

UNIT 17

SUCCESS INDICATORS AND PARTICIPATORY MONITORING

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17.0 INTRODUCTION

Success is achievement of goals and accomplishment of the objectives. However, absolute success is seldom achieved in any community based management project and therefore it is essential to monitor the success in midway of the implementation of the projects by identifying certain milestones. This can be done at the time of planning. However, the planning process need to be dynamic and flexible enough to incorporate the modifications that are brought in during subsequent reviews of the progress of the project.

The concept of JFM rests on the strength of the bonds between various stakeholders which in turn depends on the confidence each one has on the other. The other equally important pillars of the concept are gender and equity, democracy, transparency and working of the institutions/committees. The success of JFM can be monitored by way of examining the progresses achieved in the areas of gender and equity, democratic process, transparency, working of FPCs, and status of the JFM managed forest (including extent of forest and tree cover, biodiversity conservation, forest ecosystem health and vitality and productive and protective functions of forests such as forest resource productivity, and soil and water conservation).

17.1 GENDER AND EQUITY

The principles of gender equality are enshrined in the Constitution of India in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. While guaranteeing social, economic and political justice and equality to all citizens, the constitution also empowers the state to take affirmative action to promote women's advancement.

However, neither the constitutional provisions nor the enactment of progressive laws on their own could ensure equality and advancement of women in practice. Towards equality, the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI),

Government of India, 1974, was a landmark in changing government of India's thinking on women's role in development. Based on gender-specific empirical evidence, the CSWI highlighted that rather than improving women's status, the dynamics of 'development' has created new imbalances and disparities such as the declining sex ratio, lower life expectancy, higher infant and maternal mortality, declining work participation, illiteracy and rising migration. The most significant outcome of the CSWI report was the recognition that women as a group were being adversely affected by the processes of economic transformation.

17.1.1 Gender Roles and Forest Use

Rural women are major actors in India's forestry sector. Besides gathering a diverse range of NTFPs, they provide wage labour in forestry works. Women's employment in forest-based enterprises is estimated to be approximately 572 million women days, of which 90 per cent is in the small scale enterprises using NTFPs as raw material. Women's role as gatherers includes collection of firewood for sale and self-consumption, fodder for livestock and other NTFPs including food, medicines, seeds, leaves, and building materials. NTFPs, which account for nearly two-fifths of forest department's revenue and three-fourths of net export earnings from forest produce, are mostly collected by women.

Be it in the mountainous regions of north-east or in western and eastern ghats or the forested tribal belt of central India, women continue to be major gatherers and users of a diverse range of forest products compared to the men. In accordance with socio-cultural variations in gender roles among different communities, while some products are mostly collected by women (primarily NTFPs for subsistence and income), others are mostly collected by men (primarily timber for house construction and agricultural implements as well as for sale) and some are collected by both.

Among the tribals and occupational groups, hierarchy of caste is very important and indicates the socio-cultural significance. Besides this, there are also strong associations of superiority and inferiority, as well as specialisation in the collection and use of different forest products. In north Haryana, women of the Gujjar community consider it beneath their dignity to process a local fibrous grass (*Eulaliopsis binata*) into rope as that is the traditional vocation of the lower status *Banjara* community. Therefore, wherever JFM is being introduced the diversity of gender and class and their dependence on forests should be given due importance.

17.1.2 Equity

Sharing and access to resources among various sections of the society in a judicious way is extremely important for the success of JFM. Some sections of the society, because of their caste or economic status are capable of harnessing and utilizing more resources than others. Some villages may have more forest area than others, and smaller villages with forest resources may find themselves at a disadvantageous position as people from neighbouring villages may utilize their resources in larger quantities. In JFM, therefore, the success can be measured by looking at the sharing of resources, whether the needs and aspirations of all sections of the society are met equitably.

Equity is not only concerned with equitable and joint sharing of benefits but it also means adequate participation of disadvantageous and poorer sections of the society in decision making. For example, while higher caste people usually may ask for plantation of timber species like teak and sal, the lower caste people generally want fuel wood and fruit bearing trees.

17.2 DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

In JFM, democracy and democratic process play a significant role. It involves the participation of people especially those living in and around forests to manage their forests more efficiently and with a greater degree of autonomy. This is evident from the fact that democratic movement has made encouraging progress in many countries during the second half of the twentieth century. Examples from West Bengal, Haryana, Tripura and other states of the country indicate the fact that involving people in managing forests in a democratic manner does pay. The success of the Sukhomajri project in Haryana in achieving people's co-operation is well-known. The principles of equal right and responsibilities, and villagers' commitment to protection and regeneration created expanded livelihood opportunities from increased production of grasses, leaves and gatherable biomass.

The democratic process in JFM arms the people, different agencies like the FPCs, NGOs and others with substantial autonomy to make policy decisions in matters relating to usufructs, collection of NTFPs and selection of beneficiaries. Further, even rural institutions like panchayats, forest co-operatives can also play important role in promoting such effort.

17.3 TRANSPARENCY

As started earlier, confidence and mutual trust among various participating communities and stakeholders is fundamental for the success of JFM. One of the key issues for building confidence and mutual trust is to share information with all concerned. Broadly speaking, transparency can be divided into two levels : (1) between the participating institutions like FD, NGO and FPCs, and (2) within the institutions i.e., all the ranks and files of each of these institutions should be well informed and as far as possible involved in decision making as well as in execution of the works. The most critical aspects are those concerning financial matters. The FPC executives and FDs need to be very careful in sharing of the accounts with the members. One of the ways of ensuring transparency is to organise frequent meetings of general bodies. There are numerous examples where community based development projects have become successful by ensuring transparent working of the management. Degree of transparency therefore, provides a very good measure of the level of success of JFM.

17.4 WORKING OF FPCs

FPCs are the most important part of JFM. They are responsible for receiving the feedback from the communities about their needs and aspirations, for taking stock of the resources available, preparation of the microplan and execution of the project. Working of FPCs can therefore make or mar the JFM. Working of JFM can be evaluated by the frequency of meetings, attendance in the meetings, participation of the members in the discussions, documentation of the proceedings and dynamism or capacity to accommodate newer ideas. For example, if the meetings are held as frequently as envisaged, the meetings are attended by a sizeable section of the community representing all sections of the society, every one feels free to present his/her view point and the same is given due considerations, the proceedings are minuted regularly and the FPCs are capable of accommodating changes in order to effect evolution according to changing needs, the JFM can be considered as successful. The working of FPCs therefore can be used as a very good measure of the success of JFM.

17.5 STATUS OF FOREST

Status of the forest, managed through JFM is one of the important indicators to assess the success of JFM. Some of the criteria which may be considered for monitoring the status of the forest are : (i) extent of forest and tree cover, (ii) forest ecosystem function and vitality; (iii) biodiversity conservation; (iv) soil and water conservation; and (v) forest resource productivity.

17.6 SUCCESS INDICATORS

Criteria and indicators need to be developed for evaluating the performance of JFM. These criteria and indicators are essentially site-specific and are highly variable depending upon the socio-economic and forest conditions. A few criteria and indicators are given in Table 17.1, which may be helpful in evolving site-specific success criteria and indicators. Most success indicators concern processes and therefore, need to be examined periodically. The trend of variation over a period of time gives better indication of success than one time evaluation.

Criteria	Indicators
Community organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Initiation (GOs/NGOs/Self) ★ Actors for initiation ★ Extent of participation in the formation of JFM committee ★ Representation of various interest groups including women, castes and tribes
Functioning of the JFM institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Chairperson and membership (size and composition) ★ Degree of concensus in forming the rules & regulation ★ Regulation and frequency of meeting ★ Attendance and Participation in the deliberations of meetings ★ Decision making mechanism ★ Conflict resolution mechanism ★ Transparency of records and accounts ★ Awareness about rights, obligations and working of JFM
Benefit sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Equity ★ Sustainability ★ Contribution of different groups in the change of income ★ Pattern of consumption of forest produce
Status of forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Regeneration status ★ Growing stock of wood and NTFPs ★ Area of forest and canopy cover ★ Increment of wood and non-wood products ★ Species richness and density ★ Level of intangible benefits ★ Availability of NTFPs ★ Abundance and frequency of weed, pest and diseases. Grazing and fire (quantity, type) ★ Maintenance of food chain, its length and interlinkages ★ Soil and water conservation indicators such as soil moisture, soil erosion, run off, soil pH, organic carbon and nutrient status, soil flora, fauna and microbes, level of water table, soil depth, soil compaction etc.
Forest resource utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Aggregate and per capita timber and NTFP consumption ★ Import and export of forest products ★ Employment in forest based enterprises ★ Contribution of forest to the income of forest-dependent people

17.7 PARTICIPATORY MONITORING

Once the microplan under JFM is finalised and implemented, impact assessment and monitoring become important which should be carried out through participatory monitoring.

Why assess impacts and monitor forest management ?

- ★ To identify at an early stage remedies to problems caused by inappropriate management and modify or devise new silvicultural prescriptions.
- ★ To evaluate the performance and sensitivity of the forest management system to meet multiple needs of the community.

Who uses impact assessment indicators and monitoring parameters ?

- ★ The forest dependent community
- ★ Forest Department
- ★ Development and extension workers
- ★ Researchers

How to conduct impact assessment and monitoring ?

Impact assessment and monitoring is an ongoing process. Data needs to be collected periodically over a long period of time (several years) to assess the impact and monitor the participatory forest management activities. Some of the steps to be taken and a basic framework for impact assessment and monitoring are given below.

1. Identify the objectives of impact assessment and monitoring and select the indicators.
2. Test the indicators and modify them to suit the community's objectives.
3. Collect information.
4. Validate the information by checking against other sources.
5. Set up baseline data and identify specific indicators and parameters.
6. Rate the impact or performance using evolved criteria and scores, on the participatory monitoring form.
7. Interpret rated indicators through discussions.
8. Repeat steps 1 to 7 each year.
9. Check for changes in the ratings from year to year. If a rating falls over time, modify or change silvicultural prescriptions accordingly.

For the purpose of impact assessment and monitoring, it is necessary to devise a framework to suit the individual situation. Some probable indicators, ratings and their sources and means of information/verification have been listed in Table 17.2.

Table 17.2 : Probable indicators, ratings and source of information for monitoring		
Indicator	Rating	Source of information, means of collection and verification
Tree diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low 2. Medium 3. High 	Participatory forest resource assessment, inventory, field observation
Non-timber forest products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. None 2. Few 3. Diverse 	Participatory forest resource assessment, inventory, field observation and market surveys
Harvesting methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Destructive 2. Non-destructive 	Participatory field observation, interviews with forest users, participatory forest resource assessment