
Post-Recognition of Community Forest Rights

COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN: FACILITATORS GUIDE

NIRMAN

An Initiative for
Sustainable Development

NIRMAN

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Community Based Forest Management Plan: Facilitator Guide

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NIRMAN has made a humble attempt to publish a facilitator guide on Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) as a reference manual for field level facilitators, development workers, and activists. Anyone can make use of the guideline. We will highly appreciate due acknowledgement to NIRMAN.

Foreword

NIRMAN, published the manual on Manual for Preparation of Claims for Community Forest Rights and Community Forest Resource Rights under Forest Rights Act, 2006 in the year 2014, in the regional language of Odia, with an aim to expedite both the individual and community forest rights (CFR) claim filing process under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA, 2006). Since FRA, 2006 came into force in 2008, around 41,367 CFR titles have been issued to the local communities across the Indian sub-continent. Around 5,036 CFR titles have been issued to the local communities in Odisha, at the time of publication of this facilitators guide for facilitation of the community-based forest management plan (CBFMP) preparation.

As per the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Amendment Rules, 2012, the rights holders should prepare conservation and management plan for sustainable management of the community forest resources. Such community-based forest conservation and management plans should be integrated with the micro-plans or working plans of the forest department if it was considered necessary by the respective gram sabha (village council).

Although the Amendment Rules, 2012, provides the much needed space for the local communities to prepare the community-based forest conservation and management plans, thereby, empowering them; however, it does not prescribe any clear instructions about the process to be followed to prepare the CBFMP. The guidelines issued by the government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Forest Policy Division (2016), with the title “Guidelines for Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Community Forest Resources” is a welcome move. The guideline contains very elaborate text and lengthy formats, however, it neither contains any clear instructions nor prescribes the mechanisms to engage local communities in a collective and participatory manner, quintessential for strengthening of the collective local institutions. The lack of clear guidelines for preparation of CBFMP had been a major impediment in the progress of CFR management. In this background, NIRMAN has embarked upon developing the facilitator’s guidelines for preparation of the CBFMP, for communities which received titles under the FRA, 2006.

An extensive literature review was done for developing the facilitators guide. The facilitator’s guide has been developed through compilation information from different sources, taking into reference especially, “the CBFM guidelines – for the establishment of village and forest reserves and community forest resources”, published in 2007 by the Forestry and Beekeeping Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, The United Republic of Tanzania. Preparation of the present guide also took detailed reference of “The community forest management – CFM technical guidelines” by Hanoi (2006), Viet Nam, and “Simpler forest management plans for participatory forest management” by The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome (2004).

The facilitators guide provides all the necessary information, required tools, and steps involved in the preparation of community-based forest management and development plan. The guide was expected to help both the facilitators and local communities to prepare CBFMPs in a collective and participatory manner with active participation of different stakeholders associated with community-based forests and their resources. The booklet was written by NIRMAN's staff and scholars, and reviewed by experts on CBFM and FRA, 2006. We hope that users of this CBFM facilitator's guide will find it practical, applicable, realistic and useful in the field situations.

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Author's Note

Community-based forest management plan (CBFMP) should be less about preparation of a (rigid) document, but more about the process, and opportunity to bring local communities together, to exchange dialogue, discuss, negotiate, and develop a locally appropriate forest management plan. The development of CBFMP shall be recognized as an opportunity to empower local communities in the process of development of the plan. The present guidelines for development of the CBFMP is not exhaustive, however, it was expected that it could help local communities and facilitators to initiate the process, navigate, and design a locally appropriate plan for management of the community-based forests. It is however necessary to caution at the very outset that if the main focus and outcome of the CBFMP development process is more about development of a rigid document, and reinforcement of oppressive institutions, and less about empowerment of local communities then the entire process could become redundant. It should be noted that the 'process' but not the 'product' which is important. The process of preparing a CBFMP is equally, if not more important than the CBFMP document itself.

The process of preparing a CBFMP should be considered as an opportunity to identify and involve stakeholders, develop CBF management objectives and design strategies, create room for negotiation, assign responsibilities, weigh costs, benefit sharing, and resolve conflicts, assimilate local knowledge and practices, and empower local communities. The process of CBFMP preparation should be used as a catalyst for capacity building and empowerment of local communities. Therefore, the present CBFMP guidelines shall be recognized as a tool to guide the process of developing a locally appropriate management plan for sustainable use and development of community-based forests. Further, CBFMP is also an opportunity to empower local communities, enhancement of local livelihoods and improve their quality of life.

The CBFMP facilitator's guide has been meticulously developed by compiling information from "the CBFM guidelines published by the Forestry and Beekeeping Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, The United Republic of Tanzania, the "Simpler forest management plans for participatory forest management" by published The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and our own field knowledge and experiences. It is highly recommended by the authors to see also community forest management plans prepared by the FAO and Forestry and Beekeeping Division, Tanzania, as much of the present facilitators guide had been developed referring them. The authors welcome valuable and constructive inputs and feedback which would help to further improve the facilitators guide.

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Acronyms

AAP: Annual Action Plan
BMP: Best Management Practice
C &Is: Criteria & Indicators
CBEs: Community-Based Enterprises
CBFM: Community-Based Forest Management
CBFMP: Community-Based Forest Management Plan
CBFR: Community-Based Forest Resource
CF: Community Forestry
CFMA: Community Forest Management Agreement
CFMG: Community forest management group
CFMs: Collective Forest Managers
CFR: Community Forest Rights
CFRR: Community Forest Resource Rights
CFRC: Community Forest Rights Committee
DBH: Diameter at Breast Height
DFO: District Forest Officer
EC: Executive Committee
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FD: Forest Department
FMPs: Forest Management Plans
FMU: Forest Management Unit
FRA: Forest Rights Act
FPUM: Forest Product Utilization Matrix
FSI: Forest Survey of India
FUG: Forest User Group
GOI: Government of India
JFM: Joint Forest Management
MA&D: Market Analysis and Development
MFPs: Minor Forest Products
MoEF: Ministry of Environment and Forest
MoTA: Ministry of Tribal Affairs
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations
NTFPs: Non-Timber Forest Products
NWFPs: Non-Wood Forest Products
OP: Operational Plan
OTFD: Other Traditional Forest Dwellers
PANR: Participatory Appraisal of Natural Resources
PESA: Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas), Act 1996
PLA: Participatory Learning and Action
PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal
SFM: Sustainable Forest Management
VFC: Village Forest Committee
VFPC: Village Forest Protection Committee
VSS: *Van Suraksha Samiti* – Forest Protection Committee

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Part I: Introduction

“The Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, also popularly known as the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, had been implemented throughout India since 2008. The act gives legal ownership of the forests to their customary users (The Gazette of India, 2007; Vaidya, 2011). FRA is one of its kind as it was an attempt to undo the “historical injustice” done to tribes and other forest-dwellers by the state in India. The act believes that recognition of the customary rights and forest tenure is indispensable to redress the historical dispossession of forest/land ownership and rights of the forest dependent communities by the state. The act, allows local communities to claim both individual rights (on parcels of forest land under cultivation), as well as community forest resource (CFR) rights on forest lands. In summary FRA 2006, recognizes three types of rights: (1) landownership rights; (2) right to collect and use minor forest products (MFPs)/non-timber forest products (NTFPs); and (3) right to protect and conserve forests and biodiversity (Bandi, 2015). By recognizing community customary rights over forest resources the act ensures livelihood and food security of the forest dwellers while empowering them to use biodiversity sustainably and conserve it to maintain ecological balance (GOI, 2007; Vasundhara and Kalpavriksh, 2012).

The Forest Right Rule (amendment) 2012, mandates that gram sabha should constitute the community forest rights committee (CFRC), which shall prepare a conservation and management plan for community forest resources, in order to sustainably and equitably manage community forest resources for the benefit of forest dwelling communities as well as the protection of forest, wildlife and biodiversity (GOI, 2016a). The GOI (2016) guidelines for preparation of conservation and management plan for community forest resources mandates that “the CFRC should carry out documentation of community forest resources (ecological), tenurial system (including the forest rights), and relevant socio-economic and traditional practices. Further, the documentation should include aspects such as assessment of current status, regeneration capacity, pressure of demands on the resources, sustainable harvest potential of various forest products including minor forest products (MFPs), potential of bridging deficit of adequate regeneration of forest produce, etc., as well as issues related to community forest resource-based sustainable livelihood development.” (GOI, 2016a; Pp: 9).

Although, expectations of the guidelines about documentation requirements are valid and legitimate, they sound a bit unrealistic and overambitious. Satisfying such ambitious requirements, such as “assessment of current status, regeneration capacity, sustainable harvest potential, potential of bridging deficit of adequate regeneration of forest produce, etc.”, sounds unrealistic. This is especially because of the prevailing very low numeracy and literacy rates among the indigenous and other forest dependent communities (MoTA, 2013). Competency and skills required for preparation of such sophisticated documentation demands literacy qualification beyond higher secondary education. However, the percentage of rural population in general and tribal population in particular with such level of literacy qualification is abysmally low. The tribal population with higher secondary education is as low as 13 per cent (MoTA, 2013).

FAO, (2004) points out that requirements such as production of CBFMPs as written documents not only presents a problem for the local communities but also understanding the alien language and forestry terms such as inventories, bridging deficit of adequate regeneration, etc., would be difficult for them. Further, low literacy rates among the forest dependent communities make the tasks such as writing, typing, and punching numbers challenging, thereby, disempowering and discouraging them from involvement in the process. For instance, Malla *et al* (2002), found that local communities could not understand the meaning of inventory and many measurement units used in the forest operational plans, and performing calculations related to growth estimates and harvests was next to impossible for the local communities. Despite the disadvantages of application and relevance to the rural communities, volumes of written documents, quantitative data intensive inventories, baseline surveys, and growth estimates and projections have been the primary evaluation tools for the Forest Department and researchers (FAO, 2004).

The guidelines mandates also that it is the responsibility of the Forest Department (FD) to provide the CFRC with necessary technical, documentary material and feedback during the process of conservation and management plans preparation. It is necessary to notice that preparation of a conservation and management plan for sustainable development of community forest cannot be done in a single day. Moreover, preparation of prescriptive and technically demanding CBFMPs may considerably increase workload on the field-staff of the Forest Department, with cost implications to the government providing additional field allowances for the field-staff to do the work (FAO, 2004). There is a danger of preparing the CBFMPs hastily by the field-staff because, either they cannot spend enough time with each FUG or due to pressure of fulfilling the target. FAO (2004) points out that this could lead to preparation of blue-print and rigid conservation and management plans which may or may not be suitable to the needs, interests and development of neither the local community nor the forest. Such hastily prepared operational plans often end up as failure.

Timber production had been the major focus of the conventional forest management. Although forestry has advanced and achieved many milestones in production and management of timber oriented monoculture plantations, but the same may not be true about protection and management of natural-mixed-forests in India. A holistic scientific approach to management of natural-mixed-forests, sustainable development of non-timber-forest products (NTFPs) along with development of forest dependent communities and economy is still a long way to go. Unfortunately, the conventional forestry education and training does not impart the necessary skills to the pupil. For instance, social and communication skills are extremely important to facilitate participatory processes such as preparation of CBFMPs, however, such skills are not imparted through conventional forestry education (Malla *et al*, 2002; FAO, 2004). Moreover, preparation of CBFMPs especially in the context of post-FRA rights recognition scenario is a recent development, therefore, prevalence of confusion on the ground about the CBFMP preparation processes is natural.

In this background it was assumed that the present CBFMP facilitators guide would be a useful source of reference for the government agencies, other organizations and practitioners who are working on facilitation and development of the CBFMPs. The facilitators' guide presents the process

of CBFMP preparation in a stepwise manner, assuming that following such a process would help not only in the production of a CBFMP but also gradually building capacities of the local communities and autonomous-collective local institutions necessary for sustainable development of the community forests. It is not necessary that all the stages discussed in the CBFMP facilitators guide are followed in all situations for preparation of CBFMPs, nor the process discussed will be the same in all circumstances (FBKD, 2007).

Part II: Legal basis of CBFMP

“The forest rights under Section 3(1)(i) of the Act bestows upon the right holders the right to protection, regeneration or conservation or management of any community forest resource, which forest dwellers might have traditionally been protecting and conserving for sustainable use.” (GOI, 2007).

As per the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Amendment Rules, 2012:

The gram sabha would constitute “committees for the protection of wildlife, forest, and biodiversity, from amongst its members, in order to carry out the provisions of the section 5 of the Act.” (GOI, 2016a). The Section 5(f), of the Forest Right Rule (amendment) 2012, mandates that: “The Forest Rights committee” constituted by the gram sabha, under Section 3 of the Forest Rights Rules 2008, will prepare the conservation and management plan for community forest resources. The “Rule 4 (1) (f) provides for mechanism to monitor and control the committee constituted under the clause (e) which shall prepare a conservation and management plan for community forest resources...” (GOI, 2016a). The purpose of community-based forest management plan is to ensure not only sustainable management of the community forest resources, but also equitable sharing of responsibilities and benefits for the community forest resources rights holders. The community-based forest management plan should be integrated into the micro plans/working plans/management plans of the forest department, with such modifications as may be considered necessary by the forest rights committee, after forest dwellers’ rights on community forest resources have been recognized. However, the gram sabha (as defined under Section 2 (p) of the FRA), can chose to integrate the community-based forest management plans into the forest department’s working plans if it considers this necessary. (Shrivatsava, 2012). For further details about the background and other legal requirements of preparation of community-based conservation and management plan, please see also GOI, (2016) guidelines for conservation, management and sustainable use of community forest resources, (Annexure – I).

Part III: Few Things to Remember Before We Start

The draft (1) on the National Forest Management Certification Standard published by the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) suggests that a “*forest management plan shall comprise the cycle of inventory and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, and shall include an appropriate assessment of the social, environmental and economic impacts of forest management operations. This shall form a basis for a cycle of continuous improvement to minimize or avoid negative impacts. Forest management planning must provide for the sustainable management*”

of forests and its biodiversity, encompassing the social, economic and ecological dimensions, as enshrined in the National Forest Policy.”(NCCF, 2016; Pp: 6).

3.1. The Four Functions of CBFMPs for Collective Action and Management

The very first step of CBFMP preparation is to have a clear idea and understanding of the purpose and functions of the CBFMP. Studies suggest that it is important to distinguish the main functions of CBFMPs at the very outset, before embarking upon to identify the broader principles which can be used for guiding and supporting CBFMPs. As per suggestions of the FAO (2004), a CBFM should have four main functions, which are as follows:

1. CBFMP is a legally required document,
2. CBFMP should be the output of a participatory interactive learning, capacity-building and negotiation process,
3. CBFMP is a technical guide for management planning, implementation and monitoring, and
4. CBFMP is an instrument to describe and regulate local forest governance based on multi-stakeholder negotiations and agreements (FAO, 2004).

3.2. Conventional vs. Collective Forest Management Plan

Community-based forestry is now a widely accepted concept around the world and many countries have put policies and laws into place to support local management of forest resources. However, such inclusive initiatives have many constraints and challenges, which prevents realization of the potential offered by devolution of ownership or management rights to the local communities (FAO, 2004). One of the main constraints is the overambitious and unrealistic requirements imposed on local communities for preparation of the community-based forest conservation and management plans. Other challenges include, imposition of the use of conventional forest management plans, in other words, forest work plans which are designed purely for raising (timber/wood pulp) plantations, for the preparation of CBFM plans. The format used for raising large scale plantations for timber/wood/pulp production require high levels of technical and financial capacity, therefore, such formats are unsuitable for small-scale and non-timber-production-oriented community-based forests. Further, the forest department personnel are expected to extend support to local communities for preparation of the community-based forest conservation and management plans. However, this is not only too ambitious but also impossible in most of the cases as the forest department is severely understaffed and forest department personnel (especially the frontline staff) are not trained to prepare non-timber-production-oriented forest management plans as per the needs and interests of local communities (FAO, 2004; Nayak and Berkes, 2008).

3.3. Put Emphasis on the Process not Plan

Normally, the conventional top-down approach of FMP preparation does not recognize the importance of process – particularly participatory processes and active and equal engagement of local communities in FMP preparation. The only aim of conventional FMPs is to produce a plan, in other words a document, with instructions on forest management. The conventional “document-driven” approaches for FMP preparation is usually adopted by the forest department, for their convenience and benefit, but not necessarily to augment the collective management of forest resources by local communities. The “top-down, document-driven” approaches not only alienate

local communities of “ownership” of the FMP, but also result in lower level of understanding among the local communities, poor reflection of their needs, and conflict with implementation strategies, thereby, leading to lack of commitment and poor participation of local communities in implementation of such FMP (FAO, 2004; Nayak and Berkes, 2008).

It is necessary to notice also that a robust FMP document itself is not a good indicator of successful forest management. A robust FMP document shall not be considered an indicator of local communities’ capacity or the lack of, to address the issues of forest resource management, benefit sharing, conflict resolution, and poverty alleviation. A good FMP document does not promise the presence of an efficient institutional mechanism at the grassroots level. On the other hand CBFM groups which are technically very poor to develop even a simple FMP could have a highly efficient local institutional mechanism and very successful not only in managing their community-based forest resources but also addressing the issues of benefit sharing, poverty alleviation, and conflict resolution, whilst CBFMs which are good on paper may either not follow the plan or very inefficient in implementation of the FMP document (FAO, 2004).

Therefore, the process of preparing a FMP is equally, if not more important than the FMP (document) itself, it should be noted that the planning process is an opportunity to empower the local communities, mobilizing them, building social capital, enhance participatory learning, improve their knowledge and skills, create opportunities for negotiation, designing strategies in a participatory manner to address the issues of benefit sharing, poverty alleviation, and conflict resolution. Further, the FMP preparation should be used as an opportunity:

- ▲ To identify, mobilize and engage local stakeholders,
- ▲ To empower local forest users/groups/stakeholders,
- ▲ To reach consensual agreement among the stakeholder on forest management objectives and strategies, through negotiation,
- ▲ To negotiate and agree on benefit sharing, forest management duties and responsibilities and costs, and
- ▲ To combine local knowledge with technical expertise and scientific information (FAO, 2004).

3.4. Apply Planning Logic to Develop a Site-specific Plan

It is very common to find CBFMPs with very broad management objectives, for instance, micro-plans prepared by the forest department for every separate region for implementation of the state promoted integrated conservation and development programmes are often identical. “This is a common situation under joint forest management in India where the value of participatory planning at village level is somewhat undermined by centrally developed and funded “schemes” which forest department staff are expected to deliver via village forest protection committees (VFPCs) in order to achieve predetermined physical or financial targets. The result is that most plans are very similar despite significant local differences.” (FAO, 2004, Pp: 4). The broad forest management objectives are followed by a detailed list of management activities which may or may not have any relevance or relationship with the stated objectives. This could be the result of: 1) No attempt is made to derive the real local (or site specific) objectives from locally identified issues, needs, interests, aspirations,

and opportunities. The practice of development and implementation of site-specific objectives (where there will be different management objectives for different patches/units of the same forest) is rarely encountered. Often, the broad (forest) management objectives are simply copied from the national policies or guidelines and applied to the local context with undesirable human, economic and ecological consequences. Therefore, management objectives should be locally derived through detailed analysis of local issues, needs, interests, trends and potentials, which does not take place in reality. 2) Management activities are often developed either as a “wish-list” with no guarantee that they will ever be realized, or driven exclusively by the availability of resources (often external funding) for implementation of the programme, often in a paternalistic manner without any impact on the ground (FAO, 2004).

3.5. Minimize over Emphasis on Silviculture and Fire lines Prescription

Studies suggest that over emphasis on silvi-cultural prescriptions and making of fire lines and negligence of local livelihood aspects have propelled over-protection of the community-based forests, thereby negatively affecting both the forests and local livelihoods, and overall well-being of the local communities (FAO, 2004). It is necessary to notice that management objectives of local communities are often not timber production or biodiversity conservation but enhancement of local livelihoods, through multi-purpose forest management and use. However, the tendency of external experts, technicians, conservationists, and forest department officials is either timber production or biodiversity conservation. This general tendency is often reflected in the silvicultural and fire line prescriptions and closure of grazing and livelihood activities in community forests are often included in the CBFMPs. The narrowly focused management objectives as opposed to approaches favoring the management of a more dynamic and complex, multi-purpose, multi-objective, multi-storey mixed forests, or NTFP production is often missing from the CBFMPs (FAO, 2004).

3.6. Put More Emphasis on Development of Food-Forest

Studies suggest that forest dependent communities' on an average access 150 varieties of uncultivated foods from forests (Rajyalakshmi, 2002). Most of these uncultivated foods are very rich in micronutrients, essential for nourishment. For instance, forest dependent communities in Odisha harvests around 350 varieties of uncultivated foods from forests and more than a quarter of them are found to be very rich in micronutrients (Deb, *et al.*, 2014). A study conducted by Azim Premji University suggests that the root cause for increase in malnourishment among the forest dependent indigenous and rural population is due to decrease in consumption of diverse uncultivated and cultivated foods and excessive consumption of rice and only handful of veggies due to changes in food cultures (The Hindu, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind the strong relationship between forest health and human health, food and nutrition security during planning of the CBFMP. Henceforth, more emphasis should be laid on development of food-forest among the community forest habitat to ensure food and nutrition security of the local community.

3.7. Lay More Focus on Enterprise Building and Business Promotion

Income and employment generation for the forest-dependent communities should be promoted as an integral part of the community-based forest management initiatives. Promotion of forest-based

collective enterprises has potential for income generation and creation of employment for the local communities through sustainable forest management and utilization of the community forests. Studies, however, suggests that CBFMPs developed with focus on livelihood-oriented objectives found more success than CBFMPs with exclusive focus on promotion of commercial enterprises (FAO, 2004). Further, excessive emphasis on only forest protection and lack of focus on local livelihood enhancement and employment generation could blow a dent in operationalizing the CBFM, as it could increase opportunity costs for the local community. Further, if the objective of forest management is livelihood enhancement through employment and income generation, without a clear orientation on enterprise building and business plan, there is a danger of total failure of the collective enterprise, potentially effecting not only local livelihoods but also the community forest resources. Therefore, development and inclusion of a fool-proof business plan with comprehensive information on the available community forest resources, yield estimates, market projections; cost-benefit analysis, investment planning, infrastructure development, staff training, and labour management is indispensable (FAO, 2004). Given the low literacy rates among most of the forest dependent communities around the world, it is not necessary that all afore mentioned tasks should be carried out by local communities themselves; they could be outsourced. However, it is necessary to build capacity of the local communities gradually so that they can perform costs and benefits analysis and business planning exercises on their own in the long run.

3.8. Focus on Building Capacity of the Local Community

Although it is considered desirable to either completely avoid external intervention or keep it to the minimum to ensure local community autonomy over management of the community forests, however, there are many instances where local communities completely lack confidence and accountability to govern the community forest governance under decentralized forest governance arrangements. FAO, (2004) cautions that handing over forest governance responsibility to local communities “if local institutions are weak or inequitable will not ensure effective forest stewardship”. Therefore, a balanced approach is needed “*between granting local powers from the ‘outside’ and taking local powers from the inside, which is unique to time, place and circumstance*” (Mayers and Bass, 1999). It is necessary to notice that there is a considerable difference between gradual emergence of an autonomous-collective-local forest governance systems and externally induced forest management systems promoted through either external donor or state supported schemes (FAO, 2004). The strength of an autonomous-collective-local forest governance model lies in the collective efforts of the local community to get together first, learn and set collective goals, of development, before they start negotiating with external stakeholders (FAO, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to build capacities of the local community through the entire process of CBFMP preparation to build confidence and a sense of self-reliance among them.

3.9. Develop Local Community Knowledge and Skills

Many quantitative methods used in forestry are not very relevant to the thinking processes and utility of rural people. Given the very low numeracy and literacy rates among the indigenous and other forest dependent communities, over emphasis on use of quantitative methods in forest management planning would promote dependency rather than self-reliance as it cannot be done

without outside professional assistance (FAO, 2004). Further, excess emphasis on numeric data for resource quantification is often considered culturally and technically inappropriate for rural people. FAO, (2004) points that technical equipment (compasses, relascopes, computers, etc) and forest inventories conducted to produce quantitative data to calculate biomass for projecting sustainable harvest levels and annual allowable cuts of timber or NTFPs is often too alien to be meaningful to the local community. The excessive use of such equipment and quantitative methods could totally alienate and discourage rather than actively engage the local community in the CMFMP preparation process (FAO, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to adopt and promote methods and approaches that discourage local communities' dependency on external assistance and promotes self-reliance.

3.10. Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, Values, and Practices

A study on indigenous knowledge of bio-indicators of tribes in Mizoram, Northeastern India suggests that indigenous communities and farmers have wealth of knowledge on bio-indicators. The knowledge that was passed down from generations, if documented and used properly, can play a significant role in designing location specific projects especially for agriculture development. The study suggests further that if indigenous knowledge of the weather prediction and bio-indicators could be integrated in the climate change adaptation related strategies and projects (Chinlapianga, 2011). Ironically, the wealth of indigenous knowledge, values and belief systems are conveniently ignored by scholars and main stream society until "*they have been examined and declared valid by conventional western science*" (Balasubramanian, 1999). Consequently, external methods are imposed upon the indigenous communities in the name of "science and scientific knowledge", sometimes causing irreparable damage to both the indigenous knowledge systems and sensitive local ecosystems.

FAO (2004) suggests that problems associated with externally imposed methods can only be addressed when it is recognized that values and beliefs of the indigenous communities should be fully incorporated into forest management planning and decision-making processes often as a "*..mix of indigenous and outside knowledge and values*" Haverkort and Hiemstra (1999). Most often scholars and outside professionals find indigenous values and practices hard to digest, hence conveniently brush them aside as superstitions. For instance, local values like "ancestors are satisfied"; "spirits are felt"¹, are often considered "non-negotiable" by indigenous communities as they are so fundamental to their livelihoods and a sense of self and security (Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2002), but conventional science considers them scientifically invalid or superstitions. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a balance between conventional science and indigenous knowledge, values and belief systems during planning for CBFMP, unless local communities' values and belief systems are not taken into consideration and incorporated it is unlikely that local forest governance would succeed (FAO, 2004).

1. Millar, (1999) found that "ancestors" play a crucial role in natural resource management and local knowledge generation in Northern Ghana. Another study suggests that "satisfaction of ancestors" is a crucial criterion for indigenous communities in natural resource management. Gonese, (1999), in a study on Shona society in Zimbabwe, found that "communities take good care of trees planted in the traditional spiritual context and that their survival rate is high".

3.11. Avoid Imposition of External Rules and Regulations

The prescribed information requirements under government laws and legislation far exceeds the minimum information required for preparation of CBFMPs, regardless of whether that information is actually needed by the local communities for management of the community forest (FAO, 2004). Further, imposition of unnecessarily prescriptive regulations and external control on community forest management planning could have a negative impact not only on the resource dependent poor and marginal groups but also on health of the forest and biodiversity itself. Imposition of external rules and regulations could reduce access of the poorest and marginalized groups to forest resources, while increasing access to local elite and other influential groups (FAO, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to build flexibility into the CBFMP through inclusion of rules and regulations which emerge from collective decisions, combined with increased local capacity and opportunity for innovation and avoid inclusion of external regulations and top-down controls as far as possible.

3.12. Avoid Rigidity and Make it Flexible

As a common practice the top-down conventional forest management plans are often treated as rigid blueprints prescribing everything that should be undertaken in a forest area with little scope for flexibility and participation of the local communities. In practice, however, the local communities find this rigid top-down approach unrealistically demanding, and irrelevant in the local context. As a result, conventional forest management plans often fail due to lack of ownership and support of the local communities. It is therefore necessary to avoid rigidity and remain flexible enough to incorporate local interests and needs to keep the CBFMP realistic and relevant to the local situations and context.

3.13. Build upon the Existing Local Institutions

It is necessary to notice that CBFMPs should be rooted in local institutional structures with which people are familiar and which they respect (FAO, 2004). However, rural and indigenous communities are mostly based on internal pluralism (i.e. differences between individuals) and are just as unequal, unbalanced, dynamic and liable to change as any other human society in the world (Hountondji, 2001; Chidley, 2002). Therefore, additional care must be taken to ensure that building on local institutional structures should not perpetuate or reinforce inequalities of gender, religion, culture, and economic or social status or ethnicity. Further, preparation of CBFMP as a document with a set of broad rules on how the forest should be managed could be no longer be an option especially when collective management of resources itself is a sensitive and potentially risky process. Hence, the preparation of CBFMP should emphasize on the development and strengthening of the local institutional systems and mechanisms which reinforces and ensures accountability, equal representation, gender and equity, and decision-making. According to Donnelly-Roark *et al*, (2001), four elements are crucial for a functional collective local forest governance system, they are:

- ▲ Local institutional accountability,
- ▲ Local technical and intellectual capacity for management,
- ▲ Economic strategies based on existing local resources, and
- ▲ Cultural and emotional resonance.

Therefore, active involvement of local people is indispensable in the decision-making processes which are based on local perceptions and experiences rather than those imposed upon them by planners or technical “experts” from outside.

3.14. Focus on Multi-purpose and Multi-storey Forest Management

When forest management objectives have been derived from local needs and interests, through a participatory approach, it is very likely that the focus of community forest management may management of multiple products (NTFPs) but not timber production alone. Irrespective of timber production, it is likely that local communities prefer forests with multiple products and services and forests which serves diverse needs and purposes may be equally, if not more important to the local communities. The planning, production and management of such a dynamic and complex multi-purpose forest systems for production of diverse goods and services to serve diverse needs invariably demands diverse skills, ideas, knowledge and information other than just conventional scientific and technical inputs for timber production. Therefore, indigenous knowledge should be given more merit rather than external technical advice to realize the local forest management objectives. Hence, management activities should be based not only on indigenous knowledge and practices but also on production of multiple products. Even conventional forest management approaches have also made a headway in designing management activities for multi-purpose forests, for instance, Rathore and Campbell (1994) prescribes a number of innovative silvicultural approaches for management of forests under Joint forest management, the state supported participatory forest management programme in India.

Innovative multi-purpose forest management approaches prescribed by Rathore and Campbell (1994) are as follows:

- ▲ “Managing for multiple products (within the same space);
- ▲ Multiple time horizons (different rotations for different products);
- ▲ Site specific prescriptions (local level silvicultural solutions);
- ▲ Landscape level linkages (aggregation of small forest patches);
- ▲ Maximization of growing space (multi-storey forest management);
- ▲ Encouraging natural regeneration;
- ▲ Mimicking natural forest in plantations (for forests of mixed native species);
- ▲ Individual plant manipulation (pruning, single tree selection, lopping); and
- ▲ Innovative grazing and fire control.” (FAO, 2004; Pp: 42).

3.15. Focus on Empowerment of the Disadvantaged Individuals and Stakeholder Groups

Forest-dependent communities, especially the indigenous communities are in general socio-economically weak and marginalized, hence, often fail to voice their issues and concerns unless they are paid special attention through creation of the much need space to do so. Therefore it is important to ensure that the CBFMP preparation process should not only a create space for the marginalized individuals and groups to share their issues and concerns but also ensure that their issues and concerns are addressed through implementation of CBFMP. The participatory CBFMP preparation process should be conducted in a succession, a series of sessions involving different

stakeholders, primary villagers, neighbouring villages, migratory forest users, etc. CBFMP preparation should involve stakeholder analysis to ensure that all stakeholder groups are identified with indicators of their stake on resources and their capacity to participate in the management (FAO, 2004). Further, mechanisms should be developed to practically bring the most disadvantaged individuals/stakeholder groups to the forefront and assimilate them into the process of forest management planning and implementation (FAO, 2004). Empowerment of disadvantaged stakeholders is indispensable to ensure that vulnerable groups are not further disadvantaged or marginalized from the process of CBFMP planning and implementation, which is likely to happen if proper attention is not paid.

3.16. Ensure that CBFMP Planning Process will remain with the Local Forest Managers

Often there may be a temptation amongst facilitators to accelerate the CBFMP preparation process in order to save time or achieve targets, however, such attitude may not only take the process completely out of the hands of the local community but also jeopardize capacity building of the local communities. Further, alienation of local communities from planning process could make local communities lose interest in the project as they may not feel the ownership of the CBFMP, in the worst case they may altogether abandon the project. In addition, absence of local communities in the CBFMP preparation process could eliminate the chances to reach consensus and agreements among the different stakeholders, thereby, resulting in problems later – probably appearing during implementation of the CBFMP (FAO, 2004).

3.17. Ensure that Objectives of the CBFMP are based on Local Needs and Interests

The CBFMP preparation process should ensure that local issues, needs, interests, aspirations, and opportunities are directly linked with the community forest management objectives and management activities. This would allow CBFMPs to remain focused on: (a) addressing the genuine local issues, needs, interests, opportunities and priorities, and (b) the implementation of which would lead to realization of the identified local management objectives (FAO, 2004).

3.18. Collect Only Minimum Information Required for Inventory

Makarabhirom and Raintree (1999) cautions that preparation of detailed forest resource inventories (e.g. detailed NTFP inventories) might encourage over exploitation by local NTFP traders or outsiders who may move in and exhaust the resource in short time once information of stocks are publicly known. FAO, (2004) refers to the Article 25 of the Forest Law (1996) in Lao which states that: “*the harvesting of timber and other forest produce can proceed only in surveyed and inventoried production forest areas for which there is a forest management plan*”, and “*the harvesting of other forest products such as mushrooms, roots, tubers, shoots, leaves, flowers, barks, resins, gums must be carried out according to specific regulations issued by concerned agencies*” (Pp: 9). Therefore, it is necessary to collect only minimum information required during preparation of inventories to avoid undesirable consequences.

Avoid also too much emphasis on scientific methods of data collection as well as collection of either too much or unnecessary information. The data collection requirements should be planned

according to the local forest management objectives, and as a thumb-rule always collect only the minimum amount of information according to the specific local forest management objective. Adopt simple data collection systems and methods:

- ▲ FMUs which are not included in the planned management activities shall not be included in the inventory,
- ▲ Trees can be counted rather than measured for an assessment of overall standing stock,
- ▲ Qualitative measures of forest condition can be used as an alternative to measurement to estimate canopy density and regeneration potential, and
- ▲ Local measurement units such as headloads of fuelwood instead of weight and number of poles instead of volume can be adopted for data collection (FAO, 2004).

3.19. Open Doors for Negotiation at the Very Outset

Forests are often the life savior of most of the marginalized and the landless individuals/groups among the local communities, because forest offers room for the socio-economically disadvantaged groups to maneuver and overcome food and financial crisis at time of adversaries. They often take advantage of the *de facto* open access arrangements to access forest resources for subsistence and income generation. Therefore, any insensitive regulation during forest management planning could have unexpected and undesirable impacts on the vulnerable groups (FAO, 2004). Further, consensus among inter and intra-village resource user groups should be achieved before addressing the technical issues of forest management. Therefore, doors for negotiation should be opened for the resource user groups at the very outset of the CBFMP preparation, to negotiate terms and conditions of resource use (FAO, 2004). Deferring resource user group negotiations could potentially lead to conflicts among inter or intra-village resource user groups during implementation of the CBFMP. Therefore, sufficient time must be allocated for facilitation of inter and intra-village user group negotiations to avoid any potential conflict of interest over resource management and use.

3.20. The Format of CBFMP

First and foremost, there is a lot of confusion and debate over the content and length of the CBFMP, however, a simple CBFMP does not need to contain more than a simple list of actions, with timetable for rehabilitation and development of the community forest and improvement of local livelihoods (FAO, 2004). The roles and responsibilities of each actor associated with the implementation of CBFMP should be defined not only to ensure accountability and transparency but also ensure that planned tasks and objectives are realized. Therefore, CBFM should focus more on building local institutions and capacities of the local community, livelihood enhancement, benefit sharing, conflict resolution, and monitoring mechanisms, instead of detailed silvicultural prescriptions.

Part IV: The Different Types of CBFM Plans

A format for preparation of CBFMP had been described elaborately in the guideline prepared by the MoEF on conservation, management and sustainable use of community forest resources. The suggested format comes with the notation that it may be suitably modified by the CFRC. The suggested format is provided here below (Box: 1). However, it is highly recommended to refer

Annexure-III of the MoEF guidelines (2016), and go over the suggested format prescribed for preparation of the CFRC conservation and management plan. Although the CBFMP format prescribed in the MoEF guidelines is elaborate, but it can be also a simple list of actions as per the interests and requirements of the local communities and CFRC.

The list of forest management and development actions could be a simple list of planned activities such as: planting saplings/seedlings in a degraded or clear forest patch to assist regeneration, plugging gullies, digging trenches to check soil erosion and harvest rainwater, building check-dams and bunds over waterbodies to encourage ground water recharge; conducting silvicultural operations such as thinning to encourage healthy growth of forests and elimination of undesirable (exotic) weeds etc. The CBFMP should have an action plan and timeline for execution of the forest rehabilitation and development activities. The CBFM should have a component for local livelihood enhancement and community development. By-laws should be prepared around the planned activities and included in the CBFMPs to entrust clear roles and responsibilities, ensure monitoring, accountability and transparency, and enforce rules and regulations to resolve the issues of trespassing, encroachment, and inter and intra-village conflicts over resource use and benefit sharing (FAO, 2004; FBKD, 2007).

The CBFMP should be a perfect balance of local livelihood enhancement, community development, and sustainable forest resource use and management, therefore should not be skewed overtly towards detailed silvicultural prescriptions and forest regeneration operations. The CBFMP should be planned ideally for five years, however, it should be reviewed once every year, but monitored on a regular basis, throughout by adopting “participatory resource monitoring” arrangements².

Among the several types of forest management plans (FMPs) prescribed for management of small-scale forests or CBFM, two major FMPs have been found suitable for small-scale forests or community-based managed forests. However, the two FMPs are distinguished depending on the overall forest management objectives and the type of forest managers involved. Although these two types of FMPs are not mutually exclusive (e.g. the livelihoods-oriented and forest enterprise model are usually combined for management of a collectively managed, community-based forest).

The two major FMPs applicable for the small-scale forests or CBFM context are:

1. Forest management plans for livelihood-oriented forestry, and
2. Forest management plans for commercial forest enterprises (Box: 2 and 3).

² “In Participatory Resource Monitoring, a community monitors its own natural resources (e.g. forest growth; harvested products; NWFPs collected and sold and even biodiversity indicators such as insects found in the forest. The community also keeps their own records of these and uses this to manage the forest resource in a sustainable way by developing “check and balance” mechanisms.” (FAO, 2004, Pp: 20).

**Box 1: Suggested Format for CFRCM Plan
Conservation and Management Plan**

**Period of the plan
CFR Management Plan**

1. Vision,
2. Objectives of management,
3. Problems and issues if any for management,
4. Area demarcation with CFR (use zone, non-use zone, plantation zone, water zone, reed and bamboo zone, gene pool zone and MFP collection zones, fish breeding zones, etc with Maps),
5. Resource use from CFR area:
 - i. Own use.
 - a. MFPs and Fish (list of species, how much to collect, where to collect, when to collect),
 - b. Harvesting mechanisms for each MFP and fish,
 - c. Recording of harvest by each right holder,
 - d. Record of sale by each right holder.
 - ii. Use for cash/sale.
 - a. MFPs and Fish (list of species, how much to collect, where to collect, when to collect),
 - b. Harvesting mechanisms for each MFP and fish,
 - c. Recording of harvest by each right holder,
 - d. Record of sale by each right holder.
 - iii. Agreements on amount of harvest/collection area/sale etc by gram sabha / right holders.
 - a. Plans for MFP and fish harvesting practices,
 - b. Rationale for species selection and rate of harvest,
 - c. Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment used.
6. Protection and regeneration:
 - a. Demarcation of restoration area for flora/fauna and terrestrial/aquatic habitat,
 - b. Demarcation of gene-pool area for no or limited use,
 - c. Identification of species to be planted in restoration area,
 - d. Protocol of plantation or ANR as required,
 - e. Any other measure for protection and restoration (list them and give detailed activity like fire protection).

7. Organization and administration

- i. Structure:
 - a. Management structure as decided by gram sabha,
 - b. Composition of nominated CFR management committee.
- ii. Responsibilities:
 - a. Role of management committee,
 - b. Responsibilities of gram sabha and right holders,
 - c. Tasks assigned to committee and right holders,
 - d. Operation of joint tasks,
 - e. Overall regular reporting to gram sabha and other line agencies.
- iii. Convergence and synergy building:
 - a. Building linkages with other line agencies,
 - b. Agreement on joint tasks/responsibilities,
 - c. Schedule of joint tasks,
 - d. Joint meetings on building synergies with other line agencies,
 - e. Convergence of CFR plan with other plans,
 - f. Development of joint work plans if required.
- iv. Amenities:
 - a. Office,
 - b. Equipment,
 - c. Communication,
 - d. Incentives and awards.
- v. Budget:

Yearly work plan and budget.
- vi. Maps (most of the section will be accompanied with maps).

Source: GOI, 2016a. Guidelines for Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Community Forest Resources. MoEF, India. (Copied).

4.1. Simple CBFMP for Livelihood-oriented Forest Management

The livelihood-oriented forest management plans are relatively simple compared to the commercial forest enterprise model as the business component is absent (FAO, 2004). Livelihood-oriented FMPs require only minimum, but clearly articulated details, such as the following:

- a) Map of the forest boundaries,
- b) Resource assessment,
- c) User group details,
- d) Assessment of forest product needs,
- e) Rights of the user group,
- f) Responsibilities of the user group,
- g) Resource use and benefit sharing arrangements, and
- h) Minimum resource protection standards.

4.2. Simple CBFMP for Enterprise-oriented Forest Management

The enterprise-oriented FMPs are relatively complex and elaborate than the livelihood-oriented FMPs. Simplification of enterprise-oriented FMPs for commercial production of either timber or non-timber forest products (NTFPs) / minor-forest products (MFPs) under the enterprises model is neither easy, nor desirable. The enterprise-oriented CBFMPs require detail assessment of the available resources and production plan, as well as market projections and business plan for the enterprise. Further, excessive simplification of the enterprise-oriented CBFMPs could lead to mismanagement or over exploitation of resources, which could end up doing more harm than good to both local communities and community-based forests. Requirements like these which makes the enterprise-oriented FMPs inherently more complicated.

The difference between livelihoods-oriented and enterprise-oriented forest management plan is however very narrow and thin. Further, studies suggest that local communities achieve greater success when CBFMPs are more enterprise-oriented, than livelihood-oriented (FAO, 2004). Therefore, it is better to incorporate livelihoods within the enterprise-oriented forest management plan than distinguish and separate them. However, management objectives of the enterprise-oriented CBFMPs should consider the current local forest conditions; the range of forest products available and used and most importantly the needs and capacities of the local communities. The enterprise-oriented CBFMPs should consider local conditions practically while developing the plan (FAO, 2004). One of the major components of enterprise-oriented CBFMP is market analysis and business planning (Box: 4).

Box 2: Operational Contents of the Enterprise-Oriented Forest Management Plan (Nepal)

“According to the regulations relating to the Forest Act (1993), the operational plan for a community forest should contain the following elements (Branney *et al*, 2001).”

1. Details of forest name, boundaries, area, condition, forest type,
2. Map,
3. Block division with details of each block,
4. Resource assessment,
5. Objectives of forest management,
6. Methods of forest protection,
7. Forest development activities,
8. Nursery, plantation and income generating Programme,
9. NTFP/MFP development activities,
10. Provisions for using income from sale of products,
11. Penalties, and
12. Provision for wildlife protection.

Source: FAO, 2004.

Box 3: Operational Contents of the Enterprise-Oriented Forest Management Plan (Cameroon)

1. Executive summary,
2. Introduction,
3. Legal status,
4. Institutional status,
5. Planning process,
6. General description,
7. Maps,
8. Problem analysis,
9. Overall objectives for the forest,
10. Resource assessment (for each FMU),
11. Problem analysis for each FMU,
12. Management Objectives for each FMU,
13. Strategies and options for each FMU,
14. Activities for each FMU,
15. Rules and responsibilities for each FMU,
16. Annual Plan of Operations (prepared every year), and
17. Annexes (Articles of association; benefit sharing arrangements; agreements with other institutions; list of households; any other information).

Source: FAO, 2004.

Market Analysis and Business Planning

The Market Analysis and Development³ (MA&D) methodology (Lecup and Nicholson, 2000), was proved to be successful for the establishment and promotion of small-scale NTFP-based enterprises (FAO, 2004). The MA&D approach emphasizes on development of a holistic forest management and business planning process, through involvement of local communities from the outset, in planning and designing of the enterprise as well as developing the business plan. MA&D approach focuses not only on sustainability of resources and markets, but also on social, institutional and technical sustainability (FAO, 2004). MA&D approach directly links the community-based forest management and conservation activities to local livelihood enhancement and income generation opportunities by providing support to investigate the market environment. The MA&D approach consists of three phases.

During the first phase local communities will assess the existing situation and make a short-list of locally available products and services with the potential for business and enterprise development. The MA&D approach assists local communities to take into account the sustainability of four important aspects (resources, market, socio-institutional and

technical). The second phase encompasses a detailed analysis of the social, economic, ecological, and technical viability of each of the short-listed products. Results of the analysis during the second phase helps local communities to select the most viable products with the promise of business and enterprise. MA&D approach assists the local communities to discuss over market potential which is necessary for development of a business plans. During the third phase local communities are encouraged to develop their own enterprise development and business plan (see Box: 4). Studies suggest that MA&D had been proved successful beyond the small-scale NTFP-based enterprises (FAO, 2004).

Box 4: Market Analysis and Development Process (MA&D) Approach

Phase 1: Assessment of the Existing Situation

Preparation of an inventory of the existing resources, products and services; identification of products with the potential for income generation for local communities. Eliminate the non-viable products and services.

Phase 2: Identification of Products, Markets and Marketing Strategies

Selection of most viable products for business and enterprise development; identification of potential markets and discussion of marketing strategies. Consensus over objectives of the enterprise and business development.

Phase 3: Business and Enterprise Planning for Sustainable Development

Development of strategies for building the enterprise and business planning. Entrepreneurs will be guided through the pilot phase; training for entrepreneurs on innovation, business skills, monitoring, scaling-up and adaptation during adversaries.

Source: Lecup and Nicholson (2000).

3. "The Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) methodology was developed by FAO/FONP in collaboration with the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC). Other institutions and organizations that supported the development of the MA&D methodology and instruction manual include the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Netherlands Development Assistance (NEDA), the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV)."

Part V: The CBFMP Preparation Process

As mentioned earlier the basis for developing a CBFMP is the clear understanding of the purpose and functions of the CBFMP, especially the four main functions of the CBFMP. The format of a CBFMP however should depend entirely on the local context and situation (FAO, 2004). It may therefore be necessary to give different emphasis to each of these four CBFMP functions under different situations. For instance, CBFMPs for livelihoods-oriented forest management should emphasize on means to regulate local forest governance and decision-making, whilst CBFMPs for community enterprise-oriented collective forest management should have both livelihood and business functions. There can be however, no blueprint or blanket approach for preparation of CBFMPs, it should be noted that these principles are merely intended as guidelines (FAO, 2004).

CBFMPs should not be prepared only through a one-off series of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises or one time village level planning meetings. It is necessary to keep in mind that most forest dependent communities in India are illiterate and have very limited knowledge and capacity in scientific and technical forestry, literacy and numeracy. Therefore capacity-building of local communities should be made an essential part of the CBFMP preparation process, this is to ensure that they not only participate actively in the entire CBFM preparation process but also understand, agree, and own the final CBFMP. Invariably the entire process may take a long time, since the entire process takes place in succession and every step in the process builds on the previous steps – thus slowly building capacity of the local community (FAO, 2004).

The CBFMP preparation process should be conducted in succession, a series of steps which link local problems and/or opportunities with management objectives and forest management activities of the community forest. Adopting the logical framework methodology based on problem analysis could be very useful for this process as it enables facilitation of this process effectively (FAO, 2004). Often there may be a temptation amongst facilitators to accelerate the CBFMP preparation process in order to save time or achieve targets, however, such attitude may not only take the process completely out of the hands of the local community but also jeopardize capacity building of the local communities, eliminate negotiation opportunities and in worst case open gates for conflicts and create new problems – probably during implementation of the CBFMP (FAO, 2004).

Further, preparation of CBFMPs also have an important function – negotiation. During the process the primary stakeholders consolidate appropriate local forest governance mechanisms in consultation and negotiation with inter and intra-village stakeholders. Further, developing accountability mechanisms and putting check and balance systems into place as part of the CBFMP, demands negotiation amongst stakeholders. Hence, negotiation among inter and intra-village stakeholders should take place at the outset of CBFMP preparation but not after enforcement of the CBFMP (FAO, 2004). Therefore, following a structured planning process is necessary to build mutual trust and confidence not only among the different stakeholders but also other local institutions to reach consensus on broader local forest governance arrangements and interests. Hence, it should be noted that preparation of CBFMP for collective management of community forest may take several months rather than few weeks to complete (FAO, 2004).

5.1. Stage One: Getting Started

The preparation of CBFMP should be gradual and step-by-step process, with capacity of local communities built gradually at each and every step. Therefore, it is necessary to notice that CBFM plan should not be prepared in haste by following a simple checklist or through conducting a series of rapid participatory exercises over a few days. A CBFM plan produced hastily, spending only a few days will never resolve conflicts, rather incite conflicts, in the worst case, may alienate and further disempower the disadvantaged groups and may never contribute to building capacity of local communities. Therefore, sufficient time should be invested and patience should be practiced in mobilizing local communities, building social capital, enhancing participatory learning, improving local communities' knowledge and skills, and create enough opportunities for intra and inter village/community negotiations, which is crucial for developing a strong collective local forest management institution (FAO, 2004).

Faham *et al.* (2008) observed that level of literacy, use of mass communication media, local communities' attitude towards participation and social interaction played a vital role in motivating local communities in the west Mazandaran of Iran to participate in the social forestry programme. Likewise, study on local communities' participation in community-based forest management in Ludhi-Damgade district of Nepal suggests that socio-economic factors and benefits obtained from forest resources determine local communities' participation in forest management (Maskey *et al.* 2005; Datta and Sarkar, 2010). Sharing of information about socio-economic and ecological benefits that could be derived through sustainable forest management; sharing of success stories of local communities benefiting from sustainable forest management, using mass communication media (especially screening of short documentary films) may have a profound impact on local communities' thinking and attitude. The use of mass communication media and social interaction could play a vital role in motivating local communities and building a strong collective local forest management institution.

5.1.1. Meeting with the FRC Members or Gatekeepers

To initiate the process, meet with the FRC members/gatekeepers to discuss and collect preliminary information about the CBFMP. Find out with the FRC whether a CBFMP had been prepared for sustainable management of the community-based forests. Based on the response of the FRC, about the availability of CBFMP, and nature of the CBFMP available with local communities, introduce the basic concepts of CBFMP and explain the process of preparing a CBFMP to the FRC. Ask the FRC members to organize a meeting with few gram sabha (village council) members to discuss over the need for preparation of CBFMP, basic concepts of CBFMP and explain the process of preparing a CBFMP.

During the discussion with few gram sabha members, depending on the local communities' interest, screen very select and relevant documentaries/short films (preferably in local language) of successful CBFM villages/communities, forest-based livelihoods, community-based forest enterprises, sustainable forest management practices, and community-based biodiversity

conservation initiatives at the gram sabha meeting. The use of audio visuals (documentaries/short films, preferably in local language) and sharing of case studies/success stories of successful CBFMs have been found highly effective to evince interest among the local communities, increase their participation as well as mobilize them to electrify the CBFM activities. Upon completion of the gram sabha and CBFMP facilitation team meeting, request the gram sabha representatives to convene a village assembly meeting to discuss with the entire village over the concepts of CBFMP and explain the process involved in preparation of the CBFMP for sustainable development and management of forest resources and enhancement of local livelihoods.

5.1.2. Preliminary Village Assembly Meeting

As a follow up to the gram sabha meeting with the entire village, request the FRC to convene a village assembly and CBFMP facilitation team meeting for further discussions. After receiving FRC's confirmation of the date and venue, agree with the FRC when and where the CBFMP facilitation team shall meet the residents at the village assembly. Accordingly conduct the village assembly and CBFMP facilitation team meeting, and meet the entire village at the meeting. During the preliminary village assembly meeting, discuss (explain, if necessary) with the village assembly the need for preparation of a CBFMP, the process and steps involved and the duration takes to prepare a CBFMP with collective action. Make sure to screen the relevant documentaries/short films and share success stories of successful CBFM villages/communities with the entire village. Discuss in detail with local communities about the importance of setting objectives of the CBFMP not only for sustainable development and management of the community-based forest and forest resources but also enhancement of local livelihoods. At the conclusion of the preliminary village assembly meeting request the local communities to extend their full support and cooperation and practice patience during the entire process of CBFMP preparation. At this stage request the villagers to reflect over the points discussed during the preliminary village assembly meeting and prepare for the follow up meeting. Inform the village assembly about the follow up village assembly and CBFMP facilitation team meeting and the activities that will be conducted during the follow up meeting. Decide over the date and venue for the follow up meeting.

5.1.3. Follow up Village Assembly Meeting

The CBFM facilitators' team should plan and decide in advance the list of activities and issues that should be discussed at the follow up village assembly meeting. Prepare a check list of all the activities and topics for discussion and do an in-house dry run with the CBFM facilitators' team members. Meet with the village assembly on the agreed date and venue for the follow up meeting. It is necessary to notice that follow up meeting is not a one-time meeting but a series of participatory meetings and exercises conducted over a period of time. Series of follow up meetings should be conducted preferably following the principles of participatory appraisal of natural resources (PANR) and participatory rural appraisal (PRA). One of main aims of the follow up meetings is the capacity building of local communities through participatory approaches. The follow up meetings should be conducted in a combination of PRA and PANR exercises and personal and focus group discussions. The goal is to mobilize social capital, collective knowledge and collective action to build collective institutions necessary for sustainable use and management of the community forest

resources and community development. Following the PRA and PNRA methods the following activities should be conducted in series at the follow up village assembly meeting.

Activity 1: Participatory Social Mapping (intra and inter village)

Identification of the residents and social structures of the resident village is probably the good way to start the CBFMP preparation process. The residents and social structures of the resident village shall be mapped through “social mapping” exercises, adopting participatory approaches prescribed in the PRA (Mukherjee, 1997). The CBFM facilitators’ team with the assistance of CFRC should convene a village assembly to conduct the social mapping exercise. The CBFMP facilitators’ team should ensure that the social map should be drawn by the residents with details of the social structure and institutions of the resident village. Make sure that the social map identifies the different forest user groups and families, landless, resource dependent, forest dependent artisans, single women, differently-able households, nomads (honey gatherers and pastoralists) etc of the village. The social map should give a fair idea of the social and economic differences among the village households. The social map should capture information about the different social groups of the village (very important especially in the case of a heterogeneous village), number of households of different social groups, HH location, etc. The structures of local administration and enforcement of local institutions, such as community halls, village assembly locations, religious and social services centers, etc should be also captured in the social maps.

Activity 2: Participatory Forest Resource Mapping

Information about the different types of forest resources available in the community forests and those collected by the local communities for domestic consumption, subsistence and sale can be collected adopting the PANR tools (Mukherjee, 2003). Data should be collected through mixed or focus group discussions. Products, season of availability etc., One of the main focuses would be collecting information about the benefit sharing mechanisms and the allocation of the forest resources for different user groups of the village. (See the tool box for format - 1. Checklist of Possible Forest Uses and Forest Products Available).

Activity 3: Participatory Forest Resource Use Mapping

After completion of the intra and inter village social mapping, conduct a participatory resource use mapping of not only the entire village but also of neighbouring village(s), if that is applicable. Conduct participatory resource use mapping exercise either in small focus groups or inviting significant cross-section of the local community, however, active participation of the marginalized families and women must be ensured. In situations where neighbouring villages are also dependent significantly on the native community forest, then neighbours should be also involved in the participatory resource use mapping exercise. The best option would be conducting the participatory resource use mapping exercise with the native and neighbouring villages together. If that is not possible, then resource use mapping exercise shall be conducted separately, however, it is necessary to ensure that at least few representatives of the other party should be present while mapping exercise is conducted separately. This is to ensure any potential conflict of information or interests over community forest resource use.

Encourage the participants to prepare a resource use matrix, however, for collection of maximum information, conduct the exercise in a succession:

- ▲ First, encourage the participants to prepare a detailed list of forest uses and services of the community forest. Make sure the entire forest use list has been prepared, proceed to the next step,
- ▲ Encourage the participants to list out the products (fuel-wood, NTFPs, wax and honey, uncultivated foods, fish, edible insects, medicinal herbs, charcoal, timber, poles, etc) collected against each forest use and

RESOURCE USE MATRIX								
	GENDER		WEALTH			PROVENANCE OF USER		
	Men	Women	Richer	Average	Poorer	Villager	Neighbouring village	Stranger
Cropland	12	2	10	8	5	10		
Kitchen Garden Land	3	10	10	10	10	10		
Tree Wood	6	6	5	6	10	6	4	5
Tree Leaves	3	13	6	3	10	5	3	
Medicinal Plants	6	8	2	3	8	5	3	12
Grasses	10	4	9	5	2	6	4	

Figure 1. Source - Thomson, and Freudenberger, 1997. Community Forestry Field Manual 7

service listed. After completion of preparation of the list of forest products, proceed to the next step,

- ▲ Encourage the participants to write details of the number of households (native and neighbor, if applicable) involved in the collection of forest products, - pay special attention and collect details of the vulnerable and marginalized households,
- ▲ Next, gather details of the collectors (men/women/children/outside) involved in collection of the forest products from the community forest, -
- ▲ Next, gather information about the season of availability of each product collected from the community forest,
- ▲ Next, gather information about the purpose of collection (domestic consumption/sale/medicine/cultural),
- ▲ Collect information about the amount of each product collected from the community forest, and
- ▲ Finally, produce a Forest Product Utilization Matrix (FPUM) and use it to estimate of the uses and services provided by the community forest, number of households (native and neighbouring village) dependent on the community forest, the number of products collected from the community forest, the amount of each product collected from the community forest and utilized, etc. (See the tool box for format - 2. Checklist of Possible Forest Products Used against each Forest Use; 3. Forest Product Utilization Matrix – Subsistence; and 4. Forest Product Utilization Matrix - Revenue).

5.2. Stage Two: Setting Local Interest and Situation Based Objectives of the CBFMP

It is a common practice to prepare CBFMPs with very broad management objectives, often without consultation with the local communities. For instance, micro-plans of the joint forest management (JFM) programme, are prepared by the forest department using a centrally developed blanket format, often without consultation with the local communities. Therefore, JFM micro-plans are often found identical across the sub-continent without much variation, despite the significant regional and local variations (FAO, 2004). The broad management objectives are often based on the national forest policies and national interests. Such blanket approaches to preparation of CBFMPs have many setbacks. The lack of consultation with local communities fail to derive real local issues, hence do not include or reflect site-specific local needs, interests, aspirations, issues and opportunities.

Blanket approaches and broader management objectives often fail to establish relationship between broader national interests and specific local needs and aspirations. Broader management plans could also make local communities lose interest in the project as their needs are neither reflected nor met, often they do not feel ownership of the CBFMP. Broader management plans could do also more harm than good to precious local biodiversity and sensitive eco-systems, in case of mismatch between blanket management approaches and local eco-system functions. Therefore, overall management objectives should be derived in consultation with the local communities through detailed participatory analysis of not only local needs, interests, aspirations, possibilities and opportunities but also local biodiversity and eco-system functions.

As the facilitator, encourage the local community to discuss what they would like to do with the community forest. Invite the local community for discussion and guide the discussion carefully towards setting the overall management objectives based on local needs, interests and aspirations. It is important at this stage to invite the marginalized groups as well as the neighbouring villages to the table for negotiation and agree upon the newly set management objectives for management of the community forest. Consultation meetings for setting the overall management objective should be conducted either in small focus groups or large group involving the entire village. Active participation of the marginalized families and women in the discussion must be ensured. It was found that output of the objective setting meetings would be very effective if they are conducted in succession involving small focus groups, and then share the consolidated information with the larger group for feedback and decision making. Further, involvement of neighbouring villages is mandatory in case of their dependency on the community forest. The output of the overall management objective setting meeting would be effective if it is conducted with the native and neighbouring villages together. In case if that is not possible, then overall management objective setting meeting should be conducted separately, however, it is necessary to ensure that at least few representatives of the other party should be present at the objective setting meetings. This is to ensure any potential conflict of information or interests over the objectives set for management and use of the community forest resources.

Activity 1: Engagement of the Local Community in Small (focus) Groups

We have learned from our past experiences that active involvement of the local community is absolutely indispensable especially in the processes which are likely to benefit them either directly or indirectly. However, engagement of the local community in one large group has its own risks and disadvantages. Large group engagement could lead to either non/passive participation of local communities, or altogether absent from participation, or refrain from sharing their concerns openly in large group meetings. Usually certain segments of the local communities, especially women and marginalized groups are either constrained by local customs and traditions, feel shy, insecure or overwhelmed to participate in large group meetings. The passive participation or absence of the vulnerable and marginalized individuals, households, or groups at the meeting could seriously affect the decision making process. In the worst case scenario, negatively affecting the well-being and livelihoods of the marginalized individuals, households, or groups. Hence, the “individual and small-group consultation strategy”, meeting with individuals, women, men, and marginalized individuals and groups, either separately or in small focus groups has been adopted to discuss their interests, aspirations, and issues in detail. Information thus collected was compiled to prepare a comprehensive report and the report was shared with everyone at the village assembly meeting to develop the road map for the future.

The strategy, although laborious and time consuming, but helps tremendously to gain valuable insights and understand the village internal dynamics and issues. The “individual and small-group consultation strategy” could be very effective in investigating local issues separately and resolving them collectively. The strategy to consult few individuals and each section of the village separately not only encourages people to open-up and voice their issues, needs and interests but also helps in incorporation of every individual/groups’ interests in the community development plan/project. Engagement in smaller groups also helps in improved communication and sharing of knowledge and personal information and interests. Further, it is relatively easy to engage and encourage people’s participation in the smaller group meetings than large group assembly. This strategy was found to be very effective to engage local communities and convey information about the FRA more effectively.

Activity 2: Negotiation among the Intra and Inter-village Resource User Groups

One of the most important activities that should not be ignored is the creation of space and platform for intra-village and inter-village forest user group negotiations. Agreements through consensus among the local resource user groups (both inter and intra-village) over resource use, benefit sharing, responsibilities and other institutions is absolutely indispensable for the success of CBFMP. Therefore, consensus among inter and intra-village resource user groups should be achieved before addressing the technical issues of forest management. Therefore, doors for negotiation should be opened for the resource user groups at the very outset of the CBFMP preparation, to negotiate terms and conditions of resource use (FAO, 2004). It is necessary to notice that deferring negotiations could potentially lead to conflicts among inter or intra-village resource user groups during implementation of the CBFMP. Therefore, sufficient time must be allocated for facilitation of inter and intra-village user group negotiations. Both inter and intra-village user groups should be invited

to the table and encouraged to participate in the discussion meetings during the initial phases of CBFM preparation. Inter and intra-village user groups should be encouraged to negotiate over the terms and conditions of resource use, benefit sharing, responsibilities and other institutions in an open and transparent way. Sufficient care should be taken to ensure participation of the marginalized and disadvantaged stakeholder groups and empowerment of these groups during the entire process CBFMP preparation.

After collectively finalizing the forest management objectives, proceed to the next stage, CBFM assessment and management planning. Agree with the local communities or CFRC the time and location for the next visit of CBFMP facilitators team to the village for conducting the stage three activities. Inquire with local communities or CFRC whether they have any prior experience and knowledge about forest resource assessment or whether there is a need to co-opt additional members to the team to assist in forest resource assessment. The additional member committee may include traditional healers, pastoralists, honey collectors, charcoal makers, etc, of the local community with expertise and special knowledge of the local forest resources.

5.3. Stage Three: Local Objective(s) based CBFM Assessment and Management Planning

The stage three, forest resource assessment and management planning is the most crucial stage of CBFMP preparation. Successful assessment of the community forest resources status would lead to development of an effective CBFMP. Successful completion of forest resources assessment should result in the preparation of a draft forest management plan (FBKD, 2007).

Conducting the stage three activities may however, require conducting a brief training for the CFRC/local resource assessment committee on classification and demarcation methods based on local land use and land cover pattern. The local community shall be encouraged to divide the community forest into different forest units/zones, based on the local land use and land cover pattern or as per convenience of the local community. Demarcation of the community forest into different "Forest Management Units (FMUs)" would make also development of the management activities for FMUs convenient. The FMU management activities should be developed after completion of the resource assessment exercise for the entire forest. The planned management activities of each FMU should be based on the resource availability, local needs and interests. It is necessary to also keep in mind that management activities of each FMU should be planned against the agreed local forest management objectives. Resource assessment and data collection activities should be also designed against the local forest management objectives. After completion of the resource assessment activity for each forest unit, data should be compiled and analyzed in a participatory way and findings should be presented to the village assembly for further discussion and approval. Results of the resource assessment could help in making collective decisions over levels of use of forest resources and realizing the local forest management objectives. The process of conducting the stage three activities is discussed in detail here below:

Step 1: Demarcation of the Community Forest into Different Forest Units

Customary boundaries of forests and forest units of the community-based forests often do not align with the official administrative boundaries demarcated by the forest department (Rindfuss, *et al.* 2004; Balooni and Inoue, 2009). Further, local communities often use their own local identification mechanisms, land marks and local names to distinguish and identify different forest patches or forest units. Local communities often recognize forest patches and forest units with reference to the available resources in the forest patch (for instance, presence of certain trees/plants or wildlife), sacred grove, waterbodies, local land use pattern, or a person or historical event which took place in that forest patch or unit.

For instance, the community-based forest (around 1006 ha) of Pachgaon village in Maharashtra, India had been divided into 24 sub-compartments called *tapus*. Each *tapu* had been given local names which are easily recognized by local communities. “For instance, *Amla bhoyar* is the *tapu* which has a cave with one *amla* (*Emblica officinalis*) tree on it. *Gohru Lavan* is another *tapu* named after a man named Gohru died there few years ago. *Tapus* are demarcated through fire lines and gram sabha has reserved also 34 ha of the best preserved forest patch for wildlife conservation, and named it as the Pachgaon sanctuary. The sanctuary is also a source of perennial streams” (Agarwal, 2016).

Taking into consideration the local conditions, encourage local communities to distinguish or demarcate the community forest into different forest units based on local identification pattern. Participatory resource identification exercise could be used for this purpose and communities should be encouraged to draw pictures of different forest units either on chart papers using markers/crayons or directly on the ground using either chalk or etch using a stick. Make sure to ask the local communities to draw pictures of different forest units in the way they visualize them. Label the different forest units with local names with which they are usually referred or identified, similar to afore mentioned Pachagaon village situation.

Name of the Community Forest on Government Records	Local Name of the Community Forest	Local Name of the Each Forest Unit of the Community Forest	Name of the Each Forest Unit on Government Records/FD Work Plans
		FMUnit 1:	FMUnit 1:
		FMUnit 2:	FMUnit 2:
		FMUnit 3:	FMUnit 3:

Step 2: Objectives-based Assessment of CBF

Undertake participatory forest resource assessment together with the CFRC/local resource assessment committee. The resource assessment activities of each FMU should be based on the agreed local management objectives as well as the information captured in the resource use matrix developed during the resource use mapping exercise. With reference to the resource use matrix prepare a checklist of the flora and fauna which are most important for the local community either for domestic, subsistence or commercial use. Accordingly, design a format for collection of data

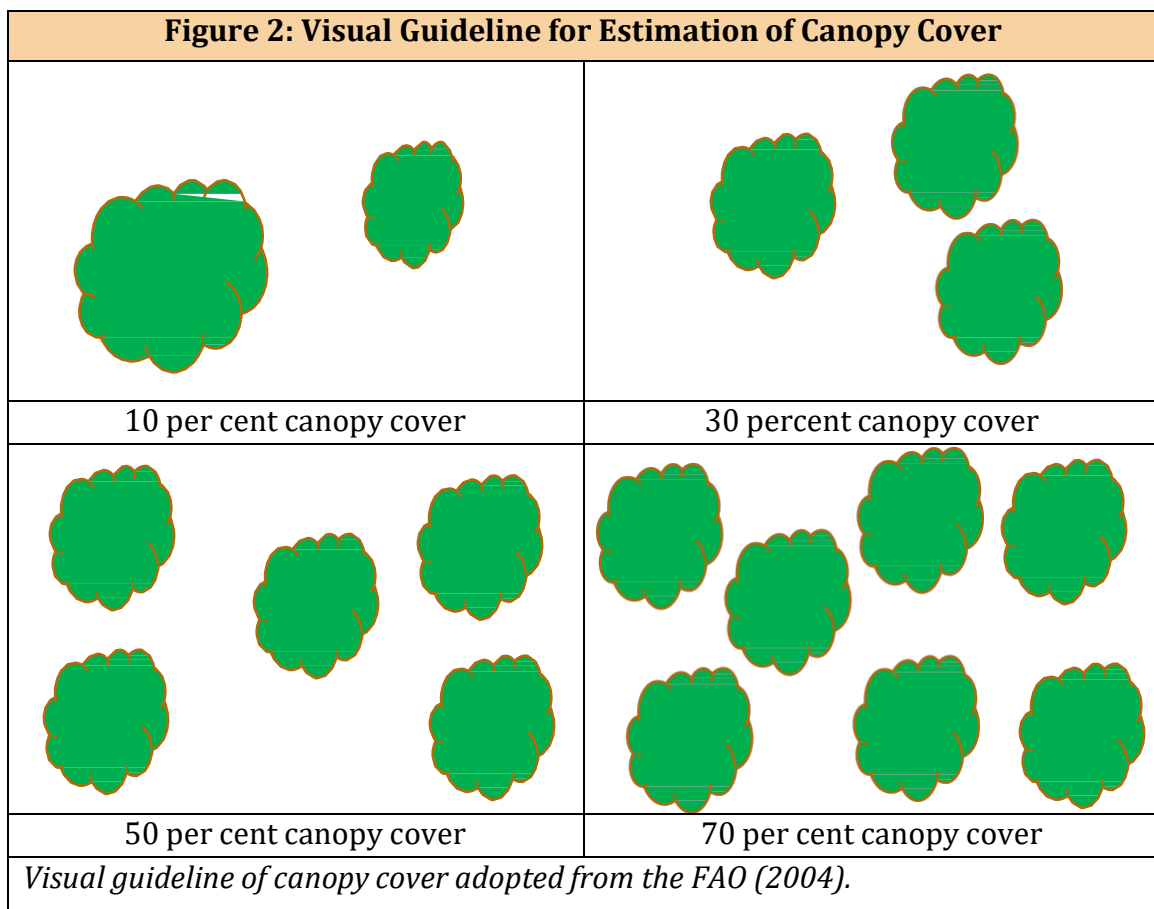
related to the status of flora and fauna at each FMU, useful to the local community. In addition, information related to disturbances and threats such as soil erosion, gaps, fire incidence, over grazing, poaching, illegal felling, health of waterbodies, pest and disease, etc., should be also captured for better resource assessment of the community forest. In order to produce a good resource assessment report, collect data for every FMU with the help of either the CFRC or CFRC and the additional member committee whichever is applicable. A transect walk in and around the community forest together with the local resource assessment committee would be enough to gather all the necessary information. In case of planning for an intensive data collection, more robust scientific methods can be adopted for purpose of data collection. Conduct a dry run of the data collection format to standardize it as per the local condition and situation. Agree with the resource assessment team over the data collection schedule and plan accordingly.

Step 3: Transect Walk around the Community Forest and Data Collection

Take a walk through each of the FMU together with the resource assessment team, however, if the FMU is very large, plan to conduct data collection exercise on different days. Only collect relevant information of the flora and fauna, record the information in the data collection form prepared for this purpose. It could be possible that each FMU may be used for multiple objectives, care should be taken that data is captured accordingly to develop an efficient management plan for the respective FMU. If the local forest conditions and forest policies are conducive for utilization of timber, readings of the diameter at breast height (DBH) of timber species present in the respective FMU shall be recorded. The data of the DBH readings will be useful in estimation of the basal area. Such measurements however, should be used only to figure out whether timber utilization is possible for local use but not for estimation of how much timber can be harvested for commercial purposes. Information related to disturbances and threats such as soil erosion, gaps, fire incidence, over grazing, poaching, illegal felling, health of waterbodies, pest and disease, etc., should be also captured during the transect walk. (See tool box for format - 5. Flora and Fauna Inventory - Field Sheet).

Step 4: Data Compilation, Analysis and Preparation of Resource Assessment Report

Depending on the local situation, local community literacy level, competency of local community with numeracy and data analysis knowledge and skills and other factors such as availability of computers etc, the data compilation and analysis can be planned. It is necessary however to adopt methods that would encourage active local community participation, but not the other way. For instance, estimation of canopy cover can be done using scientific methods such as line-intercept, spherical densitometer, however, there is no standard ground-based techniques available for canopy estimation (Fiala *et al*, 2006). Depending on the local conditions, the scientific canopy cover estimation techniques can be substituted with simple visual techniques for estimation of canopy cover (Fig: 2). (See tool box for format - 6. Forest Assessment Forms).



Step 5: Drafting of the Community Forest Management Plan

Based on outputs of the forest resource assessment report, prepare a draft management plan for the community forest (FBKD, 2007). Based on the outputs of the forest resource assessment, the resource assessment committee should prepare a draft the conservation and management plan for the community forest. In addition to the analysis report on the status of forest resources and health of the forest, the draft CBFMP should include information about the roles and responsibilities as following:

- ▲ Map with the boundaries of the community forest,
- ▲ Roles and responsibilities for managing and protection of the community forest,
- ▲ Forest protection mechanisms and arrangements,
- ▲ Regulations over use of the community forest area and forest resources,
- ▲ Penalties for violation of rules and mechanisms to deal with perpetrators,
- ▲ Livelihood-enterprise-use related information and plan,
- ▲ Participatory resource monitoring mechanisms, etc.

The above mentioned points are not exhaustive, only suggestive. After drafting the CBFMP the CFRC should submit it to the gram sabha for perusal and approval (GOI, 2016a). (See tool box for format - 7. Forest Management Action Plan (Annual)).

Overall Management Objective(s)	Planned Management Activities for Each Forest Unit	Time Plan	Labour Requirement	Budget Estimate	Source of Funding
1.	FMUnit 1:				
	FMUnit 2:				
	FMUnit 3:				
2.	FMUnit 1:				
	FMUnit 2:				
	FMUnit 3:				
3.	FMUnit 1:				
	FMUnit 2:				
	FMUnit 3:				

5.4. Stage Four: Formalization of the CBFMP

Many decentralized forest governance systems around the world are based on use of local by-laws (rules and responsibilities) as it provide the legal basis for enforcing the CBFMP, hence it is necessary for the CFRC to draft bylaws based on the CBFMP and present them to the gram sabha for approval. The procedure for preparation of bylaws is presented in Box: 5. One of the legal basis for preparation and enforcement of CBFMP are the provisions bestowed upon the gram sabha under the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 (PESA), which extends Part IX of the Constitution with certain modifications and exceptions, to the Fifth Schedule Areas notified under article 244(1) of the Constitution (GOI, 2016b). The provisions of PESA which empowers gram sabha are as follows:

“PESA, exclusively empowers gram sabha to:

i. Safeguard and preserve the:

- (a) Traditions and customs of the people, and their cultural identity,
- (b) Community resources, and
- (c) Customary mode of dispute resolution.

ii. Carryout executive functions to:

- (a) Approve plans, programmes and projects for social and economic development,
- (b) Identify persons as beneficiaries under the poverty alleviation and other programmes, and
- (c) Issue a certificate of utilization of funds by the Panchayat for the plans; programmes and projects.” (GOI, 2016b).

In addition, “PESA also empowers gram shabha/ Panchayat at appropriate level with:

- i. Right to mandatory consultation in land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons,
- ii. Panchayat at an appropriate level is entrusted with planning and management of minor water bodies,

- iii. Mandatory recommendations by gram sabha or panchayat at appropriate level for prospective licenses/lease for mine and concession for the exploitation of minor minerals,
- iv. Regulate sale/consumption of intoxicants,
- v. Ownership of minor forest produce,
- vi. Prevent land alienation and restore alienated land,
- vii. Manage village markets,
- viii. Control over money lending to Scheduled Tribes (STs), and
- ix. Control over institutions and functionaries in social sector, local plans including Tribal sub plans and resources.” (GOI, 2016b).

5.5. Stage Five: Implementation of the CBFMP

Approval of the gram sabha is necessary for implementation of CBFMP and enforcement of bylaws. Henceforth, it is necessary to present the draft CBFMP and bylaws to the gram sabha for approval. Feedback of the gram sabha or major objections if any, should be taken into account before finalizing the draft CBFMP. Upon approval of the final CBFMP, the gram sabha should pass a resolution and record it in minutes. If gram sabha is keen to integrate its CBFM in the forest department’s work plans, then it can chose to write to the Divisional Forest

Officer (DFO) about the approval of the CBFMP and bylaws and submit a copy of the same to the DFO office. The integration of gram sabha approved CBFMPs into micro plans/working

Box: 5 Developing Bylaws for Community-Based Forest Management

The jurisdiction of the bylaw is limited to the community-based Forest Management Plan and the legal source of Village Bylaws is the Constitution of India (Articles 243G, 243H, 243I, and 280) and extension of Part IX of the Constitution under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.

The procedure for drafting Village Bylaws

- ✦ A proposal for developing Bylaws should be put forward to gram sabha by the CFRC,
- ✦ The gram sabha shall convene village assembly to discuss the proposal,
- ✦ Views of the resident villagers should be taken into account,
- ✦ The gram sabha drafts and approves the final bylaws and passes it and it should be recorded in the minutes,
- ✦ The gram sabha may submit the Bylaws to the DFO for feedback and support and record it in the minutes. Though not legally required, the District Council may want this.
- ✦ The Chairperson of the gram sabha shall submit the proposed Bylaws to the Panchayat office and mark a copy to the DFO.

Copied and adopted from: Forestry and Bee Keeping Division (FBKD), 2007, Pp: 20.

plans/management plans of the forest department could eliminate potential conflicts between the stakeholders over management of the community forest.

5.6. Stage Six: Participatory Monitoring of the CBFMP

The user-led monitoring known as "Participatory Resource Monitoring (PRM)" can be really effective and perhaps the best alternative to externally driven monitoring systems. In PRM, the local community monitors its own natural resources (forest health and growth, NTFPs and other harvested products and sold, fire incidence, pest outbreaks, encroachments, poaching and biodiversity). The local community also keeps its own PRM records and use them to manage their forest resources in a sustainable way. PRM enables the local community to develop their own "check and balance" mechanisms to manage their forest resources more effectively (FAO, 2004; Dey, 2002). Contrary to the conventional external monitoring solutions which requires considerable technical inputs, time consuming, and also expensive, PRM mechanisms on the other hand could be very convenient and easily blend with the day-to-day activities of local communities without consuming their time and finances. Further, conventional forest monitoring systems are mostly inclined towards timber production and management of monoculture plantations, however, PRM could be tailor made to suit the livelihood-oriented forest management plans.

Box: 6 Model Format for Community-Based Forest Management By-laws

Section 1. Title of the Bylaws

This says that this Bylaws shall be known as community-based forest management bylaws and has been made under the Constitution of India (Articles 243G, 243H, 243I, and 280) and extension of Part IX of the Constitution under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996

Section 2. Purpose of the Bylaws

The purpose is to give the VFPC powers to exercise full management and to be held accountable for the protection, management and regulation of the CF use in a sustainable way and the punishment of those who violate the rules set out in this Bylaws.

Section 3. Manager

This identifies the Manager [usually the VFPC] and sets out its duties and powers, terms of the committee, procedure for the appointment of new committee, records required and their maintenance, and reporting etc.

Section 4. Protection

This sets out the rules as to how the forest will be managed – regulation on grazing, harvesting from a specific FMU. Patrolling and appointment of patrolling teams/watchman etc.

Section 5. Rules and Regulations

This sets out each and every rule or 'law' of access and use of the forest. Uses of the forest which are prohibited and permitted, through a license or fee or available for free.

Section 6. Penalties

This sets out the precise penalties for violation of each rule.

Section 7. Procedures

This is states exactly how offenders will be apprehended and penalized.

Section 8. Expenditure

This section will set out a plan on how income from fines, penalties and fee is to be kept and how it should be spent, with approval of whom.

Section 9. Amendments

This will state the procedure for amendments.

Section 10. Date of Commencement

This states the date the Bylaws will come into force.

Copied and adopted from: Forestry and Bee Keeping Division (FBKD), 2007, Pp: 20.

The focus of PRM mechanisms may be as follows:

- ▲ Participatory processes through which the local forest user group actively participates and carries out forest resource monitoring and assessment on their own, without any help of professional technicians and externally driven inputs,
- ▲ Holistic forest resource assessment (covering the entire forest) rather than just timber,
- ▲ Simple qualitative methods with emphasis on visual observations rather than accurate measurement of the changes in forest resources,
- ▲ Emphasis on use of locally used measurement units and classification systems than using conventional inventory terms and units, and
- ▲ Presentation of forest monitoring and assessment information through use of visuals and graphics to enable better interpretation and understanding of results by local communities (FAO, 2004).

5.7. Stage Seven: Review of the CBFMP

5.7.1. Review of Management Efficiency

Although CBFMPs are prepared for a longer time line, but it is necessary to conduct either half-yearly or annual review of the CBFMP to assess the effectiveness of implementation. Review of CBFMP should focus on two major aspects:

- a. Assessment of the management operations, and
- b. Assessment of the impact of community-based management on the forest.

Review of the CBFMP should be conducted by the CFRC or in consultation with the CFRC, in case it is conducted by an external party. The review committee may prepare a checklist of things that are considered important for review. For more information about the checklist of questions and probes for this purpose please see box 6 and 7.

The general monitoring indicators of positive CBFM are:

- ▲ Decrease in incidence of illegal activities such as illegal charcoal making, poaching, logging etc, in the community forest area,
- ▲ Signs of forest improvement such as signs of regeneration, reappearance or increase in the number of rare or valuable species etc
- ▲ Decrease in the incidence of uncontrolled fires
- ▲ Increase in ground water table or reappearance of springs
- ▲ Return of the lost wildlife or increase in the number
- ▲ Decrease of shifting cultivation practice in community forest area or decrease in encroachment of the forest for non-forestry purposes
- ▲ Increase of sense of ownership of the community forest and forest resources among the local community
- ▲ Decrease in inter and intra village conflicts over management and usage of the community forest, etc., (FBKD, 2007).

5.7.2. Amendment of the Management Plan

In case if performance of the management arrangement was found dissatisfactory, necessary actions should be initiated by the review committee and suggested actions should be presented to the gram sabha for perusal and approval. The amended forest management plan should be made official by the gram sabha through passing a resolution. (See tool box for format - 8. Quarterly/Half-yearly/Annual Forest Management Monitoring Report and 9. Assessment of Achievement of Goals and Planned Activities).

Box 7: Suggested Questions and Probes

To Review Management Efficiency

1. Performance of Managers

- ☞ How well is the executive committee (EC) working? How frequently does it meet? If it has not been meeting regularly, why not?
- ☞ Has there been any change in membership of the EC? Why?
- ☞ What is its relationship with the gram sabha? Does it need improvement?
- ☞ Have any village leaders been offenders? If so, how did the EC handle these cases?

2. Book and Records Keeping

- ☞ Does the Secretary keep Minutes? Where are these?
- ☞ Is there a record of each offence and fines paid?
- ☞ Does the village forest protection committee (VFPC) have its own Receipt Book?
- ☞ If there are no records, why not? Who should keep records?
- ☞ What records would the VFPC now wish it had kept? What should be kept now?

3. Financial Management

- ☞ Who has been collecting money from fines and/or fees?
- ☞ Where is that money being deposited? Does the VFPC have its own Account?
- ☞ Where has been the money invested? Where is the record of expenditure?
- ☞ What problems have arisen with money matters?

7. Transits and Permits

- ☞ How many permits have been issued and for what purposes?
- ☞ Who has been supervising harvesting?
- ☞ What problems have been found with the permit system?
- ☞ Has a quota system been put in place, and if so, who is keeping track of how much is being extracted?
- ☞ What is the system for receiving applications? How many have been turned down and why?
- ☞ Has there been any change in the number of 'freely permitted' uses where a permit is not needed? Why?

8. Punishments and Sanctions

- ☞ Are fines being levied at the rates set or have these changed?
- ☞ What other punishments are being given?
- ☞ Who is doing the fining and what problems exist with this system?
- ☞ How many offenders have refused to pay fines, why, and how has the VFPC handled each case?
- ☞ Has the VFPC been forced to take people to court? How is the Court reacting?

9. External Support

- ☞ How often has the Forester visited since CBFM began?
- ☞ What problems has he helped with? What problems has he not been able to help with and why?
- ☞ Which other district officers have come?
- ☞ What kind of support is now needed?

- ☞ What needs does the committee have for money? Is there enough money from fines?
- ☞ Should fees now be charged for some forest uses? Which ones? Why? What rates should be set?
- ☞ How have revenues been shared with the gram sabha for general village development? Has enough been left over to ensure good forest management?

4. Reporting

- ☞ Does the Chairman of the VFPC report to gram sabha meetings? How often?
- ☞ How often gram sabha had been informed of problems and progress of CF?

5. Patrolling and Protection

- ☞ Is patrolling continuing as it started or has it changed?
- ☞ Is the number of patrol members the same or changed? Why?
- ☞ How often are patrols being made, any changes than originally, why?
- ☞ Is a Patrol Record maintained?
- ☞ How do the patrolmen feel about the job? What problems are they facing? How may these be solved?

6. Rules and Violations

- ☞ Do people of the village know the forest use rules – how were they told?
- ☞ What rules are being broken most and why?
- ☞ What rules seem to have fallen by the wayside?
- ☞ Have any new rules been put in place?
- ☞ Which groups in the community are most unhappy about the forest use rules and why?
- ☞ Are people from neighbouring villages obeying the rules?
- ☞ What are the most common uses of the forest now?

10. Boundaries

- ☞ Has the perimeter boundary been agreed? How many disputes were there and how were these solved?
- ☞ Are there any outstanding disputes concerning the boundary? If so, who with and why?
- ☞ Where is the record describing the agreed boundary?
- ☞ What kind of internal zones have been made? If the forest is managed by sub-villages?
- ☞ Has each FMU been marked? How? If not, why not?
- ☞ Are there any outstanding disputes among sub-villages as to their part of the forest?
- ☞ Has the forest been divided into protection and use zones? If so, how are they known or marked? Are the distinctions observed?

11. Rehabilitation and Regeneration

- ☞ Have any of the plans to rehabilitate the forest been implemented? If not, why not?
- ☞ What is the most urgent task?

12. Local views and Interests

- ☞ How do ordinary villagers find management – what are their complaints and their suggestions? What benefits have they seen with CBFM?
- ☞ How has their access to the forest changed?
- ☞ What shortages are villagers experiencing and how do they feel about these?
- ☞ What forest uses are now seen as most important to members of the village?
- ☞ Are villagers proud of their forest?
- ☞ Are neighbouring villagers respecting the forest as now under this village?

Copied from: Forestry and Bee Keeping Division (FBKD), 2007, Pp: 26.

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Box: 8 Review of Impact on the Community Forest

1. Have the in-forest dwellers left?
2. Has cultivation in the forest ceased?
3. Have those sharing boundaries with the forest marked the boundary?
4. Has encroachment ceased? If so, with what effect on the forest?
5. Is there any evidence that the Protection and Use Zones are operating?
6. Has the perimeter of the forest area been agreed and marked? Is more permanent boundary marking needed?
7. Have all boundary disputes been resolved?
8. If management is supposed to operate on a sub-village basis, is there evidence that this is operating? Which sub-village has most improved the forest? Which has least improved the forest? What is causing the difference?
9. What signs are there that the forest condition is improving: -
 - ☞ Are the springs returning and the stream flow improving?
 - ☞ Is there more undergrowth than before?
 - ☞ Is the canopy closing?
 - ☞ Are cattle and people trails closing?
 - ☞ Are there more tree seedlings?
 - ☞ Are burnt areas recovering?
 - ☞ Are hives seeing better occupancy?
 - ☞ Are wildlife and game numbers increasing in the forest?
10. Are there any new burnt areas?
11. Who do you see when you are in the forest and what are they doing?
12. Do they hold permits if they are supposed to for those uses?
13. How many cattle do you see in the forest and are they outside the permitted Grazing Zone?
14. Is there evidence of newly felled trees? Bark-stripping? Excessive pole-wood harvesting? Excessive root destruction?
15. Are fallen trees being used? Are whole trees or branches being lopped for pole-wood?
16. Has any pruning or thinning been undertaken and if so, by whom, with what effect?
17. Is there any evidence that action has been taken to fill in the gullies, rehabilitate the watering points, close the springs from livestock, and so on?

Copied from: Forestry and Bee Keeping Division (FBKD), 2007, Pp: 27.

Part VI: The CBFMP Tool Box

1. Checklist of Possible Forest Uses and Forest Products Available

Village Name		Forest Unit Name	
List of Forest Uses		List of Forest Products Available	
1		1	
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	
5		5	
6		6	
7		7	
8		8	
9		9	
10		10	

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2. Checklist of Possible Forest Products Used against each Forest Use

Village Name		Forest Unit Name		
Use - Socio-Cultural		Forest Products Used	Use - Energy/Fuel	Forest Products Used
1			1	
2			2	
3			3	
4			4	
5			5	
6			6	
7			7	
8			8	
9			9	
10			10	
Use - Subsistence		Forest Products Used	Use - Commercial	Forest Products Used
1			1	
2			2	
3			3	
4			4	
5			5	
6			6	
7			7	
8			8	
9			9	
10			10	
Use - Medicine / Healthcare		Forest Products Used	Use - Others	Forest Products Used
1			1	
2			2	
3			3	
4			4	
5			5	
6			6	
7			7	
8			8	
9			9	
10			10	

4. Forest Product Utilization Matrix - Revenue

Village Name						Date		
Forest Name								
Forest Product	Annual Harvest (Kgs/Qtls.)	No. of Vill. HHs Involved	Revenue (Ann./INR)	Annual Harvest (Kgs/Qtls.)	Neighbours Involved		Revenue (Ann./INR)	Collection Plot/FMU (Code)
					No. of vill.	No of HHs		

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5. Flora and Fauna Inventory - Field Sheet (FSI, 2002)

Village Name				Forest Name				Date	
FMU Name				FMU Area (Ha)				Plot Code	
Forest Type		Young		Mature		Mixed		Plantation	
Trees Enumeration Form									
S.No	Local Name	Botanical Name	No of Saplings	Young	Mature	Old	DBH	Remarks	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
Shrubs and Lyanes Enumeration Form									
S.No	Local Name	Botanical Name	No. of Plants under each Collar diameter class (cm)				Remarks		
			0-2	2-5	5-8	8+			
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									

Herbs Enumeration Form

S.No	Local Name	Botanical Name	No. of Plants under each Collar diameter class (cm)				Remarks
			0-2	2-5	5-8	8+	
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

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Bamboo Clump Enumeration Form

S.No	Species		Green Sound Clump		Green Damaged Clump		Dry Sound Clump		Dry Damaged Clump		No. of Decayed Clumps	Avg. Diam. of Clump	Total no. of Clumps
			1-2 yr old	Over 2 yr old	1-2 yr old	Over 2 yr old	1-2 yr old	Over 2 yr old	1-2 yr old	Over 2 yr old			
	Local Name	Botanical Name											

6. Forest Assessment Form - I				Date	
Village Name		Forest Name			
FMU Name		Area (Ha)		Plot/FMU Code	
Forest Type		Mixed Forest		Plantation	
Forest Age	Young		Mature		Old
Crown Cover	Open		Moderate		Closed
Basal Area (%)	<5m ² /ha		5-10m ² /ha		>10m ² /ha
Felling	Low		Medium		High
Fire Evidence	Low		Medium		High
Grazing	Low		Medium		High
Lopping	Low		Medium		High
Soil Erosion	Low		Medium		High
Weeds (Exotic)	Absent		Scarce		Abundant
Pest (Signs)	Yes/No		No. of trees		Tot. Area (Ha)
Natural Regen	Absent		Scarce		Abundant
Encroachment	Yes/No		No. of patches		Tot. Area (Ha)
Sacred Grove	Yes/No		No. of groves		Tot. Area (Ha)
Gaps	Yes/No		No. of gaps		Tot. Area (Ha)
Other (Specify)					
Imp. NTFP Species					
Imp. Pole / Wood / Timber Spp.					

Imp. Medicinal Spp.			
Culturally imp. Spp.			
Others (Specify)			
6. Forest Assessment Form - II			Plot/FMU Code
Dominant Spp.			
	NTFP	Timber	Other
Assessment of current status			
Suggested Management Activities			

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6. Waterbody Assessment Form - III			Plot/FMU Code	
Dominant Use				
Assessment of current status	Stream	Lake/Pond	River	Other
Suggested Management Activities				

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6. Wildlife Assessment Form - IV					Plot/FMU Code	
Dominant Spp.	Insects	Fishes	Amphibians	Reptiles	Birds	Mammals
Assessment of current status	Insects	Fishes	Amphibians	Reptiles	Birds	Mammals
Status of Man-Animal Conflict						

Suggested Management Activities							

7. Forest Management Action Plan (Annual)					Date	
Village Name			Forest Name			
FMU Name			Plot/FMU Code	Area (Ha)		
Objective	Goal	Planned Activity	Time Frame	Budget Estimate (INR)	Labour (No.)	Source of Funds

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8. Quarterly/Half-yearly/Annual Forest Management Monitoring Report						Date	
			Quarter:			Year:	
Village Name		Forest Name					
Names and Positions of the committee	Name (Women)		Position	Name (Men)		Position	
	1			1			
	2			2			
	3			3			
	4			4			
	5			5			
	6			6			
	7			7			
	8			8			
	9			9			
10			10				
Meetings/ Trainings	Date	No. of participants (W)	No. of participants (M)	Details of the Topics/issues Discussed			
1							
2							
3							
4							
Details of Revenue – Forest products/services sale, fines and Expenditure							
Forest Product/Service	Details of sale/ permits	Revenue (INR)	Details of Fines	Revenue (INR)	Details of Expenditure	Cost Incurred (INR)	

TOTAL							

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