Case Study of Popular Participation in JFM Programme of West Bengal
Since the last two decades a section of the society consisting of concerned professionals, officials and civil society groups have been promoting an alternative development model which is people centered and people controlled. In the area of forestry the people – forestry relationship is of significant concern with people sharing a symbiotic relationship with the forest. Rapid deforestation, resource users conflict and poverty has made a number of social activists, NGOs, foresters and social scientists to realise the fundamental need of involving adjacent beneficiary communities in the protection and development of the forests lands.

The main aim of the study is to study and analyse structures and processes which promote popular participation in the project and to study the impact of popular participation.

**Project Description**

**Joint Forest Management**

Joint forest management is a concept which has emerged in the New Forest Policy of 1988, emphasising the participation of the community in the management of the Forest.

The New Forest Policy 1988 is sensitive to tribe rights and to the aspect of sustainable development of the forests. It envisages people’s involvement in the development and protection of forests from which they derive their benefits. It also specifies that the requirement of fuelwood, fodder and small timber of the tribals and other villagers living in and near forests are to be treated as first charge on the produce. (SPWD 1993)

In pursuance of this policy objective, on 1st June, 1990, the Ministry of Environment and Forests sent out a circular supporting the involvement of village communities and NGOs in the regeneration, management and protection of degraded forests. Consequently 14 states, since last years, have passed their own resolutions and issued notifications to achieve those ends.

JFM recognises the benefits of an integrated approach to forest management, involving the State Forest Department. The village community (beneficiaries) and the voluntary agency/NGO in the revial, restoration and development of degraded forests. The concept is based on the principle of ‘give and take’, in which it is envisaged that Forest Department Officials would abandon their autocratic behavior in dealing with the people, and the people in turn, would participate in regeneration protection and management of forest resources having no ownership or lease rights over the forest land. (SPWD 1993)

**JFM in West Bengal**

JFM programme in West Bengal has evolved over a period comprising of three phases. The first phase covered the period between 1972 - 1982 marked by the emergence of the Joint Management system. Informal expansion of the programme
Case Study

covered phase two (1983 - 1989) and phase three (1990) saw the consolidation of the programme. (Mark Poffenger)

The main objectives of this programme is to:
1. Increase forest cover (density and area) and productivity.
2. Increase ecological benefits.
3. Meet community consumption needs.
4. Enhance community source of income.
5. Meet commercial demands.

One of the main components of this programme is formation of Forest Protection Committees. The Local Stakeholder Organisation (LSO) for the programme.

Forest Protection Committees (FPC)

Composition

DFO in consultation with Bon – o - Bhumi Sanskar Shayee Samiti of concerned Panchayat Samiti selects beneficiaries for constitution of FPC (S) within their jurisdiction, within the framework of this resolution. Beneficiary include economically backward people living in the vicinity of the forests concerned. If they are interested in the work of protection. Concerned Gram Panchayats shall extend necessary support and help to such committees to ensure their smooth and proper functioning.

Each FPC has an executive committee to carry out various activity assigned to the community. The committee consists of the sabhapati or any member of the local panchayat samiti, gram pradhan or any member of the local panchayat, elected representatives of the beneficiaries (not exceeding six members) and the concerned beat officer as the member secretary. Beat officer convenes the meetings of EC as well as FPC. The representatives of beneficiaries to the EC are elected each year in annual General meeting of the committee.

Functions

The FPC functions include protection of forest/plantations, informing the forest personnel of any person attempting to trespass or damaging the said forest/plantation and preventing such trespass, encroachment, grazing and fire. Further they ensure smooth and timely execution of all forestry work taken up in area under protection of the committee in collaboration with the concerned forest officials. They are also entitled to ensure smooth harvesting of forest produce by the Forest Department and to assist concerned Forest Officials in distribution of the earmarked portion (25% of sale proceed) – among members of FPC.

Usufructory Benefits

The members protecting forest/plantation for atleast 5 years are eligible for sharing usufructory benefits.
The forest officials in consultation with Ex. Committee and approval of Bon-o-Bhumi Sanskar Shatye Sthayee Samiti distribute proportionate share of usufructory benefits from final harvesting, not before crop attaining age of 10 years. Member are entitled to collect following items free of royalty without any damage to forests/plantations:

1) Fallen twigs, grass, fruits, flower, seed, leaves
2) ¼ of product obtained as intermediate yield from R.D.F. coppicing multiple shoot cutting and thinning and also 25% of net sale proceeds of cashew where available to be shared proportionately. Entire sal seeds and tendu leaves collected are deposited with West Bengal Tribal Development Corporate Ltd., through local LAMPS and LAMPS will pay the member in approved tariff of the individual collection.

The concerned Forest Officials - set apart 25% of net sale proceeds at very final harvesting of concerned forest/plantation and pay to all eligible members or nominee this proportionate share out of the said earmarked funds.

METHODOLOGY
Research Questions
The research question in this study was based on prior research on Joint Forest Management and on the basis of a common framework of research question for the eight popular participation cases.

The broad research questions in this explanatory form of study were:
1. How participation was defined
2. History of participation
3. Factors promoting participation
4. Factors inhibiting participation
5. Extent of participation in JFM programme
6. Consequences of participation

Hypothesis

On the basis of the review of literature and the exploratory study conducted in the two divisions our team got valuable insight regarding the community participation in JFM programme of West Bengal. On that basis the following nine hypotheses were framed for empirical examination.

1. Concretely planned mechanisms in JFM programme improves people’s participation in the programme.
2. Shared understanding of the operational meaning of participation in the JFM programme among the local stakeholders and project authority enhances people’s participation in the programme.
3. Deliberate and planned preparation of the forest officials enhances people’s participation in the JFM programme.
4. Deliberate and planned preparation of the forest protection committee members enhances their participation in the JFM programme.
5. Effective FPC enhances people’s participation in the JFM programme.
6. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme improves goal accomplishment of programme.

7. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme enhances the sustainability of the programme achievement.

8. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme enhances the capacity of the staff of the forest department.

9. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme enhances the capacity of the Forest Protection Committee.

Research Methodology: The research methodology of the study was a survey design.

Sample
The sample consisted of twenty FPCs from North Bankura Division. North Bankura is one of the five divisions in the Western circle of West Bengal. The selection of this division was done because of its easy accessibility and administrative advantages. North Bankura has both Natural and sal forests and has tribals and non tribal population thus making it quite representative of the entire population of JFM in West Bengal.

Only one division could be covered due to time constraint. The pilot study had covered the divisions of West Medinapur and Jhargram, with qualitative inputs from South Bankura official also.

Three ranges with three beats each and an average of three FPCs from each beat were selected in order to get a representative sample. The selection of the ranges were done randomly, while the beats and the FPCs were selected purposively, incorporating effective, ineffective and moderately effective FPCs. Out of the 20 FPCs 6 effective, 7 moderate and 7 ineffective FPCs were included in the sample in order to have a variance in the data.

Effectiveness indicators for the selection process were based on the Ranger and the Beat officers perception. They included aspects working of the FPC in terms of forestry work, the number of meeting, their attendance level, the working environment within the FPC etc.

Data analysis methods
The data was treated to quantitative analysis. The important variables under study were correlated other to identify relevant clusters. On the basis of conceptual analysis ten indices were created, which were:

I1 = Planned mechanisms in the project.
Sub variables: information sharing, joint assessment of project, community contribution, and economic incentives.

I2 = Shared understanding.
Sub variables: (a) shared understanding regarding the need for incorporating community participation among the forest officials and FPC members among FPC and EC members and among forest officials.
(b) shared understanding regarding salient issues related to community participation between the forest officials and FPC members.

I3 = Planned preparation of the forest officials.
Sub Variables: orientation, refresher and training programme

I4 = Planned Preparation of the forest protection committee.
Sub Variable: orientation refresher and training programme.

I5 = Effective FPC.
Sub Variables: Shared control over decisions and resources, effective action on problems, effective relations with government agencies, good organisational structure and effective work.

I6 = Participation in the project.
Sub Variables: influence on project definition, Planning, implementation and decisions, involvement in forestry work, and shared control over project benefits.

I7 = Goal accomplishment.
Sub Variables: accomplishment of stated benefits.

I8 = Sustainability of the programme achievements.
Sub Variables: Sustainability of the project benefits and independent management of the project activities.

I9 = forest staff capacity.
Sub Variables: Enhancement of the management, technical, social and material capacity.

I10 = FPC capacity.
Sub Variables: Enhancement of the management, technical organisational and material capacity of the FPCs and empowerment of the FPC members.

Following that correlational analysis was done between the relevant pairs of indices in order to test the hypotheses.

Results

In order to study and analyse the structures and processes in the JFM project which promote popular participation in the project and the consequences of the same ten indices of the ten salient variables were created. Coorlation analysis was done between each individual index with the participation index for all the twenty FPCs.

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation scores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1 &amp; I6</td>
<td>.44*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2 &amp; I6</td>
<td>.92***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3 &amp; I6</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I4 & I6 & .65**
I5 & I6 & .89***
I7 & I6 & .76***
I8 & I6 & .65**
I9 & I6 & .87***
I10 & I6 & .85***

* Significant at .05, ** Significant at .01, *** Significant at .001

Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1 - 1.33 = Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.34 - 3.67 = Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.68 - 5.01 = High</td>
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</table>

Hypothesis 1. Concretely planned mechanisms in the project improves participation.
Tabel I Shows that correlation between index of concretely planned mechanisms (I1) and index of participation (I6) is significant at .05 level of significant. The result shows that high level of relationship exists between planned mechanisms and participation in the project understudy.

The results thus are consistent with hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2. Shared understanding of the operational meaning of participation in the JFM programme enhances people's participation in the programme.
The correlation (.92) between index of shared understanding (I2) and index of participation (I6) is highly significant at relationship between shared understanding of the operational meaning of participation and the level of participation in JFM programme.

The results support hypotheses two.

Hypothesis 3. Deliberate and planned preparation of the forest officials enhances people's participation in the JFM programme.
The correlation score (.21) between the index of planned preparation of forest officials (I3) and the index of participation (I6) is not significant.

Hypothesis 4. Deliberate and planned preparation of the Forest Protection Committee members enhances their participation in the JFM programme.
Tabel I show that correlation (.65) between index of planned preparation of FPC (I4) and index of participation (I6) is significant at .01 level of significant. The
result shows that high level of relationship exists between planned preparation of the FPC members and participation.

The results thus are consistent with hypothesis 4.

**Hypothesis 5. Effective FPC enhances people’s participation in the JFM**

Table I shows that correlation (.89) between index of effective FPC (I5) and index of participation (I6) is significant at .001 level of significance. The result shows that very high level of relationship exists between effective FPC and participation.

The results thus are consistent with hypothesis 5.

**Hypothesis 6. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme improves goal accomplishment of programme.**

Table I shows that correlation (.76) between index of goal accomplishment (I7) and index of participation (I6) is significant at .001 level of significance. The result shows that very high level of relationship exists between participation in development project and goal accomplishment.

The results thus strongly support hypothesis 6.

**Hypothesis 7. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme enhances the sustainability of the programme achievements.**

Table I shows that correlation (.65) between index of sustainability of programme achievement (I8) and index of participation (I6) is significant at .01 level of significance. The result shows that high level of relationship exists between participation and programme sustainability.

The results thus are consistent with hypothesis 7.

**Hypothesis 8. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme enhances the capacity of the forest staff and the forest department.**

Table I shows that correlation (.87) between index of forest staff capacity (I9) and index of participation (I6) is significant at .001 level of significance. The result shows that high level of relationship exists between participation and forest staff capacity in the forestry programme under study.

The results thus strongly support hypothesis 8.

**Hypothesis 9. Effective people’s participation in the JFM programme enhances the capacity of the forest protection committee.**

Table I shows that correlation (.85) between index of FPC capacity (I10) and index of participation (I6) is highly significant at .001 level of significance. The result shows that high level of relationship exists between participation and FPC capacity.

The results thus are consistent with hypothesis 9.

**INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

The concept of popular participation in development projects has been hotly debated by a number of practitioners and academicians. Considerable amount of literature on participation has focused on the nature of participation, the factors promoting it and the consequences thereof. Our study, drawing from the literature review, focused on studying the relations of participation in forestry.
Participation in this study has been defined as “a process through which local stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resource which affect them.”

An attempt has been made to generate an comprehensive overview of the significant related to popular participation. The whole debate regarding the myths and realities of popular participation have been studied on a framework consisting of factors promoting PIDP and the consequences of PIDP.

In our study the framework consisted of the following relationship:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors promoting PIDP</th>
<th>PIDP</th>
<th>Consequences of PIDP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concretely planned mechanisms</td>
<td>PIDP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared understanding</td>
<td>PIDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planned preparation of project authorities</td>
<td>PIDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planned preparation of LSO</td>
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<td>Effective LOS</td>
<td>PIDP</td>
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On the basis of that a number of hypothesis have been focused upon. The results have shown that findings are consistent with eight of the nine hypothesis thus providing interesting insights into the factors promoting participation and consequences of participation in development projects (PIDP).

The results have been interpreted in the context of the specific study on hand with attempts made to study the dynamics underplay. The factors promoting PIDP and the consequences of PIDP have been discussed separately in order to make the discussions conceptually clear.

An important aspect to keep in mind is that the finding reflect the extent of relationship between PIDP and the other nine variables and do not suggest a cause and effect relationship.

It needs to be clarified that the results do not make any attempts to study the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the JFM programme. It is not an evaluative study. The study makes attempts to only study popular participation on with relation to factors promoting it and the consequences thereof.

**Extent of PIDP**

The mean scores of the participation index in the study is 2.9 which falls in the moderate range suggesting that the level of participation in the programme is moderately high or low.

**FACTORS PROMOTING PIDP**

The study has provided significant information on the factors promoting popular participation.
Concretely planned mechanisms in the project improves participation.

The study results are consistent with hypothesis one suggesting a strong relationship between concretely planned mechanisms in the project and PIDP. One can infer that having concretely planned mechanisms in the project like mechanisms for information sharing, joint assessment of the project, community contribution and incentives for participation would have a high likelihood of facilitating the local stakeholders (LSO) participation in the programme.

It needs to be specified that in the study the above mentioned four variables have been taken as a composite score and not separately. However to explain the dynamics in greater detail each of the four sub variables are being explained separately.

In JFM information sharing is facilitated by the planned mechanisms of having meetings (once a year meeting of FPCs and monthly meeting of EC). It is a prerequisite to have the Beat officer as member secretary of the meetings. Statistical data along with qualitative information showed that FPCs whose members stated that the meetings were held regularly registers were maintained. The beat officer chaired the meetings regularly and insured the participation of all the members showed a higher rating on the participation index.

A valid explanation can be that the mechanisms for systematic and regular information sharing between the project authorities and the LSO (in this case the FPC) provides the LSO with greater opportunity to learn more about the project. It’s progress the aspects of participation, the benefits thereof and other up-to-date project related information thus enhancing the community’s motivation and capacity to participate effectively.

The results do not make any judgments on the current status of the JFM programs mechanism for information sharing and how it is implemented. On the sub variable of joint assessment in the JFM programme, joint assessment has been partially ascertained by having a mechanism of drawing up micro-plans.

Micro Plans are developed by the forest officials in collaboration with the community whereby the community participates in giving information about the resource they have and the kind of activities which need planned taken up. Seven proformas have been developed by the forest officials for collecting information for microplanning. The proformas collect information on FPC related information (FPC indentification, demographic information, resource data information and need assessment information) and on the basis of that allocate physical and financial resource.

The strong correlation suggests that in FPCs where the micro plans were drawn in a systematic manner, with full involvement of the community (with their suggestions being incorporated) the participation level was high, while in cases where the microplans were not systematically designed and implemented, the level of participation was low.
Ideally joint assessment of the project in the initial project stages (in assessment of: community needs; resource base; service and infrastructure level) would generate opportunity for the LSO to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of the project, thus setting a stage for them to influence decisions regarding vital aspects of planning and implementation.

Qualitative data and observation has show that micro plans are not enough to generate substantial involvement of the community in planning and need assessment. More in-depth dialogues, formal and informal meetings and interaction are required wherewith the community could be more involved in judging the appropriateness of the project, how feasible are the objectives, how related are they to the needs of the people, how effective are the programme strategies etc.

Micro plan just helps in assessing the needs of the people and the community. It does not involve the community in assessing the feasibility of the objectives and the strategies thereof. Taking the component of community contribution voluntary labour during protection activities has been incorporated in the JFM programme. The extent, effectiveness, enforcement, organisation however varies from FPC to FPC. In the cases where the community contribution enforcement channels were effectively enforced - the members rated high on the participation index.

This suggests that having planned and organised voluntary community contribution in terms of labour or/and money is likely to act as independent investment by the community, motivating the members to make the project a success in order to get fruitful returns. This facilitates their active involvement in the project, thus sustaining their interest in the project related activities.

In our study the fourth sub variable of economic incentive includes - provisions of employment in lean period, usufructory benefits and share in the sale proceeds and creation of assets for community use. Their effectiveness depends on how effectively they are planned and implemented and how many of the incentives are incorporated.

Including economic incentives for the LSO members to participate in order to compensate for their opportunity cost is likely to have a promoting impact on facilitating the later’s participation in the project activities. It was observed as well as statistically proved that in cases where these mechanisms were enforced more the participation level was found to be higher. Thus it can be suggested that having concretely planned. Mechanisms in the project and ascertaining their enforcement would provide a good environment for the community’s participation.

**Shared understanding of the operational meaning of participation in the project enhances people’s participation in the project.** The study has shown a very high extent of relationship between shared understanding of the operational meaning of participation among the project
staff and LSO members and PIDP as the findings are consistent with hypothesis two.

In the study it has been proved that FPCs having high shared understanding between themselves and their forest officials regarding the need for community participation. Will be involved more in influencing salient discussion related to the project than those FPC members do not share the same extent of common understanding on the need for community participation and on other aspect related to community participation.

Further if the forest officials at all levels, incharge of the FPCs, also share a common understanding and the member themselves share a common understanding – the participation of those FPCs will be positively influenced.

A possible reason could be that tracing a common vision helps in formulating common strategies, channelising the energies for promoting participation rather than managing conflicting view points and interests. Common understanding for the need of participation builds trust and congenial working relationship among all the parties involved. The Project officials are more likely to readily promote and support the community’s participation and later would cooperate in return thus creating adequate opportunity for them to participate actively.

The common understanding provides a common platform of understanding and subsequent action. It is thus desirable to have all the project authorities (at all level) recognising the need for community participation rather than only the top level staff feeling so. Shared understanding between the actors involved can be facilitated by having a well planned information sharing mechanism (as discussed above) and making effective use of it.

**Deliberate and planned preparation of the Project authorities enhances people’s participation in the project.**

The relationship between planned preparation of project authorities and PIDP was not found significant by our study thus refuting the claims made by hypothesis three. A possible reason for this could be that a relatively small number of forest officials were covered by in the study and a large number of the FPC members also could not respond to the questions on this variable. Thus the correlation scores reflect responses of only very few respondents. The validity of the scores thus is questionable.

**Deliberate and planned preparation of the LSO members enhances their participation in the project.**

On the issue of deliberate and planned preparation of the LSO members it was found to have a strong relationship with PIDP thus supporting hypothesis four. In JFM study it was seen that FPCs who had undergone effective training programmes – in terms of being realistic, participatory, well organised, catering to the technical, social and organisational need of the FPCs, have been found to be higher on level of participation than those whose training and orientation has not been very effective on the above mentioned parameters.
The explanation could be that planned preparation of the LSO on aspects related to the project develops the requisite skills needed to be able to play an effective role in all the important project related decisions regarding planning, implementation, evaluation and benefit sharing. It would enhance their motivation level along with their bargaining power. To have concretely planned mechanisms in the project for participation and have a common understanding of the issue would not prove very helpful till the LSO members’ capacity to effectively utilise those opportunities is not developed. Training intervention would facilitate a change in their knowledge, skill and awareness level. (Tandon ‘89)

In – depth discussions with the FPC members and with some forest officials has shown that in JFM training on developing leadership skills and on income generation activities like poultry, mushroom and tussar processing are taking place. Though a strong relationship between these training and PIDP has been established it would be essential to add that incorporation more technical and organisational components in these training programmes would be an important promoting factor to PIDP.

The training programmes, if compatible with the needs of the community will facilitate the development of their motivation stimulating their interest and developing the prerequisite skills to be involved at all levels of the project. Further, training on only income generation will not build their skills on influencing project planning and implementation decision, or negotiation, on forestry work. The training should be more appropriate. Gender component is one aspect which needs to be incorporated in the orientation programme because it is the women who are mostly unskilled and who need the intervention. Only then can the participation of the whole community be promoted.

Further technical advice should be taken and funds should be allocated for this purpose.

**Effective LSO enhances people’s participation in the project.**

Another important relationship established by the study has been between effective LSO and PIDP, as suggested by hypotheses 5.

In the JFM project interviews with the FPC members showed that those FPCs who had developed well planned organisational structures (eg. regular meetings, attendance registers, rules and regulations, cohesive environment, decentralised planning) showed a higher standing on the participation index.

This suggests that an LSO with a well - planned organisational structure, one which facilitates effective action on problems and shared control over decisions and resources by all the members, provides a stimulating environment for its members to develop analytical and organisational and leadership skills which are helpful for their participation in the important components of the project. Members of effective LSOs (in this case the FPCs) are more likely to be more aware about participation related issues as they have greater interaction with
the government agencies and other organisations during the process of their work.

The organisational environment provides them the requisite skills to negotiate with the project officials and larger project related issues. It gives them the necessary initiative taking skills, negotiation power, information base, confidence to help them participate effectively. The organisation environment in itself provides a informal group learning environment.

Thus it is suggested that organisation building should be another area of training intervention – on aspects of group learning and group dynamics. Each of the four promoting factors are interdependent on each other for yielding effective results. In isolation they would not have adequate impact on the popular participation level. Also it would be useful to add that the participation level in the study on hand is open to influences of other promoting factors which have not been included for study. Thus for achieving effective results preferably all facilitating components need to be included as an integral part of the project design.

CONSEQUENCE OF PIDP
Besides the above discussed factors promoting participation interesting findings have been found regarding the consequences of participation.

Effective people’s participation in the project improves goal accomplishment of the project.
A strong relationship has been stated in the finding between PIDP and goal accomplishment supporting hypothesis six. This suggests that community’s participation is likely to enhance the goal accomplishment of the project. In JFM programme a strong relationship has been found between participation and goal accomplishment. It was found that PPC high on participation had accomplished greater increase in forest cost, in ecological benefits, in meeting of consumption needs, enhancement of their sources of income and meeting their commercial demands.

The results do not indicate which goal in accomplished more – it just provides an overview of all the goals as taken in a composite index. Testing each individual goal’s relationship with participation could yield interesting finding.??
It has been a general view that community participation is time consuming, incurring more expenditure and providing substandard results as it involves people who are not the “experts” being not as skilled as the “Professionals”.
Our study however has proved otherwise. In our study we have taken a very holistic interpretation of participation. It involves the community actively in decision making and sharing control over decisions from definition to implementation of the project activities.

An explanation for the strong relationship between popular participation and goal accomplishment could be that the project’s efficiency gets enhanced in FPCs where effective community’s participation has been incorporated. A viable reason for that could be that participation makes the development process more time, resource and cost effective. (Oakley ‘95)
Participation in the project enhances the willingly cooperation of the LSO (FPCs) as their participation increases their stake in the project wherewith it would benefit as much from the project as the project authority. Thus it works more for goal achievements. Further, like in the case of JFM, the project outcomes are closely related to the livelihood needs of the community thus they would work more efficiently to meet the objectives for which they have influenced the decisions. The availability of motivated, voluntary local labour force saves time, energy and cost for employing other work force.

The community’s willingly cooperation due to their involvement as ‘active partners’ in development saves the time and money spent in supervision, setting disputes, checking thefts, employing added staff for supervision, infrastructure and other overhead costs. The community participation provides an effective division of work among the project authority and the LSO thus contributing the project effectiveness.

Discussions with the forest officials and the FPC members have shown that in general the goal of commercial demand has not been fulfilled effectively. A reason for that could be that the sample includes FPCs who have been registered for only four years and felling is allowed only after five years of registration. Commercial demands would be met more effectively once the felling and subsequent sale of the timber takes place.

In this project the indiscriminate felling of trees and the resistance of the community to the forest officials has been considerably reduced since the legal recognition of the FPC as important partner in the forest management. In JFM the community (FPCs) have played a commendable role in the implementation stage (protection of the forest cover and in plantation work) which would have been difficult exercise for the forest officials, keeping the size of the project in mind.

**Effective people’s participation in the project enhances the sustainability of the project achievements.**

The findings are also consistent with hypothesis seven which indicates a relationship between PIDP and sustainability of the programme achievement. In the JFM study the FPCs high on participation indicated greater independence in managing the activities of protection, plantation, felling, marketing, conservation of wild life and development of micro plans as they had been more involved in influencing the decisions related to these activities more than the FPC who had lower level of participation.

The explanation is that the involvement of the LSO members in all the important levels in the project cycle enhances their understanding and facilitates their skill development on the important project activities. As a result the LSO members are not totally dependent on the project authority but can manage the activities in the latter’s absence. Due to this the project benefits are long – term and sustainable.

The community is a stable factor who because of their participation in the project has personal interest in the project’s achievements. Further the
participation at each level of the significant decision making builds their skills, sustaining their interest to monitor and manage the forest activities independently. This results in sustained project benefits.

An interesting finding in this study has been that in-depth discussions with the FPC members has shown that they are in general more confident in independently managing the protection and to some extent the plantation work however they feel less confident about the marketing, micro plan development exercise and wild life conservation. One reason could be that their participation, in general, is more on the prior two activities than on the others. They have influenced more decisions relating to these activities than the others.

One can thus infer that in order to strengthen the sustainability of the project activities and results on the whole it would be advisable to include the LSOs’ participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of all the project activities i.e. plantation, protection, marketing, micro plan development in the JFM project. Influencing decisions of one project initiative does not assure sustainability of another project initiative.

**Effective people’s participation in the project enhances the capacity of the project staff.**

Hypothesis eight regarding the positive relationship between participation and forest staff capacity has been supported.

In the JFM study the forest staff working with FPCs high on the participation index showed a higher rating on the effectiveness criteria. The perceptions included were those of the FPCs only (on the quantitative index) and qualitative information from the forest officials and the FPC member as the effectiveness criteria included management, social, technical and material capacity.

Effective participation of the community enhances the management capacity of the forest officials as the later gets the opportunity of coordinating and working in cooperation with the LSO which in itself is a new and enriching experience for the staff. The close interaction with the community promotes establishment of effective relationship between the two parties, thus enhancing the interpersonal skill development of the staff. This includes communication skills. Working in cooperation with the community also enhances the information base of the project staff, providing effective access to indigenous knowledge regarding the project. In the JFM project the FPC members have traditional information regarding important non-wood forest produce like medicinal and herbal plants. The effective participation of the community in specie selection increases the project staffs’ information base on these indigenous species.

The material capacity of the project authorities are also likely to be positively associated with the LSO participation in the process as expenditure on recruiting added personnel for the project gets reduced due to effective responsibility sharing with the LSOs. In JFM project it was seen that effective involvement of
the FPC members in the protection of the forest reduced the cost of recruiting a forest guard for the same task.

The finding provides very useful evidence that PIDP not only empowers the community but also enhances the capacity of the project officials. An important input especially for the project authorities.

**Effective people's participation in the project enhances the capacity of the LSOs.**

Hypothesis nine has been supported in the study, suggesting a very strong relationship between participation and FPC capacity. The FPCs high on participation criteria were more effective than those whose participation in the project activities were not as high. This can help us to state that effective participation in the program will have a positive impact on the LSO capacity. In this study LSO effectiveness was indicated by the organisational, material, technical and empowerment aspects.

Participating in the planning, implementation and decision making process is likely to enhance the management and organisational capacity of the LSO members as they would be interacting with lot more people, attending more meetings thus getting a stimulating environment to strengthen these aspects. Also effective participation would help in further strengthening of the internal mechanisms like staffing, leadership capacity and cohesiveness as the members participate in the project as an organisation and not as individuals. Peter Oakely’s interpretation of participation as organisation holds true in the case of the JFM Project.

The LSO members’ technical capacity is likely to be benefited by participation as the later process would provide the members with opportunities to interact with the project authorities, thus providing access to the technical information with the later. This holds true in the case of JFM where the FPC members have begun getting insights about technical aspects of forestry management.

The LSO members are likely to be more empowered and self-reliant as a result of their involvement in the decision making stages. Oakley's interpretation of participation as empowering thus is largely supported by the JFM study. It was found that FPC high on participation were independently and successfully involved in activities besides forestry suggesting a step closer to development of effective skills to manage their life better.

On the basis of the study one can state that people centred development/or participatory development does not only result in the project achieving its objectives and the benefits reaching the people for whom they are aimed but it also lead to capacity building and empowerment of the community at large.
Empowerment is in terms of control over resources, - natural, local, material, human and a sense of independence, well-being and dignity. The problem of top-down, growth oriented development model thus are effectively taken care of by the alternative model of participatory development as in the case of JFM.