

# Forest and People: Understanding the Institutional Governance, Social Identity, and People's Participation in Indian Forest Management

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*(Community based forest management in India has emerged mainly in three forms - indigenous community forest management, crafted community forest management, and joint forest management. These three types vary in composition, institutional rules, functioning of managing committee, modes of resolving the conflicts, and leadership pattern. Present study analyzed whether these varied factors influence the social identity and people's participation. Six indigenous community forest management units, four crafted community forest management and seven joint forest management units from three eastern states of India were studied. Both social identity and participation were significantly higher in indigenous community forest management than the joint forest management. Homogeneous community, units under participatory leadership had more social identity and people's participation. Members of indigenous and crafted community forest management had higher satisfaction with its institutional rules, managing committee's functioning, and leadership pattern than joint forest management. These factors of institutional governance directly enhanced social identity, and also participation.*

**KEY WORDS:** *participation; forest management; institutional governance; social identity; institutional rules.*)

Community based forest management is fundamentally a decentralized grassroots movement initiated by forest communities to protect natural forests from further degradation. Protection activities were usually coordinated through traditional or informal culture bound institutions. Recently, formal types of such institutions have been formed under the aegis of forest department (FD) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Previously for about 110 years (1878- 1988), forest communities were alienated from forest management in India. During this period, forests were strictly under the jurisdiction of centralized rule of FD. This process is reversed under the community based forest management system. Under this system, communities are given back either the partial rights to forest use jointly with the FD particularly in the case of protected forests or full usufruct rights where community raises the forests in village commons or wasteland. In community based forest management, communities enjoy both governance and benefit sharing rights with the responsibility of sustainable management of forest resources. These rights may be *de-facto* or *de-jure* depending on the prevailing local context. In contrast to a centralized management system, community involvement and accountability become the key aspects in community based forest management (Khare, 1998; Pimbert & Pretty, 1998; Sarin, 1996).

It has been argued that the success of community based forest management primarily depends on the extent its members embrace the social identity (in-group feelings) and thereby participate in the acts of forest protection (Pimbert & Pretty, 1998; Sarin, 1996). People's favorable perception about institutional rules, norms, and the level of freedom they have in

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decision-making facilitate in building social identity. Social identity is believed to be the precursor of people's participation in organizational activities (Ostrom, 1990; Raju, Vaghela, & Raju, 1993; Silwal, 1986). The objective of this paper is to analyze which form of institutional arrangements is conducive for building social identity and eliciting people's participation in forest management in India.

## **Community Based Forest Management: An Introspection**

Indian forest protection movement witnessed the emergence of three distinct types of community based forest management. The first type of community based forest management emerged out of local initiatives as a result of growing stress owing to rapid degradation of forest. Charismatic local leaders, enthusiastic youth groups, concerned outsiders like FD, and NGOs gave moral fillip to communities for consolidating their forest protection initiatives in an organized manner. These groups were confined to those areas where communities had either strong economic dependency on forest or had unbroken tradition of communal resource management. In eastern Indian states of Jharkhand and Orissa alone, an estimated 200000 hectares of forest were protected by thousands of community organizations (Singh & Singh, 1993). Such forest management was also reported from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Punjab. While some of these units were small and informal, others were large and formal with well-defined rules and regulations. These community institutions have broad diversity in organizational structure, age, leadership style and governance of the commons. These community based forest management units will hereafter be referred to as Indigenous Community forest Management (ICFM).

The second type of community based forest management was promoted by FD at different times. During the 1930s, first such units were formed in Himachal Pradesh popularly known as Forest Co-operative Societies and in Uttar Pradesh in the name of Van Panchayat. These initiatives generated wide scale people's involvement. However, state revenue agency reserved their rights to control the revenue flow from timber and thereby often deprived the villagers from their legitimate share. More recently, villagers' co-operation was solicited through JFM programme. It started from West Bengal and spread to Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Unlike Forest Co-operative Societies and Van Panchayat, JFM offered greater autonomy in sharing responsibilities to the villagers. Villagers were given the substantial share of non-timber forest produce along with certain portion of timber harvested, which varies from state to state. Forest executives as per the policy of the state FD frame the JFM rules. Villagers had little or no role to play in formulation of rules and regulations for their JFM unit. In West Bengal, JFM became popular owing to a strong felt need rather than being fascinated by the rules (Poffenberger et al. 1996; Sarin, 1996).

The third type of community based forest management emerged with the active sponsorship of local government and NGOs. Village *panchayats*<sup>1</sup>, Women organizations (*mahila mandals*), Tree growers' co-operatives and other NGOs who give high priority to

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<sup>1</sup> Gram (Village) *panchayat* is the lowest strata of governance in India consist of 5000 population belong from one or several adjacent villages popularly known as Panchayati Raj Institution. Mukhiya is the elected representative of village panchyat.

forest protection, took the lead to motivate and educate people to develop their community based forest management community based forest management. The effectiveness of these units varied widely depending upon their common interest, functional capabilities, and leadership pattern. During the past two decades, the number of such unit has multiplied. The third type of community based forest management is popularly known as Crafted Community Forest Management (CCFM).

## **People's Participation and Social Identity: The Link**

### **Meaning and Types**

Participation in a group at its narrowest sense is defined in terms of nominal membership (Chopra et. al., 1990; Molinas, 1998), and at broadest sense it is defined as dynamic process in which the disadvantaged have voice and influence in decision-making (Narayan, 1996; White, 1996). Participation has two dimensions (a) direct, and (b) indirect participation. Direct participation includes the involvement of stakeholders in activities like attending meetings concerning forest protection, taking active part in meetings, contributing labor towards forest management, monitoring, patrolling, etc. Indirect participation refers to individuals' obedience to forest protection rules, motivating others as well as own family members for forest protection, providing moral support to community for ensuring equity, justice, and transparency in forest management (Ostrom, 1990; Raju, Vaghela, & Raju, 1993; Sarin, 1996; Silwal, 1986; Singh, Ballabh & Palakudiyil, 1996).

From a project perspective, participation can mean informing people about a project either through (a) consulting them, or (b) by delegating managerial power over the project to them (Nuitjen, 1992). While the former type stresses on sharing of responsibilities, accountabilities jointly by project planners and the members of the community, the latter talks about total community ownership. Individual's decision to cooperate with the community vis-à-vis project planners depends on level of personal acceptance and conviction about the forestry project, favorable evaluation of institutional rules, and accrued benefits (Ostrom, 1990; Sarin, 1996).

### **What Makes People to Participate?**

Individual participation in collective action is a product of individual's self-categorisation within the organization (collective domain), psychological attachment with organizational pride and respect, and identification as organizational citizen (Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000; Ouwerkerk, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 1999; Tyler, 1999). Self-categorisation refers to one's social and personal identity in an organizational set up as member. Any person will give higher preference to organizational identity (social) over personal identity if the difference among members of the organization is low in terms of status, access to benefit, and opportunity to share the personal knowledge and experiences in decision-making arena (Turner, 1985). In a homogeneous community or group, the above differentiation is likely to be low and, therefore, self-categorisation would likely to embrace social identity. Social identity helps in developing group based pride and respect where individuals take pride in organizational achievement. The process is bolstered when organizational objectives matches with local priorities and organization tries to establish local self-governance thereby safe

guards the members' rights over resources, territory, and institutional management (Pimbert & Pretty, 1998). In other words, if institutional governance supports the local priorities and self-governance, members of the organisation develops group based pride and respect. Feelings of group based pride and respect promotes the organizational citizenship behaviour - (a) greater loyalty to the organisation; (b) enhanced compliance with organizational rules; and (c) an increased incidence of extra-role behaviour (supporting the organizational cause by motivating others, putting extra labour etc.) (Tyler, 1999). The above process is reinforced through the assurance of realization of social and economic needs both at collective and individual level. Individual needs are associated with (a) immediate survival, (b) security of resources in short as well as in long term, and (c) freedom of choices - self-esteem (Chambers, 1983; Smith & Tyler, 1997, Tyler, 1999). Meeting of these needs acts as source of motivation and enhances group-based self-esteem through a sense of relatedness, respect, peer recognition, and achievement of group goals. All these factors - social identity as self-categorization, group-based pride and respect, organizational citizenship, and self-motivation through organizational achievement directly influence people's participation in organizational set up as well as activities (Fig 1).

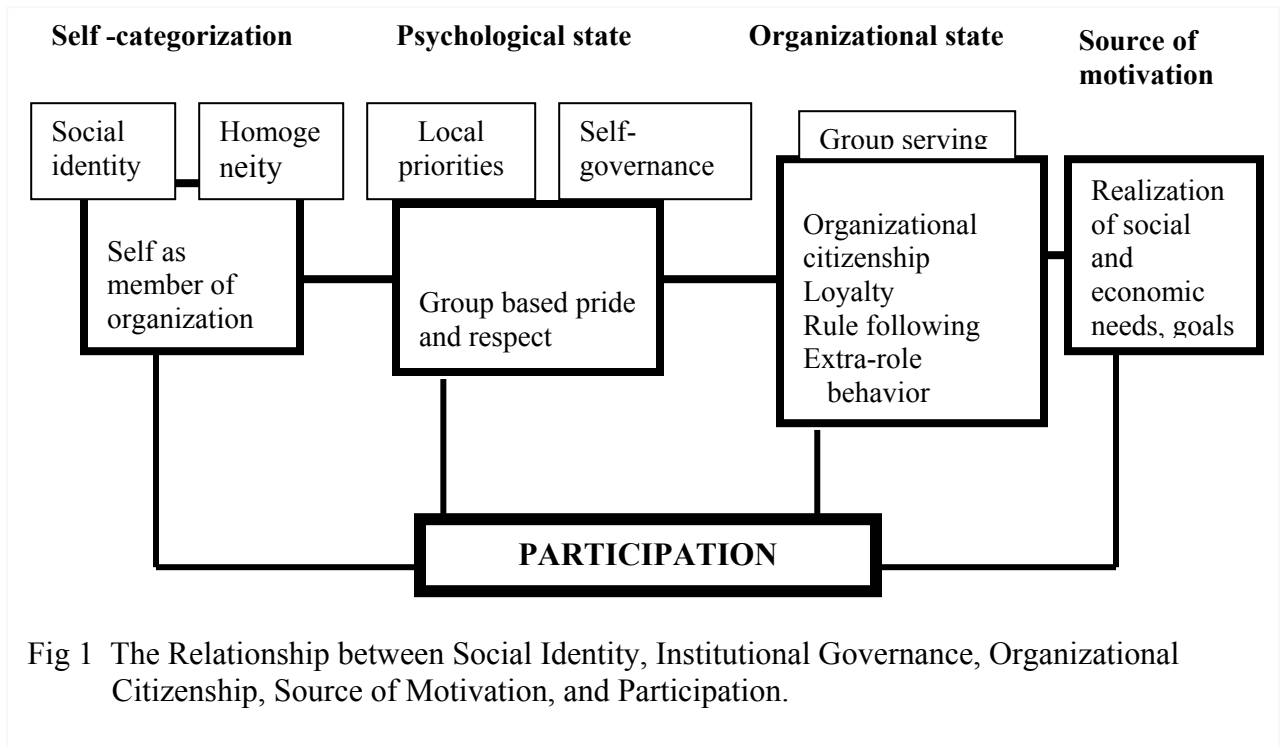


Fig 1 The Relationship between Social Identity, Institutional Governance, Organizational Citizenship, Source of Motivation, and Participation.

## **Methodology**

### **Sample**

Forest management in the three eastern states of India -- Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal -- was studied. Seven JFM units -- two each from Jharkhand and Orissa, and three from West Bengal; six ICFM units -- four from Jharkhand and two from Orissa; and four CCFM units from Orissa were selected for the study. JFM units were selected from Kanke and Bero forest range of Ranchi district in Jharkhand, Athamalik forest range of Angul district in Orissa, and Hijli forest range of Midnapur district in West Bengal. ICFM units were selected from Ranchi district of Jharkhand, and Dhenkanal district of Orissa, and CCFM units were selected from Angul and Dhenkanal districts of Orissa (Table 1). The National Tree Growers Cooperative Federation Limited promoted CCFM units. Because Jharkhand did not have any CCFM unit and West Bengal did not have any ICFM and CCFM units, no such sample was taken from these states. The decision to include these forest protection units was guided by approachability and convenience. Thus, a purposive sampling procedure was adopted.

Table 1 Profile of Sample FPC

FPC	Forest <sup>a</sup>	Forest Area	No. of Household	Composition of FPC	Population
Berham	JFM	77 ha	181	1 Village	Heterogeneous
Chandana	JFM	103 ha	372	3 Villages	Heterogeneous
Dundun	ICFM	65 ha	71	1 Hamlet	Homogeneous
Gobindberani	ICFM	41 ha	86	1 Hamlet	Homogeneous
Harinakhuri - Telebhanga	JFM	91 ha	278	2 Villages	Heterogeneous
Hutar	ICFM	150 ha	75	1 Village	Homogeneous

Jam Toli	ICFM	85 ha	200	1 Village	Homogeneous
Jamsol	JFM	250 ha	575	6 Villages	Heterogeneous
Kankadahat	CCFM	111 ha	450	1 Village	Heterogeneous
Khaksi Toli	ICFM	44 ha	35	1 Hamlet	Homogeneous
Paapsara	CCFM	330 ha	373	1 Village	Homogeneous
Pada	CCFM	500 ha	360	1 Village	Homogeneous
Sadma	JFM	105 ha	151	1 Village	Heterogeneous
Semra	JFM	67 ha	175	1 Village	Homogeneous
Shradhyapur	ICFM	53 ha	120	1 Hamlet	Homogeneous
Solanda	JFM	95 ha	195	1 Village	Heterogeneous
Sundhikatni	CCFM	33 ha	120	1 Village	Homogeneous

<sup>a</sup>ICFM= Indigenous community forest management, CCFM= Crafted community forest management, JFM= Joint forest management

Except three JFM units of West Bengal, all other units had a Forest Protection Committee (FPC) at single village/hamlet level (Table 1). In West Bengal, Jamsol FPC was constituted with six villages, Chandana FPC was formed with three villages, and Harinakhuri-Telebhanga FPC was formed with two villages. Along with these three, another three FPCs -- Sadma from Jharkhand State, Kankadahat and Solanda from Orissa State, had heterogeneous population. The remaining eleven FPCs -- Dundun, Hutar, Jam Toli, Khaksi Toli, Semra -- from Jharkhand state; and Berham, Gobindberani, Paapsara, Pada, Shradhyapur, Sudhikatni from Orissa state-- had homogenous population where 75% or more of the population belonged to a specific caste or tribe (Table 1).

The researcher met two different small groups in each FPC for focus group study. Altogether 34 focus group discussions were conducted in 17 FPCs. Separate discussions were held with FPC officials and records of each FPC were referred to.

### **Focus Group Discussion and Secondary Sources of Data**

For understanding and constructing the reality in the context of community forestry, information was gathered through focus group discussion (Flick, 2002, pp. 112-124), and from the available records of each FPC. At the outset, the researcher met FPC officials, sought permission and then attended one meeting of each FPC. This was followed by two focus group discussions. Focus group discussions were held in evening hours when FPC members were available. The researcher, knowing Hindi and Bengali languages, conducted

these discussions and verified records in Jharkhand and West Bengal respectively, and did the same in Orissa with the help of a vernacular interpreter.

The researcher began the focus group discussion by explaining its purpose. Six to eight members comprising a group were asked some open-ended questions. Open-ended questions included questions about evolution of FPC, institutional rules, access rights, benefit sharing, constitution and performance of managing committee, conflict resolution, and leadership. The group was asked to discuss the questions and the replies were transcribed in field diary. The researcher met two different groups in each FPC thereby the replies were triangulated or crosschecked. Besides these discussions, the researcher also discussed such open-ended questions with the president, secretary and treasurer of each FPC and the records of FPC available with them were also verified. This information was compiled and analyzed. The qualitative study was conducted during February to April 2000.

## **Findings**

### **Evolution**

Community based forest protection units had come into existence owing to two main felt needs for collective action. First need was to regenerate degraded forest patch for meeting the consumption needs, and second to develop and gain access to forest resources with a view to the attainment of social and economic empowerment. ICFM units were initiated by the villagers under the leadership of village leaders or youth groups without any external intervention. These were always organized at single village level (in few cases even at hamlet level as in Khaksi Toli, see Table 1) and every household of the village became a member of the protection movement. Social and cultural homogeneity was one of the special features of such units. The villagers framed the institutional rules in conformity with their tradition, cultural milieu, and environmental condition. The access to forest resources was normally confined to the members. CCFM was also evolved at single village level with the joint initiative of crafting agencies like NGOs and villagers. These units were mostly homogenous at least economically if not socially. Crafting agencies played a catalytic role in the formation of CCFM units and framing of their constitutional<sup>1</sup> rules. These rules included rules for membership, governing structures, election pattern, and benefit sharing. CCFM members had the freedom in framing rules that favored collective choice like representation of different groups in FPC, special benefit to most affected group(s), and operational rules like monitoring schedule, and fixing the date for fuel wood collection. Like ICFM, access rights were confined to the members only. In JFM, FD took the initiatives for regenerating the degraded forest patch with the active collaboration of forest communities. JFM units mostly had larger entity than ICFM and CCFM. These units often included several villages with socially and economically heterogeneous communities. Unlike ICFM and CCFM, in JFM except the operational rules, the state FD framed all the rules and regulations. Collaborating communities were given partial access rights over non-timber and timber produce (Table 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Elinor Ostrom (1990) classified organisational rules into three categories- constitutional, collective choice, and operational rules in order of hierarchy. She opined that change/modification of rules becomes more difficult in the upper hierarchy (constitutional > collective choice > operational rules).

Table 2 Basic Features of ICFM, CCFM, and JFM

Issues	ICFM	CCFM	JFM	JFM	JFM
			Jharkhand	Orissa	West Bengal
Forest Category	Village forest, degraded protected forest	Village forest, leased community land	Degraded protected forest	Degraded protected forest	Degraded protected forest
Evolution and Initiation	Villagers	Villagers and NGO	FD and Villagers	FD and Villagers	FD and Villagers
Participants	Entire village	Entire village	All willing adults	Willing people of adjoining areas	Economically backward people
Management unit	Single village/hamlet	Single village	Village/group of villages	About 200 ha of forest land	Village/group of villages
Rules framed: 1. Constitutional	Villagers	NGOs	FD	FD	FD
Collective Choice	Villagers	Villagers	FD & villagers	FD & villagers	FD & villagers
Operation rules	Villagers	Villagers	Villagers	Villagers	Villagers
Institutional structure	Two tier - GB & MC	Two tier - GB & MC	Two tier - GB & MC	Two tier - GB & MC	Two tier - GB & MC
Institution registered as society	No	Yes	Formally recognized by FD	Formally recognized by FD	Formally recognized by FD
People's representation in MC	7 -10 unanimously selected members, village head/elders	11 members (1 SC, 1 ST, 3 women, Chairperson, 5 other elected members)	One <i>Mukhiya</i> <sup>a</sup> / <i>Sarpanch</i> , representative of villagers (men & women)	6-8 members (at least 3 women), <i>Naib</i> <sup>c</sup>	6 elected representatives, pinhead representative
Voting rights	One vote per household	One vote per household	One vote per household	One vote per household	One vote per household



Tenure of the committee	1-2 year	3 years	2 years	2 years	2 years
Gender representation	Women representation in MC is not mandatory	1/3 MC members are women	1/3 MC members are women	1/3 MC members are women	1/3 MC members are women
External representations:					
1. FD	Nil	Nil	<i>Vanpal</i> <sup>c</sup>	Forester/ Forest guard	Beat officer/ Deputy Range Manager
	Nil	NGO as observer	NGO, Teacher	NGO	Nil
2. Others					

Sources: Focus group discussion and records of ICFM, CCFM and JFM rules.

<sup>a</sup> *Mukhiya* or *Sarpanch* is the elected representative of the village pinhead.

<sup>b</sup> *Naib* is same as *Mukhiya*.

<sup>c</sup> *Vanpal* is same as Forest Beat Officer.

## Institutional Governance

### Structure

ICFM, CCFM, and JFM had a similar two-tier governing structure-- General Body (GB) and Managing Committee (MC). GB comprises all the members of the forest protection unit. This was a powerful body in ICFM and CCFM. Decisions of GB were final. GB had the right to amend the existing rules and regulation. However, in JFM, GB had no right to change the rules, it could only alter some decisions pertaining to mundane issues. In practice, JFM's GB meetings were convened to apprise the general members about the state of affairs of JFM units. Except election of MC members and ratification of accounts, no other major decisions were taken in such meetings (Table 2).

MC is a representative body elected by the GB for functional purpose. The MC usually has the representation from the hamlets/castes/clans sub-groups within forest protection unit. The MC of ICFM was constituted solely by the community members. The president and the secretary were also normally elected directly by GB and MC showed greater accountability to GB. The MCs of CCFM units were constituted in a similar manner except that MC members had the power to elect the president and the secretary. These MCs had greater autonomy than MCs of ICFM. The MCs of JFM were constituted with the

representatives of different villages/hamlets/castes/clans, the local *panchayat* member, and the representative of FD. FD representative mostly acted as *de facto* secretary to MC. Like CCFM, MC members of JFM elected the FPC president. MCs of JFM units in practice exercised more power than GB in every matter and at times could even bypass the GB (Table 2).

ICFM and CCFM were governed by the principles of democratic decentralization of power and cooperation. The functioning of these institutions reflected the collective wisdom of their members in managing forests. JFM was also as per its norms, expected to be governed in a similar fashion. However, in many cases (particularly in Jharkhand and Orissa) due to some vested interest, MC members of JFM willfully deferred the reconstitution of MC for an indefinite period. This prevented the JFM to uphold the democratic values as per the expectation of its resolution.

### *Gender Issues*

CCFM and JFM had mandatory provision for women representation in the MC (Table 2). ICFM did not have such mandatory provision but it gave importance to the difficulties of women particularly in tribal dominated units. Rules for fuel wood collection and grazing were made so as to suit women. ICFM tried to ease the lot of head loader women by allowing the fuel wood collection quarterly. It also allowed rotational grazing in order to relieve the burden of children who take the cattle for grazing intermittently. Such provisions generated higher cooperation of women and children in forest conservation. In contrast, CCFM and JFM were found to impose total closure with annual fuel wood holiday(s) for collecting fuel wood. During other months of the year, women were forced to collect fuel wood from other nearby forests. This increased the distance of head loading and added to the misery of women. It is evident from the above facts that empathizing with the misery of women was more important while making rules than making provision for their representation. Presence of few women in MC hardly influenced the decision-making process in a male dominated Indian society. As women members from Orissa CCFM and West Bengal JFM pointed out that male members shouted and fought among themselves in the meeting, they (women members) became mute spectators of the whole decision-making process.

### *Role of External Agency*

Studied ICFM units were organized and managed by the villagers. Conversely, crafting agencies like NGOs played an active role in CCFM for (a) mobilizing and consolidating the protection activities, (b) framing constitutional rules, and (c) getting the forest institutions registered under society registration act or cooperative act. Otherwise, NGOs mostly confined themselves to the role of a catalyst and advisor. In the initial stages, MCs of CCFM showed more accountability to catalytic agencies than their GB. However, with the growth of the institutions, crafting agencies' role became minimal and subsequently MC became more accountable to GB. In contrast, Fads role in JFM was not just limited to a catalyst and advisor. Besides framing the JFM rules, FD continued to play an active role in every decision-making process as a major stakeholder. It influenced the process of reconstitution of MC in every case, election of president, and sale of forest produce. Without

FD's presence, MC was not authorized to take any major decision. Thus MC of JFM became more accountable to FD than its GB (Table 2).

### *Access Rights*

In ICFM and CCFM, communities enjoyed the full access rights over both non-timber forest produce (NTFP) and harvested timber. In JFM, FD and communities jointly shared these access rights (Table 3). Sharing terms of JFM varied from state to state. Among the three states under the present study, Orissa gave full access to communities over NTFP. On the other hand, JFM of Jharkhand and West Bengal offered only 1/3 and 1/4 share of various NTFP respectively to the communities. Communities received 50%, 33%, and 25% share of timber harvest in JFM of Orissa, Jharkhand, and West Bengal respectively. Higher access rights in ICFM and CCFM generated higher motivation and solidarity for forest conservation (Table 3).

### *Sanction*

Sanctions in community based organization have two important dimensions: (a) restriction on free riding, and (b) rectification of rule breaking by imbibing a sense of repentance (Gupta, 1985). Graduated sanction works more effectively than standardized sanction (Ostrom, 1990). Graduated sanction emphasizes innovative sanctioning procedure to change the attitude of offenders. Such sanctions are determined on the basis of (a) gravity of violation, (b) experiences of past sanctions and their consequences, and (c) cultural conduciveness. For instance, in Shradhyapur FPC of Orissa some members cut few Sal (*Shorea robust*) trees illegally. MC of Shradhyapur FPC after discussing the matter prohibited those offenders and their family members from collecting dry leaves (used for cooking) and *Tendu* leaves (*Diospyros melanoxylan*) (used for wrapping local cigar-- *Bidi*) for one year from its forest. The offenders were forced to go to other adjacent forests for collecting dry leaves and were ridiculed. Further, non-collection of *Tendu* leaves caused economic loss to their family. Contrarily, bureaucratic sanctions follow simplified and standardized policies. Such punishment was found to be limited to monetary fine in the studied FPCs of CCFM and JFM units. This often fails to change the attitude of the offender. ICFM units were found to practice graduated sanction and consequently had experienced a decline in the intensity of rule violations. CCFM followed a system of graduated as well as standardized sanction policy. Conversely, JFM management preferred to impose sanction as per standard rules. Such sanctions controlled the rule violation in the short-term but not in the long-term. Furthermore, while JFM sanctions were imposed mostly in the form of monetary fine, ICFM and CCFM sanctions varied from monetary fine to social boycott. In ICFM and CCFM, sanctions were imposed after discussing either in MC meeting for general offences or in GB meeting for serious offences. In JFM, the president and the forest guard generally took such decisions. For mass offence, FD reserved the right to dissolve the unit and form a new JFM unit. However, such cases have not been reported so far (Table 3).

Table 3 Access Rights, Sanction, and Conflict Resolution Process of ICFM, CCFM, and JFM

Issues	ICFM	CCFM	JFM Jharkhand	JFM Orissa	JFM West Bengal
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Access rights	Villagers alone	Villagers alone	Villagers and FD	Villagers and FD	Villagers and FD
Share of members - NTFP, Fuel Wood	Full collection rights on NTFP, quarterly fuel wood collection on decided days	Full collection rights on NTFP, annual fuel wood collection on decided days	NTFP are provided to members at market rate, 1/3 of income is deposited in village development fund (VDF)	Leaf, fodder, thatch grass, broom grass, brushwood, fallen lops/tops/twigs free of cost, leased out NTFP collected against prescribed wages	25% of Cashew, Sal seed, <i>Tendu</i> leaf, honey, wax on approved tariff, rest are free
Share of Timber	100% ownership, villagers deposit stipulated amount to VDF	100% ownership, villagers deposit stipulated amount to VDF	1/3 share of proceeds deposited in VDF, rest amount goes to FD	50% of the total produce	25% of net income except in North Bengal and Darjeeling Hills
Share of Village fund	75% of net earning is equally distributed	75% of net earning is equally distributed	75% of net earning is equally distributed	75% of net earning is equally distributed	75% of net earning is equally distributed
Sanctioning power of FPC					
Punishment	MC decides punishment	MC decides punishment.	FPC takes local action	FPC lessens or cancels share of household found guilty	Imposes stipulated fine with consent of FD
Cancel membership	For very serious case, GB can ostracize the guilty	For very serious case, GB can even ostracize the guilty	Yes	No	Undecided
Sanctioning power of FD					
Cancel membership	Nil	Nil	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dissolving the FPC	Nil	Nil	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sanction Procedure	Decisions are taken as per the gravity of	Decisions are taken as per the gravity of	Standard punishment	Standard punishment	Standard punishment

	violation	violation			
Conflict resolution at intra-village	Done mostly by consensus in GB	Done mostly by mutual agreement or by majority opinion in GB	Done by the arbitration of MC and/or FD (in serious conflict)	Done by the arbitration of MC and or FD (in serious conflict)	Done by the arbitration of MC and or FD (in serious conflict)
Conflict resolution at inter-village	Mostly by mutual agreement between villages, some time with the help of <i>panchayat</i>	Mostly by mutual agreement between villages, some time with the help of <i>panchayat</i>	By the arbitration of <i>panchayat</i> and FD	By the arbitration of <i>panchayat</i> and FD	By the arbitration of <i>panchayat</i> and FD

Sources: Focus group discussion and records of ICFM, CCFM and JFM rules.

### *Conflict Resolution*

Resolving conflicts is an acid test for organizational efficiency. In forest management, conflicts usually occur among members (intra-village) or between adjacent villages (inter-villages). For intra-village conflicts, ICFM and CCFM mostly sought solution through dialogues between the conflicting parties. If the conflicts were not resolved through dialogue, matters were normally referred to the GB. While the GB of ICFM tried to take decisions through consensus, the GB of CCFM preferred to take decisions mostly through majority opinion. JFM committees, however, preferred to resolve the conflict through bureaucratic arbitration either by MC members or FD representative (Table 3). In the event of inter-village conflict, ICFM and CCFM tried to resolve the matter through dialogues, with or without the help of local leaders. Many a times, while resolving the inter-village conflicts, ICFM and CCFM successfully motivated the adjacent villages to initiate forest protection. One such example was found in Khaksi Toli, which motivated two adjacent villages-- Jam Toli and Ber Toli-- to undertake forest protection activities. Such examples abound in Orissa. However, JFM banked totally on bureaucratic processes for managing such conflicts. Besides MC and FD, *Panchayat Raj Institutions* also played an active role in settling inter-village conflict in JFM. Although *Panchayat Raj Institution* has the legitimate rights to settle village conflict, people tended to avoid such resolution because of its political bias. In many cases, involvement of *Panchayat Raj Institution* added more complexity to resolve the conflict.

### *Activities*

(a) Protection of forestlands was the primary activity of FPC. This activity inculcated a sense of ownership, and collective responsibility. In ICFM and CCFM, people in group patrolled the forest on rotational basis. Similar practice was also prevalent in many JFM. However, some JFM appointed watchmen for this purpose, and community members contributed towards meeting their salary expenses. Higher access rights acted as a moral

booster for sincere patrolling in ICFM and CCFM. Low access rights led to low motivation in JFM. Some JFM units of Jharkhand and West Bengal allowed the patrolling team to collect the fine directly from the offender. These fines were used for the entertainment of the patrolling team to boost their spirit.

(b) Meeting constituent's forest-related consumption needs is another crucial challenge for forest management. Forest communities, living on subsistence economy, depend on various forest resources for their survival. Each forest protection unit evolved its norms for use of different forest produce to meet different needs of its constituents which are given below:

- Fuel wood holidays: Days were fixed for fuel wood collection and distribution in the form of dried twigs, branches and trees. Such holidays in ICFM were offered quarterly and in CCFM and JFM annually.
- Fixed time for collection of fodder: Due to abundance of vegetation in eastern states of India, none of the forest type restricted fodder collection. However, in a drought year, instances of restricting the number of fodder collectors per household were reported.
- NTFP: ICFM and CCFM allowed only predetermined number of persons per household for collecting the NTFP. In JFM, such restrictions were often not followed.
- Access to poles for house construction: Villagers use poles (wooden log having around 20 to 25 cm diameter) for making thatch- or local tile-roof. Every FPC provided poles to its members with nominal charges for house construction every three to five years.
- Allowance for non-members: No FPC offered any benefit to non-members except the collection of dry leaves and twigs for fuel. Frequent intrusion of non-members disrupted the protection in JFM. These problems were better handled in ICFM and CCFM. Some times, ICFM and CCFM successfully motivated the intruders to initiate the forest protection in their (intruders) village/hamlet.

### *Benefit Sharing*

Benefit sharing had wide variation between ICFM, CCFM and JFM. The benefits were economic, material and social. They were accrued at individual or collective level. At the individual level, economic benefit was accrued in the form of wage employment generated during resource development; material benefit came in the form of fuel wood, NTFP and timber; and social benefit was accrued in inculcating in-group feeling and voicing one's opinion in the decision-making. At the collective level, economic, material, and social benefits were accrued in the form of community development fund, forest wealth, and increased solidarity respectively.

Evidently members of ICFM received the highest benefit followed by CCFM and JFM. However, crafting agencies and FD mobilized funds for forest regeneration that eventually flowed into the hand of members of CCFM and JFM respectively. Such funds were not available for ICFMs (Table 4).

Table 4 Ranking of Benefit Flow in Three Forms of Forest Institutions

Level	Benefit	ICFM	CCFM	JFM
	Economic	Nil (No wage employment)	Moderate through wage employment	Moderate to High through wage employment
Individual	Material <sup>a</sup>	High	High	Low
	Social <sup>b</sup>	High	Moderate	Low
Collective	Economic <sup>a</sup>	High	High	Low to moderate
	Material <sup>a</sup>	High	High	Moderate/ Partial
	Social <sup>b</sup>	High	Moderate	Low

*Sources:* Focus group discussion and records of ICFM, CCFM, and JFM.

<sup>a</sup>High = Full share of benefits, Moderate = More than 50% share of benefits, Low = Less than 50% share of benefits.

<sup>b</sup>High = Total solidarity of FPC members in forest activities, Moderate = Solidarity of more than half of the of FPC members in forest activities, Low = Minimal solidarity of FPC members in forest activities.

#### *Other Governing Rules*

Members of GB and MC in ICFM and CCFM had the power to convene the respective meetings as per their suitability. These meetings were held at regular intervals. In the initial years, NGO representatives attended these meetings regularly in CCFM. Besides regular scheduled meetings, if 50% or more members of GB or MC desired, extra ordinary GB or MC meetings could be convened. JFM meetings, however, were convened only with the consent of FD representative. Although instances of holding meetings without FD representatives were not rare, no major decision could be taken in such meetings (Table 5).

Table 5 Rules for Meeting, Election, and Amendment of Rules in ICFM, CCFM, and JFM

Issues	ICFM	CCFM	JFM Jharkhand	JFM Orissa	JFM West Bengal
Convening the GB meeting	Decided at village level	Decided at village level	With the consent of FD	With the consent of FD	With the consent of FD
Frequency of	Quarterly	Annual and	Annual but	Annual but	Annual but

GB meeting	and regular	regular	irregular	irregular	irregular
MC meeting	By MC members	By MC members	FD is required for taking major decision	FD is required for taking major decision	FD is required for taking major decision
Election	As per the decision of GB	Once in three years	Once in two years, can be prolonged or shortened by the FD	Once in two years, can be prolonged or shortened by the FD	Once in two years, can be prolonged or shortened by the FD
Election of President of FPC	By the GB - mostly traditional leaders are unanimously chosen	By the MC members	By the MC members and FD representatives	By the MC members and FD representatives	By the MC members and FD representatives
Revision of rules	GB	GB	Except operational rules, FD can only revise the rules	Except operational rules, FD can only revise the rules	Except operational rules, FD can only revise the rules

*Sources:* Focus group discussion and records of ICFM, CCFM and JFM rules.

Election of new MC or president or both normally took place at regular intervals in ICFM and CCFM. The constituents alone decided time and mode of election at the time of framing the rules. Despite regular election, change of office bearers was not a very common phenomenon in ICFM. CCFM on the other hand, witnessed frequent change of office bearers at the turn of every election. JFM elections were not held regularly except in West Bengal. Elections in JFM took place only in the presence of FD representatives. Non-availability of FD representatives often postponed elections for years in Jharkhand and Orissa (Table 5).

In both ICFM and CCFM, GB had the exclusive rights to amend the rules. However, where CCFM was registered under State Cooperative Act, GB had to abide by the rules of the cooperatives. In such cases, GB of CCFM could amend the rules not specified in the cooperative rules. In JFM, FD reserved the exclusive rights to amend any rules as per its convenience and priority.

### **Power and Function of Managing Committee**

#### *General Management*

MC is entrusted with the role of guardian of the institutional arrangement. MC is expected to be transparent and accountable in all matters by sharing all information with GB, ensuring distributive justice, resolving the conflicts impartially, maintaining the accounts



properly, holding election on time, ensuring appropriate monitoring and sanction, and taking decision in participatory manner. MC was appreciated most when it protected local rights, secured the territorial authority over forest, and allowed time-tested local knowledge of conservation to work while discharging its duties. ICFM and CCFM units were found to be more successful in meeting these varied expectations. ICFM compared to CCFM made their MC forum more open. Normally MC's meetings of ICFM were conducted in a common place and general members were encouraged to be silent spectators of the proceedings. In contrast, CCFM and JFM units held their meeting at segregated places and preferred to maintain certain degree of confidentiality (Table 6).

Table 6 Functioning of Managing Committee in Three Forms of Forest Institutions

Issues	ICFM	CCFM	JFM Jharkhand	JFM Orissa	JFM West Bengal
Meetings	Weekly and it's a regular feature	Monthly and it's a regular feature	Quarterly but not a regular feature	Quarterly but not a regular feature	Quarterly but not a regular feature
Information sharing with other members	Any villager can be silent observer of MC meeting, decisions are made known regularly	Through notification and general body meeting	Not a regular affair, suspicion prevails	Not a regular affair, suspicion prevails	Not a regular affair, suspicion prevails
Maintenance of account	Shared with GB regularly	Shared with GB regularly	Not shared with GB regularly	Not shared with GB regularly	Not shared with GB regularly
Distribution of benefits	Equally	Equally	Equally as per FD guidelines but suspicion prevails	Equally as per FD guidelines but suspicion prevails	Equally as per FD guidelines but suspicion prevails
President's image	Participatory and nurturing	Participatory but in some cases autocratic	Participatory but in some cases manipulative	Participatory but in some cases manipulative	Mostly manipulative

*Sources:* Focus group discussion and records of ICFM, CCFM and JFM rules.

### *Financial Management*

MC also looked after the collective fund and distribution of financial benefits to all members as per the resolution of GB. MCs of ICFM maintained more transparency in financial matters. Financial matters of ICFM were always presented before the GB more frequently than CCFM and JFM. CCFM accounts were also shared with general members annually. However, in JFM financial matters were not shared with the GB regularly. CCFM and JFM funds were kept in banks, which was not followed always by ICFM committees (Table 6).

### **Leadership**

ICFM affairs were guided by participatory values. Leadership in these institutions took decisions by taking all members into confidence. ICFM leadership preferred to spend longer time for collective negotiation in order to develop consensus on each issue. CCFM leadership although acted mostly in participatory manner, presence of authoritarian leadership was also noticed. JFM leadership on the other hand, was perceived more as manipulative. Participatory spirit of ICFM leadership helped in imbibing more solidarity within the organization than CCFM and JFM. In JFM, leader's/MC's habit of bypassing the GB and taking decisions by themselves only left negative impression and de-motivated its members (Table 6).

### **Discussion**

#### **Implication of Forest Characteristics on Social Identity, Organizational Citizenship, and Participation**

##### *Social Identity*

Forest institution acted as a collection of individuals (appropriators), which tried promoting a collective cause. Appropriators made collective choices and decisions for forest management by sacrificing some of their immediate smaller gains in order to have larger collective gains. ICFM's evolution pattern, community homogeneity, rule as well as decision making process helped individual members to get involved in the institutional activities more easily than JFM. Greater individual freedom in organizational decision-making process, low individual differentiation instilled a sense of collective identity and collective self-confidence among the members of ICFM. Therefore, intensity of social identity was found to be much higher in ICFM than JFM. Limited freedom for decision-making, and higher external interference and stake provoked members to maintain their personal identity in JFM (Table 7).

##### *Group Based Pride and Respect*

ICFM members showed more group based pride and respect than JFM. In ICFM members' involvement in planning (rule making, species selection, conflict resolution, etc.) phase enhanced the scope of sharing the individual knowledge about forest management.

During implementation phase, as the members executed collective tasks like plantation, post plantation care (or protecting coppice growth in case of regeneration), monitoring and patrolling, their mutual trust, reciprocity, identification with the collectivists' norms, intra-group communication on forest and allied livelihood problems were increased among the members. The whole process not only intensified their emotional attachment with forest institutions but also increased their pride and satisfaction about group activities. Contrarily, lack of freedom in decision-making and external upper hand prevented the JFM members to develop such pride and satisfaction about JFM activities.

**Table 7** People's Perception of Institutional Governance, Leadership, In-group Feeling and Participation in Different FPC

Name	People's opinion				Social identity <sup>c</sup>	Member's participation
	Rules <sup>a</sup>	MC's function <sup>a</sup>	Leadership	Freedom in decision making <sup>b</sup>		
Berham	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Autocratic	M	Moderate	Low
Chandana	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Manipulative	M	Low	Moderate
Dundun	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Participatory	F	High	High
Gobindberani	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Participatory	F	High	High
Harinakhuri - Telebhanga	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Autocratic	M	Low	Moderate
Hutar	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Participatory	F	High	Moderate
Jam Toli	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Participatory	F	High	High
Jamsol	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Manipulative	M	Low	Low
Kankadahat	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Participatory	P	Moderate	Moderate
Khaksi Toli	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Charismatic	F	High	High
Paapsara	Highly Satisfactory	Less satisfactory	Autocratic	P	Moderate	Moderate
Pada	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Participatory	P	High	High
Sadma	Less satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Manipulative	M	Moderate	Low
Semra	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Participatory	M	High	High

Shradhya-pur	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Participatory	F	High	High
Solanda	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Participatory	P	Moderate	Moderate
Sundhikatni	Highly satisfactory	Highly satisfactory	Participatory	P	High	High

*Sources:* Focus group discussion.

<sup>a</sup>Highly satisfactory = Full acceptability, Satisfactory = Partial acceptability, Unsatisfactory = Low acceptability.

<sup>b</sup>F = Full freedom in all decisions, P = Partial freedom in collective choice and operational rules, M = Minimum freedom in operational rules.

<sup>c</sup>High = Organized group activities, Moderate = Partly organized group activities, Low = Minimal group activities.

### *Organizational Citizenship*

Higher social identity and group based pride and respect motivated ICFM members to develop (a) greater loyalty to the forest institution, (b) higher obedience to institutional rules, and (c) extra-role behavior like motivating others for the cause. Members of these institutions were proud to be identified with their organization and more spontaneously abide by the institutional norms. Higher personal identity, low group based pride and respect inhibited the organizational citizenship behavior among JFM members (Table 7).

### *Social and Personal Motivation*

Higher satisfaction about conflict resolution among ICFM members, members and higher access rights and benefit flows acted as high motivating factors for ICFM members. Lower satisfaction about conflict resolution, access rights, and benefit caused less motivation for collective work in JFM.

### *Participation*

Favorable characteristics of forest institution, social and economic homogeneity, freedom of rule making, better access rights, people's friendly management, graduated sanction, sincere patrolling, resolving the conflicts in more democratic manner etc. caused higher motivation among members of ICFM than JFM and thereby recorded higher degree of social identity, ownership, and organizational citizenship, and people's involvement in all round activities of ICFM. JFM however, failed to elicit the same degree of people's involvement in its various activities. Spontaneous members' involvement in meetings, monitoring, plantation related activities was reported in ICFM. JFM members' participation in similar activities was casual unless there was any scope of wages (Table 7).

## **Enhancing Participation: Essential Paraphernalia**

### *Freedom of Choice*

This study has revealed that for effective participation people must be given freedom of choice in every decision-making process. Diffusion of democratic rights and values is an essential prerequisite for participation (Molinas, 1998; Narayan, 1996). ICFM offered the highest degree of freedom to the members in every decision-making process. In CCFM, crafting agencies imposed certain basic rules/clauses at the initial stage that curtailed some degree of freedom of people. However, gradually, they educated people to take appropriate decisions on those imposed clauses in order to reduce the feeling of external imposition. In contrast, JFM largely curtailed the process of democratic diffusion by taking all major decision at FD level and thereby limiting the scope of individual members in exercising their freedom of choice. Participation was more spontaneous in ICFM than CCFM and JFM as people themselves took every decision which increased their sense of ownership and belongingness (Table 7).

### *Preserving Local Rights*

Every community or tribe desires to preserve its local rights, and secure its territoriality over resources. The history of Indian forests revealed that deforestation increased after colonial power took away forest ownership rights from people (Guha, 1983). Recent studies have showed that wherever people could establish their local rights over resources, resources have been better managed (Raju, 1998; Sarin, 1996). ICFM and CCFM offered higher scope to their members to ensure social, economic, and cultural rights over resources, thereby elicited more participation than JFM (Table 7).

### *Making Use of Local Knowledge*

Management of natural resources is best learned through experience. Knowledge of local ecosystems helps in sustainable management of resources. Knowledge about species preservation, care of plantation, grazing rotation, and rotation of timbers is found to be sacred among forest dwellers. ICFM and CCFM provided more opportunities to the local inhabitants to design forest institutions incorporating their knowledge and values as compared to JFM. While JFM forests accommodated mostly commercial timber species, ICFM and CCFM forests had many non-commercial species, which not only met diversified local necessities but also saved forest strands from disease pests. Maintaining Indian Neem (*Azardichta indica*), or Sindwar (*Vitex negundo*) in forests was reported to serve the above purposes at many places. In JFM, FD most often used exogenous technology guided by its commercial interest as compared to ICFM and CCFM where indigenously evolved technologies were preferred.

### *Federation*

Creation of clusters and federations of like-minded institutions helps in resolving wider conflict, increases collective bargaining capacity, and improves the liaison with external agencies. In the current study, CCFM under the aegis of National Tree Growers Cooperative Federation Limited was successful in achieving legal rights over their protected forest from the Government of Orissa. This also helped them (a) in settling the inter-village conflicts

more amicably and also entered into negotiation with villages under JFM, (b) in building network with similar kind of institutions within the State and with federations of similar institutions in other states of India. ICFM had its own limitations in this aspect. Most of the ICFM emerged and were sustained as a single identity without having any workable exchange with one another. In Jharkhand State, three ICFM under study- Khaksi Toli, Jamtoli, Hutar-- had developed inter-unit tie up with the help of tribal headship locally known as *Parha Raja* and managed to secure verbal assurance of non-interference from forest department in their forest territory. Local tribal council also offered full cooperation in the event of settling conflict with intruders/free riders from adjacent villages. Nevertheless, these examples were few and could happen only when a body like the tribal council existed. JFM had great opportunities to build such network. This can be done by forming JFM cluster at *panchayat* or forest beat level and federation at forest range level. The clusters and federations can play a supportive role to village-level JFM units in resolving inter-village conflicts, and dealing with NTFP procuring agents. However, Fads of three States-- Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal-- showed little interest in exploiting such opportunities. As a result, JFM like most ICFM was found to manage situations on single unit basis having little or no interaction with other JFM units.

Institutional process that ensured individual freedom of choice, local self-governance, pre-eminence of local rights and knowledge, and participatory leadership elicited more participation. ICFM was successful in eliciting more involvement of its members because such institutions were evolved and managed by local people. For this reason, members of ICFM asserted their rights over forest and fulfilled their forest-related socio-economic priorities independently. CCFM was also successful in eliciting participation as it offered substantial freedom to people to uphold their rights over forest. Federating structure also helped the CCFM to gain wider recognition. However, CCFM showed some dependency on crafting NGO. Constituents of CCFM showed less in-group feeling than ICFM due to less freedom in rule-making and lesser interaction between MC and GB. Bureaucratic style of functioning of JFM bodies worked against the spirit of participatory management. Members of JFM units demanded more decentralized and people-centered management. Furthermore, ICFM's approach of accommodating the interests of women and children and collective decision-making through consensus were successful in winning people's confidence. Such process though required longer negotiation, gave more stability to its institutional governance.

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