



Governance and Best Practices of Common Property Resources Management in Tripura

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Abstract: *A number of people in India depend on common property resources for their means of subsistence such as forests, wastelands, grazing land, water resources, and so on. However, cultivating these common resources with community support in order to achieve sustainable development is not only an unavoidable task but also a challenging one for the people who live in rural areas. People who reside in rural areas, particularly people who are members of tribal communities in Tripura, rely on common property resources as an essential source of income for their households. The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyse the most effective procedures and governance systems that community members and local village panchayats in Tripura have used for the purpose of the management of common property resources in order to establish sustainable communities.*

Keywords: *Common Property Resources, Rural Community, Governance, Management, Livelihood.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades people in India and across the world have observed and realised the value of between social and ecological system of natural resources. The term Common Property Resources relate the resources for which they are existing in both communal arrangements for the keeping out of non-owners and for the allotment of resources, as well as the rightful claims on collective goods for the recognised groups of community. Hence, indigenous common property resource management support the ideal of common and welfare responsibility of community at large.

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura are the seven states that make up the North Eastern region of India. In contrast to the rest of India, where CPRs is used in a more general sense, the term has a specific meaning in the North East. Land regions are classified differently by each state. The land is often held in one of three categories: village-owned, leader-owned and distributed to individual families, or



family-owned. Private property falls under the third category, while CPRs make up the first two.

Many people in the region are Tibeto-Mogoloids originally speaking with different types of languages. The population growth is much higher than other states of north eastern regions as comparing to India in average. Typically, some states like Assam, Tripura and to some point Meghalaya and Mizoram have understood a large scale of population from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal.

Common Property Resources Management deals with the land, forest, and water sources. Some describe CPRs based on their rights and others according to their own. In rural areas, CPRs have effect on livelihood of the rural people by giving substitute assets in agriculture and functioning as safety of the resources. The poor household gets the benefits with the help of CPRs in their daily livelihood where the beneficiary gets the income for household from the government through panchayat. For the poor in villages CPRs is the dependency to live a life and it has become the platform for them to run their family. Rural environment is the sustenance of the resources that significantly depends on the usability, maintenance, and management of the resources. CPRs can be said as the resources on which the community sustains itself mostly with the advantage of equal rights. The right of becoming the owner is awarded by some membership of the community or group or the head of the village. The dependency on CPRs has become the greater control for women to sustain in the societies. Some women get the opportunity to take the in-charge of the community resources as how she managed the family economy and the production because of her dependence on CPRs is greater than man.

Common Property Resources are commonly non private resources with the rights to their usage to grant the members of a community. Therefore, CPRs is not that easy to understand for many of the individual in common. It can be described as the resources on which a community sustains their life mostly with the equal rights and that include the community forest, common grazing, water tanks, rivers, and soil. The resources are managed by whole of the community or village, where individual has its own rights in the property. CPRs claim to be one of which is purely based on goods for public. Communities often get support from government or non-government for the collective action and were motivated towards preservation of environmental resources which play an important role in their life of supporting livelihoods and levels of consumptions. The outcome of such experiments is an increase in the capacity of the environment to have a better support system to larger population. Common Property rights in rural area are related to the impact of people's resources that has its expectation for both present and future where local communities have the protection of management of CPRs in general.

Research Objectives

CPRs are natural resources that belong to a community and are accessible to all members with certain restrictions but no one has ownership rights to them. By establishing an incentive structure for safeguarding the administration of CPRs, which is their source of income, CPRs aid in easing the consumption of the poor. On the other hand, CPRs are being subjected to more and more unsustainable exploitation, contamination, and conversion to other uses. The issues of rural poverty, food security, rural-urban migration, and the expansion of slums in cities are all made worse by this. In order to create sustainable communities, the study made



an effort to analyse the function of governance and best practises for managing common property resources in Tripura.

2. METHODOLOGY

The majority of the data required for this inquiry comes from primary and secondary sources. This was done so that the objectives of this work could be met. The gathering of information was started with the intention of making it easier to conduct research on the role of Governance and Best Practices of Common Property Resources Management in Tripura in order to establish sustainable communities. An objective conclusion was able to be reached as a result of the employment of documentary and analytical approaches, which led to the establishment of the framework for the study. The secondary sources of data consists books, national and international periodicals, state reports, newspaper, web services etc.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

3.1 Governance of Commons

The governance of CPRs has chosen to dedicate their volume that might correctly have been shared by **Paul Samuelson and Jeremy Bentham**. Both thinkers in their own way developed a certain criteria and methods that stand as the technique of re-evaluating and re-arranging the existing of social and economic institution. Bentham, remembering his utilitarian philosophy, distinguished the benefit derived from applying consistent principles through legislation in sharing rights and resources among the population of Great Britain in the nineteenth century. The Nobel Laureate economist work on welfare economist, attempted to measure through mathematical results of political decisions and the anticipations of their consequences when spread throughout the whole population. It is to consider the utilitarian criteria to govern “common property resources,” it is commonly a debate among mathematical economist who gave an effort to apply the original theory in real world.

The management of common resources put together the system of resources and their use in the market. Because the local market turned out to be the best related to the big markets as well as the common property system tackle with the exchange of cash. (Agarwal 2003). Common property resources hold confidence in public and the public trust the policy of government act as an honourable in its management of the resources which comprises the belief. The beneficiary has the trust on the citizen of state, as well as the future generation.

CPRs in Tripura are mainly adopted by the tribal community along with the local government to protect the custom and traditional law. Local government like panchayat has several schemes to manage the common property resources for the community. DWS (Drinking Water Resources) is one of the schemes maintained by the local government. Hand pump is common to every household for drinking water and is one of the major factors for developing the rural areas.

3.2 Management of CPRs

Common Property Resources plays a crucial role in people’s life in the North Eastern region of India. The important part of CPR in North East is Forest. In North East the CPR constitute 44.07 percent of geographical area and 20.78 percent in the country as whole with



large variations amongst the states. The percentage of CPR share to geographical area in the region increased regularly during the year 1998-99 to 2012-13 as overall in the country. It indicates the livelihood dependency of CPR in the period, which has become the main source for the agricultural land and substantiated by wide percentage of cultivators and agricultural labourers. CPR administration varies by tribal but shares certain parallels with other North Eastern communities. The village land and forest, for instance, were administered by customary law. All members of the village have equal access to the land resources found inside the town's borders. The community property belongs to everyone equally and no one has exclusive ownership rights. Each tribe takes great care of its area and its borders. CPR classification and management practises also vary by tribal, much like property ownership practises.

Village land, clan land, family land, and group land, known as Morung land, are the four main categories of land ownership among the Ao Naga of Nagaland. Forest, forests, and home sites all make up the common village land, which is managed and controlled by the local authority via the head of the village. Property belonging to a certain clan is forever associated with its members, and all members of that clan share ownership of the land, which includes Jhum land. Personal property is land that bears the surname of its owner. The boys who live in the Morung (Dormitory) have a piece of land set aside for them on which they can cut firewood.

The chief of the Thadou people in Manipur controlled the CPRs, made sure each family got an equal amount of the land by allocating Jhum plots for agriculture each year. Before distributing the land, they must first discuss it with the village ministers. In return, each household pays the principal tax in the form of Vaibeing, a traditional method of exchange (Basket). The land parcels allotted to individuals or households cannot be claimed as private property. However, if the households are dissatisfied with his work, they are given the option to relocate elsewhere or be expelled from the community entirely.

According to Mizo custom, the village council, headed by the chief, decides which land will be used for Jhum farming and then distributes plots to individual farmers with the aid of an authority on shifting cultivation known as Ramhual. The locals show their gratitude to Fathang by presenting him with a basket. In 1906 and 1935, the British introduced the Rules for Administration of Justice, which limited the arbitrary judicial powers of the chiefs. These powers included the ability to permit head hunting and provide protection to criminals.

The Assam Government passed an act in 1954 called The Assam Lushai Hills District (ACQUISITION OF CHIEF'S RIGHTS) Act 1954 (ASSAM ACT XXI OF 1954), which brought territory under the direct administration of the state. This act also put an end to the practise of chieftainship. The state maintains full authority over the first territory, which consists of a forest district. The second piece of property is what is known as the safety supply of reserve woods. These trees belong to the district council and are prioritised over those belonging to the village councils and the entity. In this context, agricultural operations are not permitted to be carried out. The village council has generously donated a safety and supply reserve forest for the benefit of the village community so that the village community can thrive. The people take firewood from the protected forest only for their own personal use and not for the purpose of selling it or otherwise making a profit. Finally, the private forest that is owned by the village council and is parcelled out to individual villagers in the form of pattas or passes of garden for the purpose of agriculture.



3.3 CPR in Tripura

Tripura has different systems and scenario in regards to CPR. The princely state of Tripura has a system where the king appointed a collector and the collector allocate land to the people. The collectors take help of village CHOUDHURY while distributing the jhum land. As there was large number of unuse land, the village people are given the opportunity to select the land for themselves for jhum cultivation. But after choosing land they need to take permission from the village Choudhury and most of the time Choudhury agrees to the people choice. Land was divided into five different types of jhum during the reign of the Manikya Dynasty. These types of land were known as Nal (Kheto Panthor), Lunga (Harung Buchuk), Chera (Twisa/Twirukung), Bhiti (Baribith), and Bastu (Nokthai). A jhum plot consists of a house site, forestland, and jhum plot, all of which are controlled by the village government and are under the supervision of the Choudhury. Jhum plots belong to the community as a whole and no one individual owns them.

The Nal property was located on highly fertile plains or along the riverbanks, and each villager held a little portion of it individually. The land had permanent heritable rights, but rights could not be sold or transferred to outside parties. The territory known as Lunga, which was permanently cultivated and located between two hills, was named after the people who lived there. It was given to the people of the Tribes in exchange for a yearly tax, the amount of which varies from tribe to tribe. Both sides of the river were comprised of Chera territory. The Bhiti and Bastu land was unchangeable and could be passed down through generations, but it could not be transferred. Historically, tribal settlements had some type of community ownership that was recognised by the king. Typically, this ownership was passed down from generation to generation. Every chief of the village was granted the customary authority to exercise control over the community

There is a general trend of conserving CPR resources in Tripura for the benefit of rural prosperity. It was also vital to the development of the surrounding rural community. The social structures that determine how common property assets are used and managed are specific to the types of resources in question. We, the people who make up society, are best served by an appropriate and efficient community management system. Commonly held natural resources must be managed effectively if cultural institutions and societal progress are to flourish. In Tripura the common property resources are managed by Panchayat mostly with the help of government to enlarge the development of the resources. The management of the resources involved many organisational schemes. The management are practice by Local Administration, whereas people prefer to maintain the resources by themselves through their community institutions for betterment of their own profit. Local administration has few schemes in managing the common property resources. Gram panchayat place before the gram sansad relating the schemes and selection of the works for public utility under any schemes or project relating to the common property resources. The administration of shared property resources entails both costs and gains. Fast-growing, locally-visible, individually, or collectively managed resources will be most suited to the local administration's expertise.

Land ownership customs in Arunachal Pradesh vary widely across different groups of people. The Nyishis Tribe had clearly defined CPRs that included areas of uncultivated forest, rivers, and natural resources that were managed by the village council and made available to the villagers. Some of the Galo CPRs are utilised for residential purposes, such



housing (Nam) and storage (Granaries), while others are used for agricultural purposes (Nasu).

Three types of land are recognised by the Khasis of Meghalaya. There is clan land, private land (called Rykynti in Finnish), and raid land. The Raid property fell under local authority because it was communally owned. Property for economic purpose, mostly for agricultural activities, was separated from land for residential use, where dwellings and other common facilities were constructed. The users were the permanent residents of the village, and membership in the village was the basis for the right to use. The village chief lacks the legal jurisdiction to provide such a licence to a non-Khasi individual or organisation. The village councils oversee the CPRs because they belong to the community. Each clan had exclusive rights to its own territory. Several categories were established for the forest land: sacred forest, village community forest, protected forest, and individual forest. The sacred forest is off-limits to everyone. The village Darbar, the local government, oversaw the care of the communal forest. While people are allowed to collect leaves from protected forests for personal use, this is not to be done for commercial purposes. Private forests are solely accessible to their owners.

The territory known as Garo, which is in Meghalaya, is governed by the chief (Nokma). Individuals do not have ownership rights to the housing plots; rather, the community holds title to them. Hilly land in the Garo hills is governed by customary law, while plain land in the Garo hills is governed by the provisions of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation Act of 1886, which was adopted by the Garo hills Autonomous District Council in 1952. Currently, the Garo hills are divided into these two categories: hilly land and plain land.

The Tripura Land Reforms and Land Revenue legislation of 1960 was passed into law by the Tripura Legislative Assembly. It only acknowledged the specific parcels of land for registration, which resulted in them becoming state property. It was decided that the goal should be to bring those who cultivate the land into direct touch with the state and to offer them the possibility of inheritable and permanent property rights to the land on which they work. People in traditional tribal communities typically do not have a method for registering land ownership. Despite this, the state remained unstable, and most of the land was utilised to relocate Hindu immigrants from Bangladesh, which is in east Pakistan. As a direct consequence of this, the indigenous people had lost over sixty percent of their land by the year 1979. As a result of immigration, the percentage of people who identify as tribal has dropped from 58 percent of the population in 1951 to 31 percent in the present day.

3.4 Livelihood and CPR

Traditionally, the population of tribal in Tripura exercised shifting or cultivation of jhum in the forest that are covered with hill slopes of a state. Mostly it is a tribal state where indigenous people live in. Most of the people depend on the forest products for their livelihood to run the family, where they get all the products and resources from the forest and they even collect some forest eatable (Chamung), materials (Manwi Khwnwi), animals (mwsa mayung), firewood(bol), bamboo (wa), bamboo shoot (muya)and banana stem (Laiphang) etc, to sell in the market. The houses in Barmura are made of bamboo and hay which is called as the traditional house of Tripura. Mostly people are dependent on the forest for their livelihood and survival. The items for cooking are made of clay where they made it



by themselves and sell it too for their daily expenses. People use river as their means of transportation where they make handmade boat with banana stem which is easy to carry loads where they want to. Bamboo shoot is a traditional vegetable in Tripura is very famous where those people collect it from the forest and sell it. The indigenous people of Tripura formally depend on CPR for their development. People also do dry harvesting (HOOK) where they plant various types of rice (Mairung), vegetables like Pumpkin (Sumurwi), Brinjal (Phantok), Musk Melon (Thaichumu), Cucumber (Dorompai) etc.

4. CONCLUSION

CPRs play an important part of the lives of the people in rural areas worldwide. In Tripura and northeast India, the tribal populations not only greatly depend on CPRs for their livelihood but they also play an important role in their preservation. However, the CPRs are now reeling under the pressure of growing population and development programmes. The CPRs are gradually becoming either open access resources or state properties. The management techniques of CPRs need to change to adapt to current challenges. There is a wealth of research available on the various disagreements that frequently surface in settings involving common property. The research that has been done on this topic typically focuses more on the categorization of these disagreements and an analysis of the factors that contribute to them than it does on the techniques that should be used to resolve them. The focus, when it comes to CPRs needs to be on finding solutions now rather than just analysis of the causes of their degradation. The emotional connect between the community members and their CPRs along with their realisation of the negative impact of degradation of CPRs on their livelihood can go long way in the sustainable management of CPRs. So, given enough motivation, solutions to save the CPRs can be effectively developed. CPRs are important for maintaining sustainability of Tripura economically and ecologically.

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