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Research Article

MANAGEMENT OF COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES: A PRAGMATIC MODEL FOR UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Common Property Resources (CPRs) constitute important component of community assets in India and they benefit the livelihood of the rural population in many ways. At the national level, it is estimated that, since 1960, reductions in the area of CPRLs varying from 30 to 50 percent have been noticed in different states of the country. Over the period of time quantity and quality of CPRs has declined and depleted rapidly in Uttar Pradesh, India. Management of Common Property Resources have many social and economic implications for rural population. It has guaranteed the continuous supplies of natural resources that are essential for subsistence economy of rural people. It has constituted a mechanism of social control to protect common property resources. This research Paper analyses the importance of CPRs, depletion of these resources and more specifically attempt to suggest a pragmatic model of the management of CPRs for the state of U.P. that can be generalized for entire India.

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INTRODUCTION

Common lands in India are broadly of three categories, namely, forest lands, government lands and community lands. Here, we are concerned with community lands though vital linkages with the use of and access to government and forest lands have to be very much kept in view while studying the problems of CPRs management. Common property land and water resource exist in the form of grazing grounds, village woodlands, catchment areas, dumping and threshing grounds, village ponds, rivers, streams, banks and beds and other common waste lands. These resources constitute an important vital element in the production economy of rural areas in India. This would be equally true of most rural areas falling in different regions of Uttar Pradesh, though in varying degrees. CPRs are support areas which are essential to village economies. These resources meet the day to day basic needs of local people, provide them indirect sources of employment and supplement and complement their incomes.

At present, most of these resources are in a state of degradation and depletion. Their availability has shrunk over the past many decades. At the national level, it is estimated that, since 1960, reductions in the area of CPRLs varying from 30 to 50 percent have been noticed in different states of the

country. Many reasons have contributed to the shrinkage and degradation of common lands and water resources among which can be mentioned increasing population growth and consequential anthropogenic pressures, intervention of the state, market forces, pressures generated by the development processes themselves, break-down of village communities, allotment of lands for different purposes including for cultivation, dwindling of village institutions, etc. The CPRLs are gripped with the 'tragedy of commons' [Hardin-1968]. The fact remains that; at present, what we understand by common property resources are common lands with free-riding access. If such lands are to be converted into common property resources, then the most important thing is to establish and promote appropriate local management bodies of the user communities and its co-ordination with state and center level institutions. Resources become common property when the group of people, who have rights to their collective use, is well defined and there is clarity in laws, rules and procedures for the use of such resources which are observed by the collectivity of the users.

In India especially in the rural areas, the development process of the people is fully determined by the people's participation in utilizing the natural resources and more particularly, in conservation, management and encroachments of common

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natural resources. For the maintenance of natural resources, such as irrigation tanks, ponds, grazing land, waste land and forest lands the participation of the local people is considered the most important requirement. People can participate as individuals or in group in the maintenance and conservation of natural resources. It will be more effective, useful and sustainable, if their participation is institutionalized legitimately at the local level.

Review of Literature

Hardin, G. (1968) in his article "The Tragedy of Commons" defined 'commons' as the resources or the resource land areas in which there was free access of the common people. He cited the example of pastures which were open to all herdsmen to allow their cattle to graze freely. Also, the national parks were other examples of commons which were open to all without limit. He stated that the inherent logic of the commons remorselessly generated tragedy. This happened because the every user of commons tried its best to maximize gains, along with the continuous pressure of growing population on commons. The principle of maximizing gains from commons generated the tragedy. The tragedy of the commons reappeared in the problems of pollution. In this instance, the people did not take something out of the commons, but they put something in the commons in the forms of waste materials such as sewage, waste chemicals, radioactive materials and heat waste into water; noxious and dangerous fumes in the air, and so on. The economic principles in this instance were the same as happened earlier. The rational man found that his share of cost of waste material discharged into the commons was less than the cost of purifying them before releasing. The human, in both ways: as a user of CPRs as well as a discharger of waste material to the commons, was solely responsible for the tragedy of commons. Hardin's view was that "we are locked into a system of 'fouling our own nest', so long as we behave only as independent, rational, free enterprises". The growing population was another important factor for the tragedy of commons.

Commons contribute more to poor households than anti-poverty schemes

In a study conducted in 81 villages across 21 dry land districts across seven states in rural India, pioneer of commons research in South Asia N S Jodha measured the dependence of poor communities

(small farm households and the landless) on CPRs. The commons in these districts included village pastures, community forests, wasteland, common threshing grounds, waste dumps, watershed drainages, village ponds and tanks, rivers, rivulets, riverbeds, etc, and the area under commons ranged from 9 to 28% of total village area. The data revealed that 84-100% of poor households derived benefits such as food, fuel, fodder and fibre from common lands. By contrast, only 10-28% of large farmers used CPRs, and the benefits they accrued were fewer. Per household income from CPRs ranged from Rs 530 to Rs 830, depending on the region. Small, poor households benefited more than larger, richer households; common lands also serve as a safety net for the poor during periods of crop failure and uncertainty. Since returns for individual users from degraded lands are not much

for the rich, the poor, who have surplus labour and fewer opportunities, accept these low-paying options more readily. Harvesting of seasonal products and the opportunity to benefit from unskilled labour are additional factors that make the commons more attractive for the poor. In fact, the results indicate that CPRs contribute more to poor households than anti-poverty schemes in some of the areas that were evaluated. An analysis of monetary data from this study also suggests that CPRs play a role in reducing inequalities in income between classes. The results call for their inclusion in poverty alleviation and rural development exercises. One of the key findings of Jodha's work has been the documentation of the decline of CPRs. This refers not only to physical loss in terms of area, but also recorded declines in productivity and changes in status, ownership and governance. In the three decades following India's independence, the area under common lands declined by 26-63% in the dryland districts that were assessed. While population growth had a role to play, this decline was largely attributable to privatisation for the benefit of the poor as part of various welfare programmes. However, 49-86% of privatised lands ended up being allocated to farmers who were better endowed. In a majority of instances where land was given to the poor, they did not have additional resources to develop the land, nor were they provided any support to do so. As a result, much of the land was sold, mortgaged, remained fallow, or was leased on a long-term basis. The remaining common lands were overexploited resulting in declining productivity. These developments also have adverse consequences for drylands which are typically fragile ecosystems and hence prone to greater degradation and poor resilience. The decline in CPRs is often very closely paralleled by a decline in social capital (especially traditional institutions and mechanisms of governance).

The management of common property resources (CPRs) and its implication on environment, social equity and poverty has been well studied in India. There is a large number of empirical studies in India dealing with poverty, inequality and the dependence on rural households on CPRs (Jodha, 1985, 1986, 1990, 1995; Iyengar, 1989; Beck, 1994, 1998; Singh *et al.*, 1996; Iyengar and Shukla, 1999). There appears to be a general consensus that poorer households are dependent more on CPRs and consequently derive a high income from these resources. Studies from different States of India have found that CPRs contribute 0.1 per cent to 29 per cent of the income of poor households. For example, in Gujarat the average contribution of poor household lies between 0.1 per cent to 22 per cent (while for non-poor it is between 0.1 to 11.4 per cent), in Karnataka 10 per cent (for non-poor 6.2 per cent), in Punjab 22 to 27 per cent (for non-poor 22 per cent) and in West Bengal 19 to 29 per cent (for non-poor 0.13 to 5.62 per cent) (see Pasa, 1992; Beck, 1994, 1998; Jodha, 1985, 1986, 1990, 1995; Iyengar, 1989; Singh *et al.* 1996, Iyengar and Shukla, 1999).

Murty, M.N. (1994), in his paper, attempted to obtain the conditions for optimal sharing arrangement between governments and locals for the management of forestland. There were three options for the management of commons: (a) market, (b) government interference (regulation) and (c) voluntary collective action. The voluntary collective action could be an alternative to the market or to the government

interference, in the management of CPRs. In the developing countries, the limits to voluntary collective action were people's capabilities to harness the preserved commons and the fairness in the appropriation of benefits. According to him, the collective action was possible if an outside agency or the government played an enabling role in removing the above limits. The catalytic role of government was found in a regime of joint forest management by government and people in the developing countries including India.

The concepts of Efficiency, equity and social justice and CPRs

Efficiency is related to rates of use of the resource: excessive use leads to depletion or degradation, and the physical and technical characteristics of the resource often dictate some optimal rate of utilisation. Underutilisation is also inefficient. Evaluating efficiency in the use of communal grazing land is controversial. Some analysts have pointed out that high stocking rates make economic sense for multi-purpose herds, and have questioned the conventional criteria for assessing rangeland degradation (Sandford 1982; Scoones 1987; Abel and Blaikie 1989). **Equity**, which is contributed by social and economic factors, includes fair distribution of resources, rights, opportunities and wealth among people and over time. From the perspective of social justice, equity must attend to issues of fairness. In other words, the inclusion in decision making of those most affected by the proposed development intervention should be seen as social justice (Agarwal 2001; Kothari 1999). This definition is distinguished both from the notion of 'equality' where everyone receives the same benefit from a resource, and from a notion of 'equity' that suggests people get benefits according to the amount of their input in terms of labor, etc. Neither of these definitions takes justice into consideration. Rather, equity or fairness must take many other factors into consideration. Equity in resource management must consider the historical, cultural, social, economic, political and institutional forms of oppression that have produced marginalized people and inequitable conditions in the society. The management approaches of natural resource management must be devised to allocate more resources to disadvantaged groups so as to make the system as a whole more fair. Therefore, interventions, which seek equity and social justice, should devise ways to give marginalized groups more benefits.

The decentralized management of natural resources in the Indian context is possible only by recognizing the significance of the concerned local institution and by giving power to the grass root level. The local institutions meant for management of CPRs which has been ignored by development planning in the past (Ostrom *et al.*, 1988), has great relevance in sustainable resource use practices since they have developed within specific historical, cultural and ecological context (Berkes, 1989). Further, it is believed that only local people are, and can be, the best managing hands for their common resources. Though, the traditional local institutions have been replaced by the modern formal institutions, most of the rules and regulations are still based on the former one. Some of the VPs which has failed in managing their *Village Panchayats* (VPs) properly, agreed on the fact that weakness or lacunae exists within their institution (VPs) in term of illiteracy and lack of knowledge regarding government rules, official

processes and various programmes, lack of understanding and related conflicts within the institution etc.

Mohapatra KM, (2006) presented a suggestive model for the optimal utilization and sustainable development of CPRs through private- public participation, on the basis of Indian experience. The involvement of local people and communities in CPRs-management was expedient in order to attribute a realistic meaning to the grass-root management system. In the light of the latest National Environmental Policies, he proposed for a decentralized organizational structure such as SCRMO, DCRMO and VCRMO at the state, district, and village levels respectively, for the management of CPRs. At the each level, the organization should include both government and private representatives, and particularly, the village level organization should, inter-alia, include *panchayat* representatives. The functions of the village level common property resource management organization (VCRMO) were to be harmonized with that of village *Panchayats* so that the participation of the villagers and communities in CPRs management could be materialized. According to him, the managerial functions of the VCRMO should include three main aspects: (i) planning, (ii) operation and (iii) periodical assessment of resources and fixation of optimal limit for exploitation of a resource. In order to activate operational functions, the managers should take care of certain socio-economic problems of the inhabitants, which are largely associated with CPRs. These include the matter of accessibility of public to CPRs, terms and conditions for leasing of CPRs, local and community demand for CPRs, the problems of negative externalities of CPRs development, and so on. He described in detail the procedures of a periodical valuation of CPRs, the determination of the minimum reserve stock and optimal exploitation rate of a CPR, and the periodical investment requirement for a CPR.

Aim of the Study

The main objectives of the research paper are to

1. explain the importance of CPRs for rural development in Uttar Pradesh
2. Search out some feasible solutions to the problem of degradation of CPRs; and
3. Provide a suitable pragmatic model for effective management of CPRs.

To find the above objective I have used both primary and secondary data. On the basis of secondary data, the whole state of Uttar Pradesh is initially classified into two CPRs regions: CPRs abundant (rich) regions and CPRs scanty (poor) regions. CPRs –poor region on the basis of the percentage of CPRs land area to geographical area. We selected 6 districts from all three agro-climatic zones namely Middle Gangetic Plains (MG), Trance Gangetic Plains (TG) and Central Plateau and Hills (CHg) for our field survey. Three district namely Mirzapur, Khiri and Chitrakoot were chosen from CPRs-rich districts / regions another three district namely Sant Ravidas Nagar, Fatehpur and Hamirpur from CPRs-poor districts / regions. From these six Districts, six village panchyat were chosen for field survey. For the secondary information, the reports of the Population Census, Agricultural Census, NSS-reports, Statistical Abstracts, etc. is referred.

**Analysis of Management of Common Property Resources
Sustainable Development and CPRs Management**

In the context of sustainable development (SD), how should the CPRs be viewed? The dependency of Private Property Resources (PPR) on CPR is a major component of sustainable development. Going by the characterization of it, SD also requires maintaining CPRs in the interest of all generations to come. In other words, their sustenance should be linked to resilience, equity and then growth, and not the other way round (Figure-1.1).

Talking of equity, there is a very significant linkage between CPR and the poor. The poor people often depend significantly, upon the products of CPR. Good examples are collection of fuel wood, fodder and non-timber forest products, water (mainly public) and even public utilities such as public toilets and bathing places. The poor are not only the beneficiaries of CPRs, but also provide CPR inputs such as local knowledge and community labour. According to Jodha (1986) about 30 per cent of labour and small farmers in Rajasthan consume only CPR food items. In Madhya Pradesh this dependency is 50 per cent. In Rajasthan about 42 per cent of household income is from CPRs only. According to him, about 80 per cent of the rural poor depend on CPRs for food and almost 100 per cent for fuel, fodder and water.

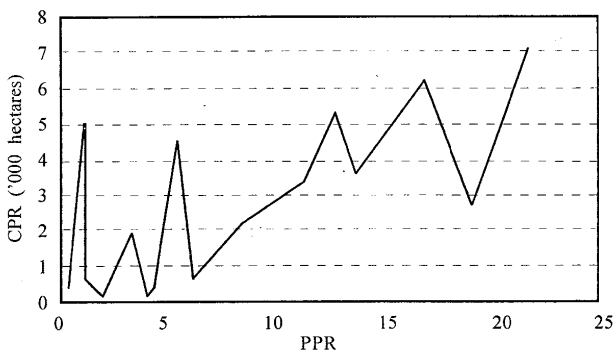


Figure 1.1 CPR-PPR Linkages ('000 hectares): State Level.

As far as development is concerned, according to the World Resources Institute (1990), nearly 500 million people in India depend upon non-timber forest products (NTFP) for their livelihood. According to one estimate NTEP collection generates about 1063 million man-days of employment in India. In other words, CPRs provide a significant component of income and growth of the masses.

Finally, CPRs can provide livelihood supports and resilience when the regular crop or other forms of income fail (due to droughts, floods, earthquakes etc.). During the periods of major droughts the poor tribals of Chhotanagpur plateau depended on local roots and tubers (locally called ghitti, a CPR product) grown in the forests and survived. In the 1987-88 drought period, grasslands (and not crop residues) saved millions of livestock in India.

Evolution of CPR Regime and Institutions

In the context of natural resource management with CPRs two questions emerge. First, when is a 'common property regime' relevant? Second, how does it emerge? These questions can be

answered if one looks at CPR from the point of view of both efficiency and sustainable institutions to manage them.

Can one view a CPR regime as a case of scale economies?

Here, both 'carrying capacity of the resource' and 'efficiency criteria' are to be considered. Consider for the moment, three alternative management regimes: Private, CPR and Open Access (leaving out for the moment 'state' as another alternative). As illustrated in Figure-1.2, considering land productivity as an indicator of efficiency, up to a level x, private ownership is preferable. Beyond x, CPR management has an edge over private management. Open Access is in any case, a fallout of failure of CPR or even private resource management and is least efficient.

Evolution of CPR institutions takes place, either when private resource management fail (in terms of cost efficiency) or because of scale advantages of the resource or when the 'state fails to manage the resource as a public good'. In the first instance, owners of private resources may even hand over or sell their small and marginal resources for creating CPRs. In the second instance of a large scale resource, they may ask the state to intervene to take over the resource for better management. Example of the first is pooling of small and fragmented private lands of low productivity to create a CPR institution. A good example of such a situation is the Chakriya Vikas Pranali, an institution operating in Bihar in which poor tribals and small farmers of Chhotanagpur regions have pooled their private lands to create a commonly pooled private resource. Example of the second is the state (or government) managing large irrigation systems, forest resources, and community grazing lands.

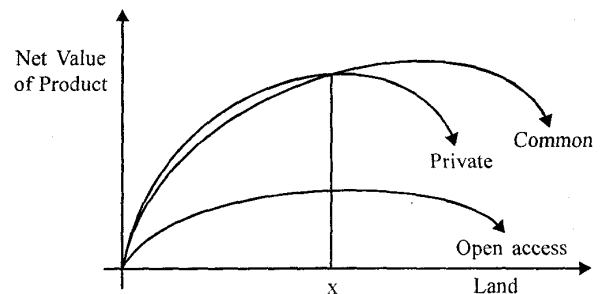


Figure 1.2 Efficiency of Land Use and Property Rights Regimes.

Thus, there are three broad strands of thought through which institutions have evolved to manage CPRs. First, historically traditional societies have evolved systems to manage them, through a process of conflicts, learning, and mechanisms to resolve them. That is how village republics have emerged in India and elsewhere (Wade, 1987). Basically, local conventions have prevailed to guide the use patterns of such resources. The tribals of India have always dealt with this issue in this evolutionary manner. The institution of shifting cultivation in north-eastern India is a good example. Second, come to the process of customary laws introduced by the government, empowering the local communities to enjoy several CPRs (for example, fuel wood, NTFP). For instance, the Indian National Forest Policy document of 1988 clearly recognizes the rights and concessions to tribals and locals regarding grazing lands, collection of non-timber forest products (NTFP) etc. The third strain of CPR institutions

emerges, whenever the market mechanism fails to manage and maintain, or failure on the part of the state to 'police' the public resources. Examples are the emergence of joint forest management (JFM) institutions introduced by various states in India (through legislation, an example of the state having failed to manage them as a public good) or the 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India, introducing Panchayat Raj institutions (PRIs).

Categorization of the States according to CPRs

For the purpose of CPRs management, categorization of the States according to CPRs availability in the State is as follows:

CPR as a percentage of geographical area range between 4 and 30 per cent in different states, barring such states as Himachal Pradesh, which are known to have protected forest CPRs. In the north eastern states and other hilly regions, the non-forest CPRs are relatively less. Three broad groups can be made on the basis of CPR intensities.

States where the CPR area is low, being less than or around ten per cent of geographical area: In this category are Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, **Uttar Pradesh**, West Bengal and Kerala. Punjab and Haryana have a high level of agricultural development. A larger percentage of land under private ownership and a low level of forest area per capita exists. Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh by virtue of being states comprising diverse agro-climatic zones exhibit the marginal characteristics.

States where the CPR area falls in the range of around ten to thirty per cent: A number of states such as Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Tripura.

The outliers with more than 30 per cent area under CPRs: Rajasthan has a CPR area of around 42 per cent not because of forest areas but by the nature of land use patterns. Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir oii account of being hilly states show varying characteristics. This is because of large areas of protected forests in Himachal Pradesh, which make the area under CPRs unduly high and similarly, large areas in the category of reserve forests exist in Jammu and Kashmir which decreases the CPR area to an unusually low level.

It is found that in a majority of the states, there has occurred a decrease in the land to which CPR rights exist. Per capita CPR land has also gone down. These decreases are more pronounced in the arid and semi-arid states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Rajasthan.

Most economic theories start off with a laissez-faire economy, without the government as another agency in the society. From the political science point of view, the government or the state has an important role to play in all economic decision making. What is the role of the government in environmental management? Government can act as an eminent domain; it can act as an enabling agent or benevolent state; or it can act purely as a policing state. In each of these situations there are some problems with the role of the state. if the state acts as an eminent domain, sometimes its action may conflict with social justice. For instance, a number of legal provisions are provided for the management of natural resources in India. Many of them, when actually implemented are against the interest of common people. As a benevolent state, the government may act in the interest of protecting the

environment for some time, but the strategy may not survive in the long run, unless the political system is also stable. As a policing state, it invariably fails to manage natural resources well. A new socio-political concept called participatory institutions, based on the principle of 'collective action' seems to hold some promise. Under this concept, the state, people and all other stakeholders are equal partners in decision-making, implementation and sharing the gains.

Participatory Institutions and Panchayat Raj

Management of natural resources in general and common property resources in particular qualifies for this participatory approach. It is an approach to reduce all possible friction between different agents or players in the social system in the management of public and common property resources. In economic terms, such a strategy can reduce several major costs in institutional management. They are bargaining costs, monitoring costs, enforcement costs, transaction costs and finally search or information costs. Generally, most of these costs are incurred in a market-oriented system. A reasonably acceptable definition of participation is as follows:

Participation is a process of initiation and continuation of an active process by which beneficiary/client groups influence the direction and execution of a development activity with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of personal income growth, self-reliance or the values they cherish, including equity (Samuel Paul, 1989).

The evolution of participatory institutions is not easy. The failures of participatory development in natural resource management can be attributed to several socio-political factors. The notable ones are:

- ✓ Lack of leadership to hold the community together
- ✓ Difficulty in imposing 'Governance' of the system
- ✓ Growing consumerism and increasing market influence
- ✓ State retaining its eminent domain by holding technology, finance,
- ✓ administrative and legal powers

The governance for participatory development will include rules on sharing the benefits, responsibilities and duties; transparency of the system; conflict resolution mechanisms; and complete self-governance.

Apart from a number of isolated success stories of community oriented natural resource management systems in India and elsewhere, one participatory development institution having a universal format is the so called Joint Forest Management (JFM). Indian JFM was initiated in 1990 with guidelines drawn from the National Forest Policy document of 1988:

The National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages peoples' involvement in the development and protection of forests. The requirements of fuel wood, fodder, and small timber such as house-building material, of the tribals and other villagers living in and near the forests, are to be treated as first charge on forest produce.

Till 1996-97 about sixteen states have implemented JFM (through legislation), with about ten to fifteen thousand participatory forest protection committees (FPC) covering about 1.5 million hectares of forest lands. The scheme is still at the initial stage of its universal implementation.

It is in this context that Panchayat Raj institutions (particularly after the 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India) can also be noted. The spirit of the act is participatory. The act confers considerable powers to the panchayats at different levels. These include (a) power to prepare and implement plans for economic development and social justice, (b) implementation of schemes entrusted to them by the state and the central governments and (c) exercise of powers as delegated in the subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule in the Constitution of India. Among many, the Eleventh Schedule includes maintenance of community assets, forestry, fuel and fodder, fisheries, water management, wastelands development, and soil conservation. However, Panchayat Raj does not fall in the category of participatory development in the strict sense.

Gender in management of CPRs: The gender issues are also crucial in managing and harvesting of CPRs. The formal and informal discussions with male and female groups of sampled villages revealed that the women folk have comparatively better knowledge regarding the management of CPRs and importance of different fodder, grass and fuel wood species, than their male counterparts. It has also been reported that the women could be better environmentalists than male (Gbadegesin, 1996). Usually, females in Indian central Himalayas become quite familiar with their forests and pastures from the childhood. Almost all the activities related to the forests, grass collection and agriculture operations are performed by the women, but their participation in term of effective and actual involvement in local Institutions as well as in decision making process at community level is almost negligible. Traditional community is dominated by male folk who do not allow their female counterpart to take active part in such matters by considering them socially, mentally and physically inferior. Participation of females as a member in six VPs in the study area is proportionately not satisfactory, whereas, in three VPs female participation do not exist.

**Common Resource Management Organizations (CRMOs):
A Pragmatic Model:**

The clause 5.6(a) of NEP-2004 stated for the formation of partnership of public, NGOs, private parties and communities for the purpose of management of natural resources. With reference to this clause, we propose for the formation of grass-root level organizations for managing common property resources. We call the above proposed organizations as 'Common Resource Management Organizations (CRMOs). CRMO is conceived as a particular form of organization which includes public servants, community's representatives and private persons as its active members, those who are committed to work together for the social welfare. The main objectives of CRMOs will be to (i) develop, preserve and maintain sustainability of CPRs; (ii) periodically assess the existing resources; (iii) determine the optimal level of a resource to be exploited for social uses and markets; (iv) decide the sections of the community those will have regulated access to CPRs; (v) look after the development of infrastructure base for the growth of CPRs; and (vi) maintain the accounts of CPRs.

In order to make the above proposed organizations operationally viable at grass-root level, their structural aspects should be harmonized with the existing 'Panchayat Raj'

systems; so that a large number of members of 'Panchayat Raj' who are the elected members, can participate in decision making for CPRs management. This is to be done by inducting some elected representatives of panchayats as active members of CRMOs.

The main advantages to CRMOs by inducting elected panchayat members are as follows. Firstly, CRMOs can have easy access to CPRs lying under the purview of village panchayats and different communities. Secondly, CRMOs can get strong support from villagers through their elected representatives to panchayats. Thirdly, the village level leaders have a detailed knowledge about the location of CPRs lying under a village jurisdiction, and they have also knowledge about poor households depending on these resources. Being the members of CRMOs, they can give correct information and suggestions, which will be much useful for the resource management. Lastly, many poverty-alleviating schemes relating to natural common resources such as a fore piciculture, etc., which usually pass through 'Panchayats', can be integrated with the functions of CRMOs.

A three-tier system of CRMOs is proposed in view of decentralizing the power and increasing management efficiency (Figure-1.3). One setup shall be at state level [SCRMO], one at district level [DCRMO] and last one at the village panchayat level [VCRMO]. The State Common Resource Organization (SCRMO) will consist of stakeholders drawn from the Ministry of Forest and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, State Pollution Control Board Private Bodies and NGOs. Its main functions should be the fund generation and the policy decision making for the growth, preservation and sustainable utilization of CPRs. The investment decision shall be taken by SCRMO. A district level common resource management organization (DCRMO) being an intermediate body shall implement and execute the policy decisions at village-panchayat level, and collect grass-root level information and communicate the same to SCRMO. A DCRMO should consist of members such as district collector, tehsildars, block development officers, chairman of panchayat samiti, bank officers, educationalists, and so on. The DCRMOs will also have supervisory and coordination functions.

The real managerial functions are entrusted to village-panchayat level organizations (i.e. CRMOs). A VCRMO will have two separate bodies named as Members Council (MEC) and Managerial Council (MAC). MEC will consist of members such as panchayit pradhan/ sarpanch of the concerned village, village ward members, representatives of disadvantaged sections, school teachers, VLW, student representatives and so on. These people are presumed to be more aware of the nature, availability and benefit of CPRs in their vicinity. They can supply correct information and realistic views for the growth and preservation of CPRs. The main functions of MEC shall be to help the MAC in implementing policies and managing CPRs at its jurisdiction; and to supply realistic information to the higher bodies for assessment of policies and amendment or revision of policies if necessary. The entire managerial functions are entrusted to MAC. Keeping in view of inadequacy of CPRs in one panchayat, a cluster of panchayats' resources can be pulled together under one VCRMO.

The CRMOS should be viewed as non-profit organizations. They should be run on no-profit and no-loss basis. The profit motive may lead the organizations to over-exploitation of resources. The costs such as managerial costs, capital costs, wages and other form of transaction costs are to be covered up by generating income periodically from only marketable CPRs.

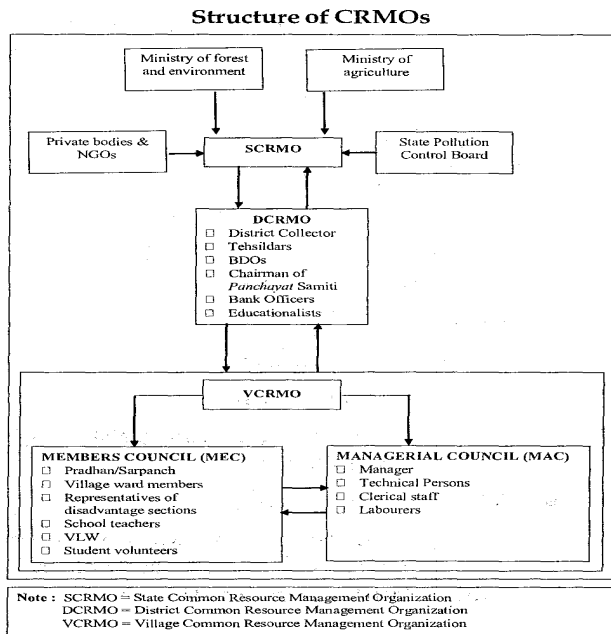


Figure-1.3 Structure of CRMOS

Management of CPRs with the Help of CRMOS

Survey and classification of total CPRs

In order to know about total stock of natural and semi-natural common property resources, including wasteland areas, an initial survey of these resources by panchayat/village wise is necessary. Since the official records of these resources are available with 'tahsildars', village panchayats and forest department of the government, the competent persons from these offices can be called upon, and deployed to cooperate and help CRMOS for conducting the survey and identifying the resource areas. If there is a case of illegal occupancy or any litigation case on CPRs, that must be amicably solved at the administrative and judicial levels.

Total natural and common property resources can be classified initially by their nature and further, by their quality.

Classification by Nature of CPRs

The Following types of Natural/ CPRs are Available in Indian Villages

- ✓ Forests (reserved/protected)
- ✓ Hills/rocky areas/mountains
- ✓ Rivers/rivulets/ falls/ springs
- ✓ Lakes
- ✓ Sea/sea beach areas
- ✓ Community/social forests
- ✓ Common grazing lands/ pastures/permanent fallows
- ✓ Village ponds, tanks, etc.

- ✓ Village orchards/parks/common worship places/common recreational places/ village cremation & burial grounds
- ✓ Village school area, playgrounds, village libraries, etc.
- ✓ Village road side areas
- ✓ Forest wastelands

Non-forest wastelands: salt affected land, waterlogged land, marshy/ swampy land, gullied/ravine land, land with and without scrub, sandy area, barren, stony and sheet rock area, mining and industrial waste area, snow covered area, desert area, etc.

Thus, sustainable management of CPRs can ensure sustainable development of Indian economy particularly rural development of India.

Implications of Common Property Resource Management

Management of Common Property Resource have many social and economic implications. It has guaranteed the continuous supplies of natural resources that are essential for subsistence economy of rural people. It has constituted a mechanism of social control to protect common property resources. Individual exploitation is kept in check and local common resources are protected from destruction by individual beneficiaries. It is not only equitable but is based upon a number of considerations, such as family needs, communal responsibility, respect and welfare (Shrestha 1990). In a proper common property management system, each household can meet their basic needs of timbers, fodders and fuel-woods without destroying or regenerating their resource bases. Joint ownership provides checks and balances to prevent over harvestings by illegal means, such as stealing, commercializing, etc. It also provides incentives and motivates people to protect their forest resources. Sustainable CPRs management contributes directly to the profitability and sustainability of both agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises. Poor management of CPRs can have detrimental consequences for rural infrastructure of economic development and health of rural people (Uphoff 1986). Common property management has policy implications as well. The diversified and differentiated property management practiced by the local people have several positive effects in managing the use patterns- availability, distribution, and conflicts associated with forest and pasture resources and should be supported and strengthened rather than replaced with a monolithic or exclusively private system of ownership (Acharya 1990). Local system of CPRs management should be identified and recognized by the policy makers and planners for the effective and equitable resource management. Local systems of resource management are effective, enduring and productive. They are locally preferred approaches and therefore they should be supported and strengthened. The blueprint approach cannot fit into complex local situations. Planners and policy makers should appreciate the social reality. This is what a social scientist can tell planners and policy makers about the management and maintenance of common property resources.

All common property resource management involves multiple individuals and groups beyond the social group that holds the resource in common. Stakeholders may include national government ministries, district government officials, commercial extraction interests, local communities, or

international NGOs. These groups have different powers and interests with respect to the CPR. The authority that the social group actually holds over the resource it manages is contingent on its relations with these outside stakeholders, who may wield significant control over management decisions. Claims of political neutrality or scientific expertise may increase outsider control. Also, taxation, regulation or market power may allow outside groups to control a significant portion of the benefits generated by the resource.

Community based natural resource management involves a number of independent actors at the national and local levels and their social, economic and political interests drive their actions where a power relations keep dominating the poor and marginalized. However, most professionals involved in facilitating such community based resource management programme are trained in technical and environmental issues, and are not well equipped to analyze such social, economic and political issues.

There is at present no forum at both the national and local levels, whereby each actor is allowed to present their case for discussion. It means the poor and marginalized have no opportunity to put their issues. The local elites capture most of the local forums and the bureaucrats and donors capture the national forum. The neutral forum should focus on positive discrimination, where the poor and marginalized get priority in fulfilling their livelihood needs that ensures the equity and social justice for them.

The governance and the role of civil society have been key concepts in development. Therefore, the policy processes need to encourage the presence of multiple network of civil engagement that through learning process facilitate for mutual benefit. Such civic engagement will put pressure to those in power to be more responsive and accountable to citizens, particularly the poor and marginalized.

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