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## Status of joint forest management committees and their role in livelihood security in forest division Rewa, Madhya Pradesh

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### Abstract

Madhya Pradesh represents 12% of the forest area of the country. The forest lands occupy 30.72% area of the State. JFM is an effective strategy to involve people in regeneration and management of forests. The Madhya Pradesh Forestry Project had Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) component for the management of degraded forest areas. Such programme while ensuring the conservation of flora and fauna, also provided stability for the agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, and local cottage industries and thus helps in all round economic development. District Rewa has 172 numbers of JFMCs but it was found that more than half of them were non-functional. The results shows that at an overall level from the selected FDAs, the total number of JFMCs was 172 out of which only 87 were found to be active as funds were being allocated to only those JFMCs from the FDA. Sirmor FDA had highest number of registered JFMCs i.e. 43, followed in Dabhaura (32), Mauganj (31), Hanumna (30), among them higher were found active in Rewa (47.37%), followed by Chakghat (47.06%), Sirmor (44.19%), Rewa (50 Semeria (42.86%) and Mauganj (41.94%).

**Keywords:** JFM, forest communities, forest conservation, livelihood, income etc.

### Introduction

Forest is one of the most important natural resource of India. Forest resources play a major role in the development of human society. People living in these forest fringe villages depend upon forest for a variety of goods and services such as wild edible fruits, flowers, tubers, roots and leaves for food and medicines, firewood, timber for agricultural implements, house construction and fencing, fodder (grass and leaves) for livestock, grazing of livestock in forest, and collection of marketable non-timber forest products. Thus, the forest is closely interrelated to human beings. As per India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2017 total forest and tree cover is 8,02,088 sq km which is 24.39% of total geographical area of India. Madhya Pradesh has the highest forest area in the country, even after the division of the State. Madhya Pradesh represents 12% of the forest area of the country. The forest lands occupy 30.72% area of the State. The State has a forest cover on 25.2% area. If we include the scrub forests and tree cover outside forests, than this ratio increases to 29.5%. The forests of the state are important due to its rich bio-diversity, carbon sink and the potential to absorb more carbon. The state caters to catchment area of many important rivers that transcend the boundary of the State. Thus, the forests of the state contribute significantly to the environmental and ecological balance and water conservation in the country. The state is rich with wildlife and 9.5 per cent of the forests are included in the Protected Areas. It also has the largest tribal population with 42 tribes and 3 primitive tribe groups that live in close vicinity to the forests. The state has taken the path of inclusive growth in forestry sector.

### Importance of the JFM

JFM is an effective strategy to involve people in regeneration and management of forests. There is need to ensure financial sustainability and devolution of more management and decision making power to the communities, along with greater involvement and integration with the Panchayats. FPCs should be linked to other natural resource management and livelihood. Forest Rights Act, 2006 provides a good framework to manage community forest resources with the help of gram sabha and link it to other developmental schemes. Women and other marginalized sections of the community need to be empowered so that they can participate in JFM (Aggarwal and Chauhan, 2015) <sup>[13]</sup>.

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Recognition of the significance of community conservation and management activities of natural resources further leaves a question that do all communities are equally capable of sustainable resource management? The present study is an attempt to address the status and effect of community based forest resource management under joint forest management in the state of Madhya Pradesh. As more than two decades have passed since the inception of participatory forest management programme, it is commendable to evaluate its present status, its impact on the socio economic status of rural people in providing employment, poverty alleviation, sustainable forest development and their interaction with the forests. It has been observed that forestry programmes have failed to draw people participation. The present study is an attempt to investigate the reasons responsible for this.

### Materials and Methods

Madhya Pradesh presents a perfect scenario for the study of man forest interaction and its two third of geographical area is under forest, around 90 per cent of the total population living in the rural are a gaining at least some part of their livelihood from forest. Thus, Madhya Pradesh is selected purposively for the present study. Forest Development Agencies (FDAs) with well-functioning JFMCs were identified and selected for the study after consultation with the forest department and the NAEB officials. A multistage random sampling technique was used to select the final sample for the present study. In the first stage, approx 10% per cent JFMCs viz. 24 out of 215 JFMCs were selected for the present study after consultation with forest department and NAEB officials. In the second stage, from each selected Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC) was taken and three functional JFMCs from each JFMC were chosen randomly. Further, from the each selected JFMC, minimum of 10 respondents were selected randomly, thus, making a total of 331 respondents from 24 selected JFMCs. In addition to this nearly 20 per cent of the total office bearers of JFMCs were also selected to carry out the survey work. The selected JFMCs have been given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** List of the Selected FDAs and JFMCs

Ranges	JFMC's		
	Basa	Tikar	Itarpahad
Semariya	Katai	Mainha	Purva
Sirmor	Sarai	Ghuma	Etma
Atraila	Kuraili	Shivpur	Latar
Dabhora	Remari	Khara	Pati
Hanumna	Jhari	Lodhi	Bhati
Mauganj	Gadhava	Bhela	Uchehra
Chakghat	Kot	Dhakhara	Mahewa

### Results and Discussion

#### Status of JFMCs in the Selected Ranges

The selected FDAs had 172 numbers of JFMCs but it was found that more than half of them were non-functional. The Table 2 shows that at an overall level from the selected FDAs, the total number of JFMCs was 172 out of which only 87

were found to be active as funds were being allocated to only those JFMCs from the FDA. Sirmor FDA had highest number of registered JFMCs i.e. 43, followed in Dabhaura (32), Mauganj (31), Hanumna (30), among them higher were found active in Rewa (47.37%), followed by Chakghat (47.06%), Sirmor (44.19%), Rewa (50 Semeria (42.86%) and Mauganj (41.94%).

**Table 2:** Status of JFMCs in the Selected Ranges of district Rewa M.P

Forest ranges	Total JFMC's	Active JFMC's	Active JFMCs percentage
Rewa	19	9	47.37
Semariya	14	6	42.86
Sirmor	43	19	44.19
Atraila	29	9	31.03
Dabhaura	32	12	37.50
Hanumana	30	11	36.67
Mauganj	31	13	41.94
Chakghat	17	8	47.06
Overall	215	87	40.47

#### Status of JFMCs in India and Madhya Pradesh

It accounts for 56.60% of the total forest area under JFM in the country at present. The forest areas which can be taken up under the JFM programme include degraded forests as well as well stocked forests. It is evident from the table that, among the different caste groups involved in the JFM, the percentage of general caste families was highest (49.79%) followed by the scheduled tribe (32.32%) and scheduled caste (17.89%) in the country (Table 3). Madhya Pradesh had the largest network of JFMCs in the country (15228), as well as the area of the forest covered by the JFM (6.69 mha) in the country. The JFM also generated the employment of 749.72 lakh man-days throughout the country.

**Table 3:** Status of JFMCs in M.P and INDIA

Particulars		Madhya Pradesh	India
JFMC's Committees		6687390	22938814
		70.62	29.82
Recorded Forest Area (ha)		9468900	76916800
		100	100
Number of families involved	General	645000	7228301
		37.94	49.79
	Schedule caste	255000	2597604
		15.00	17.89
	Schedule tribe	800000	4692314
		47.06	32.32
Total		1700000	14518219
		100	100
Annual employment generated	(lakh man days)	91.77	749.72
		12.24	100

### Conclusion

Present study concludes that JFM play very important role in development and conservation of forest and also provide huge opportunity to local forest people/ dwellers. Forest Development Agencies (FDAs) with well-functioning JFMCs.

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