

PREFACE

Forest resource has become a much talked of subject globally in general and in our country in particular. The relationship between man and nature has become intricately with the pace of economic development. Deforestation has touched a serious height. Forest resource of India was initially exploited by the British and after independence commercialisation for industrial interest and alienation of the local people have converted this resource into a common pool resource (CPR) problem. It has been converging to what Garrett Hardin calls "the tragedy of the commons". It is in this context that the Social Forestry (SF) programme has been initiated in the country. The objective is to overcome the tragedy through a sustainable use with people's participation. Government of West Bengal, has started this programme more than a decade ago. The basic objective of this study is to find out, on the basis of practical experience in West Bengal, whether the S.F. on private holdings and farm forestry, on common lands are economically and financially viable, whether the projects have achieved their main objectives, whether they will emerge as a new rural institution for greening our country, and what are their impacts and constraints.

The study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the vanishing forests, global concern and the extant literature. The second chapter deals with the present status of forest resources-causes and impacts of deforestation, forest policy and forest development of West Bengal Vis-a-Vis India. Conflicts and alternative claims on forest resources with their social and cultural acceptability have been analysed in Chapter three. The fourth Chapter deals with the analytical framework of CPR problems in the context of social forestry with its evolution, importance and role in economic development. The fifth chapter analyses the achievement and impact of social forest on rural economy based on micro studies. The sixth chapter comprises the issues and options, conclusion and lessons with some suggestion. At the end a glossary and the list of references are provided.

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