

## PREFACE

The UN Forum on forests has always recognized the strong role of Indigenous Peoples in achieving sustainable forest management. In 2007, the Forum adopted the Non-Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI) on all types of forests, the first ever inter-governmental instrument on sustainable forest management for enhanced access to forest resources and relevant support to the livelihoods of forests dependent local and indigenous communities, living in and outside forest areas. The IUFRO (The International Union of Forest Research Organizations, French) promotes global cooperation in forest-related research and enhances the understanding of the ecological, economic and social aspects of forests and trees. It disseminates scientific knowledge to stakeholders and decision-makers and contributes to forest policy and on the ground forest management. IUFRO's vision is of science-based sustainable management of the world's forest resources for economic, environmental and social benefits.

Here the District Alipurduar, situated in the northern eastern part of West Bengal has international borders with Bhutan and Bangladesh in the north and south respectively. The forest of Alipurduar, assign its significance roll in the international context for providing shelter and protection to various species of wildlife along with forest villagers as it has huge forests cover in respect of the West Bengal and India. This research work can be compared the socio-economic and livelihood status of forest villagers as well as activities of JFM prevailing in Alipurduar, with the other countries of the world. The position of socio-economy of forest villagers as well as activities of JFM can be marked out in respect of international context. Therefore, this research work has international importance and may be assists worldwide interaction with poly makers, administrators, and others forest participatory activity concerned. So this research work has international values and will help in proper documentation of management level of forest for sustainable livelihood of society. Nationally the Alipurduar District has got a great credence being one of the important forest cover district in India where National protected areas include the Buxa National Park (which includes the Buxa Tiger Reserve), the Gorumara National park and part of the Jaldapara National Park and unclassed forests are located.

There are numerous forest villages around these forests and these settlements are growing continuously by extracting forest resource in the uncontrolled and unsustainable way which is considerable matter for national level environmentalists. Therefore forest covered area of Alipurduar District which constitute near about 9.86 % of West Bengal's forest cover land is an important subject matter of considerations in environmental issues along with sustainable livelihood of forest inhabitants. Sustainable management through JFM action directly or indirectly reflects the overall environmental quality of West Bengal and in India. Further the study about the sustainable livelihood of forest villagers through JFM prevailing in the this district can be compared with the JFM as well as forest participatory management prevailing in other states of India like in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Kerala. Therefore, this research work has national importance in broad perspective and more specifically to direct the forest rural area development programme within the country. In this research, various assessments will be reviewed that are conducting in Alipurduar District at national, state and forest division level. This study could generate information to assess the impact of JFM policies, issues that need to be addressed and new challenges. An attempt will be made here to review Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) studies conducted in the district. The major goal is to understand the life style and adaptation of villagers in forest ecosystem, functioning of JFM institutions, and regeneration of vegetation and non- timber forest product (NTFP), issues involved in implementing and sustaining the programme. Also the study will highlight few important points, which would enhance forest villagers' socio-economic conditions and improve active participation in the JFMC meetings through sustainable management. Further proper planning by the Government and the non-governmental organization would be possible through this study.

My efforts will be worthwhile if the students, researchers, academicians and policy makers find this volume useful.

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