

## ENABLING THE COMMUNITY TO GAIN COMMAND OVER THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS IS EMPOWERMENT

### Enabling Empowerment

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**Until and unless we understand the administrative systems of natural resources and empower the masses as informed guardians, we end-up once again defeated, throwing the blame on the politicians for our failures, leaving the poor further frustrated.**

Over a decade, the social scientists, development professionals and government are popularizing participatory methods with gender-friendly and sustainable strategies in developing natural resources. In 1980s, a number of studies held the responsible for the deterioration of natural resources and for neglecting traditional social and physical structures looking these resources. The World Bank concurred with these opinions (David Mosse, 2003)., Participatory management has become the official language of joint forest management, watershed development water distribution in irrigation management and participatory methods have become compulsory tools in fields studies. Incremental equity is promoted since total equity is difficult being political in nature (M.V. Nadkarni, 1995). Equity in distribution of income and wealth is a requirement or a condition for sustainable development and not merely an indicator (A.S. Mathew, 1995).

Some or other form of participatory efforts had been encouraged since colonial (David Mosse, 2003) today, the participatory management is heavily supported by government or external funds. The participation is political, not process based (V. Ratna Reddy 2003 and Joost Oorthuzen 2003). More over, the development professionals (Walter Mendoza and John D' Souza 2002) ignore the question of geniuses of rights claimed by the occupants of natural resources (Mihir Shah 2003 and M.V Nadkarni 1995) and implementation of minimum wages. Through there are some success stories of gaining rights over natural resources (Anubhavala Pandiri, 2002), The development professionals-advocacy groups – did not so far take-up capacity building in the governance of natural resources. The development policy is of course, political. The law making is also a political process today the development is management without governance and governance is with out proper participation.

Present situation of distributing the "incremental growth" reminds the conditions prevalent before the advent of East India Company. In those days, Craftsmen and laborers by and large used to service on share in the harvests, spillovers and leftovers. All these Customary practices are integrated into religious and social services ensuring some kind of guarantee of employment and food security and reinforcing social stratification sacrificing human rights and rule of law (A.Vidyanadhan, 2003).

It will be interesting to reconstruct how the governance and development management parted the ways.

### Administrative systems governing the Natural Resources

#### The process of reserving the 'forests'

- Identification of the area in terms of ecological and commercial importance.
- Assessment of the needs and customary practices of the villages
- Reserving through gazette notification incorporating customary practices.

#### Rules for felling of trees

- Fruit bearing trees, minor forest produce yielding trees should be protected from felling.
- Twenty meters distance should be maintained between the trees marked for felling.
- Trees should not be felled within 20 meters on the banks of perennial streams and roadsides.

Reserve notifications and maps, felling rules forest schedule rates (wages), transport policies are the issues in forest administration. Forest working plan is an action plan. The training imparted to the forester includes all the necessary skills.

### Principles of Water Management

"The engineer is held responsible for the water in his canal....." Peter Mollinga, 2003.

Localisation means allocation of the lands proposed to be served by an irrigation projects to different types of irrigation, viz. perennial, wet, garden and light.

The method of 'joint azmaish' was introduced and made mandatory by the state. Representatives from the revenue irrigation, agriculture departments and the Water users Association representatives participate in this exercise.

All the local magistrates and command area officials are given maps of the entire command area to better understand the system, which helps in the proper supervision and regulation of water wherever necessary.

These principles evolved and followed since colonial times till date are consistent with the tradition (David Ludden 1994). But the East India Company and thereafter the British used to collect all the surplus produce in the farms as tax that too in cash. As a result the community was left with no resources to maintain the infrastructure of irrigation developed since centuries.

"Prior to the arrival of the British in South India, communities managed water systems collectively through a system called *Kudimaramath* (self-repair). Before the advent of corporate rule by the East India Company in the 18th century, a peasant

paid 300 out of 1,000 units of grain he or she earned to a public fund, and 250 of those units stayed in the village for maintenance of commons and public works. By 1830, peasant payments rose to 650 units, out of which 590 units went straight to the East India Company. As a result of increased payments and less maintenance revenue, the peasants and commons were destroyed. Some 300,000 water tanks built over centuries in pre-British India were destroyed, affecting agricultural productivity and earnings." Vandana Shiva, 2002

<b>Welfare State</b>		
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Tools of Governance</b>	<b>Tools of Development</b>
Land	Cadastral maps, Record of Rights	Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Transect, Micro plan (social map, resource map)
Forest	Forest reserve notifications, Felling rules, transport permits	PRA, Transect, Micro plan
Water	Hydraulic maps (localization or Joint Azmaish)	Contour maps, PRA, transect, micro plan
Objective	Principle equity	Incremental Equity
Key players	Revenue, Forest and Irrigation departments	Development departments
Source of power	Fundamental Rights, Acts and Rules	Directive principles, policy documents, government orders, memos, guidelines
Conflict resolution	Courts, principles of natural justice	Community & officials
Gains	Rights (security of tenure)	Share (usufruct)
Support	Government funds (in general) through budget allocation	External (bilateral) funds
Training	District Training Programme Recommended by the National Academy, 1982	Training in development
<b>Hardware and Software = "Welfare State"</b>		

Political leaders leading the struggle for freedom convinced the people that foreign rule is source of misrule organized the masses to force the British to quit. They ignored educating the people in administrative procedures governing the natural resources through some of the British and Indian officials offered to introduce such education in the schools (Nandini Sunder, 1997 and Peter Mollinga, 2003). We have mixed the governance of natural resources with politics and thrown out the baby with the bath water.

The educated in India were and are eager to become partners in the ongoing developments all over the world, imbibe scientific temperament and achieve technological progress. The rate of literacy, life expectancy, per capita income, and gross national product are projected as indicators of development.

#### Land Record

"A land record is actually a voluminous form officially called the Record of Rights, carrying details tenancy and whether it is government land as well as crop inspection reports. The land record is critical to both the government and the farmer. It contains all manner of data related to the land: area, nature and possession of land, whether acquired by registered or unregistered document of succession, partition, mortgage, tenancy, assessment, water rate, classification of soil, number of trees, details of crops grown, land utilization, etc. The village accountants do not open records to public scrutiny and updating them has been a process plagued by delays, corrupt corruption and flaws. Even if the accountant is honest, delays are endemic because each accountant handles four-to- five villages. The system is decentralized, which means this vast data meant little to district headquarters"

We followed the development policies of West paying lip sympathy to the displaced and marginalized (K.L.Rao, 1978).

#### Book Keepers

Only the bureaucracy of revenue, forest, and irrigation departments are trained in the governance of land forest and water resources. These officials are vested with quasi judicial powers to decide the rights and enforce their decisions (David C. Potter, 1996). Thus they are the book keepers of natural resources and they have the powers to confer ownership. After independence, both the people representatives and officials joined hands in manipulating the records. We failed to check the abuse of power by executive then and there and conserve the forests, implement land reforms, protect the

Today the development is management without governance and governance is without proper participation

common property resources and regulate the water distribution. But we attribute the deterioration and alienation of these resources to population growth or lack of political will.

In the independent India, the awareness about the rights is the blessing of Public Interest Litigation. Implementation of judicial relief still remains in the hands of unwilling often hostile state machinery. Advocacy now needs to go beyond forest bills, rehabilitation policies, it needs to reach out beyond government and officials and involve citizens groups (Walter Mendoza and John D'Souza, 2002). But the understanding of civil society about governance is almost peripheral. The leadership in civil society is not process oriented but self-centered and the information is anecdotal (Binu S. Thomas 1995). But there are NGOs who are recognized by government for their efforts in mobilizing the poor through educating the information and procedures of governance.

Sakti named the state level conference held in 1993 on JFM after the local customary practice '*noorinti adavi*', motivating the tribals to assert by planting usufruct-yielding trees of reserve forests in the tribal areas of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh (Aravind Khare, 1998). The tribals in West Godavari district forced the government to distribute land records, conduct title verification of non-tribal land owners and High Court directed to involve the NGO in the adjudication of land rights. The encroached drinking water tanks in *Dalit* hamlets in the Godavari delta are renovated. Here *Dalits* are learning joint azmaish to locate the appropriation of land and water.

Experiments unfolding in distributing the incremental growth are also drawing attention. CHIPKO movement protected the trees and took-up plantation in the forests.

We have mixed the governance of natural resources with politics and thrown out the baby with the bath water.

Day by day politicians are emerging as resource brokers. In the absence of learning opportunities to know the rules and force the officials to follow the rules, the people are approaching the politicians. The educated in India should blame themselves for driving the people in such directions.

*Pani Panchayat*, the moment of dam oustees in South Maharashtra ensures equal share of water to the landless poor (Anant Phadke, 2000). 4,000 villages in Orissa are managing their forests without external support (Sushil Saigal, 2000). Ananta Paryavara Parirakshana Samithi is protecting common properties in 40,000 acres.

Now the political economists are demanding the recognition of water reforms at par with land reforms. But they are aware, even after two and half decades of the implementation of land reforms, there has been no significant reduction in the extent of land concentration i.e. large holdings in the hands of rich few (Satyajit Singh, 1997). Collective efforts for genuine land redistribution are met with state repression (Satyajit Singh, 1997 and SAKTI 2003). We failed in implementing land reforms and with that defeated mindset; we want to tackle the water issue. Until and unless we understand the administrative systems of natural resources and empower the masses as informed guardians, we end up once again defeated, throwing the blame on the politicians for our failures, leaving the poor further frustrated.

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