management activities). However, in practice portions of VSS income from forest produce sales are reserved for the VSS President and APFD staff. Villagers and NGOs report that proportions taken by the Forest Department vary from between 8% and 30%. People suspect that share taken by the FD could be even more, though this is hard to verify due to the lack of transparent financial records.

Disputes over entitlements to income from the sale of forest and plantation produce also stem from the land tenure and demarcation problems already noted. During the evaluation, villagers in different settlements told how they had passed resolutions to harvest resources on VSS land only to be advised that the resources lie outside the VSS jurisdiction and belong entirely to the Forest Department (See Box 12). In other cases, communities complain that the APFD invokes the “incremental” rule whereby the VSS 100% share in income is reduced by a factor based on the age of the resources and the date of VSS formation. Many

communities have been dismayed to learn that resources protected by them for years, still only yield a modest benefit due to a technical rule in the law.



People in participating villages report that they have not been empowered by the World Bank financed “community forest management” project, now in its third year of implementation. Instead, control over forest management decisions remains with the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (APFD). Benefits under the project have so far been confined to occasional wage labour on soil conservation and plantation works prioritised by the APFD (pictured left). [Photo: T Griffiths]

Box 8: Main issues in Nandigaru Village, Vizianagaram District

- Forest Department control

The VSS members assert that the FD has consistently rejected VSS resolutions and initiatives, and imposes its own forest management priorities, which include singling, trenching, and soil works, on the community. In fact, the villagers report that the FD will refuse to pay for any forest management works it has not decided upon itself.

The community members say they are disillusioned with the project, and there have been no VSS meetings since the beginning of CFM. Resolutions are passed by VSS members collecting signatures throughout the village on an ad-hoc basis.

Nandigaru is a forest village, which means that community members do not have official title to their agricultural (patta) lands. The community would like to assert their control over forest management, but fear that if they do not obey the FD, their insecure land tenure will be further weakened or entirely removed.

- Incompatibility with traditional agricultural requirements

The traditional village *Perdha* (headman) reported that VSS wage-employment works imposed by the FD often conflict with the requirements for cultivation. Since the FD expects works to be undertaken according to its own schedule, village cultivators are forced to flout their traditional agricultural calendar, which requires specific timing for sowing, reaping and harvesting of different species.

To date, the CFM project has not delivered village infrastructure benefits and most VSS have not signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forest Department. A significant number of villages have not yet seen the microplan for their village, though many have undertaken PRA with facilitator NGOs. Over 700 villages identified by the APFD as containing “encroachers”, have still not started PRA work as PRA and microplans will be

based on the objectives set out in the revised Resettlement Action Plan adopted by APFD in 2004.⁵⁴

Some villages report that there have been little or no wage labour opportunities for more than two years under the CFM project. Other villages report welcome benefits from wage labour in singling, soil conservation and plantation activities for the Forest Department. In some villages, there are also reports of incomplete wage payment, echoing one of the main problems found under JFM (e.g., Box 12). Despite the monetary benefits for workers, some VSS explain that the paid work for the APFD generates internal village conflicts as non-VSS members often do not agree with the works being undertaken, e.g. establishing plantations on *podu* land.

Box 9: Main issues in Srikrishnapuram Village, Visakhapatnam District

- Forest Department Control

The VSS passed a resolution to plant jackfruit and cashew plantations on its land. The Forest Department refused this resolution, claiming they were not forest species. The VSS decided to plant these species all the same, only to find the Forest Department officials brutally destroying their plantations a few months later. Instead, the FD is pressing the VSS to plant unwanted species such as teak, maddu and custard apple.

The community members therefore ask “What is the point of the VSS? The Forest Department makes so many beautiful promises, and we hope that something might change, but nothing happens, and we lose more and more control over the forest and our resources.”

However, the villagers interviewed expressed their fear pulling out of the CFM project: they fear that the FD may increase its pressure on them, and restrict their access to the forests altogether; that their traditional hunting pursuits may be further restricted; and that the 66 acres of land provided for cultivation for landless villagers by the government may be withdrawn.

The VSS members interviewed feel trapped in an “invisible slavery” vis-à-vis the Forest Department: they do not want to suffer the impositions of the CFM project, but fear more damaging retributions should they abandon the VSS.

Weakening of traditional institutions and related knowledge:

In small homogenous villages and hamlets (e.g., less than thirty households) the VSS tend to be more respectful of fellow villagers’ wishes, customary rights and traditional decision-making processes. In these villages, FD pressure to give up traditional land use and forest-based livelihoods is resisted and the views of the Gram Sabha and local Panchayat are respected (as VSS member themselves are often part of these same indigenous institutions, while traditional leaders are part of the VSS General Body). In contrast, in medium-sized and large villages, VSS elections and access to World Bank funds have marginalized the Gram Sabha and Panchayat who have little or no access to funds for community development.

⁵⁴ The APFD claim that much work at the village level has been delayed due to slow project disbursements and the revision of the resettlement action plan APFD (2004)



Traditional roles and institutions such as the village forest guards, who watch over the villages' forests and forest resources, are being replaced by the VSS. Nevertheless, in some villages, these guards still exist, and are often paid in kind by the villagers. This traditional village forest guard in Vizianagaram District still holds this role. [photo: T. Griffiths]

In these larger and often multi-ethnic and mixed caste villages, the VSS leadership is still usually captured by non-tribal families and the more affluent who are more willing to apply unpopular APFD policies in return for development funds and wages for their relatives and peons. As the VSS controls funds under the World Bank CFM project, this has resulted in prominent villagers vying for the post of VSS President, which carries with it some degree of power. In some settlements, the post has even been auctioned off, which has generated conflicts. In a few cases, VSS elections have required police presence to suppress local protests against these elections.

Given that AP 2002 CFM Order only requires 50% of households to establish a VSS, this means that up to half the population can be opposed to the partnership with the government, but the VSS and CFM scheme still go ahead in the community. Furthermore, the Annual Report for the project in 2003-04 stated that in an effort to coordinate with other state development programmes, the "poorest of the poor" have been automatically enrolled as VSS members. Non-VSS members and automatically enrolled members of the VSS (incorporated due to their income status), must suffer policies imposed and funded by the CFM project that they did not choose.⁵⁵

Support NGOs report that it is mainly in these latter mixed and larger villages that VSS members continue to press tribal and landless families to surrender land to the VSS and give up traditional farming practices. Shifting cultivators stress that many traditional crops such as millet only grow on *podu* land and that valuable crop diversity and traditional knowledge is being eroded through the anti-*podu* policies of the VSS and APFD.

⁵⁵ GOAP (2002) CFM Government Order G.O.MS.No.13, on 12/02/2002 (available from <http://www.ap.nic.in/apforest/>)

Box 10: Main issues in Mannapuram Village, Srikakulam District

- Forest Department Control:

The community would like to plant fruit tree crops such as Mango, Guava, Custard Apple, Jackfruit and Soapnut. The FD has refused the VSS resolutions passed to this effect however, since these are not “forest species”, and do not fit in with the established FD workplan.

The VSS maintains that the FD has the same amount of control over decision-making under the CFM project as it did under the JFM project. Due to the lack of control over decision-making regarding forest management and the FD’s failure to fulfil its promises, the community’s motivation to implement the project has drastically diminished, and their relationship with the FD has worsened.

- Problems with land tenure:

Under the CFM project, 130 acres of *podu* land have been planted up with eucalyptus, both as a result of FD pressure, and the desire of some community members for wage employment. However, as a result of the FD disregarding agreements with the VSS concerning the location of plantations on VSS land, at the time of the interview, the VSS had just recently given permission to community members to resume their *podu* cultivation in some areas.

- Problems with microplanning:

A microplan was prepared by the VSS in mid-2003, and was submitted to the FD. The microplan contained provisions for: source and dam irrigation, roads, field drainage, drinking water, a village hall to be built for 10 VSS in the area, and demarcation of agricultural land. The Forest Department has not acknowledged receipt of this microplan, and is not implementing its proposals.

- Financial irregularities

The Chairman of the VSS claimed he was not informed of the figures for both the VSS and the joint account. Furthermore, the VSS maintain there has been a grave lack of transparency with regard to the joint account. For example, the FD withdrew Rp 20,000 supposedly to pay for singling and trenching operations. The community was only provided with Rp 7,000 for this work however, and despite repeated requests for transparency, VSS members have received no explanations for the missing Rp 13,000.

Access and resource rights under CFM

Although there are often restrictions on hunting and *podu* cultivation, several VSS visited as part of this evaluation report that they have passed resolutions permitting access to VSS areas for the cutting of timber for bullock carts, plough shares and for fuel wood. In some areas, villagers report that the Forest Department was previously very strict in controlling such access and demanded bribes for access, but since JFM and CFM this practice has declined in VSS villages. Nonetheless, there is a general view that the more lenient approach from the Forest Department is conditional upon cooperation with its agenda through an obedient and amenable VSS at the village level – as already indicated in the discussion above on patron-client relationships fostered under the project.

Box 11: Main issues in Mallesvallasa Village, Vizianagaram District

- Problems with land tenure

As a result of severe inter- and intra-village conflicts during the JFM project, the community was initially hesitant about agreeing to the CFM project. Once they had decided to accept CFM, the FD demanded they stop their *podu* cultivation. The VSS passed a resolution to provide *podu* land to the 6 landless families in the village, but the Forest Department rejected the resolution. As a result these landless families have become wage labourers on other people's lands.

- Poor relationship with the Forest Department

The community members maintain that no forest works have been done in their village since the start of the project. A PRA was completed in 2003, but since then, the FD has not communicated with them concerning village development.

- Lack of financial transparency

The VSS joint account was opened at the beginning of the project, and the village provided Rp 500 to start the account. Since then, the FD have shown them no bank statements, nor given them any information concerning the contents of the account.

Box 12: Main issues in Itchaparam Village, District of Visakhapatnam

- Problems with boundary demarcation:

At the outset of the JFM project, the APFD had indicated the boundaries of their VSS on a walking tour; they were however never shown a map of the VSS. Bearing the boundaries shown in mind, the VSS carefully tended a eucalyptus plantation found within the limits of their VSS. When the time came to harvest the trees, at the end of 2003, the FD impeded the villager's harvest of the plantation declaring it lay outside of the VSS boundary and the property of the government. The Forest Department then paid a contractor to harvest the wood, the latter bringing in labourers from outside to undertake the works. The VSS complained about this to the department, claiming they should be contracted to harvest the wood, and were initially met with the threat of eviction and legal action if they upheld their complaint.

- Problems with incomplete wage payment

Eventually the VSS convinced the Forest Department that they should be contracted to carry out the eucalyptus plantation harvesting work, yet to this day they still have not been paid their full wages.

- Problems with microplanning

A PRA exercise was carried out by the support NGO, and community members were asked to put forward proposals, for the microplan. The latter included a community hall, a community festival unit, and casherina and eucalyptus plantations in suitable areas. Some of their proposals were not included in the microplan. Furthermore, although this VSS has a printed copy of their microplan, none of the villagers can read it, since it is written in Telugu, the official language of AP. They were not aware that only Rp 100,000 (~USD 2,185) had been allocated to tribal development, while Rp 600,000 (~USD 13,115) had been allocated to forest treatment.

- Cooperation or coercion?

The community feels it cannot pull out of the project as people fear it will only make problems with the FD worse and "we will not be able to live in peace". This is because the Forest Department still threatens eviction of villagers from "forest land" if the VSS challenges FD decisions on forest works and benefit-sharing. Villagers also complain that the APFD threatens to take legal action against VSS members that disregard the FD ruling on management of VSS land.

Box 13: Main issues in Kamalabanda Village, Vizianagaram District

- Problems with incomplete wage payment

The VSS undertook trenching work for the Forest Department in November and December 2003. It was owed Rp 71,600 for this work; so far it has only received Rp 36,000. Furthermore, this village is still owed Rp 9,000 by the FD from works undertaken during the JFM project. A resolution was passed at the time, requesting due payment, but it remained unheeded by the APFD. The VSS Chairman then met with Forest Department staff at the local office, and still nothing was resolved. Finally, the whole village went to meet the Forest Department, and yet still they have not been paid their full wages. The community complained that such action takes a lot of time, energy, effort and money, which they cannot afford to expend. At the time of interview, the community was very concerned since they did not know what course of action to take next in order to receive their payment.

- Lack of financial transparency

The VSS reported that all account information is held by the Forest Department. The VSS only has the VSS account pass book in its possession.

- Problems with boundary demarcation:

As a result of VSS boundaries being demarcated without appropriate consultation, the VSS of Kamalabanda's neighbouring villages are infringing on its customary lands, creating conflict between the communities. When this was reported to the FD, the latter claimed it was not their responsibility, and that the communities should deal with it amongst themselves.

- Forest Department control

The VSS members report that the Forest Department only implements activities according to its own plans which involve largely trenching, singling and commercial plantations. The FD has provided them with a choice of species for plantations, without taking into account the requests put forward by the VSS. The community reported that since none of their resolutions are taken into consideration by the FD, they do not see the point in passing them anymore.

E. Conclusions

The conclusion derived by the participatory evaluation of the WB-assisted CFM Project in Andhra Pradesh is that participating villagers do not feel empowered by the project. It is therefore concluded that the APCFM project is not achieving its publicly stated objective of empowering local communities to: "...take autonomous decisions regarding the management of forest resources assigned to them". There is a general consensus among NGOs and communities that after ten years of JFM and two years of so-called CFM, the APFD has increased its grip on forest resources and penetrated the heart of village-level decision-making and village resource politics. The project has so far mainly benefited the forest department who have obtained state of the art equipment and vehicles. It has also advanced the Forest Department's agenda to establish eucalyptus and other commercial plantations on degraded land.

Another key conclusion is that many of the problems with the previous JFM project, identified by Samata in 2000, have not been resolved under the phase II CFM project. Indeed, it is clear that many of the same problems are re-occurring (compare findings of this preliminary evaluation with points in Box 1).

Facilitator NGOs are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the project and conclude that the World Bank is not learning lessons and the Forest Department has the same amount of control over forests under CFM as it did under JFM:

"The CFM project is like a sugar-coated pill which is bitter inside. The Forest Department explains CFM as being different from the previous JFM project in Andhra Pradesh - when communities were just treated as labour to do the Forest Department works and forest protection. But what we see now after two years is that CFM is just old wine in a new bottle. There are small changes, but basically this project is JFM with another name and the people do not have more power to decide how to use the forest...the Forest Department still dictates how the forest and land is to be used..." [Sanjeeva Rao, Velugu Association, Srikakulam District, AP, July 2004]

"We support NGOs in AP got involved in the JFM and CFM because we genuinely believed that this would bring some benefits for the Adivasi peoples and other forest dependent communities in AP. However, with first World Bank-assisted JFM project there were serious problems with involuntary resettlement and the Forest Department took a great deal of land away from the tribal communities in the name of the VSS. We were very upset and complained bitterly to the AP government and the World Bank. In the preparation for the new CFM project, they assured us that things would be changed, but now there is a realisation that the CFM project still gives almost total control to the Forest Department and the VSS institution is still undermining the traditional authorities in the village and the communities are not well informed..."[Devullu P, Sanjeevini Rural Development Society, Visakhapatnam District, AP, July 2004]

At the community level, people are likewise disillusioned. VSS meetings have become infrequent, and when they do happen, the attendance is low. Some of villages are considering dissolving their VSS and rejecting the project altogether, while others fear pulling out of the project will only make existing problems with the APFD worse and result in the loss of much-needed funds and paid employment.

Meanwhile, implementation of the project's resettlement policy only began in September 2004, and most VSS microplans have yet to be implemented on the ground. The major social,

economic and cultural impacts of this World Bank sponsored project have therefore still to materialise.

Although most project impacts have yet to transpire, several points about the AP CFM project are already clear at this stage after two years implementation. First, the term “Community Forest Management” is a misleading title for the project, which constitutes another top-down World Bank intervention primarily geared towards supporting the policies of a state forest department.⁵⁶ Second, the current World Bank forestry project in AP suffers from multiple conceptual and practical problems that are likely to generate continuing tensions and controversy in the coming years and will continue to attract further strong criticism from civil society and indigenous organisations.

Above all, project critics will continue to point out that no amount of technical changes in implementation will remedy the basic injustices enshrined in the key principles of the project, which aims to remove Adivasi people from their traditional forest lands and avoids tackling the contradictions and obstacles in the legal framework in India that prevents transition to genuine community-based forest management.

The forgoing findings also indicate that the APCFMP is also in violation of several internal World Bank policies, most notably the Bank’s policies on Indigenous Peoples, Involuntary Resettlement and Forests [Box 14]. At the same time, the loan agreement is not being upheld and those who lost shifting cultivation (*podu*) land under the previous Bank project are complaining that they are suffering severe and growing deprivation and want their traditional lands back. For its part, the Bank is still disbursing funds for the project, which activists and community leaders maintain shows that the Bank has not changed its spots and is not learning lessons...

The main conclusion so far among leading forest activists in AP is that the Bank’s piecemeal, project by project, approach at the State level is diverting attention away from the popular calls for wider legal and governance reforms required to promote genuine community forest management through the recognition of the ownership rights of Adivasi and other forest-dependent communities in India.

Samata does not fundamentally agree with the World Bank forestry project whether JFM or CFM and its policies with regard to forestry or other development projects, particularly in indigenous peoples/tribal people’s areas. Samata and the FPP do not consider that problems with World Bank projects can be solved by technical changes to project implementation. Rather, these projects are flawed in their objectives and design from the start. These projects abuse the whole concept of “community participation” and “community-driven development”.

The hidden agenda of such WB funded projects appears to be pushing the responsibility of regenerating resources like forests onto communities, while failing to properly respect their resource rights. At the same time, the forest authorities do not hesitate to award access and exploitation rights to outside private sector interests like mining companies.

Samata strongly condemns the exploitation of institutions created under CFM like the VSS for legitimisation of constitutional violations such as the handing over of Adivasi and forest lands to private mining companies. As the organization which won the landmark Supreme

⁵⁶ During the preparation of the project many NGOs had opposed the use of the term “CFM”, which they argued was inappropriate and could not be legitimated by the narrow project objectives cf. OED (2002) *op. cit.* at page 8, Box 2 (final bullet). See also, LAYA (2002) *Community forest management project in Andhra Pradesh – a critique* unpublished manuscript

Court judgement against transfer of tribal lands to private mining companies, in the Samatha Judgement, we oppose the proposed exploitation of VSS created under the WB funded JFM/CFM projects, for bauxite mining in the scheduled areas of the state. Areas where forests have been regenerated under these two projects are now under threat of destruction from mining. It appears that the WB does not have any consistent policy with regard to its forestry projects when they conflict with other industrial pressures on forest lands. Given the failing above and those documented throughout this report, Samata rejects projects like the APCFMP that are imposed, diversionary and implemented through the state governments in the name of “community participation”. In practice, this project does not address the basic issues of rights and access to forest and natural resources.

There is also a drastic lack of project information at the community level. The PAD document of the CFM project states that the NGOs are a threat to the success of the project (externalities). However, in practice it only the monitoring and pressure from NGOs which enables flow of information to communities and representation of community issues and concerns to project authorities and the World Bank.

Box 14: Violation of World Bank's Safeguard Policies**Operational Directive on Indigenous Peoples O.D. 4.20**

> **Paragraph 8:** "The Bank's policy is that the strategy for addressing the issues pertaining to indigenous peoples must be based on the informed participation of the indigenous peoples themselves" The consultations relating to project design, the Tribal Development Plan and the Resettlement Action plan were not carried out in conformity with this provision;

> **Paragraph 8:** "..., incorporation of indigenous knowledge into project approaches [is a] core activit[y] for any project that affects indigenous peoples..." The forest management approaches are all based on Forest Department working plans, and do not incorporate the traditional knowledge of the tribal communities. The PIP specifically uses the term "scientific" management and knowledge of forests, and does not mention indigenous knowledge.

> **Paragraph 14(a):** "The key step in project design is the preparation of a culturally appropriate development plan based on full consideration of the options preferred by the indigenous people affected by the project" The objective of the TDP is to "reduce the dependence of the tribals on the forests", which contradicts this safeguard, both with regard to the importance of development being "culturally appropriate", and with regard to the "full consideration of the options preferred by" the tribal communities themselves.

> **Paragraph 14(e):** "Development activities should support production systems that are well adapted to the needs and environment of indigenous peoples..." This is not the case in the CFM project, where the needs of the tribals and the environmental conditions within which they live are not often considered in the development and forestry works imposed by the Forest Department;

> **Paragraph 15(c):** "...the Bank should offer to advise and assist the borrower in establishing legal recognition of the customary or traditional land tenure systems of indigenous peoples (...) These steps should be taken before the initiation of other planning steps that may be contingent on recognized land titles." Land tenure issues remain very much unresolved within VSS areas under the AP CFM, and many Adivasi communities still do not benefit from government recognised tenure over their lands and territories, even despite the serious conflicts that have resulted from lack of resolution of tenure issues.

Operational Directive on Involuntary Resettlement O.D. 4.30

> **Paragraph 10:** "...ensure that the displacement or restriction of access does not occur before necessary measures for resettlement are in place" The final RAP was completed nearly 2 years (May 2004) after the start of the project (August 2002) and does contain on paper a safeguard in this regard. However, in the meantime it is reported that some tribals have already suffered direct or indirect eviction within the scope of the project.

> **Paragraph 11:** "Preference should be given to land-based resettlement strategies for displaced persons whose livelihoods are land based. ... the lack of adequate land must be demonstrated and documented to the satisfaction of the Bank." It is not at all clear under the current revised RAP how priority will be given to land for land compensation.

Operational Policy on Forestry (1993) O.P. 4.36*

> **Paragraph 1c:** "Requires borrowers to identify and consult the interest groups [private sector and local people] involved in a particular forest area" This requirement has arguably not been complied with in a number of project areas where affected VSS have little or no information about the project and its objectives.

> **Paragraph 2:** "The Bank does not finance projects that contravene applicable international environmental agreements." The primary objective of the Tribal Development Plan is to "reduce the dependence of the tribals on the forest". This arguably contravenes articles 8j and 10c of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to which India is party. Under Article 10c States are required 'as far as possible and as appropriate to protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements'.

* The World Bank's new Forests Policy adopted in November 2002, came into force after the APCFM project as approved and became active in August 2002.

F. Recommendations

Given that the CFM project is already underway, steps must be taken to try and avoid and reduce any potential negative impacts of this flawed project on Adivasi and other local communities. By making the recommendations below, Samata and the FPP are not endorsing in any way the APCFM. Rather, the following recommendations are made in an effort to press the World Bank to uphold the social and environmental commitments made in its loan agreement with the Government of India. In this regard, the World Bank has to immediately address the following:

- The rights of the people practicing *podu* cultivation and those who lost lands under the JFM project should be thoroughly assessed and all lost lands should be reinstated. The assessment should be undertaken with the proper involvement of representative community organisations, VSS, local and state/national level NGO's, tribal community groups and affected families.
- The World Bank and the FD must fully implement OP/BP4.12 and all agreed project-level safeguards against forced resettlement. The R&R policy for forest dwelling/tribal communities cannot merely provide for monetary compensation for lands lost as this does not provide for long term, sustainable livelihoods.
- The project should take into account the constitutionally recognised role of the Gram Sabha, provided for under the 73rd amendment Act, the Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas Act (PESA Act) of 1996. Under Indian law, the Gram Sabha has supreme power over the village's resources, including forests, hence any peoples' forestry institutions should function entirely within the framework of PESA Act of 1996.
- The project should ensure that local benefit sharing is effective and that rights and decision-making under the project are distributed equitably and in accordance with relevant international standards. The current design and budget rules for large JFM/CFM projects such as the APCFMP do not promote the sustainability of forests, but rather tend to provide sustenance for the state forest departments. As these international projects involve public tax payers and community resources, they must be the subject of a proper public audit before increasingly complex and multiple WB forestry/natural resource management projects are proposed.
- Adivasi communities' traditional knowledge of forest management, protection and sustainable use must be properly respected and taken into account in project implementation. The APCFM project still gives precedence to external expertise in determining forest management requirements and in training and institution building components; and yet without proper respect for local knowledge and customary institutions there cannot be a proper community forest management approach to forestry.
- The World Bank should provide active support to the Indian government to resolve the contradictions inherent in current Indian government policy towards forestry, which claims to promote community or joint sharing of powers and decision making on the one hand, but still regards local communities as 'encroachers' of forests. There is a need for genuine shift towards people-centred development.
- Clear felling of forests under the CFM project, using heavy machinery should be immediately stopped as it will destroy the biodiversity of the forests.
- The World Bank should encourage and work towards a fundamental policy shift towards community oriented development planning and implementation, which gives priority to community control over forests, local domestic needs and wider ecological needs, rather than providing support to market-induced deforestation by private, state and global forces aided by government policies and programmes.
- The World Bank and the APFD must deal severely with the corruption in the bureaucratic structure of the Forest Department in Andhra Pradesh and other states

where it is active in forest-related projects. Unless this corruption is tackled, there cannot be genuine dialogue between communities and the government and there is no purpose for programmes like CFM, which have no future once project funding comes to an end.

- Land use and forest use should be classified taking into account the goals of the forest policy rather than unscientific methods of allocation of forest lands based on percentage of land under forestry.
- Proposals for protected areas and sanctuaries and other conservation plans in VSS areas should be properly reviewed and the Gram Sabha in the scheduled areas must be meaningfully consulted and its decision taken into account prior to the design or implementation of any such plan.
- The World Bank and the APFD must provide timely and adequate measures to tackle emerging problems and risks under the APCFMP.

Need for emergency independent commission to evaluate project

Given the multiple problems with the APCFMP, the World Bank Group should enable the establishment of a fully independent commission to review the forestry programme of JFM/CFM involving national, international and local organisations which have credible history of work in forestry and people's representation. This commission should be established as soon as possible and its recommendations should be seriously implemented. In short, the current nature of appraisals and reviews being conducted by or for the WB are highly questionable and there is a need for a well-resourced and independent review of the whole project. The WB should not engage in the planning or implementation of new projects in the state until the existing conflicts in the APCFM project are addressed and resolved.

Finally, by means of this report Samata wishes to advise the World Bank and the international community that neither local NGO's nor communities are aware of the Bank's role in current international forest-related policies and how they may affect forest-dependent communities in AP and other parts of India. For example, on the ground, there is almost no information on global trading between developed and developing countries with regard to natural resources and climate change programmes, in which institutions like the WB are reported to be actively involved.

Samata is concerned that programmes like JFM/CFM mislead the public and communities on issues of sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and human development. Forest issues and the needs of forest peoples cannot be solved by a few international projects, while the consumption demands of developed countries and other wider global forces continue to expropriate and deprive local people of their natural resources and their right to sustainable livelihoods. As currently conceived, such international programmes do not provide any significant impact on ecological and cultural regeneration nor do they improve people's livelihoods.

ANNEX I: A summary of key findings in villages visited in Andhra Pradesh in 2004

Village	Main finding	Key concern	Other comments
1. Polkampet , Nizambad District	<p>⊕ Nothing happened since 2002</p> <p>No knowledge of budget allocation or operational plans for APCFMP</p>	<p>VSS Restrictions on WLS use</p> <p>No knowledge of CFM project objectives</p>	<p>Did get benefits from past JFM project</p> <p>Villagers do have access to cut timber for bullock carts etc <u>except</u> in WLS</p>
2. Kannapur , Nizamabad District	<p>-People unhappy about VSS rules</p> <p>- FD writes microplans</p> <p>- landless still marginalised by VSS</p> <p>- village elders not consulted by VSS MC</p> <p>- FD does not address key priorities and concerns of villagers e.g., land demarcation, fencing etc</p> <p>- FD still harassing “encroachers”</p> <p>- No knowledge of budget allocation or operational plans for APCFMP</p> <p>- No knowledge of Project grievance mechanisms</p> <p>- Never seen TDS nor RAP</p>	<p>F Department ignores VSS resolutions</p> <p>FD still dictates decisions and forest management work of VSS</p> <p>⊗ FD will not accept fruit-bearing domestic trees on forest VSS land. FD forces eucalyptus to be planted</p> <p>⊕ Project only “started” in 2004 with arrival of SIDS facilitator NGO and PRA exercise</p>	<p>JFM since 1992</p> <p>Do see minor benefits from paid work</p> <p>Women now in VSS MC</p> <p>No knowledge of CFM project objectives</p> <p>⊕ Do not feel “empowered” by CFM</p>
3. Tumbana Colony Srikakulam District	<p>All documents held by FD <u>not</u> VSS. No knowledge of budget allocation or operational plans for APCFMP</p> <p>⊗ There are unresolved land disputes over boundaries of cultivated and forest land</p> <p>There are only minor changes between previous JFM project and current CFM project (re VSS membership etc)</p>	<p>Land appropriation by FD with CPTs</p> <p>No ID cards for VSS members to exact fines on outsiders and illegal loggers</p> <p>Villagers want full ownership and control over forest land and cultivated land</p> <p>Villagers want to foster a mixed forest, including medicinal plants and fruit trees</p> <p>The FD writing the microplan, but community has no information</p>	<p>Some benefits have been received through temporary wage labour</p> <p>FD is putting heavy pressure on VSS to enter out grower schemes for industrial eucalyptus plantations.</p> <p>VSS has passed resolution rejecting eucalyptus plantations on VSS land</p> <p>No MoU has been signed between VSS and F Dep under CFM project</p> <p>⊕ Do not feel “empowered” by CFM</p>

<p>4. Manapuram, Srikakulam District</p> <p>JFM and CFM have undermined traditional management systems as dynamic is now driven by development funds and wage earning opportunities rather than respect for traditional authorities</p> <p>To avoid serious conflict with villagers and FD the VSS is obliged to implement controversial policies e.g., planting <i>podu</i> land with eucalyptus – many villagers want to do the work to earn cash, while the affected <i>podu</i> cultivators do not wish to lose land</p>	<p>Villagers completely unaware of the existence of TDS and RAP</p> <p>No knowledge of Project grievance mechanisms</p> <p>No knowledge of budget allocation or operational plans for APCFMP</p> <p>VSS President and MC have not seen joint account statements. However, there are indications already of serious discrepancies in use of VSS funds by FD</p> <p>Villagers had stopped <i>podu</i> cultivation at request of FD and promised benefits in return. After 2 years the FD has not delivered so people have returned to <i>podu</i> cultivation</p> <p>Indications that surrender of <i>podu</i> land is not entirely voluntary and may be occurring outside “official” CFM funded operations</p>	<p>Peoples priorities and needs are still not respected by the FD e.g., need for land demarcation and check dams</p> <p>FD blames villagers for forest degradation – they reject this</p> <p>FD “has same amount of control under CFM as it did under JFM”</p> <p>FD has not recognised the microplan prepared by Manapuram (and nine other villages)</p> <p>FD has broken agreements on land use with VSS and planted up cultivated land</p> <p>⊗ FEW WORKS HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN THE LAST TWO YEARS – little activity under CFM, except some singling and trenching works</p> <p>⊗ Do not feel “empowered” by CFM</p>	<p>In this case microplan drafted by Adivasi youth group for 10 villages BUT after 12 months the micro-plans have not been approved by FD and the facilitator group is unable to obtain a copy of the draft document</p> <p>⊗ FD rejects species that VSS wishes to plant as maintain they do not conform with FD working plan</p> <p>Villagers do have access to cut timber for bullock carts etc, but in other villages people are being fined for cutting bamboo</p> <p>Needs of women and landless not addressed by CFM project so far</p> <p>VSS meetings are rare and few people attend as people have lost trust in FD after many broken promises</p> <p>Manapuram village is considering joint protest letter to GOAP and World Bank about CFM project</p>
<p>5. Neligandi, Srikakulam District</p> <p>Have their own autonomous inter—village forest protection committee called <i>Adupu Sangham (formed in 1998)</i></p>	<p>NOT PART OF World Bank CFM PROJECT</p> <p>Decisions about forest management, <i>podu</i> cultivation, land use and demarcation are taken collectively.</p> <p>Collective decision are also made when a member wishes to fell a large tree</p>	<p>Did not and will never form VSS under CFM as the community is not willing to give land and resources and control to the FD/government</p>	<p>Want to maintain ownership and control over the forest</p> <p>See the foreign aided CFM project as a “bribe” to make the Adivasi people give up their forests</p> <p>They do not want to depend on the government</p>

<p>6. Srikrishnapuram, Srikakulam District</p>	<p>Very little difference between the previous JFM project and the current CFM project</p> <p>⌘ The FD is pressing the VSS to plant species they do not want</p> <p>⌘ The community are disillusioned with the VSS, but are <u>afraid</u> to dissolve the JFM Committee as they fear the FD will come down hard and restrict forest access completely and come down hard on their traditional hunting activities</p>	<p>FD prohibited felling of plantation established by community on VSS land = lost work and no benefit</p> <p>FD has destroyed jack fruit trees planted by the community on VSS land</p> <p>The community feel like “invisible slaves” of the FD</p> <p>⊗ Do not feel “empowered” by CFM</p>	<p>No MoU with FD has been signed under the CFM project</p> <p>They now do not want to be part of the CFM project, but are afraid to pull out as they fear a backlash by the FD</p> <p>They are continually afraid that the FD will take their little amount of cultivated land away from them. For this reason, the VSS does not wish to anger the FD.</p> <p>There are signs land will be taken away for a new national park...</p>
<p>7. Itchapuram, Vishakhapatnam District</p> <p>No knowledge of budget allocation or operational plans for APCFMP</p>	<p>The VSS members have no idea what is the difference between JFM and CFM projects – other than change in the composition of the VSS</p> <p>FD threatens to take legal action against VSS that disregard the FD ruling on management of VSS land</p> <p>FD still threatens eviction if VSS challenges FD decisions on forest works and benefit-sharing</p> <p>⌘ The micro-plan was written by the FD. Most villagers do not know what is in the microplan and cannot read it. Scrutiny with Facilitator NGOs shows several key village priorities omitted from the plan.</p>	<p>⌘ FD under JFM had destroyed fruit tree plantations on old <i>podu</i> on forest land</p> <p>The community gave up these <i>podu</i> under JFM, but has now lost the land completely and is afraid to reclaim it back</p> <p>⌘ FD ignored VSS resolution and did not give permission to harvest dead <i>cashew</i> trees on VSS land as agreed by VSS</p> <p>The major part of the Micro-plan budget is allocated to forest treatment and plantation works and a minor proportion to village development.</p> <p>⊗ Do not feel “empowered” by CFM</p>	<p>There is a lot of fear of the FD</p> <p>⌘ There is no clarity or agreement on the precise boundaries of the VSS jurisdiction – which has led to serious disputes between the VSS and FD</p> <p>There is no accurate and reliable map of the VSS area</p> <p>⌘ The community feels it cannot pull out of the project as people fear it will only make problems with the FD worse and “we will not be able to live in peace”</p> <p>Women do participate in VSS and are members of the MC, but have not so far presented any resolutions on women’s matters</p>

<p>8. Kamalabanda, Vishakhapatnam District</p> <p>Overall conclusion is that JFM and CFM have enabled FD to increase <i>control</i> forest management</p> <p>⌘ The traditional system of resource management and governance is been weakened and diluted by the VSS and FD</p> <p>⌘ There are boundary disputes between this village and other villages regarding the VSS jurisdiction – partly because the VSS has never been demarcated. FD denies any role or responsibility in such disputes even though the FD created VSS areas in the first place</p>	<p>Very little difference between the previous JFM project and the current CFM project</p> <p>No knowledge of Project grievance mechanisms – they only know that they must tell grievances to Facilitator NGO</p> <p>All financial documentation is kept by the FD and not available to the VSS</p> <p>No knowledge of budget allocation or operational plans for APCFMP</p> <p>⌘ The FD consistently takes its own cut form VSS funds for work on VSS land [e.g., 25% cut to FD]</p> <p>⌘ The decisions on VSS work and priorities are made by the FD</p> <p>⌘ The FD has threatened to cut off all funds to the VSS and exclude it from the CFM project if villagers continue <i>podu</i> (shifting) cultivation</p> <p>During the PRA exercise the FD told the villagers: “Do not express your needs. We will tell you what you need and what you will do”</p> <p>The community does not feel it has any more control over the forest as a result of the CFM project</p> <p>The VSS is often in conflict with traditional village elders</p>	<p>Incomplete payment for work done for FD</p> <p>Lack of redress for complaints regarding use of funds under the project</p> <p>Under CFM, the FD still dictates the way the forest is used and managed just as it did under JFM</p> <p>⌘ The FD is writing the microplan, but the villagers have received no news at all about progress with the plan since completing the PRA</p> <p>JFM did remove the hidden FD tax on forest users (bribes, fines etc), and in return for JFM committees cooperation, the FD allows access to the forest for subsistence use</p> <p>⊕ Do not feel “empowered” by CFM</p>	<p>The VSS does not see the point in making their own resolutions on specific issues as they are sure the FD will just ignore them.</p> <p>People are very disillusioned after receiving no payment or only partial payment for work done for the VSS and FD.</p> <p>No VSS meetings have been held since March 04 as people are fed up.</p> <p>The VSS has disregarded FD prohibition on <i>podu</i> cultivation and has allocated <i>podu</i> land to 10 landless families in the village</p> <p>⌘ The FD has threatened 20 villagers with legal action against their <i>podu</i> cultivation</p> <p>There is a growing feeling that CFM (JFM) is actually generating more problems than benefits</p> <p>The village is resolved to dissolve the VSS unless (i) the FD pays promptly and in full for VSS work (ii) the VSS resolution on <i>podu</i> cultivation is respected by the FD</p>
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<p>9. Malevallasa, Vishakhapatnam District</p> <p>The villages joined JFM as they saw neighbouring villages were receiving paid work from the FD</p>	<p>The VSS has complied with FD requirement that they stop <i>podu</i> , but this has generated conflicts in the village</p> <p>All financial documentation is kept by the FD and not available to the VSS</p> <p>The FD is writing the microplan, The PRA was completed a year ago, but the community has no news of the microplan</p>	<p>☹There have been no major works for 2 years since CFM started</p> <p>No benefits have been received from the CFM project so far</p> <p>⚠The VSS passed resolutions to allocate <i>podu</i> land to landless families, but the FD <u>rejected</u> this decision.</p> <p>☹ Do not feel “empowered” by CFM</p>	<p>The villagers are still not sure participation in CFM is worth it as they have their own autonomous forest protection system anyway</p>
<p>10. Nandigaru, Vishakhapatnam District</p> <p>A Forest Village</p> <p>The traditional leadership system is still strong in this village</p>	<p>No information on the purpose and objectives of CFM project</p> <p>⚠Decisions on forest management are made by the FD, not the VSS</p> <p>FD priorities are singling, trenching and earth works</p> <p>⚠The FD will not <i>allocate funds to</i> villagers for forest-related work chosen by the villagers themselves</p>	<p>⚠FD is imposing its own plans and work schedules on the VSS</p> <p>⚠This VSS has passed its own resolutions e.g., relating to wage rates, but these have been disregarded by the FD</p> <p>☺ There is no trouble between the VSS and the village as a whole as the VSS is respecting the rights and wishes of the villagers and decision-making powers on land and resource use still remain with the traditional headman (<i>perdha</i>) and local panchayat and Gram Sabha</p>	<p>The greatest concern of villagers is the insecurity of their cultivated lands. They worry that if the VSS does not do as instructed by the FD then the FD make start action to take their land from them</p> <p>☺ There are no boundary disputes with the neighbouring village even though their traditional <i>podu</i> fields intrude on the new VSS jurisdiction of Nandigaru. The traditional leaders have agreed to respect traditional boundaries</p>

This report summarises the key findings of a preliminary NGO and community evaluation of an ongoing Community Forest Management (CFM) project in Andhra Pradesh, India. The project, funded by the World Bank, officially claims to be aimed at reducing poverty and empowering communities to take autonomous decisions regarding forest management. However, this evaluation finds that rather than genuinely devolving control over natural resource management to the communities involved, the APCFM project is entrenching the control of the Forest Department at the local level, often against the wishes of the communities.

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