

Joint Management of Forests in West Bengal: A Case Study of Jamboni Forest Range in Midnapore District

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ABSTRACT In 1972 the West Bengal Forest Department (WBFD) launched an innovative pilot project in Arabari to regenerate the degraded sal (*Shorea robusta*) forests by involving local people as partners in the management of forest. The overwhelming success of the Arabari project encouraged WBFD to extend the Joint Forest Management (JFM) in other areas by establishing Forest Protection Committees (FPC). This paper reports results of a diagnostic study undertaken among 42 FPCs in Jamboni forest range of Midnapore district. The objective of the study was to examine the role of a select socio-economic factors on the functioning status of the FPCs. The study concludes: (i) Seventy-four percent of the FPCs were functioning well; (ii) the smaller the number of villages participating in a FPC the greater its effectiveness; (iii) the greater the proportion of tribal composition in the FPC the greater its effectiveness; (iv) the greater the proportion of households in each participating village (s) included as FPC members the better its management of the forest, and (v) the greater the proportion of natural forest to plantation in the FPC project area, the better the protection.