

## **Chapter-8**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In the present work we have tried to put across an analysis of the nature of management of natural resources in India against the context of participation and empowerment of the community and specifically the women. In a way the women in CBNRM is gendered, seen either as extension of domestic into the non-domestic, as bound up with family obligations, situated with limited mobility in neighborhood setting, being given an opportunity to improve their livelihood opportunities within a structured existence. The further stress on natural resource management is sustained by both the familiar 'ethics of care' made popular by 'Difference Feminism' where woman is seen as more suitable than man as nourisher and care giver, duly supported by the historical evidence of early division of work post hunting-gathering stage where women by way of necessity invented agriculture, and the more contemporary conservationist argument: create an interest in conserving ecosystem and not simply in depleting it for fulfilling daily needs of fuel, food, fodder and fiber. Added to these, CBNRM by women is also supported by a current favorite strategy of poverty reduction, a pro-poor and safety net argument, because of the privileging of small-scale insiders (labor intensive, surpluses retained locally, maximization of internal trade transactions) to the exclusion of outside capital (which would lead to mechanization, loss of artisanal jobs, enclosure, privatization, export of profits and re-investment elsewhere). The policy thrust on CBNRM by women is also supported on many other grounds: the benefits of the small, efficient resource use and allocation, locally appropriate technologies and the successful application of indigenous technical knowledge (ITK), because local ecological specificities can be addressed by local experience and experimentation, adaptive agricultural practice,

wildlife and hunting practices and forest use, local farmer networks etc. our brief was not to scrutinize the soundness of all these arguments or to do the same for the less friendly arguments which admit livelihood generating potential of CBNRM projects without any considerable conservation or ecological gain or find problems with project sustainability once the scheme based support is withdrawn. Our primary interest was in the nature and extent of women's empowerment through SHG formation in natural resource management projects. We had a related interest in the institutional aspects too, to see how the PPP model was fairing in the context of CBNRM. Through the present study we seem to have developed some clear ideas in these matters. More specifically we may say that our main hypotheses were found to be both relevant and not aside by wide margin. But before we proceed along this line let us have a quick summary of the previous chapters.

In Chapter-1 entitled 'Introductory Remarks' we introduced the main dimensions of our study. Engaging in a discussion on the contested notion of development, the chapter brought out the research problem. The general problem that this study sought to address was one of understanding the reasons behind the success of women-specific community based natural resource management in India which is reportedly successful in generating livelihood resources and unsuccessful in ensuring sustainability, understating different layers of success and failure, the associated political ecological factors, role of institutions, practices, and entrenched values -- to seek the overt and covert ways in which success and failure are defined, dispersed, claimed, disclaimed, maintained, confiscated, channeled, subdued, co-opted, cross-linked, truncated, multiplied, paralyzed over especially in the context of CBNRM as practised in North Bengal. A brief review of literature was introduced there that focussed on the discourses surrounding man/nature and

women/nature relationship. A brief review was also carried out on community based natural resource management in India in order to disentangle and highlight the research gap and to generate research objectives and questions. It was found that there has not been any attempt to inquire into the gender aspects of increasing practices of Public Private Partnership in India, particularly in relation to CBNRM, to understand the nature of gains that have accrued to women through such practices in relation to overall emphasis on Public Private Partnership in India. While some attention have been drawn to generation of livelihood supports to women through community based projects detailed micro-level studies have not been undertaken to compare purely line agency sponsored projects, purely NGO driven projects and those made under Public –Private Partnership to understand the conditions of success or failure and the terms of such success and failures. Generally CBNRM studies have focused on their livelihood aspects or on sustainability aspects but seldom gains and losses have been evaluated in terms of political empowerment, self reliance and independence of the members of such communities despite the fact that in many cases the communities have shown to have developed a new political capacity to secure and enlarge their control over their livelihood and immediate environment. Moreover, no study existed on the CBNRM practices in North Bengal. Therefore the research work attempted not only to understand the nature of PPP that exists in the domain of CBNRM but also relate the findings with empowerment of women in general. The study has been framed within the broad framework of feminist political ecology and thought it suits our problem better if we align with Critical Theory's concern with Praxis and particularly the project of Habermas in search of some kind of objective grounding. The methodology that the study employed is diverse ranging from qualitative methods, methodological trends adopted by CISED on CBNRM in their team

based researches on specific projects, Critical theoretical perspectives on Praxis and a constructivist approach. Tools like interview method, participant observation method and focus group discussions were used in the field trip that was conducted.

The Chapter 2 entitled, 'Participation and Empowerment: Situating Community Based Natural Resource Management by Women' is essentially a theoretical chapter where we have discussed the various discourses and positions surrounding the concept of 'community'. Community as a concept has undergone major changes and from an understanding of it as a closed category, we are now in the era of globalization, possessing multiple identities, regard it more as an open concept, a fluid and a relational category. With the development of feminism/s the concept went through further changes and evolved as a contextualized contingent category. Within the neoliberal agenda of development social capital has become one of the key determinants in the facilitation of development. Community therefore is both a Life-world where we do things and a system set up in pursuit of living where instrumental rationality prevails. When therefore a few people are brought together under a 'scheme' or 'project' with definite targets and careful selection of procedures a 'Community' of a different kind is created. Women in CBNRM projects can be seen in community terms. Within this community we have tried to understand the nature of participation and empowerment and their connections to other aspects of society, economy and polity. Discussion on the concept of participation in the context of CBNRM led us to devise an evolved typology of participation. The concept of empowerment is intertwined with the concept of participation. Our engagement with the concept of empowerment and a critical review of the literature on it again brought out certain limitations in the established understanding of the concept of empowerment. It emerged that participation not

necessarily leads to empowerment , if it fails to influence decisions or remains confined to a narrow isolated human interest, money or power for example. Scholars like Agarwal(1997) point out more the empowerment and decision link. Following Habermas' model of deliberative democracy, we have tried to propose a model on participation empowerment praxis through which we have attempted to understand different axes of participation and levels of empowerment across these axes. As evidence for the existence of common property management grew, attention shifted to mapping out the conditions under which collective action would take place. A resource that is to be managed or improved collectively should be accessible to group members to facilitate control and exclusion of outsiders, and small enough for a group, or possibly a federation of groups. Scholars like Davis and North(1971) and Ostrom(1994) have tried to figure out the underlying principles that facilitate such collective action. Not only this our discussion also pointed to the nature of the role of the state on the one hand and the reasons behind an overwhelming acceptance of CBNRM as desirable and workable especially by women. CBNRM practices are desirable by women because of women's dependence/closeness to nature, the various dimensions of which were discussed in the chapter. What followed was the designing of a new model of development ---SHG-PPP and CBNRM. SHGs have been successful in generating an empowering culture as people get trained better within the environment of collective learning. The groups promote a democratic culture and provide the members with opportunities to imbibe norms of behaviour that are based on mutual respect. The SHGs foster an "intrapreneurial" culture where each member realises that while she/he needs the support of the group to achieve her/his objectives, the group also in turn requires her/his support in adequate measure. The groups provide a firm base for dialogue and cooperation in

programmes with other institutions like Government departments, cooperatives, financial and Panchayat Raj institutions; if the groups are functioning well, they have the credibility and the power to ensure their participation in identifying, planning, budgeting, and implementation of Panchayat Raj programmes for the empowerment of the poor. The groups create a dialogic space between the women who operate in a collectivity, the governmental agencies and the non governmental agencies which definitely creates an enabling environment where women can participate and influence decisions in the context of CBNRM.

In Chapter 3 entitled 'Theory & Practice: Community Based Natural Resource Management in India', we discussed the rationale of the Government of India to introduce a shift in their policy on natural resource, from governance to management on the one hand and from government controlled development to participatory development. Since the 1990s there has been an incorporation of the livelihoods framework within these practices especially in the arena of rural development. The rediscovery of community management albeit with an amicable settlement with an acceptance of government control evolved in India not just within the discourses generated by social movements on alternative path to development but also in the government policy papers. The reason was not too far to seek, the failure of rural development programmes to generate livelihood security, depletion of natural resources alongwith environmental crisis and the conflictual positioning of the people with the government line agencies and departments in matters of natural resource governance. Several institutional reforms were taken up in order to develop a synergy between state and society on the one hand and design a better governance system for natural resources. Since 1970s government in India designed social forestry programmes in India with the intention of providing fuel and fodder

for the poor in the villages around the reserved forest reserves. However, the programme failed to achieve its desired goal because of its lack of farsightedness and failure to generate sustainable livelihood and equity. The programmes benefited the rich and not the poor (Shiva et al 1981; Krishna 1996) . Moreover, the orientation of the governmental machinery was elitist and patriarchal that further excluded the marginalized category within a community (Krishna 1996). The government failed to understand the symbiotic relationship that existed between the environment and the people. By 1980s the realization dawned on the government that community participation was necessary for a sustainable natural resource management. It has been a learning and an evolving process as it has emerged in our discussion on the different issues, starting from the shift in the assumption of the existence of a homogeneous community to the acceptance of the heterogeneous and the fluid nature of the community. Moreover, the relationship of women vis a vis nature has been understood from different positions, the understandings of which have colored the situationality of women in relation to natural resource management policies, strategies and above all the practices. The division of labour that exist in India are actually a cultural construct rather than determined by biology( Fernandes and Menon 1987; Nathan and Kelkar 1991). Infact as the discussion proceeds we understand that women's experiences are contextualised and are different in differeing contexts. Against this backdrop what emerged was a debate regarding the best possible way to NRM practice in India, whether Government should collaborate with the NGOs and encourage community participation; given the heterogeneity that exists within community/ies should SHGs be encouraged especially in case of women's participation! Moreover, given the reality that some CBNRM practices are successful whereas some are not, we felt that it was necessary to probe the

enabling/disabling factors in some select cases of CBNRM in India. The results hinted at the locational socio-political arrangement and the presence of certain critical factors that either led to success or failure of the CBNRM practices.

The chapter 4 was entitled Public-Private Partnership, Women and Community Based Natural Resource Management in India. In this chapter we focussed essentially on the new type of governance that has emerged and successfully entered the different realms starting from infrastructure, to health, to natural resource management. This new form of governance, PPP hinges on a partnership between government on the one hand and private sector operators on the other. With the reinvention of government and the shift in the role of the government from control to supervision, collaboration, coordination etc., there also emerged diverse conceptualizations and practices of PPP in different fields. The definition of PPP therefore has also reflected these changing understandings as the nature of partnership varied from situation to situation. This reality has made scholars like Roy Widdus (2001) and Buse and Waxman (2001) view partnerships as "social experiments". Without an understanding of how power operates within these structures any analysis would be a superficial one which prompted us to look into the various understandings of power with a special focus on a feminist understanding of power and probe into how power influences discourse and thereby the decision of who gets what, when and how. Schmidt(2002) points out in this connection that discourse has the potential to change the ruling values and ideas, performing a cognitive and a normative function. As Schmidt argues, discourse must also show "how the policy serves to build on long standing values and identity while creating something new...more appropriate than the old public philosophy (ibid: 221). Although no grand theory exists on PPP but analysis of partnership could be found

being discussed in the literature on network governance. Network governance especially in the field of environmental governance, emerged as an answer to the complex environmental problems on the one hand and the presence of diverse actors like NGOs, the private sector, scientific networks and international institutions in the performance of various functions of governance on the other (Dedeurwaerdere, T. 2005). It operates by linking up the interests of all the stakeholders and directing them towards a common goal. PPP initiatives in India has been in operation from the past but this was given a major support especially after the 1991 economic reforms when it was the desirable way to realize the new demand for a participatory empowering development. In the domain of natural resource governance we have been able to delineate five major perspectives that have been put into operation in diverse policies and programmes undertaken by the government. Amidst the environmental crisis that India faced, it was but an imperative that India redesign her frame of natural resource management and engage in a partnership with the local community not as passive beneficiaries and implementors of governmental directives but as empowered partners. The emergence of SHGs as vehicles of self employment generation has provided a way out for the government. The initial objective as can be seen in the 9<sup>th</sup> Plan document was to reach credit to the poor but with the gradual success of this model, it was felt that SHGs could be used to realize sustainable participatory development. SHGs were now felt as the vehicle for not only generation of sustainable livelihoods but also facilitate governance. Therefore, with this objective the various departments under the Government of India has promoted and involved SHGs in the process of participatory development and governance. Partnership between the government and the SHGs was devised as a strategy to facilitate participatory governance and development. In this schemata NGOs

emerged as the third node in the partnership, as a catalyst in the new set up. NGOs emerged as the facilitators in the partnership, training, forming groups and coordinating between the community and the government departments. This strategy has been well accepted as can be witnessed by the stress of the government on this strategy in the different Plan documents as well in the designing of various government development programmes.

The chapter 5 was entitled 'The Line Agencies and Community Based Natural Resource Management: Programmes and Schemes with Special Reference to West Bengal'. The Chapter narrated the reasons behind the emergence of SHGs as a strategy for participatory development on the one hand and livelihood generation on the other. Another goal gets added to this in the context of NRM practices --- the goal of sustainable and equitable development. In India the different plan documents especially after the 9<sup>th</sup> plan, have been suggesting the strengthening of the concept of SHG led development and incorporation and use of this strategy in various government policies and programmes and in diverse fields. Basically SHGs had emerged as institutions of microfinance but gradually it spread to other areas especially after the realization of the potential of this group based approach to development. SHGs were linked to banks and it was found that the strategy bore twin powerful results, it generated better employment generation and empowerment of the poor, and, on the other it facilitated better penetration of the banking sector in the grassroot. However, it was found that the stability of the group was a problem and this led to the emergence of a new partnership between the banks, SHGs and the NGOs and government line agencies, SHGs and NGOs on the other. Different context specific patterns of linkages emerged throughout the country. In West Bengal NGOs emerged, with regard to their relationship with the SHGs as facilitators and catalyst in the process of implementation of

government programmes related to CBNRM on the one hand and on the other as trainers and agents for community building exercise and generating effective social capital.

The chapter 6 was entitled 'Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Natural Resource Management: Select Case Studies with Special Reference to North Bengal'. The chapter focussed on the nature of the NGO activities in the field of CBNRM in India. NGOs have been instrumental in the grassroots acting as financial intermediaries/ facilitators/ implementors of different developmental programmes and have taken up issues of social justice. Generally, the approach they adopt is based on the projects the NGOs get to implement from the government/donor agencies. But they also undertake bottom-up strategies depending on the level of empowerment and awareness existing within the community. NGOs operate either independently on their own in project implementation or the bigger NGOs contract out projects to, or collaborate with, local/smaller NGOs who operate as the agents/in collaboration with the bigger NGOs. Within the new model of partnership arrangement for governance on the one hand and involving the community not as passive beneficiaries but as actors on the other, NGOs have occupied the space of a catalyst in the developmental process. Within the triadic arrangement the critical third angle has been occupied by the NGOs whereas the other two has been taken up by the Government and the people. The chapter has undertaken a brief review of some NGOs who are active in natural resource management and working in India and in West Bengal in particular. In the process we have noticed that NGOs with their experience at the grassroots and their innovation have been able to generate successful CBNRM practices, practices where they have been able to involve women as well. They have involved the women SHGs by training them and facilitating and coordinating between the groups and the government line agencies.

The various governmental schemes run by different departments for generating development, are implemented not only by the government but also in collaboration with the NGOs. This has also been reflected in the field study conducted by us in some select regions of North Bengal.

The chapter 7 entitled 'In the Field' was concerned with CBNRM practices of some select regions of the three districts---- Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur, situated in the northern part of the state of West Bengal. The region is popularly known in government and other circles as North Bengal. The field study was conducted through the mode of participant observation, administration of structured schedules, focus group discussions and informal discussions with the relevant officials at the government and nongovernment level. The results generated through the survey indicated that the conditions for enhancing participation and empowerment do not exist equally in all the regions. As the WBHDR(2004) shows the HDR rating of Uttar Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri are lower as compared to Dakshin Dinajpur, it is also subsequently found that in the district of Dakshin Dinajpur governmental programmes and schemes are better implemented than the other two districts. However, in adverse conditions also it has been found that NRM programmes operated better in empowerment terms in the backward districts with the existence of a NGO as a facilitator. It has not only generated participatory development but has been able to spread it over to the domain of empowerment of women in general.

We may at this stage recall our first hypothesis:

CBNRM will continue to be marginal for overall security of women and environmental sustainability so long as they are formed and shaped under the logic of current nature of neo-liberal development strategy. Since PPP represents

more an extension of neo-liberal strategy of development CBNRM would form a weak component of PPP and is likely to be gendered as well.

We now have several evidence in support of this conjecture. The NGOs are more visible in advocacy area than in developmental areas in India. The same is true in the districts that we covered in our study. NRM projects, despite the weight of arguments in their favor, seem to have a low priority compared to other asset building (like IAY) or livelihood generating projects, such as NREGS. In fact an insignificant portion of schemes under SGSY are concerned with NRM. We had a hard time segregating NRM projects at Block Level from non NRM projects. This low priority on CBNRM is visible through the absence of any national programme on CBNRM or in the absence of any systematic database on CBNRM projects in India. If CBNRM is conceived merely as a component of the substitution programme to offset the unequal outcome of market economy one can understand that it may not attract comparable attention to those programmes that can show results in a short time such as food subsidy or wage related programme. Sustainable development is mostly tipped in favor of growth rather than conservation of resource and CBNRM, in so far as its conservation aspect is concerned, is already at a disadvantage.

Our field study has largely supported the second hypothesis :

CBNRM under certain local Conditions, environmental, political, socio-cultural etc. and involvement of appropriate change agents may lead to women's greater control over their lives and immediate environment.

In our study women were generally found to have considered NRM projects as being successful in ensuring better livelihood opportunities than they would have got without these projects.

Women in general admitted better time management between household work and project work, their own little adaptation of different techniques, a point highlighted by a line of argument favorable to CBNRM, the benefits of the small: efficient resource use and allocation, locally appropriate technologies and the successful application of indigenous technical knowledge (ITK). Several case studies by us reported that activities through SHGs helped the members gain popularity and leadership qualities and raised their expertise. Many active members also became NGO personnel, Resource Persons for Gram Panchayat or even Gram Pradhan. Some members belonging to BPL category were seen to have sent their wards to private English medium schools. This was in line with the familiar argument CBNRM can initiate a benign cycle of effective participation, empowerment and the development of political confidence and expertise

The third hypothesis was not directly supported by our study not because it was incorrect, but because we do not seem to have necessary theoretical framework to evaluate the nature and extent of empowerment. The hypothesis was this:

Even when CBNRM projects fall short of goals defined in terms of system rationality it may be quite adequate in empowerment terms defined in regulative and aesthetic norms and hence revealing the tensions among different types of rationality.

As far as systemic goals are concerned certainly CBNRM projects were found to have held out great hope to poor women. Many were found to have augmented their income, started regular savings and developed entrepreneurship of limited kind. Many developed political base in their SHG network and in fact in our field study we found a high correlation between economic and political

empowerment. The conservationist goal was hard to evaluate but subjectively at least women were found to be more concerned about ecological balance as their economic well being was tied to the pool of natural resources. But our study also revealed the structural and contingent obstacles, poor literacy factor, and lack of training of advanced kind, poor infrastructure and red tapes, explaining poor outcomes in systemic terms.

What our study revealed however was that the conceptual constructs need to be modified especially in the context of evaluating the empowerment implications of CBNRM projects. The case studies offered a rich texture of practices where along with the instrumental reasons regulative and expressive dimensions were also present. The women seemed to have developed a new subjective awareness of their selves in relation to fellow members, occasionally developing new norms and bringing out their aesthetic interests in designing gardens, harvesting or their patterns of living. Multitasking seems to have been more rewarding economically and constructively developed. Several case studies conducted by us reported that active members spread out from basic NRM project; say a piggery, to nursery, vermicomposting, floriculture or mushroom cultivation. Lack of literacy wherever present was perceived to be a genuine difficulty to activities necessary for project work, like banking activities and record keeping. But in many cases the groups were seen smothering out the hitches as one liberate member would complement the excellent management skill of an illiterate partner. We felt the need for further theoretical work as a basis for more relevant study women's empowerment through CBNRM. We have tried to construct a model looking at participation and empowerment as praxis. In the proposed model we have divided the areas of Praxis (Man and Nature) into three domains---Scientific/Technical, Regulative and Expressive. The areas of Participation under Scientific/Technical have

been divided into two categories—System and Nature and System and Society (that comprises economy and polity) . The Domain of Empowerment under System and Nature is Truth/Fact and under System and Society is Money/Power. The areas of Participation under Regulative is the System (System means a set of relationships abstracted for analysis with a predefined concept or goal.) and Life world (life world constitutes the site where people do things) and the Domain of Empowerment under this is Justice/Norms. Participation can be seen in instrumental terms , related to power in political System or related to money in economic system , and also in regulative terms, say in Life World, where people in producing their means of existence also produce and participate in norms-building or work within a 'just' set of relationships. Participation can also be seen in expressive terms in society where people do not just do things but do it the way they like or value, a matter of aesthetics that is related to their expressive interests. Participation therefore is multidimensional along the aspects of reason. Empowerment then can be seen along these axes of facts, norms and aesthetics where participation is positively linked to it. Neither participation, nor empowerment would be comprehensive if we consider them in instrumental terms alone. Moreover such dominance of instrumental reason constrains both participation and empowerment, as it is under the condition of systematically distorted communication. We found that in a setting like CBNRM the idealizing presuppositions have an operative effect on actual discourse: we may regard outcomes (both consensual and non-consensual) as reasonable only if our scrutiny of the process does not uncover obvious exclusions, suppression of arguments, manipulation, self-deception, and the like. Investment in poor people's assets and capabilities on a large scale requires changes in opportunity structures within which the poor people pursue their interests. This involves the removal of formal and

informal institutional barriers that prevent the poor from taking effective action to improve their well being---individually or collectively---limiting their choices. It also implies the need for changes in social and political structures that perpetuate unequal power relations.

We found also that CBNRM projects need to be developed more flexibly. SHGs in Forest Villages or forest fringe villages of Jalpaiguri district were found to have problems with projects for which environment was inhospitable. The absence of land rights and threat from wildlife proved to be genuine obstacles. Elephant raids to paddy fields are common, particularly in Boro-Crop season. Even poultry was difficult to run due to leopard attacks. But the members' spirit was high and they achieved considerable success with apiary and mushroom cultivation and often black pepper plantation along with bettlenut plantation. In Dinajpur districts therefore agriculture based projects and animal husbandry could be main types of NRM projects.

Our field study made another disturbing dimension clear to us. The typical way of measuring success or failure of departmental activities on the achievement of targets in quantitative and formal terms often goes against the nurturing need for promoting a new kind of community initiative that is CBNRM. In our case studies in Jalpaiguri forest areas such as Poro Basti we found a whole SHG group under SGSY ultimately taken over by the Forest Department in Damanpur Range for exhibiting their own Departmental work without working for new group creation. In a reverse instance an SHG initially formed by the Forest Department lost its motivation due to management and support problems and ultimately moved under SGSY. Sustainability is often found lacking in NRM projects but this may not always be intrinsic to NRM. In case of Jalpaiguri Forest Department surely failed as a facilitator.

As for PPP we seemed to have found a positive facilitating role of NGOs in CBNRM projects. In our field study Kalchini Block in Jalpaiguri district provided a setting where we could compare both Government managed SHGs and NGO (LKP) managed SHGs. In Kalchini Average Scores NGO managed SHG members was 71.08 compared to Average Scores of Overall Empowerment status of Government managed projects which was 60.2. It was found that Subsidy component was crucial for supporting NRM but not sufficient alone. NABARD projects lacked subsidy component and were generally found to be stagnating in our case studies. However subsidy which is an integral feature of Forest department's projects and SGSY projects did not ensure livelihood benefits or sustainability uniformly. Our study clearly shows that CBNRM should be viewed in much broader terms than in the narrow confines of its origin which are perceived to be rooted in concerns for wildlife resources. It is noted that rural livelihoods and the environments that support them are complex. This complexity can not be captured by a focus on economic benefits of CBNRM alone; it needs to include both tangible and intangible benefits.

Last but not the least, CBNRM deserved to be considered more seriously for amelioration of poverty, maintenance of biodiversity and women's empowerment. In India poverty zones are mostly in rural areas many of which areas are rich in mineral resources or rich biodiversity hotspots and endemic zones of gender discrimination. A national scheme for PPP based CBNRM allowing for necessary flexibility for adaptation to diverse agro-climatic and ecological settings is the need of the hour. We also feel the need for greater NGO participation in tandem with governmental line agencies for CBNRM practices. Nobody today has a recipe for success in the theory and practice of development. But more or less everybody agrees to the need of breaking the vicious cycle of low participation

on the one hand and inequality and impoverishment on the other. The cycle can be broken at any point by incremental change either at the level and nature of participation or at the level of reduction of poverty and inequality, leading to corresponding change in the other, in a mutually reinforcing way. If so, then CBNRM with proper catalytic agency, holds a great promise as a priority area of policy intervention.