

Annex 10.

Consultative meeting with village forest committees to promote sustainable forest management and collaborative governance in the fresh water swamp forests, central Western Ghats, India

Organized by Snehakunja trust and Ran Forest Trust

Date – December 28, 2017

Venue – Gajanana High School Vanalli, Sirsi

Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) is the program of ministry of environment forest and climate change, government of India, initiated during 1991-92. Main objective of JFPM was to conserve the biodiversity in the Western Ghats with the participation of the local communities. The importance of forest for the sustainable supply of resources and its services especially watershed protection, prevention of soil erosion, nutrient cycling has been recognised since the late 19th century. JFPM program is described as a forest management strategy under which the government represented by the Forest Department and the village community enter into an agreement to jointly protect and manage forestlands adjoining villages and to share responsibilities and benefits (Government of India, 2002). An increasing focus on people centered policies, bottom-up planning processes and decentralized governance are some of the key characteristics of this new paradigm (Ostrom, 1990). This allows local communities to jointly manage areas of reserve forest with forest department and legally share the benefits arising from forest protection. In the process village forest committees (VFCs) were formed in the villages. JFPM has strengthened the capacities of villagers to protect the forest. It has also provided opportunity for local people and Forest Department to work together for conservation of forest. It has also led to decrease in the pressure on forest for fuel wood and fodder by establishing plantations, construction of fuel-efficient ovens and bio gas plants. However, there are criticisms about actual participation of the people, some concerns were; participation of weaker sections of the society and women is less. Villagers were forced to participate in the project by Forest Department giving them financial benefit after cutting of the old plantations. Forest dependent communities were marginalised by reducing their access to resources. Natural forests were totally ignored throughout the project period.

Hence this one day consultative workshop with the VFC members, former Western Ghats task force chairman and local community people was organised to discuss and address the above mentioned issues and to foster collaborative management and governance of forest resources towards achieving the sustainable forest management.

In the beginning, Narasimha explained about importance of swamps, ecological restoration – past experience and success stories, current project of rain forest trust about feasibility study on declaring the FWS as PAs. Then, Ananth Ashisar, former chairman of Western Ghats task force, government of Karnataka said about objectives of JFPM and functioning of VFCs in the state and specific to Uttara Kannada district.

Participants were then divided in to three groups to discuss the issues separately. Each group had nearly 15 participants.

First group discussed about the participation of VFCs in the management of forest resources especially, NTFPs and self organized trading of NTFPs, promoting the collaborative governance processes

Second group discussed about improved value addition of forest resources, value chains and involving women groups in the processing and marketing. A detailed listing of species was made that could be taken for further value addition and marketing.

Third group made a listing of species that are locally threatened and prioritised for establishing the nursery. Further they discussed about ensuring participation of VFCs in the state forest department nursery.

Species favoured to obtain saplings and locally threatened

	Species suggested for nursery	List of threatened species in the region
1	<i>Acacia sinuata</i>	<i>Myristica malabarica</i> (wild nutmeg)
2	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>	<i>Piper nigrum</i> (wild peper)
3	<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>	<i>Mangifera indica</i> (wild mango)
4	<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i>	<i>Acacia sinuata</i>
5	<i>Calamus thwatessi</i>	<i>Calamus thawaitesii</i> (rattan)
6	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>	<i>Apis dorsata</i> (honey bee)

7	<i>Garcinia indica</i>	<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i> (monkey jack)
8	<i>Garcinia gummigutta</i>	<i>Sapindus lourifolius</i> (soap nut)
9	<i>Myristica malabarica</i>	<i>Carissa carandus</i>
10	<i>Mangifera indica var. appe</i>	<i>Garcinia indica</i> (kokum)
11	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> (gooseberry)
12	<i>Sapindus lourifolius</i>	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>
13		<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>
14		<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>
15		<i>Aegle marmelos</i>

Species that are found common and could be considered for further value addition and marketing

	<i>Species name</i>
1	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>
2	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>
3	<i>Flacourtia montana</i>
4	<i>Ziziphus oenoplia</i>
5	<i>Terminalia bellerica</i>
6	<i>Buchanania lanzan</i>
7	<i>Aporosa lindleyana</i>
8	<i>Garcinia morella</i>
9	<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>
10	<i>Mimusops elengi</i>
11	<i>Terminalia elliptica</i>
12	<i>Garcinia gummi-gutta</i>

13	<i>Garcinia indica</i>
----	------------------------

Finally, participants of the workshop made the following resolutions,

Strengthen community forest management institutions through participatory and inclusive approach for sustainable management of NTFPs. Develop implementable institutional models for sustainable management of NTFPs with the focus on forest conservation and NTFP-based sustainable livelihoods. Strengthen policies for sustainable management of NTFPs through improved forest governance and to ease harvest and transit restrictions of forest products for betterment of forest-dependent communities. Declare all the major FWS as community conserved areas under wild life protection act.

Presidents and representatives of six VFCs, Snehakunja project team, Parna Western Ghats farmer producer company directors, former Western Ghats task force chairman Anantha Ashisar, government advocate Ganapathi Bislakoppa, Gajanana high school teachers were present during the occasion.