

Jharkhand Participatory Forest Project

Workshop and Training on Social Analysis and Social Assessment February 3-9, 2004

Summary

The Government of Jharkhand, in collaboration with the World Bank, is organizing a one week workshop and training program on social analysis and social assessment in the forestry sector. The participants include senior Government officials from the Forest Department and other departments; forest department staff at different levels; NGOs and activists; academics, and members of the media. An inaugural session with H.E. the Chief Minister of Jharkhand as Chief Guest will take place at 10:00 on Wednesday, February 4th, 2004.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshop are to (i) agree on a common framework for a social assessment, which will be undertaken in subsequent months; and (ii) strengthen skills and capacity among participants to contribute to the social assessment. The social assessment is intended to provide guidance to designs, implementation arrangements, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the proposed project. Funding for such a project is being considered by the World Bank. A high quality social assessment will be an important consideration in the World Bank's appraisal of the project proposal.

Background

The Government of Jharkhand is making a concerted effort to identify and address the development needs of poor and isolated communities. With this in mind, the Government is preparing a Participatory Forest Project, which will emphasize a broad, multi-sectoral approach to poverty reduction in forest fringe communities.

Dialogue with the World Bank

The World Bank is considering supporting the proposed Participatory Forest Project. A positive dialogue is already underway between the Government of Jharkhand and the World Bank regarding the preparation of a project proposal,

and consultations have also taken place with other agencies, NGOs, and local communities.

Focus on social issues and poverty reduction

Both the Government and the World Bank emphasize the need to ensure access to services and benefits for poor and vulnerable groups. The proposed project will incorporate active participation by all concerned stakeholders.

Innovation in project design

Unlike traditional projects in the past, where a design was decided on before consultations about impacts were undertaken, the proposed project will adopt a flexible project design where findings from social studies, consultations, and other data sources will be taken into consideration before the project design and implementation arrangements are decided on.

Social assessment

The project design will be informed by several studies and analyses, such as economic analysis, environmental studies, and other. An important part of this is a systematic social assessment process. Through social studies and consultations, the following elements will be addressed:

- Social diversity and gender issues (understanding the socio-cultural, political and historical context)
- Organizational and institutional structures
- Stakeholder analysis (all major concerned or affected groups)
- Participation framework (the involvement of key stakeholders)
- Social risks (such as lack of capacity, lack of consensus, or potential negative impacts from the proposed project)

The social assessment will provide guidance to the project design; help identify suitable implementation arrangements and collaboration between various agencies; and lay the groundwork for further consultations and a transparent, participatory monitoring system.

Workshop February 3-9, 2004

The workshop and training program will consist of presentations, group work and discussions, and practical fieldwork where small groups consisting of representatives from different agencies will visit nearby communities and learn about their concerns and priorities. The participants who complete the full course will be accorded certificates from the World Bank Institute.