COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS; ISSUES AND CHALLENGES (Odisha)

9th October 2012
CBD Hyderbad
Tushar Dash
Vasundhara
OUTLINE

- Overview of CCAs in Odisha
- Key issues and challenges
- Federations of CCAs (campaign, movement groups)
- Opportunities
COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS AND INITIATIVES IN ODISHA

Community forestry
• About 12000 self-initiated forest protecting groups throughout Odisha protecting around two million hectares of forest

Biocultural territories
• Customary territories and sacred areas
• Niyamgiri, Juang pirha...

Forest based cooperatives
• Women cooperatives collecting NTFP and protecting forests (Sambalpur, Deogarh, Nayagarh..)

Other community conservation initiatives
• CCIs in protected areas (Badrama, Sunabeda...)
• People’s movements for saving forests (Niyamgiri, Gandhmardan, coastal areas, mangrove forests...)
**Key Issues**

*(Legal Recognition)*

- CCAs do not have any legal recognition.
- Forest Rights Act and Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act provide legal recognition.
- FRA provides for rights and powers/authorities for conservation and management of forests.
- FRA has not been properly implemented and not been used by most of the community conservation groups and forest fringe villages.
- About 5355 CFR claims filed of which 902 titles given (lot needs to be done considering presence of 29302 forest fringe villages and 12000 forest protecting groups).
- CFR recognized are mostly JFM areas and not the traditional or customary forests of communities.
- Claims on community forests filed by more than 2000 community forestry groups are not recognized till date.
GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

- Claims of rights under FRA leading to assertion of community boundaries and territories (of community forestry groups, habitat rights, seasonal access of nomadic communities..)
- Governance changes necessary to complement and support redrawing boundaries are not given attention (...leading to confrontation and conflicts in the process of assertion of rights)
- Host of existing forest and wildlife laws such as IFA, WLPA, Joint Forest Management, Working plans etc obstructing community forest governance
OTHER ISSUES...

- Diversion of forest land and community forest resources without recognition of rights and consent of gram sabhas (village institution)
- Wildlife conservation regime continues to exclusionary and resisting implementation of amendments in WLPA and FRA (leading to violation of forest rights in PAs, relocation from tiger reserves...)
- Investments in forestry programs through externally aided projects (JICA), REDD pilot projects, CAMPA, eco-tourism projects etc affecting CCIs and working counter to FRA, PESA (e.g. plantation in community lands..)
Federations of CCAs

There are number of federations, campaign groups, local movements, research and action groups working on community conservation, rights and governance in Odisha

- **Federation of forest protecting groups** - State level federation (Odisha Jungle Manch) formed by district level federations represented by villages

- **Campaign groups** - Campaign for Survival & Dingity working on issues of forest rights

- **Local movements** - Niyamgiri, Gandhmardan, Coastal areas raising issues of protection of forests by mining, ports, and other projects
OPPORTUNITIES

- FRA and PESA are important legislations which should be used for strengthening CCAs
- Amendment rules under FRA and new guidelines address community forest rights and management rights
THANKS

VASUNDHARA
Plot No. A/70
Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha
 tushardash01@gmail.com , tushar@vasundharaorissa.org