TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE MAKING:

Actor-networks, Elite-control and Gender Dynamics in Community Forest Management Intervention in Adavipalli, Andhra Pradesh, India

A dissertation submitted by

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in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor from Erasmus University Rotterdam

International Institute of Social Studies
The Hague, The Netherlands
22 December 2009

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my promoters Prof. Mohamed Salih and Dr Marlène Buchy for their kind and patient guidance all through these years. Prof. Salih has been providing direction during the testing times, constantly inspiring and encouraging me to do better work with the thesis. Marlène has been the positive force behind my intellectual journey. Her intriguing and challenging questions and brilliant suggestions on numerous thesis drafts have immensely improved the quality of this thesis. I express my gratitude to her for industriously going through the drafts of the thesis. Many kind people have helped me at every stage of my PhD life, my heartfelt gratitude to them all.

People of Adavipalli have been and will be the true inspiration for this thesis. I would like to thank them sincerely for trusting me, and sharing their everyday life and experiences with me during my stay with them in 2004 and 2005. I am highly indebted to my mentor, Prof. G. Haragopal from University of Hyderabad in India for sowing seeds of critical social enquiry during my MA and MPhil in Political Science at University of Hyderabad and for kindly obliging me by being the field supervisor for this study. Dr Vijay Gudavarthy inspired me to join ISS for my PhD, and I am thankful to him for his kind suggestions. I would like to thank Dr Jos Mooij for her suggestions during the thesis seminar, Dr Joop de Wit for providing me with special opportunity to work with him on the IDPAD project for NWO; Dr ThanhDam Truong and Dr Amrita Chhachhi for enabling me to work with them as TRA in their courses on gender and development at ISS.

I would like to thank Ms Ank vd Berg for her eternal kindness and constant guidance throughout all the years I have known her from ISS. I am forever indebted to her for taking care of me like a family member when I was away from my family. My sincere regards to Ms Lenneke Warners, Prof. Mansoob Murshed, and Ms Renée de Louw for providing their kind and cheerful company on several informal social evenings. Ms Dita Dirks and Ms Maureen Koster from PhD secretariat and Ms Irene Lopez from Staff

Dedicated to
My mother, Mrs Kameswari

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Acronyms

ACAN	Adaptive and Contextual Actor Networks
ANT	Actor Network Theory
AP	Andhra Pradesh
APCFM	Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management
APFD	Andhra Pradesh Forest Department
APFP	Andhra Pradesh Forestry Programme
APJFM	Andhra Pradesh Joint Forest Management
BC	Backward Castes (Indian Constitutional terminology)
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CFM	Community Forest Management
FD	Forest Department (of Andhra Pradesh)
FNGO	Facilitating Non-government Organisation
GB	General Body
GCC	Girijan Cooperatives Corporation
GO	Government Order
GOAP	Government Order of Andhra Pradesh
GOI	Government of India
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MOEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
OC	Other Castes (Indian Constitutional terminology)

PAD   Project Appraisal Document
PID   Project Information Document
PIP   Project Implementation Plan
PRI   Panchayati Raj Institutions
PRA   Participatory Rural Appraisal
SC   Scheduled Castes (Indian Constitutional terminology)
ST   Scheduled Tribes (Indian Constitutional terminology)
UNCED   United Nations Conference on Environment and
             Development
UNDP   United Nations Development Programme
VSS   Vana Samrakshana Samithi (Village Forest Protection
             Committee)
WWF   Worldwide Fund for Nature

Glossary

Adivasi – or tribal, is a term used in India to denote ethnic minority peoples who are socially, culturally and economically distinct. The Indian Constitution defines a list of tribal groups recognised by the Government, known as 'scheduled tribes' (ST).

Bidi/Beedi – a type of locally made cigarette. Women engage in *beedi* making for alternative income through collection of *Beedi* leaves from the forests.

Boda – a type of grass commonly found in semi-arid forest areas of Andhra Pradesh.

Dalits – term used to denote the 'scheduled castes' (SC) as defined in the Indian Constitution. They were referred to as *Harijans*- 'God's Children' by M.K. Gandhi.

District – each Indian state is subdivided into several distinct administrative units known as 'districts'.

Grama Panchayati – village council often comprised of several neighbouring villages.

Mandal – each district in Andhra Pradesh state has been divided into mandals for adminsitrtaive convenience.

Abstract

Natural resource management interventions experienced what could be described as a paradigm shift from state-centred to community-based participatory approaches that is, Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). Efforts oriented towards facilitating people's active participation and direct control over resource use and management deserve credit for this paradigm shift. In a sense, the new approach is directly opposed to state centred top-down management and control of natural resources. Subsequently, contradictory responses emerged with multiple accounts of success stories and shortcomings. These participatory interventions have been heavily criticised by academics and activists alike for their inherent vulnerability in the face of power imbalances, which affect various actors' capacity to participate in the spaces provided through decentralised CBNRM interventions.

The implementation of decentralised CBNRM interventions opened up a Pandora's Box of ethical, methodological, political and socio-ecological queries for all actors concerned to analyse and appreciate. One particularly significant issue is to understand how and why formal participatory spaces fell short of meeting their objectives and even resulted in unintended consequences, both for the participating communities and interventionists.

Consequently, this thesis aims to understand whether these invited participatory institutions and spaces are likely to facilitate people's equitable participation in CBNRM interventions in rural communities. Taking the case of the village of Adavipalli within the Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management (APCFM) intervention, I argue that a continuum of these intended and unintended consequences inevitably leads to transformations in the relative social power positions of all key actors. This thesis also examines the implications of these transformations for grassroots level participatory and institutional dynamics within the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

The thesis attempts to engage with these queries by taking them as opportunities to gain a better understanding of the complex nature of the rural social fabric and its implications for contemporary and future CBNRM interventions. The study proposes that the analysis of a) the context-specific linkages between the formal and the informal institutions that shape actors' participation in CBNRM interventions; and b) the power relations that characterise the negotiations between actor-networks hold the key for better appreciating these challenges. In pursuit of this objective, this thesis examines the role of power relations in defining the linkages between the formal and informal institutions operating at the grassroots level in Adavipalli society as well as in shaping the participation of key actors in the formal participatory spaces. Within this context, gender, class and caste based participatory dynamics provide insight into key actors' perspectives on each other's roles and participation within the intervention setting. Through this analysis, I have attempted to elucidate the transformations in actors' social status and their capacity to exercise power through various networks operating at the grassroots level in the context of Adavipalli.

While the availability of formal participatory spaces and institutions provide the much needed avenues for the participation of the marginalised community members, their mere creation amidst the omnipresent power relations is not likely to guarantee 'equitable participation' as an intervention outcome. However, internationally sponsored CBNRM interventions have little scope in their design to accommodate the dynamic power relations characterising any given community during their pre-project and project lives. In the Project Implementation Documents of bilateral CBNRM interventions, 'participation' is considered 'authentic' only when it happens in the 'formal invited spaces'. Actors who are supposed to participate in these formal participatory spaces end up falling short of this authenticity, as their social life does not revolve around or comprise formal relations and negotiations alone. This laments the need for broadening the horizons of defining people's participation in these interventions. Actors' everyday social relations, interactions and negotiations occur more in the informal spaces and networks, defining their access to and control over resources aimed to be regulated through formal institutions like the *Vana Samrakshana Samithi* (VSS, i.e. Forest Protection Committee). Paradoxically, despite the sustained formal policy objectives to ensure participation, 'informal' institutional arrangements seem to hold the key to understanding the pitfalls of the functioning of 'formal' participatory spaces. This is particularly so in cases where natural resources provide much needed sources of livelihood for the poor.

Making a case for the need to acknowledge the central role played by informal institutions and power relations in CBNRM interventions, this study tries to enquire whether informal norms and practices, customary rights, and daily negotiations over resource access and usage tend to deliver more efficient avenues of participation for the marginalised in comparison to formally created participatory institutions like the VSS.

Keywords: CBNRM, Community, Participation, Power Relations, Formal and Informal Institutions, Gender, Caste, Elite Control, Actor-Networks, Participatory Forest Management, Conservation, Kadapa/Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Het ontstaan van transformaties: Netweken van actoren,
zeggenschap van de elite en de rol van gender
bij bosbeheer door lokale gemeenschappen
in Adavipalli, Andhra Pradesh, India

Samenvatting

Bij projecten op het gebied van het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen
is een paradigmawisseling opgetreden waarbij een op de staat gerichte
aanpak is vervangen door een participatieve aanpak binnen lokale ge-
meenschappen. Dit wordt Community-based Natural Resource Mana-
gement (CBNRM; beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen binnen lokale
gemeenschappen) genoemd. Deze paradigmawisseling is te danken aan
inspanningen om mensen actief te laten deelnemen en directe controle te
geven over het gebruik en beheer van hulpbronnen.

De nieuwe aanpak staat in zekere zin lijnrecht tegenover een op de
staat gerichte top-downbenadering van beheer van en beschikking over
natuurlijke hulpbronnen. Er zijn verschillende succesverhalen over de
nieuwe aanpak gemeld, maar deze participatieve projecten zijn ook ern-
stig bekritiseerd door zowel wetenschappers als activisten. De kritiek
richtte zich op het feit dat scheve machtsverhoudingen tot gevolg heb-
ben dat niet alle actoren in gelijke mate kunnen deelnemen aan de gede-
centraliseerde CBNRM-projecten.

De implementatie van gedecentraliseerde CBNRM-projecten heeft
talloze ethische, methodologische, politieke en sociaal-ecologische vra-
gen opgeroepen die geanalyseerd moeten worden en voorgelegd moeten
worden aan alle betrokkenen. Het is vooral van belang om te begrijpen
waarom formele participatieplaatsen hun doel niet hebben bereikt en
zelfs onbedoelde gevolgen hebben gehad, zowel voor de deelnemende
lokale gemeenschappen als de aanbieders van de projecten.

Het doel van dit proefschrift is daarom om erachter te komen of deze
aanpak met uitgenodigde participerende instellingen en participatieplaat-

sen een billijke deelname aan CBNRM-projecten in plattelandsgemeen-schappen bevordert. Het onderzoek richt zich op het project Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management (APCFM; bosbeheer door lo-kale gemeenschappen in Andhra Pradesh) in het dorp Adavipalli. Het onderzoek gaat ervan uit dat een continuüm van deze bedoelde en onbe-doelde gevolgen onvermijdelijk leidt tot transformaties in de sociale machtsverhoudingen tussen alle sleutelfiguren. De implicaties van deze transformaties voor de participatie en institutionele processen aan de ba-sis van de samenleving binnen het APCFM-project in Adavipalli worden ook onderzocht in dit proefschrift.

Dit proefschrift is ook bedoeld om meer inzicht te verschaffen in de complexe sociale structuur op het platteland en de implicaties daarvan voor huidige en toekomstige CBNRM-projecten. Daartoe moeten er twee aspecten onderzocht worden:

a) De contextafhankelijke verbanden tussen de formele en de infor-mele instellingen die de deelname van actoren aan CBNRM-projecten vormgeven.

b) De machtsverhoudingen die kenmerkend zijn voor de onderhande-lingen tussen netwerken van actoren.

Om dit doel te bereiken richt dit onderzoek zich op de rol die machtsverhoudingen spelen bij de verbanden tussen de formele en in-formele instellingen aan de basis van de samenleving in Adavipalli en bij het vormgeven van de deelname van sleutelfiguren aan de formele parti-cipatieplaatsen. Binnen deze context bieden participatieprocessen op grond van gender, maatschappelijke klasse en kaste inzicht in hoe de sleutelfiguren aankijken tegen elkaars rollen en hun deelname aan het project. In het onderzoek is geprobeerd om de transformaties in de soci-ale status van actoren en hun vermogen om macht uit te oefenen via ver-schillende netwerken aan de basis van de samenleving in Adavipalli te verduidelijken.

Om de gemarginaliseerde leden van de gemeenschap te laten deelne-men zijn formele participatieplaatsen en instellingen weliswaar hard no-dig, maar deze vormen binnen de bestaande machtsverhoudingen op zich geen garantie voor een 'billijke participatie' aan het project. De door de internationale gemeenschap gesteunde CBNRM-projecten bieden weinig mogelijkheden om rekening te houden met de dynamische machtsverhoudingen binnen gemeenschappen in de periode voor en na-dat een project heeft plaatsgevonden. In de implementatiedocumenten

van bilaterale CBNRM-projecten wordt participatie alleen als 'authentiek' beschouwd wanneer deze op uitnodiging plaatsvindt in de 'formele plaatsen'. Actoren die gebruik zouden moeten maken van deze formele participatieplaatsen worden uiteindelijk niet als authentieke deelnemers beschouwd, omdat hun sociale leven niet uitsluitend bestaat uit formele relaties en onderhandelingen.

Dit wijst op de noodzaak om bij deze projecten een bredere definitie van participatie te hanteren. De sociale relaties, interacties en onderhandelingen van actoren vinden gewoonlijk vooral in het informele circuit plaats. Deze informele netwerken bepalen of actoren toegang krijgen tot en kunnen beschikken over hulpbronnen die officieel beheerd worden door formele instellingen als het Vana Samrakshana Samithi (VSS; het comité ter bescherming van het bos). Ondanks de goed verankerde formele beleidsdoelstellingen om te zorgen voor participatie, lijkt de 'informele' institutionele structuur paradoxaal genoeg te verklaren waarom 'formele' participatieplaatsen niet altijd goed functioneren. Dit geldt vooral in gevallen waarin de armen voor hun levensonderhoud afhankelijk zijn van natuurlijke hulpbronnen.

Dit onderzoek wijst op de noodzaak om de centrale rol van informele instellingen en machtsverhoudingen bij CBNRM-projecten te erkennen. Het onderzoek probeert de vraag te beantwoorden of participatie van gemarginaliseerde groepen op een efficiëntere manier bereikt kan worden via informele normen en gebruiken, gewoonterecht en alledaagse onderhandelingen over toegang tot en gebruik van hulpbronnen, dan via formele instellingen die de participatie regelen zoals het VSS.

Trefwoorden: CBNRM, locale gemeenschap, participatie, machtsverhoudingen, formele en informele instellingen, gender, kaste, zeggenschap van de elite, netwerken van actoren, participatief bosbeheer, milieubescherming, Kadapa/Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh, India.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Natural resource management interventions experienced what could be described as a paradigm shift from state-centred to community-based participatory approaches (i.e. Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). This paradigm shift is credited to efforts oriented towards facilitating people's active participation and direct control over resource use and management. In a sense, the new approach is directly opposed to state centred top-down management and control of natural resources.[1] Subsequently, contradictory responses emerged with multiple accounts of success stories and shortcomings. These participatory interventions have been heavily criticised by academics and activists alike for their inherent vulnerability in the face of power imbalances, which affect various actors' capacity to participate in the spaces provided through decentralised CBNRM interventions.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the decentralised CBNRM interventions opened up a Pandora's Box of ethical, methodological, political and socio-ecological queries to be analysed and appreciated by all actors concerned. One of them that is particularly significant to this study is understanding how and why these formal participatory spaces, opened for the purpose of facilitating people's participation, fall short of meeting their objectives and result in unintended consequences for both the participating communities and the proponents of intervention. This thesis aims to understand whether these invited participatory institutions and spaces are likely to facilitate people's equitable participation in CBNRM interventions in rural communities. Using the case study of Adavipalli (pseudonym)[2] Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management intervention in Kadapa (also known as Cuddapah) district of Andhra Pradesh, this thesis argues that a continuum of these intended and

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unintended consequences inevitably leads to transformations in the relative social power positions of all key actors.[3] This thesis also examines implications of these transformations for the grassroots level participatory and institutional dynamics within Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

The idea of homogenous communities sharing common interests in natural resource management has been successfully subjected to critical socio-ecological analysis (Agrawal and Gibson 1999) in the face of heterogeneous realities characterising rural lives. As a result, the conceptualisation of heterogeneity of communities along the class, caste and gender lines has become an integral part of the design of the latest CBNRM interventions like that of the APCFM. However, how these heterogeneous actors utilise and manage their natural and social landscape and the institutions therein is yet to be captured in detail within the APCFM context.

Some of the recent studies on APJFM/CFM intervention highlighted some positive impacts of the implementation of the intervention in Kadapa district (Gopal and Upadhyay 2001) and other districts of Andhra Pradesh (Biswas et al. 1997; Muralidharudu et al. 1997; Venkatraman and Falconer 1998; Rangachari and Mukherjee 2000; D'Silva and Nagnath 2002). These studies highlighted the improvement in income generation for the communities participating in the intervention; improvement in forest cover and biodiversity; infrastructural development leading to local and community development; increasing participation of women and; betterment in foresters and local community relations resulting in reduced smuggling. Some of these studies also highlighted the discrepancies in the implementation of APJFM/CFM related forest policies and the top-down management taking place in the intervention context (Behera and Engel 2006; Reddy et al. 2004; Reddy 2008) leading to the marginalisation of the poor in general and the forest dependent communities in particular.

A recent PhD thesis (Rossi 2007) on the 'socio-economic impacts' of the APJFM/CFM engages in macro-analysis based on the institutional design principles proposed by Ostrom (1990) and highlights factors needed for better implementation of the intervention in rural Andhra Pradesh. However, the study adopts an interventionist perspective[4] and applies econometric methods to analyse the socio-economic impacts at the macro-level.

There have been very few ethnographic studies of micro-level analysis on APCFM intervention along actor-oriented lines in socially stratified contexts. This thesis takes up the analysis of grassroots level processes and power relations affecting actors' participation and institutional functioning in the APJFM/CFM intervention to fill this gap. How are the gender, class and caste-based dynamics influencing the functioning of the *Vana Samrakshana Samithi* (VSS) and the micro-level participation of actors therein is analysed in this study from an actor-oriented perspective. Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh has been selected as the study locale based on the fact that research related to the issue of community involvement in the World Bank sponsored JFM and CFM in Andhra Pradesh, so far has mostly focused on the Northeastern districts (e.g. *Vishakhapatnam* and *Adilabad* districts), where the tribal communities dominate the rural social fabric. In contrast, our study aims at understanding the power relations between actors belonging to highly stratified social communities like that of Adavipalli of Kadapa district. Here tribes constitute significant proportion of the villagers along with various other caste and religious groups.

Adavipalli provides an ideal case for the caste, class and gender-based analysis of the key actors' participation in APCFM intervention due to its demographic profile characterized by high social stratification; its history in community forest management; the people and landscape relationship and the varied degree of forest dependence.

The present study aims at investigating the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM intervention processes and practices through the actor-oriented approach (Long and van der Ploeg 1989: 226). This is done to capture the ongoing transformations in actors' capacity to exercise power and to benefit from their participation in APCFM. The actor-oriented approach also allows for making observations from actors' perspective not necessarily fixing the behaviour of actors into a rational choice theory. This study maps the emerging sporadic interactions between actors as they respond to the intervention processes while drawing on their informal and formal networks. Although systematic micro-studies on the APJFM/CFM intervention along actor-oriented lines are limited, some of the impact assessments done by the independent NGOs on the APJFM/CFM intervention (*Samata* and Forest Peoples Programme reports) do contribute significantly to the analysis of APJFM/CFM projects' socio-political impact on the communities involved. These reports

highlighted the APFD's controlling attitude and the resulting failure of institutional strengthening and sustenance mechanisms in different geographical contexts within Andhra Pradesh.

Comparative macro-scale studies conducted by academic researchers (Behera and Engel 2006; Reddy et al. 2004; Reddy 2008) on the existing institutional structure of VSS; on APFD's controlling and rent-seeking attitude highlighted serious structural and implementation problems in APJFM/CFM. In Andhra Pradesh, VSS as a participatory institution has not been legalized making it vulnerable to dissolution by APFD in case of faulty functioning or mismanagement. Also keeping in view that World Bank funds for the APJFM phase-2 (APCFM) ran out in 2007, the Andhra Pradesh state government initiated efforts to support the 8,343 odd VSS (source: APFD website: Current Status) spread across the state by formally institutionalising them through the legalisation process. In light of this proposal, the present study aims to inform the larger policymakers in Andhra Pradesh on the existing lacunae in the formal institutional set-up of VSS, so as to discourage their likely transfer into future CBNRM ventures.

This thesis attempts to go beyond the deterministic standpoints of success and failure by adopting an ethnographic enquiry to map the actual role of power relations in regulating the functioning of participatory institutions in Adavipalli context. This thesis maps the key actors' interactions and negotiations, which characterise their participation in the formal invited spaces of the APCFM intervention. The informal everyday practices and traditions followed at the Adavipalli community level are also mapped to gain insights into the relative transformations in actors' lives during the pre-project and project phases.

This thesis engages with these queries to gain better understanding of the complex nature of rural social fabric and its implications for contemporary and future CBNRM interventions. Institutions are embedded in, and function based on power relations between actors at the grassroots level. The present study assumes that the analysis of a) the context specific linkages between the formal and the informal institutions that shape actors' participation in CBNRM interventions; and an analysis of b) the power relations that characterise the negotiations between actor-networks could potentially hold the key to appreciate these queries better.

Accordingly, this thesis examines the role of power relations in characterising the linkages between the formal and informal institutions operating at the grassroots level in Adavipalli society as well as in shaping the participation of key actors in the formal participatory spaces. It also examines the gender and caste-based participatory dynamics; key actors' perspectives on each other's roles and participation within the intervention setting; as well as their day-to-day lives to locate these phenomena. This thesis tries to analyse the transformations in actors' social status[5] and their capacity to participate in the intervention through various networks operating at the grassroots level in Adavipalli context.

In decentralised CBNRM interventions, the state shifts the responsibility over natural resource management to institutions such as the Forest Protection Committees (FPC). Hence, actors who take charge of these institutions tend to control the overall participatory dynamics within and around the FPC determining who gets to make decisions and who may access the natural resources and the related benefits as well as incur opportunity costs. These actors engage in constant negotiations and interactions while simultaneously participating directly and indirectly in the formal institutions such as the FPC, as well as informal institutional structures like the local social networks functioning in the intervention setting.

While availability of the formal participatory spaces and institutions provide much needed opportunities for the participation of the marginalised community members, their mere existence amidst the omnipresent power relations is less likely to guarantee 'equitable participation' as an intervention outcome. On the other hand, the internationally sponsored CBNRM interventions have less scope in their design to accommodate the dynamic power relations characterising any given community during its pre-project and project life. In the Project Implementation Documents (PID) of bilateral CBNRM interventions, 'participation' is considered 'real' only when it happens in the 'formal invited spaces'. Actors who are supposed to participate in these formal participatory spaces end up falling short of it, as their social life is not simply made of formal relations and negotiations alone. This laments the need for broadening the horizons of defining people's participation in these interventions.

Actors' everyday interactions, negotiations and social relations happen more in the informal spaces and networks defining their access to and control over resources to be regulated through formal institutions like

the *Vana Samrakshana Samithi* (VSS). This study argues that the 'informal' holds the key to understanding the functioning of 'formal' participatory spaces in such instances. Especially when it comes to natural resources, which provide daily bread to the poor, the informal norms and practices, customary rights, and negotiations over resource access and usage deliver more efficiently when compared to participation in formal participatory spaces like the VSS. This approach also enables capturing peoples' perspectives on participatory dynamics in both formal and informal institutional settings. This thesis makes the case for the need to acknowledge the critical role played by informal institutions and power relations in regulating actors' participation in CBNRM interventions, and for their incorporation in the design and implementation. This thesis looks at peoples' actual roles around 'decentralised participatory spaces' in the Adavipalli APCFM context to redefine the meaning of 'participation' in CBNRM interventions implemented in similar rural social settings.

This thesis defines institutions as rules, norms and strategies that shape individual and organisational behaviour (North 1990: 3-10). North compares the institutions to the 'rules of the game' and organisation to the 'players of the game' (ibid.).[6] Informal institutions in this thesis are understood as social networks, norms, beliefs and practices around which actors' everyday life is regulated. Informal institutions themselves shape and are shaped by the everyday negotiations and power relations between various actors. It is argued here that in everyday practice the boundaries between the 'formal' and the 'informal' often become blurred.[7] As a result various meeting points, merges and overlaps between the two occur in actors' every day interactions. Actors' everyday engagement with and participation in the formal and informal institutions is directly influenced by the power relations operating at the grassroots level. These influences over actor participation and access to decision-making networks are qualitatively analysed by this study with the evidence emerging from Adavipalli case study.

Foucault explains that social knowledge upholds a set of societal norms and practices, which in turn shape people's self-perceptions and the way they relate to others (1976 cited in Masaki 2005: 724). Foucault terms this insidious social control as 'disciplinary power' as it acts on individuals whose behaviours are moulded to forge 'docile bodies'. This disciplinary power constrains actions and thoughts of individuals while simultaneously enabling a common frame of reference for actors to re-

negotiate their everyday realities. Under the influence of this disciplinary power, individuals discipline themselves through self-monitoring and self-measurement of their compliance with social norms (Masaki 2005: 724). Accordingly, this in-depth case study analyses the leverage power relations have on actors' everyday micro-politics as well as their participation in the created/invited participatory spaces.

> Participatory approaches to natural resource management encompass ideas about the desirability of citizens actively engaging in the institutions, policies and discourses that shape their access to resources…. Through participation in collective resource management it is claimed that people can re-negotiate norms, challenge inequalities, claim their rights and extend their access (Cleaver 2007: 223).

The participatory approach adopted by the AP state and the World Bank through the APJFM/CFM intervention essentially highlights the same ethos. However, the underlying assumption that actors' participation is facilitated through mere adoption of participatory approaches and creation of participatory spaces may be misleading and unhelpful in reaching the goal of social equity. As this study argues, actors' capacity to participate in invited spaces is directly determined by their agency and relative power position within their communities. Accordingly, this study is interested in exploring how actors' participation shapes and is shaped by the power relations while they constantly draw on informal norms and practices regulating their everyday lives. To this end, this case study maps the key grassroots level of actors' agency and networks, their relative power positions, their interests and interactions, and their negotiations in detail. Actor participation and interactions within Adavipalli APCFM context in both formal and informal institutions is analysed in this study by offering a holistic picture of the influence of informal institutions on actor participation in formally created spaces. Accordingly, in Table 7.1 (Chapter 7) I enumerate various forms of interactions taken place within the Adavipalli intervention setting between key actors. Nature of power (domination, facilitation, subordination etc.) exercised within actors' interactions and the outcomes of these inetractions are enumerated in a tabular format.

At the onset, it is argued by this study that the marginalised actors are likely to value participation in its various manifestations both for its instrumental value (as a means' for service delivery) as well as an end (for its empowering value).[8] This assumption is also verified through a micro-

level analysis of actors' relations and livelihood strategies within the Adavipalli APCFM setting. Their engagement with the participatory processes more often goes beyond the realm of the formal, resulting in continuous networking and chain of interactions and negotiations across various formal and informal community-based actor-networks. These interactions and negotiations influence the participation of key actors determining the overall direction of the intervention as opposed to pre-meditated participatory processes and outcomes put forth by intervention proponents. This analysis is aimed at informing community-based conservation interventions embedded in similar contexts of the need for better appreciation of grassroots level power relations both at the planning and at the implementation levels of participatory CBNRM interventions. This case study also aims to contribute to the ongoing debate over the efficiency of participatory CBNRM interventions in nursing mechanisms of social transformation.

The concept of 'community involvement in conservation' of natural resources like forests, protected areas, water resources and wildlife has generated a rich pool of knowledge pertaining to the policy and practice of community-based conservation interventions worldwide. The statements issued through the Rio Summit (UNCED) in 1992 strongly advocate a combination of government decentralisation, devolution to local communities of responsibility for natural resources held as commons, and community participation as solutions for the global environmental problems (Leach et al. 1999: 225). Since the Rio summit, the international focus on biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources resulted in many participatory conservation interventions sponsored by international donors and developmental agencies like the World Bank, United Nations Development Project (UNDP), United Nations Environment Project (UNEP) and Department for International Development (DFID) among others. The focus of such interventions has been on sustainable development through community participation in the conservation of natural resources. The ethical concerns of involving communities in the management of natural resources, such as empowering communities and ensuring their development among others characterise this shift at international level.

The worldview, which held 'community' responsible for the irrational exploitation of natural resources for selfish needs, popularly known as the 'tragedy of commons' (Hardin 1968), has been gradually replaced by

a worldview that celebrates communities as key actors in sustainable management of natural resources (Berkes 1989; Agrawal 2001; Agrawal and Gibson 2001; Ostrom 1990, 1998a/b; Ostrom et al. 2002). Ostrom's work on Common Pool Resource Management (1990) in particular established how collective action could uplift poor communities and was instrumental in changing popular perceptions of a powerful image created by Hardin's 'Tragedy of Commons' thesis. The concept of 'the tragedy of commons', which emphasised the selfish overuse of natural resources by humans has been successfully challenged by evidence that proved the virtue of human management of commons as those resulting in a positive ending (Ostrom 1990; McCay 1995, 1996; McCay and Acheson 1987; Rose 1994, cited in Ostrom et al. 2002).[9]

The participatory development movement led by Chambers (1983) placed 'participation' firmly as a technique for achieving the goals of equitable resource management and allowing for the poor to have access to and control over the decision-making pertaining to the same (Mansuri and Rao 2003: 7). At the national levels, governments initiated alternatives to the implementation of centrally managed, purely top-down and coercive interventions in favour of more decentralised and community driven NRM interventions. Agrawal credits this paradigm shift in natural resource management in favour of communities' ownership to the historical processes occurring worldwide. Namely, the failure of the top-down exclusionist state control of forests, the fiscal crises of the states in the wake of the debt crises of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the collapse of state socialism and the subsequent hegemonic status of neoliberal orthodoxy in economic policy circles, and more importantly, the availability of international aid funds for pursuing programmes of decentralised governance, among other trends (2005: 205).

In India and elsewhere, the role of actors and institutions in community-based natural resource management interventions is highly debated in both academic and policy circles. There have been number of studies in the context of developing countries critically investigating various analytical aspects such as the efficacy and rationale of community participation in conservation interventions across actor-oriented, gender-based, institutional and political ecology lines.[10] Because of these critical studies, community-based conservation nowadays is perceived as more than an effort to conserve natural resources. Community-based conservation is viewed as a part of wider processes of social change and as a means of

redistribution of social and political power assuring equity and social justice.

Hulme and Murphree (2001: 4) broadly define community-based natural resource management as,

> Ideas, policies, practices and behaviors that seek to give those who live in rural environments greater involvement in managing natural resources (soil, water, species, habitats, landscapes or biodiversity) that exist in their areas in which they reside (be it permanently or temporarily) and/or greater access to benefits derived from those resources.

At the conceptual and practical level, 'participation' of communities in natural resource management has come to occupy centre stage of community-based natural resource management policy research and practice in this new worldview. The World Bank notes that participation can involve 'mechanisms of collaboration and empowerment that give stakeholders more influence and control' (Reitbergen-McCracken and Narayan 1998: 4). This seems particularly true in the context where the livelihoods of community members directly depend on the resources available in their habitat. Accordingly, the pro-participation discourses celebrate participation as a tool to enable community involvement, ownership and better regulation of resources.

Various actors comprising the 'community', influence, shape and transform the conservation intervention they engage in, in different capacities. Their respective roles, their interactions with each other, with the larger community and with other key local and non-local actors involved in the intervention play equally important parts in shaping intervention processes and outcomes. Most of the community-based conservation interventions in the world involve multiple spatial-scales where actors with unequal capacities and authority participate in these interventions. Highlighting this aspect, Hulme and Murphree (2001: 5) observe that, 'while community conservation indicates a shift of authority (and management and benefits) to local residents, they remain part of a regional, national and international framework in which variety of organisations and institutions play a role'. Hence, understanding these coexisting regimes of authority and the institutional dynamics within the intervention setting becomes a precondition while focusing on the power relations between key actors.

The involvement of more powerful 'external' actors like international donors and the state forest department at various levels clearly alters the

power balance within the community structure, irrespective of its heterogeneity to begin with. The presence of valuable international monetary aid is likely to result in local actors pitching against each other during decision-making. At any given snapshot of the intervention period, there are actors less powerful than others are (e.g. *Yanadi*/ST women) and hence unable to access or influence these decision-making platforms, which are dominated and controlled by local elite and facilitating NGOs. The kind of strategies marginalised actors adopt in face of power and dominance is interesting to observe for understanding the negotiations taking place at the grassroots level. As noted by Nelson and Wright (cited in Cooke and Kothari 2001b: 69), society after all is not made up of 'free-floating actors, each with different interests which they pursue by bargaining with each other in interactional space'.

Counter arguments to participatory approaches are based on the facts that *participation* as a tool should 'be rethought if not abandoned'. They argue that it is being used to serve the interests of the powerful resulting in the imposition of the same power relations on the poor and marginalised that were originally supposed to be circumvented (Cooke and Kothari 2001a: 1-15). The recent debates on 'participation as tyranny' (Cooke and Kothari 2001b), highlight that the participatory processes and practices are replete with power and in general insensitive to the existing inequalities thus leading to further polarisation and exclusion of the marginalised sections of the communities. Cooke and Kothari (2001a: 14) argue that '…(P)roponents of participatory development have generally been naive about the complexities of power and power relations'. They argue that much of the participatory discourse (theory and practice) is underpinned by a misunderstanding of power, and question the basic meanings ascribed to the condition of 'empowerment' and the claims made for its attainment (2001b). They argue that the big claims of the transformative potentials of participatory approaches have to be re-examined in light of the counterproductive effects of participatory interventions in their present format (ibid.).

Participatory approaches to CBNRM in their present form and technique (Cooke and Kothari 2001b) are ill equipped to bypass structural and institutional constraints and biases arising from power relations. In their critique of participatory approaches, Cooke and Kothari (2001b) highlight various tyrannies that resulted due to the deification of participatory approaches by the bilateral interventions and international donors

like the World Bank. They present evidence that participation has become an act of faith in development, which they term 'tyranny of technique', one that cannot be questioned of its efficacy (Cleaver 2001: 36-55; Henkel and Stirrat 2001: 168-200). They argue that participation is serving the political agenda of local elites in legitimising the domineering forms of knowledge as community knowledge, which is termed 'the tyranny of the group' (Mohan 2001: 153-67; Cooke and Kothari 2001a: 1-15). They also challenge the assumption that participation, as a tool is neutral (Cleaver 2001: 36-55); that the supposedly neutral external facilitators of participation may control the decision-making through using participation as a legitimising process (Hailey 2001: 88-101). This is termed the 'tyranny of decision-making and control' (Cooke and Kothari 2001a: 1-15) resulting in the imposition of the same set of oppressive power relations, which were supposed to be circumvented through participation. They show that participation is vulnerable in the face of power relations and that the participatory techniques are inseparable from power exercise (Kothari 2001).

These accounts raised serious concerns over the transformative potential of participatory approaches. As a response to these alarms, accounts of transformative participatory interventions have been put forth by research on participatory development and governance (Hickey and Mohan 2004; Masaki 2006, 2007) and on participatory interventions on HIV/AIDS (Kesby 2005). The literature on pro-participatory approaches in developmental projects highlights the capacity of participatory approaches to serve as means of empowerment to facilitate redistribution of power thus enabling the locals to understand and transform themselves (Chambers 1994: 1266). This popularity of participatory approaches has been generally credited to their appeal to reduce and circumvent power relations in order to give voice to the marginalised to bring on board their needs and preferences (Kesby 2005: 2037). This thesis attempts to contribute in general to these debates on the transformative potential of participatory processes, especially as a means of simultaneously enabling inclusion/exclusion, domination/resistance and marginalisation/empowerment. This is done in the context of Adavipalli[11] (research area) APJFM/CFM intervention in India.

Sarin (1995a: 1-2) points out that the official ground for Joint Forest Management in India was prepared by the new national forest policy of 1988. She further elaborates that this reversed the states' earlier forest

management priorities of meeting industrial and commercial requirements for forest produce and maximising revenue towards an emphasis on environmental protection and conservation.[12] Community-based Natural Resource Management was adopted by various Indian states in early 1990's. Andhra Pradesh implemented the World Bank (hereafter WB) sponsored Joint Forest Management (Phase-1 from 1994-2000) and the Community Forest Management (Phase-2 from late 2002-2007) interventions. The overall goal of these interventions is to empower the rural communities through community-based sustainable management of forests, sought to be resulting in the twin goals of equitable development of the community and the conservation of forests in the state. The outcome of this collaborative intervention between the World Bank and Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (APFD) has been assessed positively at various levels in World Bank reports and AP government documents such as Project Implementation Document (PID) of the World Bank and the APCFM Project Appraisal Document (PAD).

Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management (Joint Forest Management, phase-2 known as APCFM), sponsored by the World Bank is an intervention where community is placed at the centre of the intervention. In APJFM (1994-2000), forest dependent communities simply implemented the decisions made by the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department. In an effort to ensure better community involvement and development in the APCFM (2002-2007), Andhra Pradesh state government officially (see GO Ms. No. 13 passed on 12.2.2002) made community a major player in the CFM intervention. In this second phase, communities were given more decision-making and management powers and were promised more benefits (eg. 100% rights on NTFP collected) for their participation compared to the first phase. According to the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) prepared for the CFM phase,

> (U)nder JFM, the APFD took the lead on both forest planning and forest related decision-making. Under CFM the forest department will act more as a facilitator, regulator and provider of technical support, while the community will take the lead on forest planning and decision-making *subject to conservation and sustainable management regulations, National Forest Policy and Guidelines issued by APFD.*[13]

Some impact assessments of APJFM project in three different regions of Andhra Pradesh (Vishakhapatnam, Adilabad and Cuddapah districts) point to the fact that there have been some positive impacts on some

communities in terms of their access to resources (Reddy et al. 2004; Venkatraman and Falconer 1998), income and usufruct benefits (D'Silva and Nagnath 2002; Kameshwar et al. 1995-96), employment generation (Gopal and Upadhyay 2001), forest growth (Biswas et al. 1997) and other overall social and ecological benefits (Rangachari and Mukherji 2000; Reddy et al. 2000).

However, independent NGOs (like the Samata and Forests Peoples Programme) and critics (Griffiths 2006) expressed concern over the failure of the APJFM and CFM interventions in terms of the marginalisation of the poor and the tribes people. This involves further degradation of forests (Ravinder 2003); increasing social exclusion and disparities in the concerned communities; the ever widening gaps between the rich and the poor in the interventions setting (D'Silva and Nagnath 2002); the failure of the APCFM intervention to better the livelihoods of the tribal communities and on the grounds of further marginalisation of women and the poor (Kameswari 2002). They argue that the major reason for such shortcomings is a lack of attitudinal shift in the APFD from that of 'controller of the forests' to that of 'facilitator for the communities' (Saigal et al. 1996; Roy 1992). Other reasons include the unprecedented financial aid and other forms of support to APCFM project from the World Bank (Griffiths 2006; Forest Peoples Programme 2005).

There is a debate which claims that although it appears that participatory planning/management has been initiated in these interventions, in reality actual power is still vested with the Forest Department (Sarin, cited in Borgoyary et al. 2005: 36). For instance, the facilitating NGOs in the APCFM phase have been involved in carrying out activities such as community mobilisation, formation of village protection committees, training (including gender sensitisation training), and technology dissemination among other awareness and capacity-building activities. However, Sarin argues that in spite of the space created for 'NGO involvement', in this process of collaboration, active anti-FD NGOs, who often raised voice against World Bank projects, are rarely involved. In most cases, only those NGOs who have shown to have a pro-FD approach have been involved in the process of project planning and implementation. These critics claim that 'NGO involvement' promoted by these donor-funded projects led to the FD 'co-opting' NGOs, thus further diluting the grassroots activism (ibid 36-7). The present study argues that the financial dependence of the Facilitating NGO on APFD results

in its co-option by APFD. This in turn influences the way the Facilitating NGO relates to the community and its participation in the formal spaces regulating the overall developmental outcomes.

As pointed out earlier on, recent analyses by independent researchers and NGOs[14] argue that the APJFM was not successful in promoting community participation and that the APCFM intervention fell short of delivering the expected conservation and development outcomes despite its assertion on greater autonomy and empowerment to grassroots level communities. They argue that these failures are due to the entrenchment of the AP forest department's power over the forest and the forestlands. Sunder (2000: 255-79) demonstrates that although in JFM the state governments claimed to have transferred the management powers to the communities, in actuality the forest dependent communities simply were made to follow the decisions made by the State Forest Departments. This is interpreted by Sunder as an effort on the part of the Forest Departments to 'appear flexible and yet retain the deciding vote' when it came to community management of forests (ibid: 257).

While designing the APCFM intervention, community participation in forest conservation is visualised both as an end in itself to enable equitable community development and is also a means to achieve sustainable forest management as well.[15] The World Bank sponsored APCFM intervention has more than 5,000 VSS (*Vana Samrakshana Samithies* or village level forest protection committees) involved in implementing this intervention. The VSS is an institution of forest governance that structures the participation of various sections of the community in the APJFM/CFM intervention. The Executive Committee of the VSS is imbued with the decision-making power on forest management related activities and wage work in the village and the surrounding forestland. These VSS are supported through a grant of USD$ 108 million from the World Bank to the state government of Andhra Pradesh.

1.2   Research Objectives and Questions

This study aims at focusing on the micro realities of the everyday lives of Adavipalli community members by mapping their interactions and negotiations within the APCFM institutional setting. The main objective of the current study is to examine the role of power relations operating at the grassroots level in influencing key actors' participation within the Adavipalli APCFM setting and the resulting transformations in their rela-

tive social status. The implications of these transformations for the grassroots level participatory and institutional dynamics within Adavipalli APCFM intervention are also examined in this thesis. How are the formalised participatory spaces occupied, managed and manipulated amidst the dynamic and asymmetrical power relations and the informal norms and practices in Adavipalli context is focused upon in order to map grassroots level processes of social inclusion and exclusion.

This study has both conceptual and empirical relevance as:

- It contributes to the literature on decentralised community-based conservation interventions in India involving highly stratified communities along caste, class, age and gender lines.

- It contributes to the ongoing discussion on the role of power relations in participatory interventions; and the transformative potential of participatory approaches in decentralised community-based conservation interventions.

- It contributes to the understanding of actor-oriented power dynamics by focusing on the linkages between 'the formal' (laws and regulations) and 'the informal' (social norms guiding/regulating behaviour) institutional dynamics operating at grassroots level.

- Finally, it contributes through its findings to the emerging concerns in the field of Participatory Forest Governance of the importance of adopting context specific and tailor-made community-based interventions to enable inclusivity and equity.

Internationally financed participatory interventions face typical problems of paying limited attention to the complex layers of interests and power relationships amongst actors, networks and institutions. Mahanty highlights that the 'processes of negotiation amongst the actors involved in implementation, and the dynamic and complex nature of people-landscape relationships, can obscure the pathway of an intervention as a linear means to a pre-specified end' (2000: 43). Recent analyses (Mosse 1994; Chambers 1994; Cooke and Kothari 2001b; Guijt 1996; Guijt and Shah 1998b) highlight that even the participatory approaches adopted by the international proponents are shadowed by issues related to power, institutions and internal differentiation within communities, leading to the misuse and co-option of the participatory spaces. After all, 'effective decentralization depends not only on opportunities to access power but

also on the context, including the social situation and related institutional arrangements in which this power is exercised' (Lachapelle et al. 2004: 3). Hence, there is need for careful analysis of the historical and socio-cultural background of the communities involved in the decentralised interventions. They also assert that, 'an exclusive focus on formalized opportunities to exercise power, whether pursuing research or furthering policies of decentralization or democracy, offers an incomplete approach towards understanding or promoting the potential for community forestry' (ibid 9). The linkages between 'the formal' (rules governing decentralised community-based forest management) and 'the informal' (social norms guiding/regulating caste and gender roles) could potentially give us insights into promoting the same. For these very linkages could unlock the ways in which participatory spaces shape power relations and are shaped by them in highly stratified and traditional rural communities like Adavipalli. Hence, the need for an in-depth analysis of both the formal and the informal participatory mechanisms used by actors is highlighted through this study.

Participants' claim to inclusivity works to exclude and delegitimize those who refuse to participate (Cleaver 2001; Kothari 2001) in tyrannical contexts. Cleaver (2001: 54, cited in Cooke and Kothari 2001b) appeals to a dynamic vision of 'institutions' and of 'community' one that incorporates social networks and recognises dispersed and contingent power relations, the exclusionary as well as inclusionary nature of participation to address this dilemma. While the arguments against the tyranny of participation hold firm ground, they run the risk of characterising power as dominating, negative, limiting, repressive and counterproductive. Rather power is inherently positive, productive of actions, effects and subjects even when most oppressive (Kesby 2005: 2040). Recent studies (Hickey and Mohan [eds.] 2004; Kesby 2005; Masaki 2003, 2007) suggest that the inherently positive nature of power enables the creation of spaces of manipulation for the dominated. Kesby strongly suggests that rather than avoiding dealing with power one should work with it in order to understand the contingent nature of power and its effects on participatory processes and interventions (2005: 2038). He proposes that actors must draw on technologies such as participation in order to outmanoeuvre more domineering forms of power.

Community engagement in conservation depends on the quality of interactions and negotiations between various actors and networks in the

intervention context. Actors' everyday interactions may affect the intervention processes and outcomes even without their direct participation in formal participatory spaces. These interactions and negotiations are entangled in multiple power dynamics owing to the socio-cultural milieu of key actors. This thesis will take the power relations between social actors as the point of departure and will demonstrate how and why the power relations and negotiations between actors engaged in Adavipalli APCFM intervention exert more influence over the participatory processes and intervention outcomes than the premeditated objectives of the proponents.

Some of the queries taken up for investigation in this thesis are the following: Why and how do actors form networks and engage in negotiations in socially stratified communities? What are the gender, class and caste-based marginalities experienced by the Adavipalli community members while participating in the intervention? What kinds of actor-networks shape-up in highly stratified communities engaging in APCFM intervention? What is the nature of negotiations that take place between actor-networks at the grassroots level? How and why is the relative power positions of the actors involved transformed over time? How do the power relations between key actors and participatory processes mutually influence each other? How do the local level actors and networks manipulate the CFM institutional spaces and participatory processes for their short and long-term advantage? Finally, how do the existing formal and informal value systems and power relations respond to the APCFM intervention? These are some of the issues investigated in this thesis.

Perspectives and roles of actors, their power relations and negotiations and their participation in Adavipalli APCFM context are some of the key analytical vantage points for this study. Actors' self-perceptions formed the basis to understand the formal and informal power dynamics operating at the grassroots level in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. One of the key assumptions tested by this study is that the relative power positions of the actors are transformed due to their involvement in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. These participatory dynamics also influence the course of the Adavipalli CFM intervention in the process. It is assumed that the participation of actors in the intervention process from unequal power positions alters the processes and outcomes of the intervention in multiple ways.

Two significant sets of research questions emerge through this discussion. They are:

1) How are the power relations influencing key actors' participation in Adavipalli APCFM intervention at the grassroots level? What are the implications for the functioning of formal participatory spaces created through the intervention?

2) How/by, what means various actors engage with the formal and informal institutions operating in Adavipalli? How are the overall participatory dynamics influencing the process and outcomes of Adavipalli APCFM intervention?

1.3 Decentralisation, Power and Institutions in Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

Community Forest Management (CFM) as a collective endeavour essentially is a means of decentralising the decision-making powers and functions, as well as implementing these decisions through community participation. This decentralisation process seeks to empower communities to own the conservation process through active engagement in decision-making processes and management of the resources. During the decentralisation process, existing power roles are redefined by the state at various levels in order to enable regulation, management and control over decision-making within the scope of the conservation intervention. Making the community an agent in charge of the forest use and management powers for planning, implementation and occasional adjudicative purposes is the aim of the devolution. The issue of how far this decentralisation process contributes to the autonomy and empowerment of the community in question needs careful consideration. What aspects of power are decentralised? Who gets to enjoy these decentralised powers and why? What implications does this have for the communities involved? These are some of the contested issues analysed in Adavipalli community-based natural resource management.

In CBNRM programmes worldwide, various forms of decentralisation have been recommended as a way to reduce problems that occur when a highly centralised state apparatus is used to manage the forest resources (Ostrom, et al. 1993). Decentralisation can take many forms based on the nature of state and its relationship with civil society. It is defined as the transfer of powers from central government to lower lev-

els in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy (Agrawal and Ribot 1999: 3-4). Agrawal and Ribot define two major forms of decentralisation that generally occur in governance reforms. When powers are transferred to lower-level actors who are accountable to their superiors in a hierarchy, the reform can be termed (administrative) 'deconcentration'. When powers are transferred to lower-level actors who are downwardly accountable, even when they are appointed, the reform is tantamount to 'democratic or political decentralization' (ibid). Thus, in deconcentration, the central government transfers some of its powers to lower levels but these levels remain responsible and accountable to central government, and the government reserves the right to supervise, overturn or withdraw the entrustments. This form of decentralisation is referred to as 'temporary devolution' of authority within a bureaucracy to lower level officials, combined with enhanced opportunities for people's participation (Ostrom et al. 1993: 164). In contrast, political or democratic, decentralisation refers to the transfer of authority to representative and downwardly accountable actors to have an autonomous, discretionary decision-making power and resources to make decisions significant to the lives of local people. This form is permanent devolution, in which the entrustments are transferred more or less completely to the local authorities or users (ibid.). The decision-making power is also entrusted upon the local, state government branches in some cases (e.g., Andhra Pradesh Forest Department APFD). In the case of APCFM, the process of decentralisation can be comprehended as a weakly tied administrative decentralisation with democratic decentralisation where the control over the policymaking and administrative powers related to the conservation intervention are monopolised at the state level by the AP state government. Moreover, the VSS micro plan preparation and finalisation are left to the discretion of the local communities.

The emphasis on communities as the premiere medium for conservation of natural resources is of recent origin (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Chambers and McBeth 1992; Chitere 1994; Etzioni 1996). This attention to the creation of participatory spaces for enabling people's involvement has an underlying assumption that everybody in the concerned community would have an opportunity to participate and benefit through these spaces. However, the social reality of rural societies and their relationships with natural resources are more complex and entangled than is often acknowledged (Buchy and Subba 2003: 314). Research shows that

the concept of 'participation' has not been foolproof (Guijt and Shah 1998; Agarwal 2001; Agrawal and Gibson 2001; Lama and Buchy 2002) and that it often gave out counter-productive outcomes for the people involved. Designing the community-based conservation interventions often occurs in a blueprint manner with the 'participatory tag' attached to it as a rhetoric gesture. This is done as a matter of formality, through a ceremonial gesture to acknowledge concerned community's role and as a demonstration of state's commitment to the devolution of power and empowerment of the concerned community. Evidence showed that the rush and rhetorical emphasis on community participation and empowerment in the APJFM/CFM interventions, notwithstanding the community composition and the local power relations between the key actors, resulted in counterproductive developments. These include further marginalisation and exclusion of the women and the ST people in various northeastern districts of Andhra Pradesh (Forest People's Programme and Samata, preliminary report on APCFM, May 2005).

Agrawal and Gibson (2001: 16) explaining the dangers involved in direct transfer of power to communities in participatory interventions argue that 'the shifting of power to community actors can have the pernicious effect of allowing powerful elite within a community to consolidate their own positions'. The obvious fact they state is that the heterogeneous sections of the community with their varying capacities and interests may not be able to engage equitably in the participatory forest management, even if a window of opportunity is provided. Detailed analysis has been presented by research in this area, highlighting the fact that communities are diverse and at times divided entities (Leach, Mearns and Scoones 1999: 228; Buchy and Subba 2003: 314), hence the direct devolution of power resulting in diverse and often counter-productive outcomes to the participating community.

Buchy and Subba show the evidence of CBNRM interventions from Nepal and India to argue that the mechanisms of 'participatory exclusions' have disadvantaged women and the poor, and also the outcomes of participation in natural resource management are far from equitable (2003: 314). Evidence from the northeastern belt of Andhra Pradesh (Report: FPP and Samata 2005) and from the Rayalaseema region (Reddy et al. 2004, 2008) shows that APCFM intervention is not an exception to these phenomena. Reddy et al. (2004, 2008) demonstrate that the livelihood-based benefits accrued by the poor and the marginalised

through their engagement in the APJFM/CFM intervention have been insignificant due to factors like faulty implementation of the intervention; interventionists focusing more on forest regeneration as opposed to the development of the forest dependent poor; lack of sincerity in community-based capacity-building measures; and token representation of women and the poor in participatory spaces. Keeping these insights in view, this study argues that the measures taken up to include women and the poor in the formal institutional set-up of APCFM (through VSS) ignore the presence of a more subtle patriarchal power play present in the community. These power relations regulate actors' behavioural patterns and capabilities to utilise the participatory spaces provided through these measures.

Many development theorists and practitioners criticise the blueprint approach in CBNRM interventions. Yet there are very few efforts made at various levels in the Andhra Pradesh's context to devise community-based conservation interventions capable of accomplishing the necessary flexibility to be accommodative and sympathetic to local power dynamics to enable participation of the marginalised sections of communities. In light of the above discussion of various contextual and contested issues characterising the decentralised community-based natural resource management interventions, we now proceed to investigate specific issues arising in community participation in the decentralised interventions.

1.4   Communities and Participation: Linkages in CBNRM

Community involvement and participation in conservation of natural resources through participatory mechanisms aims to empower local people through increasing their direct access and control over resources. Appreciation of the complex association between people and their landscape could result in better protection of forest-based livelihoods within a conservation intervention setting. This is possible in the long-run provided a suitable strategy of participative mechanisms is employed through the formal institutions of participatory management like that of the VSS. This involves considerable effort on the part of the powerful actors like the APFD while sharing the decision-making power along with an aim for increased participation and ownership for the community actors involved.

Participation as an approach is a right step leading to the better representation of local people's needs and aspirations resulting in their devel-

opment. However, there are number of political and socio-ecological factors regulating actors' behaviour within an intervention setting. These factors influence choices of participation made by actors on everyday basis. For instance, the opportunity costs involved in participation of an ST man in the VSS substantially differ from that of the new elite leader owing to their relative power positions in the Adavipalli community; accordingly the nature and extent of their participation in the intervention differs. Nemarundwe (1995: 11) observes that people's participation itself is a socially embedded phenomenon and cannot be elicited at will. This means people are not 'free' to participate in the created/invited spaces of participation without first entering into the realm of local power relations.

Drawing on Chambers work on Participatory Rural Appraisal (1997), Mosse (2001: 16) argues that an important principle of participatory development is the incorporation of local people's knowledge into programme planning. He nevertheless clarifies that the meaning of 'participation' is clearly not confined to 'people's knowledge' and planning, though they are an integral part of participatory techniques. The concept of participation has been critically examined by various scholars in terms of its quality, characteristics and nature, utility and functionality (e.g. means and end) (Agarwal 2001; Cooke and Kothari 2001b; Buchy and Subba 2003; Lama and Buchy 2002; Nelson and Wright 1995). As participation has many forms and magnitudes, one has to be vigilant while using it as a means of ensuring better community involvement in CBNRM. The present study stresses the need for engineering contextually embedded participatory approaches towards community-based natural resource management, with a view to incorporating factors such as local power relations, agency, structure-based dynamics and informal social relations active at the grassroots.

Drawing from the typologies of White (1996) and Pretty (1995) on participation, Agarwal (2001: 1624) proposes a typology of participation (Box 1.1) as a means to community development. This typology also reflects Uphoff's (1991) analysis on participation, in terms of objectives, that at its narrowest participation is judged almost entirely by its potential efficiency effects; and at its broadest by its ability to enhance equity, efficiency, empowerment and environmental sustainability. In this typology, the ideal level of participation in ascending order is the 'interactive participation', ideally resulting in empowerment of the participants.

Box 1.1
Typology-1 of participation

Form/level of participation (Presented in ascending order)	*Characteristics/features*
Nominal participation	*Membership in the group*
Passive participation	*Being informed of decisions ex post facto; or attending meetings, listening in on decision-making without speaking up*
Consultative participation	*Being asked an opinion in specific matters without guarantee of influencing decisions*
Activity-specific participation	*Being asked to (or volunteering to) undertake specific tasks*
Active participation	*Expressing opinions whether or not solicited or taking initiatives of other sorts*
Interactive participation (empowering)	*Having a voice and influence in the group's decisions*

Source: Agarwal 2001: 1624.

This typology is helpful to assess the quality of participation of actors in any given participatory development intervention. Participation as a technique may not have reached the desired perfection. Yet, due to its inherent weakness of not being able to respond to the deep seated power dynamics of targeted communities, so far as for the purpose of community involvement in conservation and development. Some advocate for it as a reliable channel by many international and national bodies. There are limits to what participation alone (even if interactive) can achieve in terms of equity and efficiency, given the pre-existing socio-economic inequalities and relations of power that characterise a given community (Nemarundwe 1995: 12). Hence, this study shares the need to understand and conceptualise the role of power relations in community-based participatory interventions like Adavipalli APCFM with an objective of incorporating the power relations into the canvas of intervention rather than aiming at minimising or avoiding their omnipresence. As explained by Corbridge and Kumar (2002: 766), '(C)ommunities are also institutions, and they cannot be assumed to be undivided; nor should they be defined in opposition to the state or the market, for community members are generally active in all three spheres of social exchange. What

matters most…are questions of power and access'. As institutions that are heterogeneous and characterised by various socio-economic factors, communities do engage in power relations while pursuing their short and long-term interests regulated by their political society and market. Super-imposed on an asymmetrical power plane, participatory spaces may result in reproduction of the same inequalities that were aimed to be levelled in the first place. However, these observations fall short of analysing and elaborating the transformative potentials hidden in participatory social functions. This study argues that even in the face of extremely skewed power relations such as the ones prevailing in the Adavipalli APCFM setting, there is scope for transformations in actors' social positioning and power through participation.

<div align="center">

Box 1.2
Typology-2 of participation

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1. Passive participation: Being told what is going to happen
2. Participation in information giving
3. Participation by consultation: Consultation does not tantamount to share in decision-making
4. Participation for material incentives like labour, in exchange for food, cash or other material benefits
5. Functional participation: To meet predetermined objectives after the major decisions have already been made
6. Interactive participation: Joint analysis, which leads to action plans, and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones; these groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices
7. Self-mobilisation: Taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used; this may or may not challenge the existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power

However, more recently Drydyk (2005: 259-60) (Table 1.2) developed a relatively inclusive and nuanced typology of participation drawing on Gaventa (1998: 157) and Pretty (1994: 3, 7-48). This typology is based on the potential of participatory methods with an aim to distinguish the participatory schemes that enhance democratic development, from those that fail to do so. As in the case of the typology derived by Agarwal (2001: 1624) in Table 1.1, this typology also lists the less desirable as well as the best-practiced and more desirable participatory forms. At the top

of Drydyk's list of desirability is the 'self-mobilisation' where actors' initiative to change system while retaining the decision-making power on resource use is placed. The typology presented in Table 1.2 pays adequate attention to the merits and shortcomings of participatory approaches to development and thoroughly informs the present analysis.

The sought-after form, in this typology of participation is self-mobilisation. Nevertheless, the proponent (Drydyk 2005: 260) admits that this participatory form may or may not challenge the existing status quo characterised by the inequitable distribution of wealth and power. Although participatory interventions like APCFM are initiated with a view to ensuring level playing field for all the actors involved, since the very same actors with unequal capacities, occupy the created spaces they are likely to face the same power imbalances reproduced in the newly created participatory institutions as well. This is because the efforts of giving a fresh and equal start to all the actors engaged in the intervention like Adavipalli APCFM still have to face the already existing social realities characterised by inequality of status and access. These inequalities pre-date the intervention and stretch beyond the life of the intervention. After all, as pointed by Long and Van der Ploeg (1989: 226-49), drawing clear cut demarcations of where the intervention processes end and everyday life of social actors' begins is next to impossible. Actors' everyday life and interactions transcend the intervention processes whenever they engage in interactions and negotiations with other actors.

Both the typologies of participation discussed here do not elaborate on the possibility of a social actor simultaneously engaging in multiple forms of participation both in the formal and informal spheres, and the resulting implications for actors' participation at various levels. For example, at any given point in time the new elite leader of Adavipalli may engage with various actors ranging from the Forester to the Tribal leader in both formal and informal capacities. Depending on whom he deals with and the issue around which the negotiation is happening, his participatory strategy could shift from consultative to interactive mode; and simultaneously to self-mobilisation as well. How and why the new elite leader and other actors engage in these multiple strategies in both spheres is examined through the case of Adavipalli.

The typologies of participation (Boxes 1.1 and 1.2) inform the present study to a great extent, as they could potentially throw light on the power relations within the Adavipalli community and their influence on partici-

patory processes within the intervention context. However, as mentioned in the discussion of the research problem, it is understood that participation is a form of power and a tool of exercise of power, however this does not mean that it can only be dominant and should be resisted (Kesby 2005: 2038). Hence, we need new ways of understanding what the potential power relations have to offer and to benefit from the rich informal interactions and processes happening within the intervention setting. Understanding the co-existence of positive/constructive face, alongside the negative/oppressive face of power relations may offer solutions for the perceived failures of participatory interventions at the grassroots level.

1.5 Communities: Gender, Class and Caste Dynamics

Issues like gender and caste dynamics play a major role in regulating the participation of communities engaged in conservation. The old notion of communities, especially rural ones as homogenous units living in harmony with shared knowledge and purpose, and made of people sharing needs, views and agenda is challenged. Empirical evidence (Agrawal and Gibson 1999) has shown that communities are highly heterogeneous socially, culturally and economically. The heterogeneity because of structural factors like gender, caste and class-related aspects is another important issue to be incorporated in any tailor-made CBNRM interventions. It is now recognised that communities are hubs of multiple interests and capacities establishing heterogeneity across and within various sections (Agrawal and Gibson 2001). This contributed new insights into understanding the nuances of composition of communities, and the relative implications for the intervention processes aimed at their development.

Power is exercised by actors along caste, class and gender axes. Lack of attention to these structural and agency-based aspects while conceptualising the participatory interventions invariably leads to the malfunctioning of the formally created spaces of participation. A premise behind the CBNRM interventions is that actors such as women and tribal community members are free agents with the desire and the power to act upon the recommended or designed standards of conservation. However, the fact remains that they are often not free agents, even if they have adequate knowledge and desire they may not have the capacity and power to make decisions or to act based on these decisions. The interdependent factors like local values, everyday realities and above all strategic posi-

tioning of actors at the grassroots level in community-based conserva-
tion interventions affect actors' levels and capabilities to participate. A
thorough analysis of the same requires embracing a post-structuralist no-
tion of power.[16]

Power exercise may result in short-term and long-term effects at the
community level. While short-term impacts are easy to observe and
comprehend, the long-term impacts like transformation of relative power
positions of actors' over a period of time are more subtle and need con-
tinuous mapping and monitoring at the grassroots level. Various actors
engaging in power relations may act according to both short-term and
long-term interests in any given situation of community-based natural
resource management. While local actors are aware of the consequences
of their actions at their level, they may not be aware of the after effects
of their actions on the intervention process in the long-term. As Fou-
cault says, 'People know what they want to do; they frequently know why
they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does'
(1982b: 187). Following this argument, it is argued by the present study
that the exercise of power by various actors in the Adavipalli APCFM
intervention has multiple effects on the immediate power positions of
the actors, networks and on the intervention process. In other words, it
is assumed that these dynamic power relations determine the mode of
negotiations, and the nature of actors' participation in the Adavipalli
APCFM intervention process.

These entanglements of power (Sharp et al. 2000: 1) influence the
participatory dynamics at the grassroots level in Adavipalli APCFM in-
tervention. However, by observing the individual actors alone we cannot
have the complete frame for analysis, as the resulting dynamic situation
is more than the sum of power exercised by all in the given context.
Gender, caste and class-based dynamics of the concerned society play a
major role in shaping the terms and conditions under which these spaces
are created and occupied. As pointed out by Gaventa, those who shape a
particular space affect who has power within it, at the same time those
who are powerful in one space may in fact be less powerful in another.
For examining the functioning of participatory spaces we need to ask
how they were created, and with whose interests and on what terms of
engagement (Gaventa 2003: 9). Exercise of power in various forms,
spaces and levels in Adavipalli APCFM intervention is observed in this
thesis with a special focus on the key actors' interactions. The analysis of

these power dynamics in community-based conservation interventions can be done by mapping the interactions and negotiations between key actors and actor-networks. Mapping the existing power relations indicate how these actors and networks relate to each other, and how knowledge pertaining to the intervention process is shared, and hence, how the CFM intervention is received by the actors and networks engaging in interactions and negotiations at the grassroots level.

Power and community are two inseparable aspects that continuously challenge most of the decentralised CBNRM interventions' capacities to achieve desired goals. Commenting on the alleged transfer of power by the state to the community in CBNRM interventions, Ostrom (2001: ix) points out,

> Even if legislation or policy boasts a "participatory" or "community" label, it is rare that individuals from the community have had any say at all in the policy. Further, many of these centrally imposed "community" programs are based on a naïve view of community. It is unlikely that any policy based on such views has a chance to produce more than a few minor successes.

Levels and forms of community participation are viewed as important determinants of the success or failure of the CBNRM intervention by both the state and non-state actors. Designing a perfect participatory framework for CBNRM interventions is almost impossible, as the community involved is most often a heterogeneous one comprised of various actors and their networks engaging in power relations in pursuit of different and over-lapping interests (Guijt and Shah 1998). Agrawal and Gibson (2001) warn that designing of a rapid, foolproof blueprint for conservation interventions, without actually considering the role of local actors will surely result in failure of the intervention. They argue that designing flexible and context specific interventions, avoiding carpet or blueprint policies in CBNRM, ensures better participation. Enabling a context specific design for community involvement in conservation interventions requires understanding the intricate relationship between community-based actors and the power relations in and around them. The power imbalances affect the capacity of groups and especially the poor and women to take part in development and conservation interventions (Guijt and Shah 1998).

Unpacking the notions of 'homogenous local community' (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, 2001; Chambers 1994; Guijt 1996; Guijt and Shah

1998a; Mosse 1994) opened up a Pandora's box of analytical issues of utmost importance like the heterogeneity of communities and the connection between gender, caste, class and community in natural resource management interventions. Contrary to the image of 'shared beliefs and interests' propagated by the classic notion of a homogenous community, diverse and often conflicting values and resource priorities pervade social life. These diverse and conflicting values and resource priorities are struggled and 'bargained' over by various actors of unequal power and status in the community (Carney and Watts 1991; Leach 1994; Moore 1993). Adavipalli community is a platform for such conflicting values and resource priorities. The transformative potential of participation as a technique is emphasised by the proponents of popular participation (Cornwall 2002: 10-17, cited in Masaki 2007: 2).

The concept of gender is intricately mixed with the concept of community (Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen 2001). In highly stratified and differentiated societies, devolution of control over resources from the state to local organisations does not necessarily lead to greater participation and empowerment of all stakeholders (ibid 64). Both 'gender' and 'community' are broad analytical categories incorporating diverse groups, with potentially differing or conflicting interests. Overlooking these demographic and socio-cultural factors could jeopardise the CBNRM interventions (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, 2001; Cornwall 1998; Guijt and Shah 1998; Sarin 1998).

Social exclusion mechanisms operating in participatory processes lead to further marginalisation of women and poor owing to their lack of control over and access to resources (Agarwal 1997b). Although participatory structures like the *Vana Samrakshana Samithi* are in place to enable representation of the marginalised sections of the community like women and tribes, the patriarchal norms and practices and the existing resource and power dynamics allow little room for their active participation. Agarwal (1997b: 3) stresses, '…without women's effective participation in all aspects, the emergent initiatives will have serious adverse consequences for social equality and programme efficiency, and will further disempower women…(especially since) the twin concerns of equity and efficient environmental protection need not be in conflict; quite the contrary'. Buchy and Subba warn that planning formal institutional interventions like community forestry without sufficient attention to intra-community differences, especially on gender lines, renders the interven-

tion gender blind (2003: 323). Even when there are formal structures in place, informal norms and regulations affect the way various sections of the community access and participate in these structures. The Adavipalli case demonstrates how women and men engage in the formal participatory structures through the VSS, amidst the strong presence of the informal institutions and patriarchal norms and practices.

Gender cuts across households and other dimensions of intra-community differentiation and hierarchy such as, class, caste and ethnicity (Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen 2001: 66). Nonetheless, gender relations in a community also are influenced by the same identities that it complements. Gender relations can be characterised as socially constructed through gendered norms, meanings and practices within that particular community. Everyday social interactions between various actors of the community fill these gender relations with meanings, which define the very existence and furtherance of these relations. Institutional fabric of the community facilitates the smooth flow of existing gender order, with occasional allowances in favour of the marginalised (including men), leading to the incremental transformation of these norms and practices in the end. The same institutional fabric also influences women's and men's access to and control over natural resources and their participation in decision-making activities. Both intra-household gender dynamics and community's effect on gender relations are important to locate the gender dynamics at the Adavipalli community level. As in the intra-household analysis, the case for including attention to gender differences within communities depends on the extent to which patterns of resource control, decision-making or welfare outcomes are influenced by systematic differences between men and women (Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen 2001: 66). 'Men' and 'women', are not homogenous categories, as they are also divided by the class, caste and ethnicity-based dynamics operating at the community level influences resource usage patterns. Gender relations affect structures of production as well as reproduction, thereby shaping people's relationships to communities. Community organisations affect women's access to and control over resources, decision-making and welfare. Thus, systematic power differences between men and women merit attention, while designing and implementing CBNRM interventions (ibid 66).

Moser points out that although most institutions like the World Bank, and governments have put gender-mainstreaming policies in place, the

implementation is inconsistent (Moser and Moser 2005). The importance of inclusive and appropriate participatory processes has been emphasised by the literature on participatory methods (Lama and Buchy 2003; Chambers 1994; Flora et al. 2000; Guijt 1996). However, there are clear indications of misfit between the Adavipalli community fabric, and the participatory structures opned up from the top. Realising the potential of the participatory structures, as will be demonstrated by Adavipalli case will rely on their appropriateness and responsiveness towards the gendered norms and needs of the community.

Cornwall et al. (2007: 3) argue that women often appear in narratives of gender and development policy as both heroes and victims. Heroic for their capacity to struggle and exercise autonomy, and victimised by the triple work burden and the patriarchal oppression and violence. These typologies fail to capture the grey areas of women's daily lives and struggles and the negotiations that characterise various social interactions between and among women and men in rural contexts. In order to go beyond these essentialisms, the present study tries to capture the spheres of women's influence, strategic networking and negotiations, which women engage in to ensure access to and control over resources through informal networks, as well as influencing decision-making processes at the household level and the community/VSS level. The analysis of the private and more discrete forms of participation, less visible domains of decision-making (Cleaver 2000, 2001; Fortmann 1995) are mapped through observation and ethnographic methodology. After all, the fact that women are represented in the VSS structure, may not necessarily translate into their actual participation and entice their priorities over forest management and access to resources, as will be illustrated by the present study. As the Adavipalli case will illustrate, informal networks and arenas often play a crucial role in negotiating resource access and decision-making for women and men in intervention settings.

Mearns et al. (1997: 14) opine that different social actors have different capacities to voice and stake their claims. Women might be accustomed to pressing their claims in everyday life through more subtle, informal networks and practices. This could happen both inside the household as well as in the face of a powerful village leadership or government officials in public meetings. Public representation and participation are desirable for women's benefit in terms of their work, their rights to resources in a more formal, visible and less conditional (on relations

with men) setting. Nevertheless, there is also a need to recognise that the invisibility and ambiguity may have potential strategic advantages for women as they may face less male resistance and yet draw on their agency and exercise subtle forms of influence and power (Jackson 1998: 317). After all, the fact that women are represented in the VSS may not necessarily guarantee their participation in the formal domain and translate into their actual participation in VSS activities.

1.6   Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into three parts. The first part has three chapters, which introduce the thesis, the methodology of the study and the research methods used in detail. The theoretical and analytical framework adopted for the study is also outlined in these chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the thesis while exploring relevant concepts informing the present research. Through a thorough discussion of the concepts like participation, communities and power relations, this chapter anchors the research questions and objectives.

Chapter 2 elaborates the research methods adopted by the present study. Apart from presenting various qualitative research methods adopted for data collection and analysis, this chapter also gives a description of the methodology and research location. Chapter 3 accounts for the development of the 'adaptive contextual actor-networks framework' (ACAN framework), which serves as the theoretical and analytical framework for this study. It also discusses how the theoretical concepts like participation and power; and analytical approaches like actor-oriented approach; actor-network theory, and various gender analysis frameworks contribute to the 'adaptive contextual actor-networks framework'.

Part 2 of the thesis (chapters 4-6) introduces the research site/village ethnographically. Chapter 4 delves into conservation policy and legislation in India and Andhra Pradesh. It also elaborates the vital issues in the up gradation from JFM to CFM in Andhra Pradesh. The chapter also focuses ethnographically on the Adavipalli village community and presents in detail their livelihood and resource management patterns apart from introducing various key actors involved in the Adavipalli conservation intervention.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the 'emergence of the new elite class' in the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM context with a discussion on the implications

of the emergence of new elite leadership for the Adavipalli community and the APCFM intervention. Chapter 6 explores how gendered power relations and social exclusions influence the role of women within both formal and informal ways of participation in the Adavipalli VSS, with the aim to contribute to the on-going debate on the role of women in participatory natural resource management. This chapter engages in a gender analysis and gives a clear picture of how the participatory spaces created through the Adavipalli APCFM context are occupied and managed.

Part 3 of the thesis has three chapters. Chapter 7 elaborates on key actors and their networks in the Adavipalli VSS, tries to locate their positions in their respective networks and their relationships with other actor-networks in and around the Adavipalli VSS. In this chapter, the aspects of actors' perceptions and their networking are explored. Key actors living in the Adavipalli village and their relationship to, and perceptions over the landscape are elucidated in order to understand their respective agendas for participating in the APCFM intervention. Actors' perceptions of the intervention and their respective roles in it, and that of their counterparts are explored. The processes of the network formation at the grassroots level, and actors' enrolment are mapped to analyse the nature of power relations.

Chapter 8 concentrates on the participatory dynamics through analysing actor-networks engagement and negotiations within the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. It elaborates on the nature of various actor-networks in the VSS, and their exercise of power in the decision- making process at the VSS level. Chapter 9 concludes the thesis and presents possible angles for further investigation of the case. This chapter also outlines the findings of the thesis and discusses the implications for highly stratified communities (along caste, class, age and gender lines) like that of Adavipalli engaged in the APCFM intervention. The final and concluding chapter of the thesis lists the lessons learned from the Adavipalli APCFM case, and the policy recommendations towards a contextual and adaptive community-based participatory conservation in Andhra Pradesh.

Notes

[1] Refer to Escobar (1988, 1995) and Kabeer (1994) for critiques of top-down, centralised, modernist and authoritarian approaches of development.

[2] In order to ensure the safety and protect the anonymity of the respondents, pseudonyms are used for the people and the study village. *Adavipalli* is a pseudonym given to the study village in Kadapa district.

[3] Transformation is defined for this study as an ongoing process of change (positive as well as negative) in actors' life standards as well as their social standing and their capabilities to improvise on the same. For our study, both change and transformation as social phenomena are defined as continuous.

[4] The interventionist perspective sees development and social change as emanating primarily from centres of power in the form of intervention by state or other external agents or international interests (Long 1992: 19), unlike the actor-oriented approach, which conceptualises intervention as a negotiated process created through interaction between actors (Long and Van der Ploeg 1989: 228).

[5] Social status is defined for this study as the relative position of actor/s within their network; community, village and/or any social unit on which they draw upon for their everyday life.

[6] High and Slater et al. (2006) explain that the interest in relationships between formal and informal institutions is what distinguishes the new institutionalism from the old school, which pays attention only to the formal modes of interactions as the determinants of individual/organisational behaviour.

[7] Cleaver (2001: 55) points out that 'the terms "formal" (modern, bureaucratic, organisational) and "informal" (social, traditional) institutions are convenient but misleading. Traditional and social institutions may indeed be highly formalized although not necessarily in the bureaucratic forms that we recognise'.

[8] The distinction between 'participation' as an end or as a means to an end is described by Nelson and Wright (1995, cited by Buchy and Race 2001: 294) as the distinction between 'transformative and instrumental' participation. Instrumental participation in this context uses participation as a tool for a specific end, and transformative participation embraces participation as a mechanism for social change. While instrumental participation in APCFM context is used as a tool for improving service delivery for the poor, participation as an end aims at empowering the participants.

[9] Refer to *The Drama of the Commons* (2002) edited by Ostrom et al. for an elaborate historical account of facts and analysis around Hardin's *Tragedy of Commons*.

[10] Some of the major works contributing to the CBNRM knowledge pool are-Agarwal (1994b, 1997a, 2001); Agrawal and Gibson (2001); Agrawal (2005); Blaikie and Brookfield (1987); Brosius, Tsing and Zerner (2005); Buchy and Hoverman (2000); Buchy and Subba (2003); Chambers and McBeth (1992); Cleaver (1999 & 2001); Escobar (2006); Gibson, McKean and Ostrom (2000); Guijt and Shah (1998, 2001); Lama and Buchy (2002); Leach, Mahanty et al. (2006); Locke (1999); Mearns and Scoones (1999); Mosse (1999); Nelson and

Wright (1995); Ostrom et al. (2002); Peet and Watts (1996, 2004); Sarin (2001); Singh (2001); Sunder et al. (2001).

[11] Adavipalli (pseudonym) is a village situated in Cuddapah/Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh, the fifth largest state in India. Each state in India is further divided into districts for administrative purposes. Andhra Pradesh is divided into 23 districts in total.

[12] http://www.fao.org/docrep/v3960e/v3960e06.htm

[13] Refer to page 103, PIP (2002). Andhra Pradesh Forest Department issued a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) in 2002 for the initiation of APCFM intervention in Andhra Pradesh.

[14] Refer to the report, *Broken Promises: How World Bank Group Policies and Practice Fail to Protect Forests and Forest Peoples' Rights*,(2005), 'The Great "Community Forest Management" Swindle: Critical Evaluation of an Ongoing World Bank Financed Project in Andhra Pradesh', by Tom Griffiths, Forest Peoples Programme and Ravi Repprabagada and Bhanu kalluri, Samata, http://www.forestpeoples.org/documents/ifi_igo/wb_forests_joint_pub_apr05_eng.pdf

See also *Andhra Pradesh Community Management Project: A Preliminary Independent Evaluation of a World Bank Forestry Project*, by Forest Peoples Programme & Samata (May 2005). http://www.forestpeoples.org/documents/ifi_igo/wb_andhra_pradesh_cfm_proj_may_05_eng.pdf

[15] The distinction between 'participation' as an end or as a means to an end is described by Nelson and Wright (1995) as the distinction between 'transformative and instrumental' participation.

[16] Chapter 3, section 3.6 covers post-structural conceptualisation of power extensively.

2 Research Methods

2.1 Geographical location

The selection of the research site in the state of Andhra Pradesh (AP), in India is guided by various factors such as the geographical coverage of the previous research on APJFM/CFM; the community[1] composition (highly stratified as opposed to tribal dominated); and the people and socio-ecological landscape relationship.

I chose to base this study in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh in order to focus on the participatory processes actors engage in highly stratified social context where APJFM/CFM intervention is in vogue. Kadapa district is well known in Rayalaseema region for its dynamic rural communities (along caste and religious lines) engaging in forest conservation through APCFM programme. Kadapa district is also home to the most dynamic caste and class system that results in a complex web of social and political relationships at the grassroots level, with significant implications for the community's involvement in forest conservation through APCFM intervention.

I opted for a mixed method for selection of the research site within the Kadapa district. The selected forest range from Kadapa district has 10 VSS villages in total. All the villages have significant commonalities such as their highly stratified community structure; varied levels of forest dependence; facilitated by the same NGO and their association with the Forest Department through various state-based poverty alleviation interventions.[2] Narrowing down the selection to a few of these villages took place only after visiting all the villages/communities to conduct a preliminary round of observations.

Out of the ten villages visited, two villages belonging to the same *Grama Panchayat*[3] were shortlisted based on factors such as size, community composition, history of their long-term involvement in APJFM/

CFM, and the nature of facilitation they received from the APFD and the facilitating NGO. The factors that prompted us to select Adavipalli[4] village from among these two villages are- Continued and intense engagement of the Adavipalli community with conservation interventions; its people and landscape relationship; presence of an actively functioning new elite leadership, which included a female vice president of the VSS; and being the oldest functioning VSS in the forest range with an active involvement of the poorer sections of the community in the VSS-based work.

Since the analytical focus of this study is on the influence of power relations over actors' participation in Adavipalli APCFM intervention and the resulting transformations in actors' social position, Adavipalli seemed a healthy choice compared to the rest of the villages in the forest range for conducting an actor-oriented inquiry. In other villages the relationship between the people and the landscape has not been as intense as Adavipalli. Selecting one of them as our study locale would have affected the findings of this study qualitatively, as there was no new elite class in them; people's dependence on forests has not beeen as high as in Adavipalli; and the engagement of women and tribals has not been as visible as in Adavipalli. The community-based actors of Adavipalli are relatively more engaged with the forest based livelihoods, thereby more dependent on the VSS-based labour. Thus, Adavipalli case is purposively selected to facilitate the analytical enquiry of impact of power relations on actors participation and their relative social transformations.

I undertook the data collection in two phases. First phase lasted for a period of seven months, from August 2004 to February 2005 and the second for a period of five months, from July 2005 to November 2005. This way the data collected could be analysed comparatively to account for changes in people's perceptions and the relative transformations and changes in their everyday lives and networks. The second phase of data collection proved more rewarding and enriching in terms of being instrumental in filling the gaps in the dataset.

2.2   Data collection and field observations/experiences

Ethnographic and qualitative orientation guided the data collection processes for this study. The most crucial tools used for collection of qualitative data were participant observation and focus group discussions coupled with in-depth interviews and oral histories to account for the

unwinding processes of key actors' engagement in the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM context for the last 10-15 years. Different methods were used simultaneously to maximise the reliability of the data and to triangulate the data generated through participant observation.

Accounting for the emergence of new elite was one of the major aims of the present study. In order to capture the historical evolution of the new elite section of Adavipalli, oral histories of elderly and key resource persons of Adavipalli community from various cross sections were collected. The techniques used required a lot of rapport, ease with the interviewees and hence were taken up at a later stage. Accounting for the events that led to the making of the new elite section and the related implications for the Adavipalli community as well as the APCFM intervention were captured through repeatedly visiting the respondents and recording their perceptions and opinions on the same. The method of historical reconstruction of events has been adopted to capture the process of the emergence of the new elite (NE) class. Apart from recording oral histories/ historical accounts of the respondents, some focus group discussions and impromptu meetings were also held to check the reliability of the data collected during 2004 and 2005 in Adavipalli village. The testimonies of the APFD senior officials and forest guards at the local level who have been working with the Adavipalli community for past 20 years have also been taken into consideration.

Everyday processes and observations for this study have been undertaken through participant observation. As a participant observer, I lived within the Adavipalli community; observed and comprehended the interactions and the life events of actors' as they unfolded. This not only allowed me to study various socio-political and ecological phenomena as they arose, but also offered excellent opportunity to gain deeper insights by experiencing the phenomena in person.[5] Participant observation as a method encourages researchers to immerse themselves in the day-to-day activities of the people they are attempting to understand (May 2001: 148). The present study depended on the same processes while mapping the interactions of the key actors involved in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. An interpretative approach includes the researcher's beliefs and behaviour as part of the evidence presented and considered in a research activity (Harding 1987). Following this argument, my own role and biases as a researcher and as an actor involved in this process are duly acknowledged while recording observations on a daily basis.

At the onset of the fieldwork, I conducted a baseline household sur-vey of the Adavipalli village in order to collect demographic data pertain-ing to all the households. This not only helped me to gain general in-sights into the social differentiations of community members, but also gave opportunity to introduce myself to all households, and gain rapport with the villagers in general. Focusing upon the gender dynamics within and outside the households helped to understand how women made similar trade-offs when it came to participation at formal and informal levels. These results then were triangulated with the data obtained through in-depth interviews and participant observation on women's participation in VSS.

The observations I made in my field diary during these initial days came in handy for me to compare periodically people's opinions and perceptions over a period of time as well as the formal and informal po-sitions they took on various issues concerning their community and the intervention. As time passed, I realised that there was a qualitative differ-ence in the perceptions I had of the community from time to time, which contributed towards enabling a better understanding and analysis of the people's perceptions and events.

The Adavipalli community were very kind and approachable right from the beginning. However, in the initial days I found myself limited to public and formal levels of interactions between various actors. As time passed, I could get access to more informal interactions and events owing to the general acceptance I enjoyed among the villagers and the Forest Department Officials. These observations ranged from formal VSS level negotiations; interactions between APFD, facilitating NGO (henceforth FNGO) to that of informal gender, caste and class-based relations of the community. These informal dynamics played a significant role in shaping the power relations and the perceptions of key actors.

The fieldwork process presented occasional hurdles. Accessing the in-formation pertaining to the VSS from the APFD, and the facilitating FNGO at the range level proved a challenge. And a standard answer was always available in the range foresters office: 'We will give you time…but right now you can't meet Mr X'; 'All the information is in the APFD website, you are an educated person, why don't you spend time in the internet', etc. Eventually my presence in Adavipalli village convinced them that I was not there to keep an eye on the functioning of the Forest Department. Even at this point, the FNGO leader was present in all the

interviews in the initial months on the pretext of helping me. It was only after I started discussing problems he faced and his life experience as a social worker that the FNGO leader started opening up. In the presence of the FNGO leader, community members were careful not to interact with me freely. For instance, the *Yanadi* women would never utter a word in front of the APFD personnel and the FNGO representative. Because I stayed in the community constantly, it was possible to have moments of privacy with the individuals and groups of respondents. In the initial days it was only in these informal situations that the less powerful sections like women and the *Yanadi* would open up to discussion and communication of any kind. It was not long before I could establish a good rapport with all the key actors in APFD at the range level, the FNGO personnel and the villagers at the grassroots level. This eventually encouraged the women and the *Yanadi* community members to speak up even in front of the FNGO personnel in more formal occasions like village gatherings. Sometimes when the women tried to voice their opinions and ask questions the FNGO representative was quick in thwarting these voices, by deliberately diverting the discussion and by snubbing the person who raised the question. Sometimes even the VSS leadership had to imitate the act to show their solidarity with the FNGO and APFD personnel.

The second phase involved in-depth observation of various negotiations and events in the community, through conducting focus group discussions with villagers and the VSS members. During these focus group discussions, the FNGO personnel would be present to act as a controlling mechanism to keep the larger community from expressing their views and concerns openly on the functioning of VSS in particular and APCFM intervention in general. It was only in closed focus group discussions with the women, the SC and the ST that the participants revealed the informalities of Adavipalli community involvement in the VSS.

I stated my purpose for visiting the community and my research subject to all the people involved at various levels. Sharing the research findings with them was not a conducive option, as it may threaten the livelihoods and networking of some of the key actors involved in the research. As a researcher and as an actor with ethical responsibility towards the general welfare of the respondents, the real identities of the forest range officials, the FNGO personnel, the villagers and VSS mem-

bers   have been withheld to protect their confidentiality while writing this thesis. Pseudonyms are used wherever necessary throughout the thesis to this end. However, dilemmas related to how much of the observed data is to be revealed and how, to ensure the least possible damage to the Adavipalli village community   were concerns that continuously challenged me throughout my thesis writing.

Espousal of case study method

The study is qualitative, ethnographic, adaptive and explorative in nature. Both the research problem and the research context are treated in an adaptive and exploratory manner, along with testing out a hypothesis about the participatory processes as they occur in the Adavipalli 'real-life context' (Yin 2003: 13). I adopted a qualitative case study method in order to make this inquiry deep and substantial, and in lieu of the required observation of complex grassroots level power dynamics in Adavipalli APCFM context. Miles and Huberman point out that the definition of what constitutes a case must stem from the analytical focus of the inquiry and the scale of analysis appropriate to the case (1994: 25-6). This study aims at reflecting on the decentralised participatory mechanisms that simultaneously enable inclusion as well as exclusion of the poor and the marginalised across caste, class and gender lines through engaging in a qualitative case study of Adavipalli.[6] The findings of the Adavipalli case study will be useful for adopting better intervention strategies for rural communities engaging in the APCFM intervention and inform the theory and practice of CBNRM interventions situated in similar contexts elsewhere.

   Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 52) summarise some of the particular features that distinguish case study method from other qualitative research methods as: 1) the fact that only one case is selected, although it is also accepted that several may exist; 2) the fact that the study is detailed and intensive; 3) the fact that the phenomenon is studied in context; and 4) the use of multiple data collection methods. Accordingly, the present study does not aim to generate statistically representative sets of findings. This study has the qualitative depth and leverage necessary for generating deeper understanding of the nuances around exercise of power within the grassroots level processes; along with the mapping of power relations, which cannot be accounted for through the adoption of a quantitative statistical method.

This case study is restricted in its overall scope by factors like limited timescale, resource constraints and its focus on the micro-processes at the grassroots level. Hence, it was feasible to focus in-depth into the everyday lives of actors and their interactions in the context of the Adavipalli intervention, rather than attempting a comparative analysis of multiple VSS. Given the fact that each village/community has its own characteristic features, and the intervention process and outcomes in each village are likely to differ with the slightest change in the local community dynamics, I opted for an in-depth case study of one village. This was done to understand how the APCFM intervention plays out in a particular context, generating potential results to inform similar cases elsewhere. The strength of the case study approach lies in its contextual exploration of a problem, traded off against a limited capacity to other cases since sampling is small and purposive, rather than purely random (Ragin 1992: 3). This holds true particularly to the present study, as it aims at an intensive exploration of the Adavipalli case, and contextualised understanding of actors' relationships in the backdrop of the APCFM intervention. This characteristic is considered a strength of the study rather than a weakness.

We also recognise that any other highly stratified village or community involved in APCFM with similar demographic, socio-political and ecological factors would also make a good case to carry out similar study. There is a possibility that selecting a different geographical location; characterized by different people-landscape relationship and demographic context may result in a different set of findings. Nevertheless, the fact that each locale and context is unique and different from the rest of the possible heterogenous communities, makes the central hypothesis of this thesis valid. This hypothesis says that the power relations between various actors and the processes happening at the heart of an intervention influence the outcomes of the intervention rather than the premeditated processes and spaces of intervention. That is precisely the factor that makes Adavipalli an equally important research setting on account of its characteristics elucidated in the previous section.

Appreciation of the diverse perceptions, interests and negotiations of the actors engaging in the APCFM intervention requires closer attention to the details, which only a case study method could provide. Actors' participation in APCFM is influenced by various structural and institutional factors operating at various levels. Through the case study method,

it is possible to map these intricate power dynamics and negotiations. Case study method is also adopted '…where no single perspective can provide a full account or explanation of the research issue, and where understanding needs to be holistic, comprehensive and contextualised' (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 52). The present study acknowledges that if the same study were with another community involved in APCFM, the same method could result in different findings or conclusions. Precisely for this reason, the present study emphasises the importance of context-specific case studies as a valid way forward to gain in-depth knowledge into actor-oriented dynamics and power relations at the grassroots level in decentralised community-based participatory interventions.

Box 2.1
Specific strategies adopted for the study

1. Selection of the Adavipalli village/ VSS where the community is involved in CFM intervention as members of VSS (village level forest protection committee).

2. Identification of the community structure and the level of involvement of the community in CFM processes in Adavipalli village.

3. Identification of the major characteristics of the community such as social composition, livelihood and resource management strategies, access to decision-making fora (e.g. VSS), access to the means of production (village & forest resources), division of labour (inter and intra-household), access to public goods and services, access to cooperatives (meant for the sale of NTFP), actors' roles and responsibilities within the community, etc.

4. Identification of all the principal actors and the networks in Adavipalli APCFM intervention and analyse their perspectives and pattern of interactions.

5. Mapping the heterogeneity among the various actors including the state and its agents and observing the differences in access to VSS-based decision-making process in lieu of the heterogeneity.

6. Mapping the formation of actor-networks *vis-à-vis* APJFM/CFM interventions and observing the power relations and negotiations between them.

7. Examining the institutional attributes (formal & informal) of actors from the community, and mapping how these attributes (such as membership, decision-making, conflict resolution, working in & around with the CFM rules and regulations, etc.) harmonise or clash with the interests of community participation in Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

8. Observing the structure and functioning of VSS. Triangulating the observations (at the level of actors and at the level VSS and overall village community) between the community and other actors.

9. Capturing the formal and informal power dynamics characterising the participatory processes and negotiations in the village *vis-à-vis* the VSS to reflect on how they affect the role and relative power positions of the key actors.

10. Mapping the patterns of actors' manoeuvring/manipulating the participatory spaces to realise their interests.

2.3   Research strategy and data analysis

The study attempts to analyse the process of community involvement in forest management and the influence of power relations on the principal actors' participation in the Adavipalli APCFM context. The negotiations between the principal actors and networks in the intervention process are characterised by the caste, class and gender-based aspects along with the ecological (landscape) and spatial-scale based dynamics. Capturing the correlation between the negotiations (influenced by power relations) at the grassroots level and the outcomes of the Adavipalli APCFM intervention is of interest for this research. Box 2.1 gives the specific strategies adopted for the present study in detail. Qualitative data collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and PRA techniques was analysed manually. There is very little quantitative data collected through fieldwork, and it serves more as a guideline for interpretation of various qualitative observations rather than as a determinant on its own right.

2.4   Research methods, sources, variables and units of analysis

Social Sciences have always been characterised by a multiplicity of paradigms (Long 1992b: 38). This vision emanates from the realisation that multiple realities exist in multiple planes simultaneously, throwing light on the complexity and contingency in social phenomena. No technique or method is foolproof, and completely reliable. Multiple research methods and techniques were used for the present inquiry in order to capture the data in triangulated format, which would leave lesser margin for error. The distance between the 'observed' and the 'observer' also blurs in recordings of phenomena through participant observation.[7]   The present research is carried out with the realisation that I myself am an actor in the observed phenomena, very much informed by the existing multiple realities.

The objective of the fieldwork was to gain understanding of the actors involved in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. Their livelihoods and resource usage patterns, their relationship with their landscape, with each other and with the APFD and the FNGO personnel, their networks, strategies, negotiations and participation in the intervention through formal institutions like VSS and informal institutions like tradi-

tional norms and ritualistic interactions form the basis for data collection and analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were adopted for this purpose. The value and nature of the findings strongly depend on the information richness of the cases and informants (Layder 1998: 46; Miles and Huberman 1994: 29). Hence, all the households in the village were taken into consideration in order to get a holistic picture. Apart from the villagers, the key informants for the study include Andhra Pradesh forest officials at various levels, FNGO personnel and the other CBOs involved in the Adavipalli context. Initial efforts to tape-record the exchanges proved counter-productive, hence making note of observations on a daily basis became an important activity. During the second phase, the nature of observation became more deep and informal when compared to the first phase of the fieldwork.

The thesis also draws from an element of construction of recent past through local histories spanning time scales of 10 to 15 years. The findings of the present study entirely depend upon the data set collected over a period of 12 months during 2004-05 in the Adavipalli village in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India. Nevertheless, the data I collected during 2004-05 represents only a snapshot of the fraction of the multiple realities pertaining to the Adavipalli people's lives and their realities.

Triangulation was built into the data collection and analysis processes to ensure validity and ability to be generalised. Apart from direct observation, participatory rural appraisal techniques were optimally used to map various levels of interactions, negotiations and power relations operating in the Adavipalli landscape. Data was collected by using different methods such as focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Base line surveys were conducted in order to gain primary information on all the households, members of the households and local organisations at the Adavipalli village level. Participant observation involved daily life events and interaction of the villagers to determine how they acted with respect to their resources (both forest and village-based), and to map the interactions among themselves, with their landscape, formal and informal institutions such as VSS, and local norms and values.

Table 2.1
Research methods, variables, sources of data and unit of analysis

Method / tool / technique used for data collection and analysis	Variables	Sources	Unit/ level of analysis
Participant observation as method for data collection	Local practices and rituals; gender, caste and class-based division of labour; access to and control over resources; institutional attributes (e.g., VSS membership)	Village community; community meetings; gatherings and social events; APFD and Facilitating NGO personnel; VSS members and meetings	Village; caste and gender-based groups; households; individuals; VSS level
Social, and resource mapping & Transect walks/direct observation as methods for data collection	Resources in and around the village; land tenure arrangements; boundaries and landmarks that separate communities within the village; demarcated/ designated forest territories	Key actors in the VSS; leadership (traditional and new); APFD personnel; PRA workshops	Village; household; caste, class and gender-based groupings
Pair-wise and problem ranking as method for data collection	Sources of income (actual and preferred); actors' priorities *vis-à-vis* VSS; decision making processes inside the VSS	PRA exercises/workshops	Village; household, individual; VSS level
Wealth ranking & seasonal calendars as method for data collection	Ownership of resources; access and control over resources; seasonal variations in resource availability and dependence; income and expenditure patterns	PRA exercises/workshops	Village; household; VSS level
Oral histories/ Local histories / time lines for mapping relative transformations	Changes from past 15 years in the social fabric of village community; Landscape and people; VSS as it was in the beginning and now	Village elders (men and women); traditional leaders/ elite; New elite and the SC and the ST; Facilitating NGO and APFD personnel	Village; household; individual; VSS level
Focus group discussions (FGD) for traingulating data collected during individual / households/ village/ VSS level data	Income; access and control over resources; caste, class and gender-based roles and responsibilities; decision-making processes; power relations and negotiations	Key actors and networks across gender, caste and class variations; women, men, youths, traditional and new elites; APFD personnel	Village; households; individuals; VSS level
Semi-structured and indepth interviews with key actors as method for data collection	Control and access over resources; VSS-based interactions and negotiations, decision-making processes, gender, class and caste-based dynamics	APFD personnel; Facilitating NGO; VSS members; village community; key actors and networks	Village; households; individuals; VSS level; forest range level; state level
Gender analysis used as a tool for data analysis	Gender-based division of labour; access and control over resources; level of dependency on the forest resources across caste and class groups; decision-making processes; leadership and participation in VSS	PRA exercises/workshops; community & VSS meetings; leisurely activities; 'women's time & place in any given day'	Village; household and individual; VSS level
Venn diagrams used as tools of exploringa relationships	Linkages between actors and actor-networks in the Adavipalli VSS context	PRA exercises/workshops; discussions & dialogue; VSS activities/meetings	Village; household; individual; VSS level.

In this table there is a representation of the methods used for data collection as well as analysis. Focus group discussions, historical narratives, participant observation, social and resource mapping, problem and pair wise ranking were opted as tools to collect primary data pertaining to ownership, access to and control over resources and level of dependency and usage patterns among various actors.[8] Gender analysis has been taken up to map the gendered roles of men and women both in the village setting and in the institutional (VSS) context. Gender analysis is used as a technique to analyse the gendered norms and behaviour during the everyday events at the household level as well as during the conduct of PRA techniques for the purpose of data collection. Depending on the respective gender roles of men and women in the village, their roles and participation as members of the VSS varied.[9] The details obtained through gender analysis on how and why women across various cross sections participate in the VSS is of importance to the present study. Secondary data analysis and its comparison with primary data, was another crucial technique followed by the present study in order to establish its validity *vis-à-vis* the primary data set collected over a period of 12 months stretching over 2004-05 in the village of Adavipalli. For example, the book of minutes, meant to be maintained by the VSS Executive Committee (according to the APFD regulations), had entries of several VSS meetings and discussions, which have not taken place in reality. A comparison between both the primary and the secondary data sets was necessary to observe this phenomenon.

Oral histories, and probing on the local histories in informal gatherings, interviews and focus groups helped to map the historical events in the Adavipalli village as well as the historical reconstruction of events that lead to the emergence of new elite in Adavipalli context. Living within the community and being a participant observer has helped me to gain acceptance and access to the social networks that were operating in the Adavipalli village over time, thereby enabling a thorough observation of the processes taking place at the heart of the APCFM intervention. Interpretation of the data was mindful of the socio-cultural framework of the community in consideration.

Also significant was the process of capturing changes in the power relations between various actors engaging in Adavipalli intervention. This was done through participant observation of actors' everyday interactions and the strategies they adopted while participating in various

formal and informal arena. However, relative changes in power relations of actors and how they led to the transformation in their power positions within the Adavipalli context, needed a careful analysis of data collected through various ethnographic methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This was also important to capture the overall transformations of the intervention processes and outcomes as well.

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter introduced various research methods used for the present study and provided the reasons and the requirements for the selection of the Adavipalli case as well as these methods to collect and analyse data pertaining to various variables and units of analysis. The experiences I gained from the field period were also documented in this chapter to give a feel of what it took to arrive at an in-depth understanding of the every-day life of Adavipalli community people, and in the process, how I enriched my own research skills. In retrospect, I have two major experiences to share in this conclusion. The first being that, though living in the Adavipalli community with all the villagers gave me a rich knowledge and humbling experiences- it also brought us (me and the villagers) closer and hence made me a more responsible researcher and accountable towards the content of the thesis, as it directly refers to Adavipalli people's lives. The second experience is related to the use of methods of qualitative data collection. It was amazing to see how the focus group discussions with the villagers would end up becoming historical reflections of their lives in Adavipalli for decades, and how in-depth interviews became group discussions as more and more people joined the interview setting out of curiosity and interest. It was impossible to keep the surroundings of most these interviews private, unless they involved women who were widows or divorcees with little social connections. The same was the case with the in-depth interviews. However, there were, strictly monitored in-depth interviews in private and focused group discussions with the Adavipalli villagers, which gave yet another angle to the same story that I heard during my walk with Ms. Lalithamma. On other occasions strict enforcement of privacy preventing focus groups from turning into historical accounts, or in-depth interviews into group discussions did not seem worthy of an effort when the data that came out of those encounters was equally rich and valuable. Especially, focus group discus-

sions proved to be the best way of double-checking and triangulating the historical accounts given by people. This chapter thus outlines not only the methods used for the study but also gives the space for sharing my experiences as a participant observer. One shortcoming I experienced during this endeavour is the fact that the sensitive nature of this inquiry prevented me from sharing my findings and experiences with the community to which I owe this collective learning experience. Having said that, some of the PRA applications like preparation of seasonal calendar and self- perception matrices etc. were extremely enjoyable for the participants.

On the methodological level, the limitations of this study include its specific focus on the micro realities of the everyday lives of the Adavipalli people, which renders it partially blind to the larger picture at the Andhra Pradesh state level. Although an evaluation of the APCFM intervention is beyond the scope of the present study- 'how the intervention itself gets modified as a result of these dynamic power relations within the Adavipalli context' is of significance to this case study. While case study methodology does not allow for making impact assessments as the statistical methods do, it offers rich descriptions and insights into the nuances and contextualised meanings around power relations that are otherwise not possible through adoption of quantitative methods. Thus, this study follows a qualitative and ethnographic mode of enquiry to locate the multiple transformations occurring in the key actors' lives and their implications for the intervention.

Capturing the events leading upto the emergence of new elite class- both before and after the inception of APJFM/CFM intervention proved to be extremely challenging. Those who participated in the interviews, Focus Group Discussions and oral history sessions tend to highlight events that were significant to them/ their community. Highlighting commonly mentioned events as well as moments of significant changes leading to social transformations from these multiple ethnographic accounts helped to reconstruct the historical emergence of the new elite. Hence, all efforts were made to sift through the data collected on historically significant events and triangulate them through verifying in focus group discussions at a later stage.

Notes

[1] Communities are understood as heterogenous entities with multiple livelihoods, varied types of resource dependency, ownership, usage and access patterns for this study.

[2] The names and locations of these villages and the forest range are not disclosed here to honour the privacy of these communities.

[3] Grama Panchayat is the lowest rung of the decentralised local government system in rural India. Grama Panchayat as a Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is constitutionally backed-up and the mandatory unit of local governance at the village level.

[4] Adavipalli is the pseudonym given to the research site to protect its anonymity.

[5] The method of participant observation is integral to anthropological and ethnographic research because it provides 'direct experiential and observational access to the insiders' world of meaning (Jorgenson 1989: 15).

[6] Miles and Huberman (1994) offer a wide range of techniques of qualitative data analysis.

[7] For example, when we all prayed together on a holy day, there was not much difference left between me and my 'subjects', and our actions (author's personal experiences from field diary).

[8] Refer to chapter 4 for detailed information on the ownership, access to and control over the resources of the Adavipalli community.

[9] Refer to chapter 6 for details on gender dynamics in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

3 Analytical Framework

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the main objective of the current study is to examine the role of power relations operating at the grassroots level in influencing key actors' participation within the Adavipalli APCFM setting and the resulting transformations in their relative social status. How actors draw upon their agency and social networks and how their institutional affiliations influence overall participation in the intervention are analysed in this process. In this chapter, we discuss a selection of theoretical perspectives, concepts and approaches that will be helpful in providing analytical perspective and direction for the present study in achieving the stated aim. The specific uses of each theoretical, conceptual and analytical tool are explained here in considerable detail. This chapter first engages in conceptualising power relations, agency and structure, spatial scale and landscape. It then goes on to explore the political ecology framework, feminist political ecology and feminist environmentalism in particular in exploring gender-based dynamics in access and control over resources. Actor-oriented approach is employed to engage with the aspect of agency and power play between actors at the grassroots level, and the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is used as a tool to analyse the actor-networks and their interactions while engaging in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. These conceptual tools and theories form the core of the theoretical and analytical frame for the present study while analysing the power relations in actors' everyday lives as they engage in intervention through formal invited spaces as well as informal social networks. Various functional and analytical aspects of the 'Adaptive and Contextual Actor-Network Framework' (hereafter ACAN framework) designed for the purpose of the present study are discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.2   Social Differentiation and Power

The role of 'power' is paramount in decentralised natural (forest) resource management. Exercise of power is a strategy used by various actors to gain access to and control over a set of resources. People's actions through a variety of covert means and subtle struggles usually reflect their contestation and negotiation with various dominant institutions and forms of power exercise (Scott 1985). Demonstrating the relational character of power, Villarreal (cited in Nemarundwe 2003: 57) points out that, the wielding of power presupposes the exercise of yielding to it, and leads to that of recognising the other as powerful. In this context, exercise of power essentially involves active relationships and negotiations between various actors with heterogeneous capabilities.

Access to and control over natural resources is essentially a political issue determined by the relative capabilities of various actors to exercise power or draw on their networks in the intervention setting. For the purpose of present study, weaker actors like the SC and the ST are not branded as powerless. Nevertheless, they are less capable of exercising power compared to the 'new elite leadership', which is better placed to draw upon the formal institutional setup and informal social networks of Adavipalli. Identity and social status also play a significant role in actors' struggling to enrol in various networks or to get others enrolled into their own.

As per Foucault's analysis of 'governmentality', the process of subjection of human beings transforms them into docile objects of governance (1982: 208). While the human subject is placed in relation to production and signification, the person is equally placed in complex power relations (ibid 209). Hence, to understand the subjection of individuals we need to understand the power relations they engage in. Explaining what constitutes the specific nature of power, Foucault defines the exercise of power not as a relationship between partners, individuals or collective, but as a way in which certain actions modify others (ibid 219). Thus, when we are talking about exercise of power by new elite over tribal people, we are actually talking about how a particular action of the new elite may structure the field of other possible actions of the tribal community. He further elaborates on how one is to analyse the power relationship. A power relationship, according to the above definition is that it is a mode of action upon actions. That is, power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, and are not reconstituted 'above' society as a

supplementary structure (ibid 222). Hence, power relations with their deep roots in the social nexus cannot be avoided or dismantled. Foucault says that analysing power relations from the standpoint of institutions would give a parochial picture of power relations being coercive. Instead, he recommends the analysis of institutions from the standpoint of power relations fundamentally anchored outside institutions, even if institutions serve as embodiments of said relationships (ibid).

A focus from an actor-oriented perspective on individual actors gives a break from the perspective that behaviour is regulated by an overarching structure (Hindess 1988). In addition, it enables examination of the role of individual actors and group heterogeneity (Agrawal and Gibson 1999) in Adavipalli context. The focus of actor-oriented approach is in explaining differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogenous (Long 1992b: 18-21). It considers the behaviour and interactions between actors in process oriented and contextual terms (Mahanty 2000: 47). Actor Network Theory (ANT), which defines the agency/structure dichotomy, allows room for the analysis of actors' interactions with the caste, class and gender-based networks through which they operate on a daily basis.

Bourdieu (1998: 12) describes these social spaces not as fixed structures, but as defined in relation to each other, occupied by actors according to their access to cultural and economic capital; these positions are associated with rituals, tastes and opinions, practices and values of individuals, but do not determine them. Process-based analysis of social differentiation enables examination of individual and group-based behaviour or interactions in contextual and situational terms as against those based in rigid caste, class and gender categorisation. Social groupings such as caste, class and gender are considered as contextual and flexible rather than rigid social structures to analyse the social differentiation. They are considered not as part of the rigid authoritarian structure, as they tend to reconfigure from time to time owing to the constant renegotiations of the values and norms by actors.

3.3   Agency and Structure

Agency, particularly human-agency for this study is understood as intentional, purposive, meaningful action(s); structure is the condition that simultaneously enables, frames, suggests and constrains action(s) (Gregson 2005: 22).[1] The dichotomous treatment of agency and structure as

either/or alternatives, and two different analytical categories stimulating human action is challenged by post-structural philosophers. Anthony Giddens' 'structuration theory' sought to transcend this dichotomy, to see both agency and structure as brought into being in action, in the moment of their instantiation (ibid: 23). Viewing agency and structure as two parallel analytical categories enabled appreciation of social action in its continuum for this thesis.

However, the increasing acknowledgement of the agency of 'things', an argument put forth by ANT (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 1987, 1993; Murdoch 1997, 1998), that agency is not a property unique to human beings, and that non-human actors, networks of the animate and inanimate draw on agency-based aspects of everyday life. Agency is referred to as an effect, distributed through a heterogeneous arrangement of materials rather than the intentional activity of human subjects (Law 1986, cited in Gregson 2005: 26). However, there is a danger of denying human agency its due by ascribing agency to non-human entities in everyday social life. This is addressed by human geographers like Gregson (2005: 21-41) on the grounds that human agency continues to matter in everyday life as it is humans who take the purposive, intentional action(s) and their unintentional consequences necessary for the non-human entities to draw on the agency-based factors. The way forward is shown as one that brings the efficiency of things and intentional, expressive, human action together, in ways that illuminate the 'doubleness' of agency/structure (ibid). The conceptualisation of any discussion on agency/structure cannot be separated from an understanding of the events, which comprise the constellation of moments of everyday life.

3.4 Spatial Scale

Any internationally sponsored intervention like that of AP community forest management is a bed for complex spatial scales as it accommodates many scales in terms of range of actors and localities involved in the intervention. For example, various levels of actors involved in the APCFM intervention range from international sponsor organisations like the World Bank to that of the village-level forest protection committees (VSS) at the grassroots level in Adavipalli.[2] The present study focuses only on key actors, keeping in mind that these actors are entities that operate at various levels and spaces simultaneously.[3]

This study defines space as an arena (geographical, temporal, structural, relational or otherwise) of political action, in which people and organisations interact amidst the constant play of power relations. The concept of scale is used to explain the spatial relationships in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention setting. The borders between the local/micro/inside/grassroots level and the extra-local/macro/outside/structural level in natural resource management interventions are hard to determine, as they flow into each other through the interactions of various actors and networks all the time. Some have even dismantled the categorisation of 'community' as an analytical and conceptual unit in homogenous, linear and rigid terms (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Leach et al. 1999). The ANT approach takes another step ahead and completely abandons all the structural and conceptual dichotomies between micro and macro levels of action. Instead, it recognises multiplicity of actions, scales in the networks and phenomena (Mahanty 2000: 53). As pointed out by Murdoch (1998: 361-2), a railroad is neither local nor global, as it is local at all points and international in its coverage. In this study while the distinction of 'local' and 'non-local' are important to clarify the scope of study and relationships between actors and place, they are nevertheless understood as categories that are relational and flowing into each other. This allows for flexibility in appreciating their interdependence.

3.5 Landscape

An important hybrid conceptual category in community-based natural resource management analyses is 'landscape'. Ley and Duncan (1993: 329-30) claim that the analysis of landscape as a historical and spatial text throws light on the constellation of economic interests, power relations, cultural predispositions and social relationships that constitute the character of a place. The concept of cultural landscape provides a useful framework for examining interactions between actors and landscape in an intervention, with a focus on the interactions between actors, society and landscape (Mahanty 2000: 53-4). The concept of cultural landscape also incorporates social, including economic, political and symbolic meanings (Cosgrove 1984: 13-5).

Another important aspect of actors' relationship with their landscapes is the dimension of institutions and their role in shaping these relations. How the actors, institutions engage with each other in the context of their cultural landscapes is of interest to the present study. This cultural

landscape framework is useful in understanding how institutional, economic and political relationships amongst people are rooted in landscape and what these historical patterns mean for the efforts to manage future interactions between people and landscapes in an intervention context (Mahanty 2000: 53-4). Apart from serving as a basis for actors' interdependence, landscapes also act as a congealing factor from where individual actors and their networks draw their identity and functionality as social actors and networks. This thesis tries to capture the crucial role Adavipalli landscape plays in everyday lives of the community members, as well as its role as an objective entity that continuously reproduces the existing norms and practices of Adavipalli community. Actor-network theory (explained in section 3.9 of this chapter) informs the present analysis, while placing the Adavipalli landscape as an actant in the larger actor-network of Adavipalli APJFM/CFM intervention.

3.6   Analysing Power Dynamics in Adavipalli APCFMP

Major research and theory building on power revolved around the issue of fixing the sources of power and its manifestations into dominance and resistance (Lukes 1974; Giddens 1979) as it is exercised to control and restrain human actions. However, post-structural philosophers (Foucault 1982, 1991; Giddens 1984) conceptualised power as one beyond this essentially dichotomous representation. These philosophers have displaced power from fixed analytical places and spaces in order to appreciate its multifaceted existence. As explained earlier this thesis adopts power conceptualised in Foucauldian terms. According to Foucault, 'power' is a relational attribute exercised in interactions and relationships between people.

Power exists only when put into action (Foucault 1982: 219). Power exercise is embedded in all social interactions and hence, requires a sensitive and enduring effort to be analysed. Hence, power is not possessed by actors, but it is exercised through actions, interactions and negotiations. Power exercise by actors is observed in activities around actors' network building, agenda setting and negotiations within their networks, as well as in the decision-making processes of the community-based conservation intervention in Adavipalli.[4]

For Foucault (1997: 194, 1978: 92-102, cited in Kesby 2005: 2040), power is not concentrated; nor is it a commodity to be held, seized, divided, or distributed by individuals. It is a much more decentred and

ubiquitous force acting everywhere because it comes from everywhere. Power is not inherent within powerful subjects but is dispersed throughout the complex networks of discourse, practices, and relationships that position subjects as powerful and that justify and facilitate their authority in relation to others (Clegg 1989: 207, cited in Kesby 2005: 2040). 'Power' is a way in which certain actions modify others (Foucault 1982: 219). Since Foucault's reformulation of the concept, power is generally thought of in terms of 'relationships' (Newman 2004: 139). According to Lockie, poststructuralist sociology does not view power as a one-way, hierarchal concept, but as one that is continually challenged and negotiated (Lockie 2001: 27). Hence, the exercise of power can be monitored while the actors and networks interact, co-operate, challenge and negotiate with each other during their involvement or abstinence in the decision-making and management processes in APCFM.

Foucault advocates that (1980: 98, cited in Sharp et al. 2000: 1), 'Power must be analysed as something which circulates…. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power'. Actors are capable of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power while engaging with each other in any context. Accordingly, the present study assumes that power dynamics at the grassroots level are not simply reducible to binary oppositions of 'domination and oppression', as domination and oppression co-exist within actors' interactions in any given point of time. In addition, various actors at the grassroots level are assumed by the present study to be adept in constantly readjusting their positions and strategies according to the situations as they sporadically emerge within the intervention setting. This adaptability is innate in rural communities that engage in any intervention with their short or long-term interests in view.

Power as 'dominance' perspective (Lukes 1974), is not entirely helpful to throw light on the nuanced nature of exercise of power at the grassroots level between various actors involved in community-based natural resource management interventions. The spectrum of power relations exercised especially in a rural conservation intervention setting (like Adavipalli) can be characterised by actors simultaneously experiencing dominance and resistance; co-option and co-operation; collusion and manipulation among other constantly reproduced actions. Various manifestations of dominance and resistance are interwoven in day-to-day so-

cial interactions and the existing social order is continually being read-justed (Masaki 2006: 721) accordingly by actors' and the institutions they engage in on a daily basis.

Agency of actors as well as the institutional structures on which they draw upon play significant role in producing the subjective positions of these actors, while their relative power positions undergo minute trans-formations over time. Actor-oriented approach treats actors (while exer-cising their strategic agency) as capable of constantly putting efforts to manipulate available networks of power in order to achieve their strate-gic 'situated interests' (Kesby 2005: 2046). This 'strategic agency' hap-pens in the context of all actors however, some actors may find them-selves better positioned/networked to enrol other actors in their projects compared to others (Long 1992; Long and Villareal 1996).

The paradoxical relationship between power and the subject pre-sumed to oppose it has been displaced by Foucault's analysis, which shows that power relations could no longer be confined to a central place, but rather were constitutive of all social identities (Foucault 1980a: 116). One of Foucault's main contributions to the theory of power was his attempt to study power in its own right, rather than reducing it to the central mechanism of class or economic domination (Newman 2004: 143). One should examine the micro-power experienced by different in-dividuals and groups, and then try to reveal a more general, overarching power dynamic. This is because 'there is no such thing as power as a whole' but power is exercised 'in diverse and multiple ways at the "mi-cro-level"' (Hoy 1986: 142). Power is thus examined as a regime of mi-cro-level, inconspicuous practices that different actors engage in, in face of 'disciplinary power' (Foucault 1991: 75, cited in Masaki 2005: 724-5).

According to Foucault, power exerts pressure on people both to con-firm to, and to resist societal norms, thereby facilitating renegotiations of prevailing social standards (cited in Masaki 2006: 724). The concept of structuration (Giddens 1991), regards social actors as responding to the limitations and opportunities that emerge in their daily routines, and as a consequence, interpersonal social relations are ceaselessly renegotiated and modified. Both the Foucauldian perspective and Giddens' structura-tion perspective are two perceptions of power that bring to light the constant remoulding of societal power dynamics (especially in rural set-tings), enabling us to gain a more nuanced understanding of the nature

of power than does the conventional view that represents power contestation in static terms (Masaki 2006: 724).

The influence of 'disciplinary power' (ibid 721) not only moulds 'docile bodies', but also serves as medium for the renegotiations of the interpretations of social standards. 'Disciplinary power' operates on community-based development endeavours, in such a manner as to subjugate individuals to constrained positions by pressurising them to confirm to prevailing social norms (ibid 722). For example, in the context of Adavipalli APCFM, the participation of the lower castes and women in conservation intervention through VSS is regulated by the patriarchal norms, caste and gender-based controls prevalent at the village level. At the same time, the same systemic controls enable these women to negotiate and manipulate situations of everyday life to their advantage. More evidence and analysis to substantiate these points follow in chapter 6. Although this study focuses on the grassroots/micro level power dynamics, it is informed by the realities of macro influences such as regional politics, which affect the micro settings.

Concept of power and concept of space are interlinked. As pointed out by Lefebvre, 'space is a social product…it is not simply "there", a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and hence of domination, of power' (Lefebvre 1991: 24). Cornwall stresses the fact that spaces for participation are not neutral in themselves, but are shaped by power relations, which both surround and enter these created spaces (Cornwall 2002). Also important is the perception of boundaries for these spaces. As pointed out by Gaventa, imagery of 'boundary' is inherent in the idea of spaces and places and power relations help to shape the boundaries of participatory spaces (2003: 8). Gaventa (2004: 25) also claims that simply creating new institutional arrangements for participatory governance will not necessarily be more inclusive or more pro-poor. Rather much will depend on the nature of the power relations, which surround and imbue these new, potentially more democratic spaces. Power analysis is thus critical to understanding the extent to which new spaces for participatory governance can be used for transformative engagement, or whether they are more likely to be instruments for re-enforcing domination and control (ibid 34). Cornwall (2002: 7) while locating power dynamics within these invited spaces, stresses that 'new ways in old spaces can transform their possibilities, just as old ways in new spaces can perpetuate the status-

quo'. Introducing the concept of space as laid out by Cornwall helps to analyse the participatory dynamics in the invited spaces of Adavipalli. Power analysis at the Adavipalli community level in this study is informed by the concept of fluidity of power relations, which pervade the entire spectrum of informal and formal institutional spaces operating at the grassroots level.

3.7 Gender Analysis: Analytical Aspects from Political Ecology Perspectives

Political ecology developed into a discipline with the seminal works of Blaikie (1985) and Blaikie and Brookfield (1987). Blaikie and Brookfield (1987: 17), define political ecology as one that 'combines the concerns of ecology with a broadly defined political economy…[which] encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself'. Peet and Watts (2004: 12) argue that political ecology should champion the analysis of uneven distribution of access to and control over resources on the basis of class and ethnicity. Both assertions of political ecology focus on the relationship between individuals and their environment as the basis for all the resulting interactions and distributional outcomes.

Actors' access to environmental resources is understood as political by political ecologists. Bryant suggests that control and use of environmental resources must be addressed in order to explore conflict over access, tenurial systems and social institutions regulating access (1992: 21-4). Political ecology as a theory is helpful in the analysis of political interests and actions of the various actors that participate in the conservation interventions (Bryant and Bailey 1997). Actor-oriented political ecology approach, as observed by Blaikie (1987), serves as a means to observe the role and power play of the principal actors involved in the process of conservation in Adavipalli. The objective of adopting this approach is to understand the possibilities for action by actors operating within broader political and economic structures. This actor-oriented political ecology framework is functional in conceptualising various interests of key actors at the grassroots level in Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

The initial political ecology theory was dominated by an emphasis on structure and hence tended to underrate the ability of politically and economically weaker grassroots actors. In its later and more recent phase, it is increasingly used as a theory with an emphasis on actors and their

networks, rather than on structure alone, to understand how the power relations mediate human-environmental interaction in the conservation intervention (Bryant and Bailey 1997: 2-47). Pointing to this weakness in political ecology, Jansen (1998: 231-34) observes that 'the ways in which the local actors mediate the impact of external forces should be incorporated into the analysis'. The present study aims to achieve an analytical balance between agency and structural factors while analysing the ways in which the key actors at the grassroots level respond to power relations and negotiate in the APCFM intervention. For this reason political ecology with its focus on actor's interests and their negotiations, *vis-à-vis* the APCFM intervention serves as the suitable theoretical framework for the analysis of grassroots level negotiations.

Gender and power relations in community-based forest conservation interventions have been analysed in political ecology perspective by feminist scholars. Two major approaches come from feminist environmentalists (Agarwal 1992, 1997b) and feminist political ecologists (Rocheleau 1995, 2006, 2007; Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997). Both approach gender differentiation in communities through the lenses of social division of labour, property rights and power. Feminist environmentalists highlight women's close relationship with nature due to the division of labour; although they have little formal role and insignificant decision-making authority over natural resources. Women were also seen to have an important role in maintaining social networks (Moser 1989) and thus in preserving communities. From the perspective of women and gender equity, traditional communities have been recognised as providers for women, both in terms of access to community resources and with access to external social support systems, two factors that directly impinge on women's ability to fulfil subsistence needs outside the family (Agarwal 1990). Hence, they see the necessity for women to have a place in community-resource management structures and committees. They see the presence of women in these structures, as important in bringing about change in their favour (Agarwal 1997b). Hence, participation of women in management structures is vital in ensuring that women have a voice in community-based natural resource management interventions.

However, Agarwal (1997b: 39) also points out that, despite the reservation of political places for women,

> A range of factors…constrain more gender-balanced participation, including the rules governing the new bodies, social barriers stemming from cul-

tural constructions of gender roles, responsibilities and expected behaviour, logistical barriers relating to the timings and length of organisational meetings, and male bias in the attitudes of those promoting these initiatives, including forest department personnel, village elders, and sometimes even the intermediary NGOs.

The factors of social and participatory exclusion that impede full participation of women in Adavipalli APCFM intervention are investigated in this study in light of the above insights from feminist environmentalists.

On the other hand, feminist political ecologists emphasise the power relations and property rights in the analysis of gender roles in community-based natural resource management. They emphasise the complexity and diversity of rural landscape while attempting any kind of mapping of who has access to and control over gendered resources (Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997). The analysis of 'gendered' nature of resource use and access with respect to forests and other natural resources, they argue, needs adding a third dimension to the map, the 'gender' dimension (ibid 1351). However, the unequal gender power relations do not remain static, and tend to change over time, affected by the changes in power relations between men and women (ibid). This makes mapping the gender relations more challenging and dynamic. The critical issues of gender-based relations, interactions and negotiations are intricately related to the formal and informal institutional arrangements at the community level. Rocheleau et al. (1996) observe that women who are active in networking for their environment do not usually operate within the ranks of mainstream organisations or official policymaking. Rather, they do their networking from 'backyards', grassroots and community-based organisations. Both these approaches inform present analysis of gender dynamics in the Adavipalli APCFM context. Insights from feminist environmentalist approach and the feminist political ecology approach are used in this study to analyse the role of Adavipalli women in institutional structures, for the analysis of gendered access to forest resources and power dynamics that influence decision-making processes at VSS.

Feminist political ecologists emphasise the role of power relations and property rights in the analysis of gender roles in community-based natural resource management. Women's access to resources is regulated by the gender-based inequalities that are socially reproduced at the household level. Feminist political ecology, emerging as a distinct body of

thought explores the gendered relationships of ecologies, economies and politics in communities. Gender is treated as a decisive variable in shaping access and control of resources, while interacting with class, caste, race, culture and ethnicity (Rocheleau et al. 1996: 3-4). Latest work by feminist political ecologists appealed for the understanding of the intricate gendered dynamics operating in natural resource management endeavours (Rocheleau and Ruth 2007) by extending political ecology framework to mapping and analysing actors' power relations in networks. This is an area that the present study can contribute to and benefit from the path set forth by feminist political ecologists towards better analysis of gendered power relations and their impact on participatory natural resource management interventions such as Adavipalli APCFM.[5]

3.8   Contributing Elements of the Actor-oriented Approach to the Analytical framework

Actor-oriented research in rural sociology and rural development (Long 1997) has an important role to play in the analytical framework of the present study, as it places actors at the centre of the natural resource management discourse. Actor-oriented approach views an intervention typically as a negotiated process created through interactions between actors (Long and van der Ploeg 1989: 228). It is very clear from this conceptualisation that actors are the hero of the story for actor-oriented approach. With its primary focus on the actors, and actor's perceptions and strategic actions at the local/village level rather than on more general patterns of structural change (Long 1997: 7-8); it facilitates a better analysis of grassroots level power dynamics in the Adavipalli APCFM context.

Actor-oriented sociology of development has at its heart the characterisation of social action as implying both social meaning and social practice (Long 2002). The main task of this approach according to Long is to advance a more sophisticated treatment of social change and development that emphasises the central significance of 'human agency' and self-organising processes (Long 2002: 1). The institutional domains and arenas of social action are seen as platforms for actors' differing understandings, interests and values pitched against each other. These 'battlefields of knowledge' (Long 1989; Long and Long 1992), embrace a wide range of social actors committed to different livelihood strategies, cul-

tural interests and political trajectories (Long 2002: 1) within the context of conservation interventions.

Arguing against this interventionist perspective, Long and van der Ploeg (1989: 228), stress that '…the concept of intervention needs deconstructing so that we recognize it for what it fundamentally is, namely, an ongoing, socially-constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already specified plan of action with expected outcomes'. This approach contests the popular perception that an intervention has an endpoint with a premeditated course of events. They argue for a fresh focus on 'intervention practices', rather than on 'designs of intervention' as such. This focus allows one to take into account the emergent forms of interaction, procedures, practical strategies, cultural categories between various stakeholders present in a specific context (ibid 227). This approach enables appreciation of natural resource interventions from the perspective of actors and their negotiations and so is suitable for the present study as it aims at analysing processes of the Adavipalli APCFM intervention setting.

Actor-oriented research on rural development observes that development interventions serve as fora for negotiations among actors, and that this process of negotiation between various actors ultimately determines the intervention outcomes rather than the premeditated objectives and designs (Long and van der Ploeg 1989: 226). In actor-oriented research, the term 'actor' is used explicitly to denote individuals or social groups with the capacity for agency, for decision-making and action (Hindess 1988: 45; Long 1992b: 22-3; Ramirez 1999: 110). This study adopts this in order to appreciate the agency of actors while they interact and strategise within the APCFM intervention. From the actor-oriented perspective, actors may be considered as individuals, groups, organisations like the APFD and the FNGO, institutions like VSS, and alliances of organisations. Social actors include individuals, groups and alliances that engage in the intervention process with a capacity to exercise their agency. In this thesis, the ST (*Yanadi*) and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) are referred to as a group of actors, not because they belong to one caste group, but because they have a common goal and they exercise their collective strategies (agency) in order to materialise their interests.

The analysis of power relations can be taken up at various scales while networks or coalitions of actors take joint action on shared and specific agendas with respect to the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. However,

the actor-oriented approach does not explicitly focus on the linkage between individual and institutional structures (Mahanty 2000:45). Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as a method has focused on the relationship between actors and their networks while integrating the institutional dynamics in the analysis. The relationship between individuals and social actors/institutions/organisations is important to understand how the internal dynamics of a network affect its participation in an intervention process.

The actor-oriented approach is interpretative in nature. This approach acknowledges the existence of 'multiple social realities', and thus questions the positivist approaches. Hence, it conceptualises knowledge as involving ways of construing and ordering the world, and not as a simple accumulation of facts or as being unified by some underlying cultural logic, hegemonic order or system of classification (Long 2002: 2). 'Knowledge' for actor-oriented approach emerges out of a complex interplay of social, cognitive, cultural, institutional and situational elements. Therefore, it is always provisional, partial and contextual in nature, and people work with a multiplicity of understandings, beliefs and commitments (Long and Long 1992: 212-13). Ramirez points out that many potential stakeholders might be identified in an intervention, but it is only those empowered with this situated knowledge and capacity that can participate as 'social actors' (1999: 110-11).

Agency plays a major role while actors pursue their interests through negotiations, lobbying and other strategies. Norman Long (2001: 240) refers to agency as, 'knowledgeability, capability and social embeddedness associated with acts of doing (and reflecting) that impact upon or shape one's own and others' actions and interpretations'. He further elaborates that persons or networks of persons have agency. In addition, they may attribute agency to various objects and ideas, which, in turn, can shape actors' perceptions of what is possible. Agency is composed, therefore, of a complex mix of social, cultural and material elements. Strategic agency signifies the enrolment of many actors in the 'project' of some other person or persons (ibid). However, Clegg (1989: 138-48) in his seminal work *Frameworks of Power,* points out that agency and self-reflectivity are not attributes of individual actors but must be understood as constituted and achieved through available discursive and practical means. Thus, 'while conscious and reflexive, agency is also partial, positioned, and informed by a situated consciousness of one's location and

interests within an evolving constellation of powers' (Kesby 2005: 2046). While agency is framed by power; power, resistance and transformation can all be produced by situationally conscious human action (ibid). While unstable and requiring reproduction, power has durability in time and space over and above its immediate instantiation by reflective agents (Clegg 1989, cited in Kesby 2005: 2046).

For Long, networks are made up of sets of direct and indirect relationships and exchanges (interpersonal, inter-organisational, and socio-technical), which usually transcend institutional domains and link together a variety of sites of struggle within and across spaces and domains (2001: 240-2). The actor-oriented approach with its emphasis away from deterministic macro explanations (such as Marxist and Neo-Marxist structural explanations) to actors' behaviour, facilitates understanding differential responses to similar structural circumstances (Long 1992b: 18-21). This approach is recognised as a social-constructionist approach as opposed to structural, institutional and political economy analyses (Long 2001: 1). Thus, this approach enables more flexible and contextual analysis of actors' behaviour while drawing on their agency and networks in Adavipalli.

The actor-oriented approach attempts to overcome the theoretical and methodological shortcomings of the structural and institutional analyses by adopting an actor-oriented perspective that explored how social actors are locked into a series of intertwined battles over resources, meanings and institutional legitimacy and control (Long 2001: 1). Actors exercise power in these interactions and negotiations. Power cannot simply be possessed or accumulated as it emerges out of social processes and is better considered a 'product' rather than a 'given' (Long 2001: 242). The 'boundaries' of power are permeable, and actors themselves take a role in defining and shifting these boundaries with their agency. The emphasis in actor-oriented analysis is less on categorising who possesses power and the systemic sources for these, but rather on looking at mechanisms by which actors comply, obey, question, and are able to gain power in negotiations (Mahanty 2000: 50). The everyday life is given utmost attention by the actor-oriented research in order to capture the subtle exercise of power between actors (Villareal 1992: 252-8). Present study uses this approach to examine the transformations in the position of social actors at the grassroots level in Adavipalli.

The actor-oriented approach does not disregard systemic factors that might contribute to the strategies and behaviour of particular actors. However, it considers the behaviour and interactions of actors and, between actors and society, in process-oriented terms, as a question to be investigated contextually (Mahanty 2000: 47). While analysing the engagement of actors in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention, actor-oriented approach will inform the analysis of the role of actors in reinforcing, contesting and changing institutions (Long 1992b: 24; Jackson 1997: 161).

Actor-oriented approach opens up scope for new situated insights into the actors' roles and the conservation processes as such in the intervention. However, the approach with its emphasis on actors and agency, directs attention away from interactions of actors with the systemic factors in the biophysical and social environment, which play an important role in community-based forest management interventions. This relationship between actors and networks is very important to capture the power dynamics in Adavipalli APCFM intervention. The relationships between actors and networks are discussed in the post-structuralist method popularly known as Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

3.9   Contributions of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to ACAN Framework

Actor- network theory (ANT) is a method contributing to the analytical frame of the present study. Complementary to the actor-oriented approach with its emphasis on agency-based dynamics between principal actors, ANT will serve the purpose of observing how actors and (their) networks are related to each other in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. ANT is in itself a network of ideas, interpreted and brought to life by various researchers like Callon (1986), Latour (1987), and Law (1989); hence not a coherent set of ideas or practices (Latour 1999: 15-25). The essential focus of ANT is on dissolving the dualisms of human and non-human, knowledge, power, agency-structure, nature-society, inside-outside of the network as fixed categories. Instead, what one has are heterogeneous combinations of 'material elements' forged into an ordered set of places that encompass a 'collage of differences' (Latour 1999: 15-25). This rejection of dualisms as 'given' creates space to describe them as results of actor-network dynamics.

In ANT, actor and network are mutually constitutive. An actor cannot act without a network and a network cannot exist devoid of actors (human and non-human). This relationship is highlighted in the definition of actor as 'any element which bends space around itself, makes other elements dependent upon itself and translates their will into a language of its own' (Callon and Latour 1981: 286). Actor and network constantly redefine each other; and are interdependent on each other. The term network is defined as a 'group of unspecified relationships among entities of which the nature itself is undetermined' (Callon 1993: 263). '…in a network, elements retain their spatial integrity by virtue of their position in a set of links or relations' (Law 1999: 6).

The inclusive character of this definition becomes more evident when contrasted with one of the conventional sociological definitions of network where 'a social network consists of a finite set or sets of actors and the relation or relations defined on them' (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 20). Callon (1987: 93) details the interrelation between actor and network as,

> The actor network is not reducible to an actor alone or to a network. Like a network it is composed of a series of heterogeneous elements, animate and inanimate, that have been linked to one another for certain period of time.... An actor network is simultaneously an actor whose activity is networking heterogeneous elements and a network that is able to redefine and transform what it is made of.

This functional description of actor-network allows capturing the relationships between various key actors of Adavipalli between themselves and with the overall network as well.

For ANT, there is no separate given 'agency' and 'structure', or 'actor' and 'network', but rather, a combination of these as 'actor-networks' designed to dissolve these dualisms. Hence, agency is imparted not only to humans, but also to non-human, mechanical bodies and documents. The work of reconfiguration and rearrangement of actor-networks between actors in this theory is conducted through *translation* (Thompson 2003). Callon and Law (1989: 58-9) define *translation* as 'a process in which sets of relationships between projects, interests and goals and naturally occurring entities- objects which might be quite separate from one another-are proposed and brought into being'. This concept of translation is applied to the process of key actors recruiting into and changing networks in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention in the face of dynamic power relations.

For the purpose of the present study, ANT serves as a method to focus on the relations between principal actors and their relationship with networks in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. It opens up the space for description of how various actors are enrolled into networks and engage in intervention. The analysis of the process of negotiations within the networks and their outcome on the relative participation and power positions of the actors is facilitated through using ANT as a method. The concept of *performativity* is also applicable to the present context in terms of its insistence on the idea that actors get performed in, by and through these relations with other actors. This process of performativity results in a continuous flow of relationality/negotiations between the actors in the network, resulting in transformation of power and role of actors (Law and Hassard 1999: 3).

The actor-network approach (ANT) differs from the actor-oriented framework in its emphasis on the overall system. Actor-network is a combination and result of actors and their relationships with each other and the network. Particular actors have significance only in relation to the broader network in which they are part (Latour 1999; Law 1999). It preaches following the actor and the actant (actor getting performed), in order to observe its path and actions. Actors are identified as networks in themselves, thus opening up the possibility to address the heterogeneity within the actors. ANT gives a good possibility for the study to analyse the actor level and system/structure level dynamics by collapsing the essentialist dualism between them. This enables description of agency and structure as results of the processes taking place in the intervention scene, rather than the other way around. By doing so, it facilitates observing the relationships between individual actors and the way they are connected or related to the larger networks of power in Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

3.10 Analytical Framework

Keeping the research problem in mind, this study adopts different but complementary theoretical and analytical frameworks together and simultaneously. Adaptive and Contextual Actor-Network (ACAN) framework has been designed for the purpose of the present study facilitating the analysis of the data collected through various qualitative and ethnographic research methods.[6] In this sense the general theories used here function more as 'guidelines', which suggest various possibilities rather

than as an ordering and interpretative device that tends to impose on the data analysis (Layder 1998: 35).

As illustrated by Bryant and Bailey (1997: 21), attempting a synthesis of elements from two or more approaches does not necessarily establish the superiority of one approach on the other; instead, the choice of a synthesis is dependent on the questions the research is seeking to answer. Analysing the complex power dynamics and their impact on the participatory spaces and processes at the grassroots level in Adavipalli APCFM intervention setting would not have been possible only by using a single framework or approach. Hence, this study employs a mix of the selection of theoretical and analytical frames discussed in the previous sections such as, feminist political ecology, actor-oriented approach and actor-network theory within the backdrop of a post-structuralist conceptualisation of power relations. The concepts of agency and structure, spatial scale and landscape act as guidelines for the analytical strategy of the present study. Analysis of marginalised actors' participation in the formal and informal institutions to negotiate their resource access is done by adoption of actor-oriented analysis by this study. Actor-oriented approach will be useful in capturing how various resources in the Adavipalli landscape are accessed and negotiated by marginalised actors like women and the *Yanadi* (ST).

Actor-oriented and actor-network approaches help analyse how actors make informed choices and decisions to participate based on their agency as well as self-images and perceptions *vis-à-vis* their subjective position within the community. How actors' practices and preferences differ according to the costs and a benefit they may incur through participating in formal as well as informal institutional structures is analysed by this study through these approaches. The relationships and interactions between actors and their networks are analysed through actor-network theory (ANT). The structural factors (caste, class, gender, etc.) and formal and informal institutional structures that influence the behaviour and participation of various actors within the APCFM intervention are sought to be understood through the 'adaptive and contextual actor-network framework' (figure 3.1) tailor-made for the present study.

Figure 3.1
Elements in Adaptive and Contextual Actor-Network (ACAN) framework
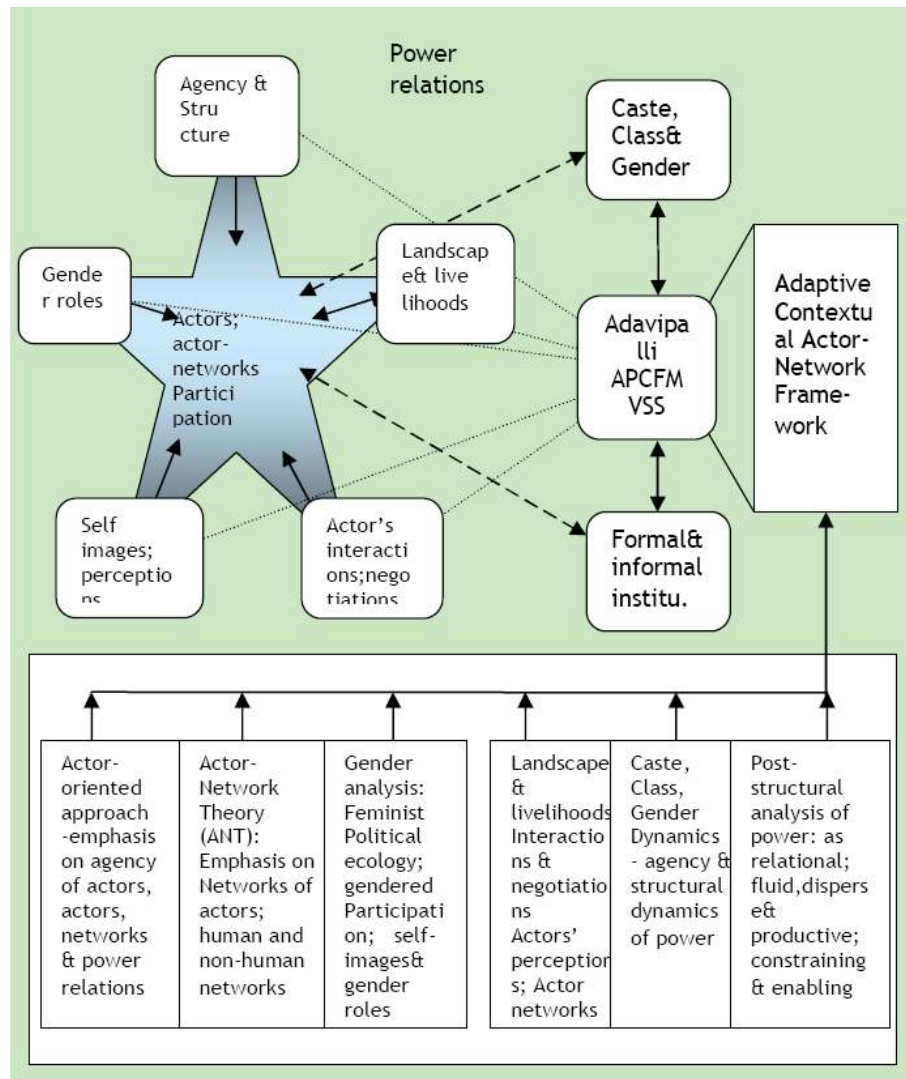
The ACAN framework also employs the post-structural analysis of 'power', in understanding the nature of actors' interactions and the influence of power relations on the participatory spaces provided by the APCFM intervention. From the post-structuralist perspective, social

categories such as caste, class and gender, and institutions such as formal policies and informal rules and norms, are analysed as processes in which actors engage, rather than structures that determine behaviour (Gibson-Graham 2000). The feminist environmentalists with their focus on women's informal roles in social networks and division of labour; and feminist political ecologists with their emphasis on the gendered power relations and property rights and entitlements of women provide the base for the gender analysis for this study.

3.11   Limitations of ACAN Framework

The adaptive and contextual actor-networks framework has limitations such as its inherent inability to resolve the agency/structure dualism, despite its efforts through adoption of both actor-oriented and actor-network approaches. The efforts of tailoring an adaptive frame of analysis for the grassroots level power relations and their impact on the participation of various actors, gets a bit complicated with the insertion of multiple conceptual and philosophical adages, proving it difficult to determine a simple and straight forward analytical boundary. For example, the actor-oriented approach that forms basis for ACAN framework has an inherent bias towards overemphasising actor's agency over the structural factors/processes such as caste, class and gender-based networks. The deployment of ANT as a method to collapse the essential agency/structure dualism poses a challenge of determining the borders of analysis for the present study. The concept of human and non-human actants as proposed by ANT challenges the efforts of present analysis of giving primacy to human agency over agency of 'things' like landscape and micro-plan of Adavipalli. However, since the nature of the social processes considered in the research context is complex, it makes sense to view each aspect of ACAN framework for its specific contribution to enrich the analytical frame of the present study rather than attempting to arrive at a foolproof analytical design.

Notes

[1] Gregson (2005: 23) argues that 'we can and clearly do need to think of an agency that is more than human and structure that is provisional and emergent, this cannot and should not mean that we dispense with thinking about a form of human agency that is conditional and a sense of structure that acknowledges (and

contest) both the durability and the power of certain relations and configurations'.

[2] Refer to chapter 4 for a graphical representation of the key actors at different levels in the APCFM intervention.

[3] I use the category of 'space' in this context as a spatial and temporal unit enabling actors' engagement in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

[4] Refer to section 3.6 for a discussion on conceptualising 'power' and 'power relations' for this thesis.

[5] Refer to chapters 6 and 8 for analysis of Adavipalli APCFM intervention using the feminist political ecology perspective.

[6] Refer to chapter 2 for a detailed explanation of the research methods used for this study.

Community-based Forest Resource Management in Andhra Pradesh: Overview

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the Andhra Pradesh Joint Forest Management and Community Forest Management (APJFM Phase-2) in order to familiarise the reader with the research context. It also introduces the key actors and their roles in the Adavipalli APCFM setting. This chapter introduces the livelihood strategies and simultaneously explores the details of who has control over the productive resources and who has access to resources in Adavipalli socio-ecological landscape. Patterns of livelihood of key actors and their respective roles in resource management are also explained here. Specifically caste, class and gender-based occupational patterns and social differentiation in the Adavipalli community are discussed in depth. This chapter also helps to map out the social positions of these actors and their respective roles in Adavipalli *Vana Samrakshana Samithi* (VSS).

4.2   Research Context

4.2.1 Conservation policy and legislation in India and Andhra Pradesh (AP)

Forest administration in India is one of the oldest in the world, with a constitutional directive towards protection of environment by the state and its citizens. The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act (1977) and Article 48A of Indian Constitution uphold state's commitment to the protection of the forests. Article 48A of Indian Constitution states: 'The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country'. The Indian National Forest Policy (1988) marked a shift in the focus of forest management in

India from that of timber extraction-based on the principle of exclusion of forest dwellers, to that of meeting community needs and creation of participatory spaces for decentralised management of forests (Sarin 1995b). This paradigmatic shift in the official focus of forest management in India from commercial exploitation of natural resources to that of people-oriented conservation of forests heralded through the introduction of Joint Forest Management in 1990 in India (Reddy et al. 2004: 10-11). The Indian government paved the way for community participation under the rubric, 'Joint Forest Management', with its National Forest Policy (MoEF 1988) and a follow up 1990 circular defining the basic rights people have in relation to forests under their protection (MoEF 1990). This shift in focus of Indian forestry through forest policy of 1988 and JFM resolution of 1990 is considered a watershed moment (Sunder 2001: 2010) in the devolution of powers to local governments (Gram Panchayats) and communities. The 1990 circular on JFM by the central government allowed individual states adopting JFM/CFM to have their own additional provisions made for better involvement of communities participating in the programme.[1] Since then, measures to ensure community involvement in forest protection and management have been in vogue in various states of India.

Figure 4.1
Forest Map of Andhra Pradesh
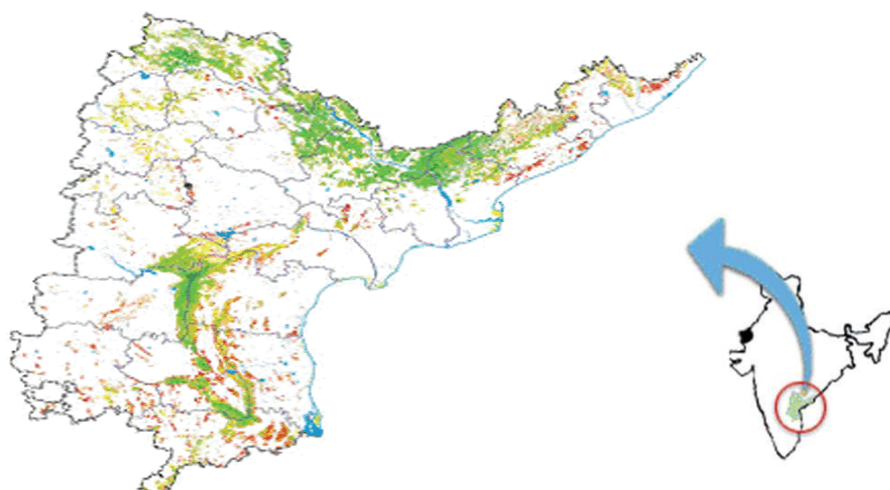
Source: www.forest.ap.nic.in (Map not drawn to scale)

Figure 4.2
Field location in Andhra Pradesh, Cuddapah District
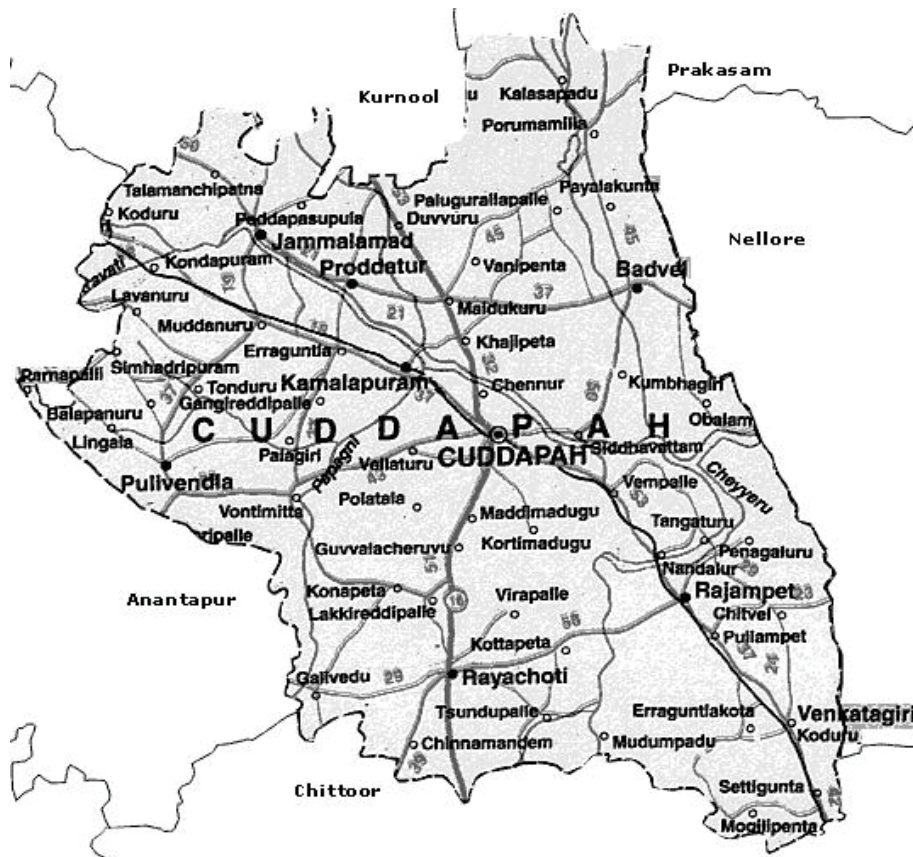
Source: www.mapsofindia.com, map not drawn to scale.

Andhra Pradesh (AP) is the fifth largest state in India, with a total geographical area of 275,068 sq. kms of which 23.2 per cent falls under forest cover of diverse densities. The forest area in AP accounts for nine per cent of India's total forest area. APJFM programme was initiated in 1992 through a government order (GOAP), and nearly 25 per cent of the total forest area has been brought under JFM by the year 2000.[2] The AP forest department under the guidelines of National Forest Policy (1988) manages the forests of Andhra Pradesh. The Government of AP (GOAP) initiated the Joint Forest Management (JFM) intervention in

1994, which continued until 2000.[3] The JFM programme is one of three major components under the World Bank. In this regard, the government of AP also issued orders in 1993 for constituting village level forest protection committees called *Vana Samrakshana Samithies* (VSS) for management and protection of forest resources enabling community involvement in the JFM and CFM interventions. There are 8343 VSS (2005-06) in the state managing 23.18 lakh hectares of forest area. About 7.85 lakh hectares of degraded forests have been treated through these VSS (Reddy 2008: 10-11). In Andhra Pradesh, funds for the JFM/CFM came through three major sources, the World Bank, the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and the various centrally sponsored employment generation schemes. Adavipalli VSS is one of 5,000 World Bank sponsored participatory institutions.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh through GO Ms. No. 13 dated 12.2.2002 issued comprehensive orders for implementing Community Forest Management in the state. The state passed a number of government orders (GOs) on JFM and CFM (JFM phase-2) stressing the importance of the involvement of communities in forest management in order to ensure the success of the initiative in protecting the forest cover and also in providing livelihoods for concerned communities. The 1992 GO Ms. No. 218, issued by the AP government made special provisions for income delivery from the JFM programmes to the concerned communities, engaging in forest protection and management through VSS.[4]

4.2.2 Gender policy and debate in JFM and CFM interventions

Andhra Pradesh Joint Forest Management was started in AP in 1992, and its second phase, known as APCFM was in vogue from 2002-07. The participation of women in the management of forests was emphasised by the 1988 act, through reserving membership for women in places of control and decision-making at the grassroots level institutions. The same principles are extended to APCFM (APJFM Phase-2) gender policy and practice, with some logistical changes in the number of women representatives in grassroots level organisations. In the APCFM official Project Implementation Plan (PIP),

> The other striking advancement contemplated in CFM is greater effort to address Gender issues. Through the new Government Order issued for enabling CFM, in each VSS, in addition to Chairperson, there will be a Vice Chairperson. Either the Chairperson or the Vice Chairperson will be

a woman. In addition to this initiative, the representation of Women in the Executive Committee has been enhanced to 50% from 30%.

These measures do reflect the gender mainstreaming activities undertaken at the policy level in APCFM. However, how these measures are faring in practice in APCFM interventions needs a thorough qualitative gender analysis of the functioning of these invited spaces.

Both national and AP state governments gave weak rhetorical reference to women's role in various policy statements of JFM. This token reference to women in these documents can be traced back to the multiple political pressures from national and international activists and donors promoting their gender mainstreaming policies (Arora 1994: 695). The lack of clarity in these policies as to what entails 'gender equality' in practice, and in what is needed to actively promote 'women's role' in participatory processes has left national, state and regional level intervention processes and practices male dominated. Sarin's review of gender equity in JFM notes that 'JFM is effectively equating people's participation with men's participation because of its assumption that as "heads of the households" men adequately represent the interests of all household members' (Sarin 1995b: 83).

A contemporary consensus in policymaking and policy lobbying arenas is that women should be fully involved in community forestry efforts, and that their involvement is especially important because of the nature of women's work (Hobley 1996: 19; Tinker 1994: 367). Nevertheless, the JFM policy positions, whether real or rhetorical, draw legitimacy from the debate over women and the importance of their relationship with the environment (Locke 1999: 266). Locke (ibid 270) points out that the mainstream WED (women, environment and development) approach has heavy influence over gender planning in JFM policy and practice in India in pointing out that women are a resource for improving project performance. The WED approach argues on an instrumentalist line concerning the relationship between women and the environment (Leach and Green 1995 :2) in that improving the status of women will assist the solution of environmental problems (ibid 7; Jackson 1993a). Locke stresses that within JFM gender planning, there is a preoccupation with formal provisions for women's participation in local forest management institutions and with the necessity of identifying women's preferences for forest resources and, to a lesser degree, their knowledge and values about forest resources (1999: 270). Even when women's knowl-

edge about forest resources is acknowledged in official documents like the Project Implementation Plan of APCFM, it is not brought into actual practice at grassroots level (Sarin 1995b) as it does not qualify as the 'hardcore scientific knowledge' approved by the biophysical domain. Within micro-planning, the specialised scientific approach to forestry prevails with its 'separation of domains of knowledge' and therefore cannot make sense of women's survival and livelihood strategies nor their needs for forest resource development (Rocheleau et al. 1996: 8, cited in Locke 1999: 275). A similar trend in India and Nepal on community forestry concentrating on the biophysical domain is interpreted by Roy et al. (2000: 248) and Buchy and Subba (2003: 323), as one that justifies putting participatory forestry in place on the grounds of the process's need of people, contrary to the people's need of process.

Contrary to these women-oriented approaches, GAD (Gender and Development) approach articulates that men also have valuable environmental knowledge in rural economies and draws attention to the gender politics of articulating public knowledge (Locke 1999: 269) in natural resource interventions. Locke observes that the gender policy formulation in JFM has been narrowly conceived within the WED influence. Apart from token references and treatment of women as an undifferentiated group, the assumption that formal representation will extract women's active participation and advance their interests *vis-à-vis* forests once they are installed in formal management committees (Gurung 1987; Hobley 1991) depoliticises the intervention.

As pointed out by Leach (1991: 19), 'understandings of women's relationships with the environment need to recognize the relationships of power and authority, negotiation and bargaining and the wider social relations in which "decisions"…are embedded'. Hence, the 'politically safe agendas' (Jackson 1993b: 1953), which omit the wider social relations that influence particular women's resource priorities as irrelevant, characterise the failure of gender equality measures at the grassroots level. Issues of interest to this thesis such as the complete male domination of VSS, unfair treatment of women participants in VSS either by their exclusion or by their adverse incorporation for unpaid VSS related work, may not be explained merely by adopting the current JFM perspective. This perspective assigns rhetorical importance to women's representation in the formal arena without paying adequate attention to the gendered nature of everyday life. Accordingly, this thesis argues for an analy-

sis of actual gender relations and their operation in everyday lives of Adavipalli community.

4.2.3 From JFM to CFM in Andhra Pradesh

Joint Forest Management as a concept and a philosophy was envisaged by the Andhra Pradesh government, where in all the forest dependent villagers of a village or hamlet organise themselves into a cohesive group with the objective of protecting, regenerating and managing the forests in the vicinity of their village or hamlet. These groups called *Vana Samrakshana Samithi*, popularly referred to as VSS; receive fiscal, technical and managerial support from the forest department. During the first phase of APJFM (1994-2000), these initiatives faced criticism on issues such as donor funding, state/APFD control, faulty tenure arrangements and the limited extent of community participation (Hegde 1995a, 1995b; Locke 1999).

However, there has been a shift in AP State Forest Policy in light of strong criticisms on implementation and outcomes of the World Bank sponsored JFM intervention in various districts. Studies conducted by independent researchers and NGOs[5] in the state emphasised the inherent shortcomings of the APJFM programme because of absence of legal status for the VSS. This had the effect of escalating conflicts at grassroots level in lieu of restricted access to resources, marginalisation of women and weaker sections (SC and ST) of the community by the dominant castes and elite classes throughout the state. Consequently, while initiating APCFM (2002-2007), the focus of forest management in Andhra Pradesh shifted from that of a 'sectoral (controlling) approach' to that of relatively decentralised and participatory 'community oriented approach' with an active participation of forest dependent communities in the intervention (APFD website). It has the twin objectives of improving the forests and lessening the rural poverty levels. As claimed by the APFD and the World Bank, while JFM was more a partnership between the forest dependent communities and the GOAP, CFM was intended to be more of a democratic process through devolution of entire process of planning and implementation. APFD and GOAP are expected to act as facilitators and providers of technical and infrastructural support. The emphasis in APCFM is on capacity-building and institutional strengthening of the VSS.[6]

APCFM is implemented in the 14 poorest districts of Andhra Pradesh with a view to contribute to poverty alleviation efforts of the state government. In APCFM, the VSS receive greater autonomy than what they enjoyed through JFM. The Executive Committee (EC) of the VSS is exclusively formed by VSS members, unlike in APJFM where the FNGO and others were part of the EC. All the official nominees like the Forest Section Officer, Forest Beat Officer, School Teacher of the Village, and NGOs will form an Advisory Committee and play a crucial role in facilitation of various activities of planning, monitoring and evaluation at VSS level.

4.2.4 How does Community Forest Management in AP operate?

The APCFM programme is primarily based on the concept of participatory forest management, but designed to provide room for greater autonomy and control for the communities participating in forest protection. It aims at improving forestry and alleviating rural poverty in the process. Every household living in hamlets, villages and clusters of villages, particularly those dependent on the forest for their daily needs, has the option of joining VSS to participate in forest protection. All the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe members of the forest would become members of VSS general body automatically, while the other castes have a possibility to join the VSS general body. VSS functions as a two-tier structure: a general body of member households called *Samithi* and a smaller 'Executive Committee' (composed of elected members, the community, forest officials and FNGO) (GO AP 1993c No. 224). Every VSS has an Executive Committee to carry out an approved Joint Forest Management Programme within the scope of the rules.

However, for APCFM (2002-2007), the rules and functions of the VSS have been changed in order to facilitate greater autonomy. The Executive Committee (EC) of VSS has to be re-elected by the village community every three years. This three-year tenure, unlike in the JFM period (1994-2000) where an EC, once elected continued until the end of the JFM project. During this period, it is responsible to manage and implement all the decisions of the VSS and with the help of the general body members including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women, prepare a micro-plan and annual plan in accordance with guidelines issued by the APFD. The Executive Committee has no place for governmental representatives or NGOs unlike the APJFM phase. In-

stead all officially designated facilitators are from APFD, village community and FNGO, form an advisory committee to review the micro-plans and annual plans for the APCFM programme.

As JFM had aimed for participation of women in VSS activities, in the APCFM intervention, a seat was reserved for a female president or vice president in VSS. In APJFM, women members had only 33 per cent of the EC seats reserved, whereas in APCFM this reservation has increased to a minimum of 55 per cent, with a provision for more female EC members when possible. In APCFM, eight out of 15 EC members are to be women in order to give them greater voice and to ensure gender balance. In scheduled areas, all the elected members of the Executive Committee have to be from Scheduled Castes (SC) or Scheduled Tribes (ST). There are two separate bank accounts in APCFM (unlike in JFM), one held jointly with the forest department in which money for forest work is deposited, and one held by the VSS in which the latter deposits the revenue from the sale of NTFPs.

Among their responsibilities, VSS members are individually and collectively responsible for protection of the forest against encroachment, grazing, fires and theft of forest produce, carry out development of forest in line with the approved micro-plan, and engage in awareness building. The micro plan should be formulated through participatory appraisal methods involving the inputs of the villagers and the foresters. Once the micro plan is approved by the APFD, funds are released for the VSS work falling under forest protection activities.

VSS members are entitled to all Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) except for those for which GCC holds monopoly rights. The right to collect the NTFP is with the VSS. The collection charges will be paid to them upon delivery of the NTFP to GCC. They are entitled to a 100 per cent share in timber and bamboo harvested from the regenerated, degraded forests approved by the government, with a payback to government for the expenditure incurred during harvesting. However, the VSS members will do the harvesting work. In addition, in 1999, the AP government issued orders providing for 50 per cent of net revenue coming from the sale of *Beedi* (a type of tobacco) leaves collected from the VSS area to the VSS. However, the VSS is not allowed to take up any agricultural crops on the forestland in the name of forest management.[7]

4.3   Setting

The selected village Adavipalli (pseudonym) falls under Kadapa district
of Rayalaseema forest region, which occupies 21.99 per cent of the total
AP forest area.[8] Selection of this village for the study was done, after
considering its appropriateness among the 10 VSS villages in the selected
forest range.[9] Adavipalli is also in the middle of the forest, covered by
the forests on three sides, and separated from the outside world by a
wide seasonal rivulet. During dry seasons villagers cross the streambed to
reach the bus shelter (constructed as part of community development
activities during APJFM phase), which is 1 km. away from the village.
This village participated actively in the World Bank sponsored APJFM
intervention from 1994. During this period, it had experienced moderate
development in terms of the construction of a bus shelter, a water tank, a
kindergarten school, a small community hall and a permanent place of
residence for the SCs and STs, who are among the marginalised sections
of the community. However, there is no medical assistance or first aid
clinic available in the village.

There are four major castes in the village, the *Reddys* (OC) the *Yadavas*
(BC) and other backward castes, the *Malas* (SC) and the *Yanadi* (ST). The
OC and BC communities of the village own most of the fertile land sur-
rounding the village. Lands allotted to the SC and ST by the state gov-
ernment are amidst the forest away from all basic amenities like water
and power supply for irrigation and hence rendered unfertile. A small
portion of the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) and ST (*Yanadi*) community lease the
lands from landowners based on equal distribution of the final income
from the yield. The landowner however does not share the investment
and the labour inputs on this piece of land during the cultivation period.

4.3.1 People and resources

The total number of households in Adavipalli village is 72 with a total
population of around 400 (Source: author's field data generated from the
Adavipalli baseline survey in September 2004). The people who depend
solely on agriculture are 70 per cent of the total population of the village,
whereas 30 per cent of the village population enjoy ownership of agricul-
tural lands (ibid). The demographic details of Adavipalli appear in table
4.1.

Table 4.1
Demographic details of Adavipalli

Population	Total village			VSS general body members			VSS committee members		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
ST	33	21	54	12	14	24	2	3	5
SC	23	17	40	10	15	25	1	1	2
BC	64	63	127	16	13	29	2	3	5
OC	63	61	124	20	13	33	2	1	3
Total	183	162	345	58	53	111	7	8	15

Source: Author's field data from Adavipalli (collected during September 2004).
Note: ST: Scheduled Tribe; SC: Scheduled Caste; BC: Backward Caste; OC: Other Caste

Membership of VSS Executive Committee is spread across various caste groups of the Adavipalli village. This is done according to the APCFM rules and regulations, which prescribe positive discrimination towards the ST, the SC and the women. For instance, in APCFM a female member must be made either the President or the Vice-president of the VSS. And there should be 50% women members in each VSS. In addition to this both the SC and the ST households become members of VSS general body by default (GO Ms. No. 13, 12.02.2002, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh).

Despite having access to seasonal agriculture labour the majority of the lower castes live here on the basis of NTFP collection and the occasional VSS-based labour. Agricultural labour is one of the major sources of income for the weaker sections of this village. The small-scale farmers from the *Yadavas* (BC) and the traditional elite *Reddys* (OC) comprise 30 per cent of the landholders in the village. Most of these farmers belong to higher castes. The remaining 70 per cent are landless labourers comprised of SCs and STs. The dominant occupation of the villagers is agriculture. Sources of income are diverse and heterogeneous within the village community. The village community is predominantly agricultural, farming rice (occasionally), groundnuts, sunflower seeds, turmeric, banana, papaya and lily flowers. The nearby market is 30 kilometres away in a town on the way to the district headquarters. Children from dominant castes and classes go to this town for their schooling and further education. On the other hand, children from the SC and ST communities go

to the kindergarten school in the village and drop out because there is no mechanism in place for their smooth transition to the next level of mainstream education. However, more than half of the households in the main village have television sets. Two households from the *Reddy* community also own two mobile phones. Most of the villagers are Hindus, with Muslim and Christian minorities (mostly from the SC and the ST) also living in the village. Even the nearest temple is five km away from the village. The ST (the *Yanadi*) has a separate colony on the periphery of the main village on the way to the forest. They are also engaged in animal husbandry, collection of NTFP and work in forests through VSS related activities, which play a predominant role in their household economy.

Figure 4.3
Remote and grassroots level actors in Adavipalli APCFM
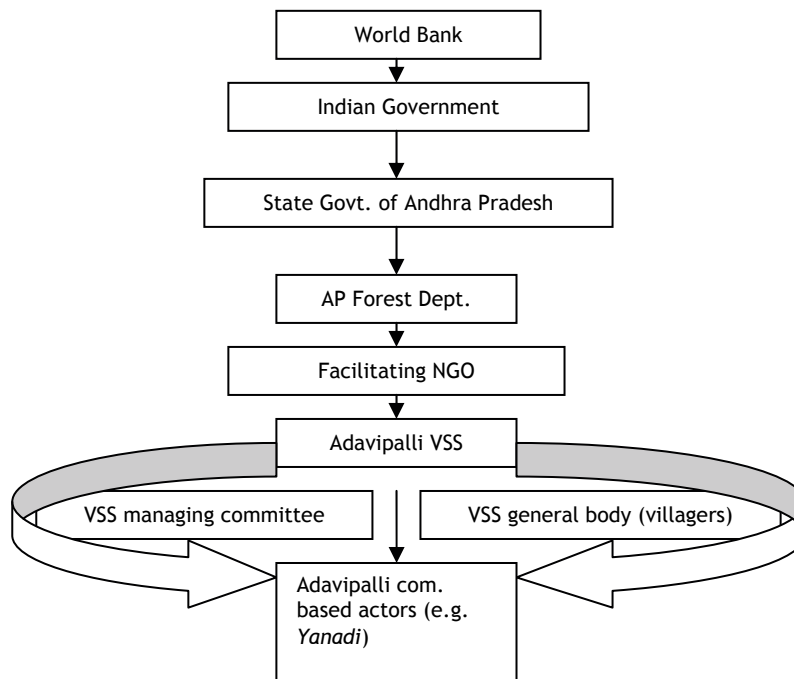
Source: Author's field data collected during 2004-05 in Adavipalli, AP- India

4.4 Principal Actors in Adavipalli APCFM Intervention

The key actors in the Adavipalli APCFM setting fit into two categories. The first is the 'immediate' or 'grassroots' category and the second is the 'remote' or 'outlying' category, based on the physical presence of the actors at the VSS level. The grassroots level has key actors involved in everyday implementation of the APCFMP through the VSS. The key actors at the grassroots level comprise the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, the FNGO, the VSS leadership and Executive Committee members and the less powerful VSS general body members. Actors like the World Bank and the Indian Government fall under the second category, as they are at the remote level, with less direct influence on the grassroots level. The other actors at the grassroots level like other community-based organisations for women's self-help groups (SHG) run through *Velugu* have no direct bearing on the Adavipalli VSS and the APCFM processes.

As the present study focuses on the grassroots level dynamics of Adavipalli APCFM intervention, it investigates the roles of grassroots level key actors in detail. However, other actors at the grassroots level such as the upper caste *Reddy* sections of the village community comprise the traditional elite caste groups, and the other community-based, NGOs working with the village community at large. An organisational tree of key actors ranging from the top (in this case, remote actors like the World Bank and the Indian Government) to bottom (grassroots level actors in and around Adavipalli) in the APCFM intervention is given below in figure 4.3.

4.4.1 Role of APFD

Andhra Pradesh Forest Department is on top of the state level network in the APCFM conservation intervention. The paraphernalia at various levels like district, range and village level (VSS) is responsible for dealing with the administration and functioning of the APCFM programme.

Out of the 22 districts of AP, 14 districts have been identified for the APCFM programme. The AP Community Forest Management Project is designed to advance the concept of JFM implemented in all the districts with the support of World Bank sponsored Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project (APFP) from 1992. APCFM has been initiated from 2002 in these 14 districts in 5000 VSS in total, with possibilities of forest regeneration and protection. The other eight districts were identified either as beyond regeneration or as home to protected forests. The protected ar-

eas are not covered under the APCFM project, due to lack of a clear policy framework on people's participation in their management.[10]

The APFD plays the role of facilitator as well as an administrator of the forests at the grassroots level in the selected forest range. There is a slow transition for APFD personnel from the role of a controller to that of a facilitator and co-manager along with the Adavipalli community. APFD is also responsible for identifying and appointing a FNGO for all 10 VSS in the range. APFD selects the facilitating FNGO to act as a medium of communication and as an agent for developing the awareness of the community involved in conservation among other functions. Together with the FNGO and other officially designated persons, APFD advises the VSS Executive Committee on the micro-plan and the annual plans of the VSS.

4.4.2 Role of FNGO personnel

In the APCFM phase, the FNGO is expected to act as a liaison between the APFD and the Adavipalli community. The aim of the FNGO is to bridge the gaps between the community and the APFD personnel via facilitating the decentralised management of forests through the VSS. The FNGO in the Adavipalli forest range has 10 staff members some of whom work on an ad-hoc basis, while the group leader of the FNGO carries out the majority of functions with the help of his personnel. This NGO has been established some 25 years ago out of the self-initiative of the NGO leader to facilitate development activities in surrounding villages, particularly to foster empowerment of the poor, women and disabled. The NGO is active in participating in various welfare activities in the forest range, and is strongly networked with various governmental departments in the Adavipalli forest range of Cuddapah district. This is one of the major reasons why this NGO was short-listed by the APFD as the facilitator of the APJFM/CFM projects (Source: Author's field data collected in 2004-05 in Adavipalli). As one of the key actors in the APCFM intervention, the FNGO plays a major role in facilitating rural community development activities, building awareness and capacity in the rural communities, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the intervention in all the VSS in the selected forest range. The NGO personnel are also involved in capacity-building activities for the community as specified in the rules and regulations of the World Bank sponsored APCFM intervention.

4.4.3 Role of the VSS Executive Committee leadership

The role of the VSS leadership in Adavipalli APCFM intervention is crucial. It acts as the liaison between the APFD, the SC and the ST sections of Adavipalli community. It presides over the VSS general body and Executive Committee meetings, it also communicates with the FNGO regarding conservation-related issues that matter to the village community. Apart from these activities, it also acts like a unifying factor between the larger village community of Adavipalli and the relatively weaker SC and ST sections.

The leadership of the VSS Executive Committee is mainly concentrated in the hands of the backward castes (BC) like the *Yadavas* and *Mutrasis*. These castes were always in second place next to the *Reddys* in terms of their access to and control over resources within and around the village. These castes appropriated the participatory spaces created during the inception of VSS by the APFD and the World Bank. Through the leadership of VSS, these caste groups modified the traditional status quo of the village by taking up the management of VSS. While using the VSS as the launching pad for their own development, these BC sections successfully created some space for development of the lower castes of the village like the STs and the SCs.

This new elite leadership[11] of the VSS is lead by Mr Samayya who belongs to the *Yadavas* (BC) caste, which is the caste at the middle rung of the caste ladder. He was a labour contractor before the inception of Adavipalli VSS in the early 1990s. With the support of other BC members, he acts as the *de-facto* president of the VSS. The vice president of the VSS, Mrs Lalithamma is a cousin of the new elite leader. The new elite leadership has the most dynamic role in the Adavipalli VSS context, in terms of its active engagement in the APCFM intervention through the VSS, and as an active moderator in representing and articulating the interests of the SC and ST sections through the organisation of VSS.

4.4.4 Role of other CBOs

The other organisation working for the Adavipalli community development is part of the AP state sponsored DRDA scheme, popularly known as *Velugu* (the light). *Velugu* is currently working with the ST and the SC communities of the village in a Poverty Identification Programme. Its focus is on capacity-building for the lower castes (SC & ST) of the village by encouraging them to have small savings. This CBO also started en-

couraging women's self-help groups in the village. However, as of 2009, it has no direct links with the functioning of the Adavipalli VSS or with the FNGO. There are some women's self-help groups in Adavipalli community, characterised mostly by caste-based identities. These SHGs are not active in the sphere of forest conservation or in terms of their involvement in the VSS activities. However, all individual members of these SHGs are participating in the VSS labour when it is available.

4.4.5 Role of the SC and the ST (*Yanadi*) in VSS EC and general body

The SC and the ST of the Adavipalli village are members of the VSS by default, according to the Government's rules and regulations. However, their role in VSS Adavipalli EC in particular and as permanent members in the general body (GB) is completely overshadowed by the new elite leadership, largely regulated and closely monitored by the Facilitating NGO. As labourers, they are still not treated as members of VSS. They earn workdays through VSS activities and are paid for their labour. As the erstwhile labour contractor of the SC and ST, the new elite leader makes sure that outsiders do not misappropriate the workdays available through VSS labour.

As members of the VSS EC they are expected to participate actively in the meetings and financial and CFM-related decision-making processes. Although the SC and the ST are expected to play an active role in decision-making processes of the VSS Executive Committee, in practice they have little access to the decision-making processes operating at the VSS level. The caste and class-based segregation operating at the grassroots level in the Adavipalli village hampers their chances of accessing formal democratic spaces created through the VSS. Added to these factors are the existing power relations within the village community. They further limit the scope of their access to real decision-making processes and bodies.

4.4.6 Role of traditional elite in Adavipalli APCFM context

This class of the village community has been enjoying access and control over the resources in and around the village for a long time. This can be refered to as the old elite in comparison to the new elite class. As discussed earlier, this class has been given only a token representation in the VSS (current president belongs to the *Reddy* caste), without any real say

or power within management or decision-making of the VSS. All the upper caste people/households in the village are practically excluded from the day-to-day matters of VSS.

4.5   Livelihood and Resource Management Patterns

Adavipalli is a village on the fringe of the forest area, two kilometres from the nearest bus route connecting to the town. Seventy per cent of the population is landless agriculture labourers and only thirty per cent of the village population owns the fertile lands in and around the village. These thirty per cent landowners fall under the OC and BC caste groups of the Adavipalli community. State government has given some lands (mostly degraded and unfertile) to the SC and the ST for the purpose of agriculture. These pieces of land are small, amidst the forest, away from all basic amenities like water and power supply essential for irrigation, making their cultivation next to impossible. For the *Yanadi* and the SC these lands are not very useful (Source: Focus group discussions with the *Yanadi* and the SC). The SC (*Mala & Madiga* communities) and the ST (the *Yanadi*) engage in multiple activities to secure income, as their assets do not include fertile lands. These sources range from agricultural labour, cattle herding to collection of firewood and NTFP (non-timber forest produce) for subsistence and sale.

In the face of their varying dependency on the resources available in and around the Adavipalli village, the resource usage patterns of all the caste groups of the village differ considerably from each other. Different user groups exhibit different priorities over resources (Leach et al. 1997). A user perspective in natural resource management research requires the incorporation of rural land users' needs, experiences and contributions into account (Rocheleau 1987; Madge 1995). This user perspective is taken on board while investigating issues like resource ownership, usage and dependency patterns in the Adavipalli community. A seasonal representation indicating the pattern of dependence on resources across various caste groups is prepared using various PRA techniques like, participatory observation; transect walks, pair wise and problem ranking, social and resource mapping, and seasonal calendars.

The Adavipalli community actively engages in agriculture throughout the year. Both farm and non-farm sources of income play a major role in the lives of the village community. While the OC (*Reddy*) and the BC (*Yadava & Mutrasi*) engage in agriculture as landowners, most of the SC

and all the ST engage in agriculture as labour working for these upper castes. Within caste groups, class based differences influence the resource ownership, dependence and usage patterns. For example, two SC (*Madiga*) households are well off in lieu of their assets like large herds of cattle (80 goats and five cows), own agricultural land in the village, etc.; one BC family is on the fringe of totally losing its agricultural lands and cattle to repay debts due to losses incurred in the past three seasons. In the same manner, the activities identified as livelihood strategies across various caste groups do overlap during all the seasons mentioned below. The pattern given in table 4.2 is only an indicator to grasp the level of resource dependence across various caste groups of the Adavipalli community.

Table 4.2
Seasonal calendar indicating resource dependence across caste groups in the Adavipalli APCFMP context

Activities	Seasons			
	Winter	**Spring**	**Summer**	**Fall**
Agriculture	0000 ***** #### ++++++	000000 ********* ###### +++++++	000000 ******* ######## +++++++++	0000000 ********** ######## +++++++++
Cattle/livestock	0000 ****** #### +++++	000000 ******* ##### +++++		00000 ****** ###### ++++
Firewood collection(c) and sale(s)	###### +++++++	******** ######## ++++++	******** ###### ++++++++	
Non-timber forest produce (c & s)	####### +++++++++	****** ####### +++++++++	***** ######## ++++++++	***** ######### ++++++++++
VSS work			******* ########## ++++++++++	

Legend: *** BCs, ## SCs, +++ STs, 000 OCs; Dependence on various types of livelihood sources is indicated through the strength of the symbols: the more the symbols the more the dependence.) Source: Qualitative Data collected by the author in 2004-05; participants filled the boxes themselves according to their own assessment.

As shown in this tabular presentation, the dependence on the VSS labour for the *Yanadi*, the SC and some BC households is limited to a period of three months, which starts in the third quarter of the summer (June) and lasts until early fall (August). During the transition period between the dry and wet seasons, the designated forest bed (identified by the micro plan prepared for the APCFM programme) is cleared of the bushes and prepared for planting before the rainfall arrives. Once the planting of the forest bed is complete, the *Yanadi* and the SC communities have almost no work available through the VSS. During these three months of VSS work, the *Yanadi* and the SC communities also depend partially on agricultural labour and the collection and sale of firewood and NTFP to supplement income coming from VSS work. Some BC households (as members of VSS Executive Committee) also participate in VSS work occassionally.

The income generation through cultivation is highly skewed in favour of higher castes (OC and BC), as major chunk of the income for higher castes comes from fertile lands and livestock they own. Almost all fertile lands in and around the village are owned and controlled by these upper castes, which gives them an edge in commanding SC and ST sections within the village, as they directly depend on agricultural labour as their main livelihood source. Occasionally small portions of these agricultural lands are given for lease by landlords of the OC and the BC to the SC and the *Yanadi* (ST) sections. Although there will be no investment from the landowners' side during the cultivation period, they claim equal share in the final produce, along with their tenants. To cope with the losses incurred in the cultivation, the small-scale farmers who lease lands also engage in collection and sale of firewood and NTFP to make extra income. Unlike the *Yanadi* who have no ownership or means of accessing a bullock cart, these small-scale farmers benefit from the collection and sale of firewood as they have access to bullock carts and hence to the local markets.

This tabular representation also shows how the ST and the SC are engaged simultaneously in the collection of firewood, non-timber forest products (NTFP) and in the labour of VSS, which serve as their major sources of income. At the same time, the ST and the SC are equally dependent on agricultural labour in the fertile lands of landlords for steady income throughout the wet season (July-Dec) and parts of dry season (Jan-June). Thus, during the wet seasons they are busy in agricultural la-

bour and in dry seasons they engage in the collection of NTFP, firewood for subsistence and sale. VSS labour starts at the end of the dry seasons and is more or less finished by the beginning of heavy rains. All these activities do overlap with each other when seasons change thereby changing their dependence on and relationship with their landscape. Especially in the context of the *Yanadi* it is difficult to establish where the village ends and the forest starts, as for them the landscape flows through spatial scale dimensions making their relationship with their landscape a special one.

This however, does not mean that the caste-based income generation patterns are open to rigid categorisations, and can be neatly boxed. All these caste groups have classes in themselves with potential outliers falling out of the general pattern of income and dependence levels. These outliers can be classified as the better off sections in their respective caste groups in lieu of their institutional affiliations, such as membership in the Executive Committee of the VSS, being part of the new elite section. These outliers owe their advantageous position within their castes to their socio-political affiliations and networks in the Adavipalli village community. Dimensions like their relative positions in their own networks also accordingly influence their participation in forest conservation through VSS.

The pattern of dependency on agricultural labour and on forest resources determines interactions within and across various caste groups in the Adavipalli setting. The lack of ownership of fertile lands and surplus livestock affects the socio-political status of the ST and the SC in the village, thus determining their chances of breaking through the cycle of their dependency on the elite landlord sections of the village. The ST (the *Yanadi*) are totally dependent on the forest and agricultural labour for their subsistence, hence their livelihood strategies revolve around their relative positions in the Adavipalli community and their interactions with other powerful sections of the village. At the same time, their dependency itself gives them the scope to manoeuvre through various traditional and new elite sections of Adavipalli.

Thus, agricultural labour has maximum significance as a potential source of income for the *Yanadi* in the wet seasons and relatively lower significance in the dry seasons. The collection of non-timber forest produce (NTFP) is regarded as very convenient during the dry seasons by the *Yanadi*. Accordingly, the availability of VSS work provides constant

income for the *Yanadi* community in the dry seasons, when the agricultural labour is scarce. Collection of firewood as an income generating activity falls to a very low level during the wet seasons, which leads to their reliance on cattle/ livestock for subsistence and income. On the contrary, sale of firewood provides a constant source of income (although low in terms of its contribution to total income) during the dry seasons. Cattle/livestock are constant back-up sources of income (however small their contribution is to the total income) for the *Yanadi* in Adavipalli context in all seasons except the summer months (April-June) thus proving to be a desired asset to possess.

Thus, their relative dependence over communal resources like the forests make the SC and the ST sections of the community less powerful in comparison to that of the land holding sections like the *Reddys* and the *Yadavas*. As demonstrated earlier in this discussion, outliers in all these caste groups reveal class-based differentiation in the Adavipalli community. While the new elite class (mostly comprising BC sections), has complete access and control over the VSS, the *Reddy* community, who are the richest land holding class of the village enjoy general control over fertile productive resources in the Adavipalli village. They also hold a current presidential position in the VSS without exercising the actual powers, which the new elite have taken in their stride.

Notes

[1] Refer to GOI (1990). Government of India Resolution on Joint Forest Management, Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi, Government of India.

[2] Refer to APFD (1999a). Note on Joint Forest Management (JFM) in Andhra Pradesh & APFD (1999b). Note on Key Facts of Forests in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

[3] Refer to the Joint Report on 'Panchayati Raj and Natural Resources Management: How to Decentralise Management Over Natural Resources, Andhra Pradesh: Situation Analysis and Literature Review', by Overseas Development Institute (London), Social and Economic Research Associates (London), TARU Leading Edge (New Delhi and Hyderabad), Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (Bangalore), Centre for World Solidarity (Hyderabad) and Sanket (Bhopal), and supported by Ford Foundation, New Delhi. October 2002.

[4] See APFD GO Ms. No. 218: 28 August 1992.

[5] Refer to Centre for Environment Concerns Report (1995); Committee of Concerned Citizens (1998); Rangachari and Mukherji (2000); Sundar et al. (2001).

[6] Refer to APCFMP document issued by GOAP & Government orders issued by the Environment, Forest, Science & Technology Department, AP 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1996, 2000b, 2000f.

[7] Refer to GO AP 1999a & 1999b.

[8] Refer to www.forest.ap.nic.in/about.htm

[9] AP is divided into three major regions, *Telangana*, *Coastal Andhra* and *Rayalaseema*. These regions are in turn divided into circles, and circles are sub-divided into forest ranges. Each forest range will have several VSS villages under its administrative focus. The procedure for the selection of the study village is described in chapter 2 of this thesis.

[10] Refer to Project Implementation Plan, Volume- 1, GOAP, p. 21.

[11] Emergence of the 'new elite class' in Adavipalli is discussed in chapter 5.

5   Emergence of New Elite

5.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the process of emergence of the new elite[1] (here-after NE) in the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM context while listing out the factors contributing to the moral and political authority it came to command. To account for the emergence of the NE in Adavipalli context, both actor-oriented approach and the actor-network theory are used as analytical tools.

Local elites are defined for the purpose of this study as locally-based individuals with disproportionate access to social, political or economic power. The term elite capture refers to the process by which these individuals dominate and corrupt community level planning and governance (Dasgupta and Beard 2007: 230). Elite capture has been identified as one of the major factors that could potentially lead to resource misappropriation and hampering of community development and uneven distribution of benefits among the poor in developing societies by recent studies (Bardhan 2002; Bardhan and Mookherjee 2000; Conning and Kevane 2002; Platteau and Gaspart 2003). However, there are also studies on the positive aspects of elite controlled development interventions that highlight the continued delivery of benefits to the poor on the basis of the mutual trust they enjoy, reciprocal exchange and the social networks they collectively engage in (Dasgupta and Beard 2007).

Community-based participatory approaches in the developing world have been vulnerable to elite capture (Blair 2000; Conning and Kevane 2002; Cooke and Kothari 2002; Galasso and Ravallion 2000; Mansuri and Rao 2004; Platteau and Abraham 2002; Platteau 2004) resulting in further inequalities in target communities. Platteau and Gaspart (2003: 2) explain that the strong disillusionment over top-down interventions pushed aid agencies like World Bank to shift their aid strategy towards

enhancing aid effectiveness and better reach for the rural poor through decentralised participatory interventions. However, when the responsibility of allocating resources is delegated to local organisations and institutions, village level elites tend to appropriate the major portion for themselves sparing only the leftovers for the poor (ibid).

Actor-oriented approach focuses on individual's strategies and argues that such strategies are mediated by culturally and historically constructed institutions constructed within specific socio-ecological contexts (Mosse 1997: 472). The agency to act and strategise for the new elite leader Samayya and other actors is embedded in and influenced by historical evolution of Adavipalli social relations, informal norms and livelihood practices. This is demonstrated in the description on the 'making of the new elite' in the following section. Here, agency refers to the capability of actors to do things, to act, to make a difference and to influence the sequence of events through their actions. However, examining actors' roles and actions alone may not be sufficient to explain a complex social phenomenon like the making of a new elite class (NE). Hence, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) with its focus on the social dynamics is used as a tool to elucidate the formal and informal social dynamics and events leading up to the making/emergence of the new elite in Adavipalli context. After accounting for the emergence of the new elite network, this chapter concludes with a discussion on the usefulness of elite control for the Adavipalli community with observations of how the NE has influenced the way key actors interact, network, negotiate and participate in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention on a day-to-day basis.

Considering the depth of analytical descriptions around the vulnerability of the community-based and community-driven development interventions to elite capture (see Platteau and Gaspart 2003; Platteau 2004), this chapter cautiously argues in favour of an elite control that can constructively contribute to community development in the absence of an impartial facilitating NGO. This chapter explicates the successful authority enjoyed by the new elite and the processes that the less powerful actors of the Adavipalli community use to interact with the new elite and gain representation by it in newly engineered formal participatory institutions.

5.2 Accounting for the Emergence/making of the New Elite

The emergence of the new elite is a major event which started before the implementation of APJFM/ CFM intervention in Adavipalli from early 1990s. This group consisted mostly of members belonging to a particular middle level caste—the *Yadava* (BC) community. The *Yadavas* have strong socio-economic ties with the other middle castes like the *Mutrasis,* and the *Rajakas* belonging to the BC category and always maintained cordial relations with rich *Reddy* caste households.[2] *Reddys* fall in the higher caste category and owned majority of productive resources in and around the village and commanded political power at the Grama Panchayat level.[3]

The *Yadava* households are relatively prosperous compared to the poor SC and ST households in the village. They engaged in small-scale farming on their own land as well as leased cultivable land from the rich *Reddy* landowners for paddy and commercial crop cultivation. Before the APJFM started in 1994, the leader of the *Yadava* community, Mr Samayya worked as a labour contractor for rich farmers in the Panchayat as well as the AP Forest Department (hereafter APFD). When most of his schoolmates left their respective villages in search of high paid labour in Kuwait, Samayya remained back in his village. He explained in his interview (conducted on 11.09.05) that he stayed back because he realised that there was so much potential in the village and the surrounding forests that there was no need for him to migrate in search of livelihood.

Samayya works and socialises with all sections of the village and acts as a mediator between the *Reddy* landowners and the BC, the SC and ST communities of Adavipalli. Poor household members of the SC and ST communities directly depended on Samayya for seasonal employment through agricultural labour as well as construction work and forest-based work. The *Yadava* community as a whole also provided a fallback for the poor SC and ST households by providing thrift loans that were usually paid back without interest by the poor through seasonal labour. Due to the resourcefulness of Samayya, his social status within the village and the Panchayat kept rising. He and his relatives also represented the villagers when there were conflicts of interest among the villagers or between the villagers and the Foresters. Samayya's rapport with the villagers and the Forest officials grew steadily during the implementation of the central government led Employment Assurance Scheme in early

1990s, as he actively worked as the labour supplier to the local government and FD, and steadily increased his own economic and socio-political power. This interdependence between various levels of the Adavipalli community as well as the FD officials characterised the time preceding the initiation of the APJFM/CFM intervention in the Adavipalli village.

Yadava community provided connectivity and sustenance to the socio-economic life of the Adavipalli community for a long time before it took over the role of caretaker for the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM implementation under the supervision of the Forest Department. Samayya's long standing relationship with all the sections within the Adavipalli community as well as the Forest Department came in handy when the APJFM was about to be initiated in the Adavipalli forest range in 1994. When the Forest Department was about to constitute a *Vana Samrakshana Samithi* (VSS/Forest Protection Committee) as per the APJFM Phase-1 rules and regulations, it favoured Samayya and his group of supporters to take the VSS leadership. Although the *Reddy* community elders were openly keen on taking the VSS leadership, the Foresters preferred Samayya due to their longstanding association with him. However, Samayya in his interview (ibid) mentioned that he preferred allocating the VSS president position to the *Reddy* community elders as a gesture of respect to the local socio-political hierarchy and practices. As a result, the Adavipalli villagers nominated Mr Subba Reddy, the eldest of the local *Reddy* leaders, for the post of president. Samayya himself was unable to take up the vice president post because the seat was reserved for women, in case the president happens to be male. Accordingly, Mrs Lalithamma, a cousin of Samayya was nominated as vice president, while Samayya became a VSS Executive Committee member along with some of his supporters from the BC, SC and ST communities. For all practical purposes, Samayya is the de-facto president, as he engages himself, his supporters and the poor villagers' in forest management and conservation activities. Being the only educated leader for the BC, SC and ST communities, Samayya presented himself as a reliable source to engage with the complex rules and regulations, maintenance of the VSS minutes book and making sense of the annual VSS micro-plan.

Samayya explained (interview dated 11.09.05) that he had to work really hard to gain the respect of the poorer sections of the village for the past 25+ years. He recollects how things worked when he was a youth of

20. The major occupation of people in the village was agriculture. There were more labourers among the BC and SC and very few small-scale farmers. Samayya's family was among those few *Yadava* households with ownership of productive resources like farming land and cattle. The *Reddys* were very authoritarian towards the rest of the community as they commanded total control over the productive resources within and around the village. They even, albeit informally, regulated access of the SC people to forestlands. However, the *Yanadis* always accessed the forest through their customary property rights in order to benefit from the forest products. NTFP was their major source of livelihood. These rights were unquestioned by the *Reddys* as well.

Samayya also accounts for changes in the developmental trajectory of the *Yanadi* (ST) community as hunter-gatherers. The *Yanadi* were wanderers and used to stay over a fortnight in the forest during hunting expeditions. Their bonds with the village as well as their perception of the village and forest landscape differed greatly from those of the other regular village dwellers. In fact, the community members generally never considered the *Yanadi* to be village dwellers. Samayya's family always had good relations with the tribal people, and bought NTFP from the *Yanadi* along with the other sections of Adavipalli community. Over time, due to formal restrictions from the Forest Department on accessing the forest, the *Yanadi* had trouble with forest dwelling, and so they started making temporary settlements on the fringes of the village, which lacked proper sanitation facilities and homes. One of the major developments that contributed to the consolidation of Samayya's moral authority and bonding with the *Yanadi* (ST) community was connected to their colony. Since their temporary settlement became rather permanent on the fringes of the Adavipalli village, the *Yanadi* were perceived as villagers by the rest of the Adavipalli community. This created aspirations of the *Yanadi* to have legalised rights to the land on which their families lived. They always approached Samayya for help, and they sought his help again on a larger, more complicated task.

Samayya was instrumental in accomplishing the legalisation of the ST colony, and getting the property deed to the *Yanadi* (ST) community as a whole with the help of the Forest Department. This incident has firmly placed Samayya as a successful leader and benefactor of the ST, and changed the perspective of the tribal people towards forest department officials. Samayya also helped the SC in acquiring small pieces of land for

lease, and helped them to buy cattle and goats prior to the legalisation of ST colony. During these separate, yet crucial steps in community development, Samayya was the key actor, nevertheless under pressure to deliver, and his success made him a reliable and trustworthy benefactor for the whole Adavipalli community. Samayya recollects how the *Reddy* landowners were another force to reckon with during these trying times. He simply had to adhere to the traditional norms and practices of honouring them through symbolic gestures like making the *Reddy* leader the chief guest for the ST colony inauguration alongside the APFD. He believes that this strategy has always delivered when it came to appeasing the traditional authority of the *Reddy* landowners. When asked why he did not run for the Panchayat, Samayya rather hesitantly explained that it was forbidden territory for him or other non-*Reddy* communities from Adavipalli. He stated that this tacit trade-off allows him and his supporters the power and control over the Adavipalli VSS functioning and decision-making. To date, Samayya remains the de-facto leader of the Adavipalli VSS with the Forest Department's support and cooperation from a rather reluctant *Reddy* community with their elder firmly placed as the VSS president.

The historical recollections of the people from various cross sections of Adavipalli village indicated that the existing hierarchical social order of the community has been carefully advanced to the newly formed participatory institutional structure of the VSS Executive Committee (EC). These recollections confirmed Samayya's account. According to Samayya, this arrangement so far has worked in favour of the whole community in avoiding potential conflicts in power sharing between the traditional elite (*Reddys*) and the rest of the villagers at the grassroots level.

There were varied opinions and recollections of the formation of new elite from the respondents who recollected the historical events. A cross section of aged people from various sections across caste, class and gender axes who witnessed the historical events leading to the emergence of new elite participated in in-depth interviews. Their accounts were similar to what Samayya himself explained. However, a number of other interesting opinions emerged along with accounting for the making of the new elite. An aged villager (55 years old from SC community) who recollected the VSS formation incident commented,

> We are dependent on him (Samayya) and the Forest Department for our daily bread. And we show our gratitude by nominating those people who

have always stood by us in need. The *Reddy* households never helped us the way the *Yadavas* did. What is wrong if we (the poor) want to see our leaders in control of the VSS?

On the other hand, a widow belonging to the ST (*Yanadi*) community felt that the whole exercise was a staged and predetermined act of collusion between the Forest Department, Samayya and the rich landowners. She declared,

> I don't want to waste my time talking about the powerful men. They don't have to worry like me about the next meal. It is true that Samayya cares for the SC and the ST people and does work for our good. But, why are the ST families still the poorest, living in huts while all the *Yadava* families managed to construct brick houses on the main road of the village?... We all know who heads the VSS is pre-decided by them even before we were called for the VSS formation meeting by the Forest Department. Whether it is the *Yadavas* or the *Reddys* leading the VSS, poor women like me will never get out of misery. So why waste my time, it is better to collect *boda* grass instead.

Another ST woman who sat throughout the discussion commented on the outburst of the widow ST woman saying,

> Samayya has never neglected us and the SCs. Isn't it because of him that we have a roof over our heads now? Imagine if Samayya was not around to help us. Who will patiently listen to your problems and give advice? Who will provide you with work and your children some food? It is always important to be thankful to your benefactors. You should be ashamed to talk like this about Samayya.

People's accounts and opinions on the emergence of the new elite and its current role were varied and deep seated in their everyday life experiences. In the following section, we discuss some of the major implication the new elite control has for the community.

The reconstruction of the process of making/emergence of the new elite class is done through analysis of oral histories and testimonies of Adavipalli community members. The respondents included elders of the traditional elite (*Reddy* section can be categorised as economic elites); elders of the BC (comprising the new elite class); elders of the SC and ST apart from the APFD and FNGO personnel. One common thread running through all these testimonies is the acknowledgement of a constructive and positive strategy adopted by the new elite class while making

itself into what it is at present. For instance, recollecting the process of the making of the new elite class as it happened, the APFD local range level officials pointed out,

> What we now call the new elite class used to be the labour contractors for the traditional elite of the Adavipalli community. Before the inception of the Adavipalli VSS in 1994, the same group used to liaison on behalf of the SC and ST groups of Adavipalli for agricultural labour and other kinds of labour available for earning their livelihoods. They also employed the SC and ST community members to work as labour in their lands too. This was going on for some time even before the inception of the APJFM intervention in Adavipalli in 1994. They have successfully demonstrated their capabilities to the Adavipalli community to be the future VSS leadership. Since the new elite class enjoyed the confidence and trust of the rest of the Adavipalli community, the *Reddys* (traditional elite class) have also been cooperative during the whole process.[4]

One of the OC (traditional elite section) elders pointed out during the in-depth interview,

> We never had problems with the fact that the BCs have developed into a new elite class by using their connections at the community level with their landholdings and the general goodwill they enjoyed as the erstwhile labour contractors…both the ST (the *Yanadi*) and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) have a lot of respect for the new elite leadership as it always acted in their best interest, may that be before the start of the APJFM project in 1992 or afterwards until now.[5]

The BC elders who witnessed the whole process of the making of the new elite class had an insider perspective to offer. As pointed out by the aunt of the new elite leader,

> We all were sceptical in the beginning about our nephew and other youngsters from our caste taking up this task of leading the VSS through the APJFM/CFM phases…. After all, such bodies have been traditionally controlled and lead by the *Reddy*'s…. Since my nephew and his followers enjoyed the general support from all sections of the village community, even the *Reddy* landlords also approved his leadership of VSS. Under his leadership, we have benefited steadily along with the SC and the ST. We are all proud of the fact that the new elite leadership has been successful in developing the poor from the BC and the ST communities by negotiating on behalf of them with the APFD and the facilitating NGO.[6]

The historical accounts of the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) and the ST (*Yanadi*) communities focused on how they and the new elite leadership have been working together since the APJFM/CFM intervention both as VSS members and as part of a network whose benefits go beyond membership and participation in the APJFM/CFM intervention. In the words of a senior VSS member from the SC group,

> We have always worked together as a unit even before the start of the APJFM intervention…if we are able to plan for future without any worry about today's meal; it is all because of the kind leadership of the new elite class. Yes, we do face problems from time to time as VSS Executive Committee members, but at the same time we all trust the new elite leadership's judgment, and we believe that they will lead us into what is best for all of us…sometimes we feel that the *Yanadi* have progressed more compared to us because of their close association with the new elite leadership…but, it is also true that we were always in a better position to begin with, socially and economically compared to the *Yanadi*. Unlike the *Yanadi*, some of us have access to and ownership of agriculture lands in and around the village, which made us slightly better off compared to the *Yanadi* who even now don't have ownership of fertile lands. The new elite leadership has been working for our welfare and development through its mediation earlier with the traditional elite for the agriculture labour, and now-a-days with the APFD and the facilitating NGO for the VSS labour and related issues like working days and increase in wages.[7]

The *Yanadi* have had intimate interactions with the new elite leadership compared with any other section of the Adavipalli community. This is because of their continuous dependence on the new elite earlier for agriculture labour, for the forest and VSS-based livelihoods at present. Not only did they depend on the new elite for livelihood security, but also for achieving the social recognition and status as a legitimate contingent of the Adavipalli community. The *Yanadi* leader and others in the tribe express a deep sense of trust and gratitude towards the new elite leadership and the new elite section in particular, for being partners in their joys and troubles, and for making it possible to integrate with the Adavipalli community. In the words of one *Yanadi* elder,

> We have always worked closely with the new elite leadership for past three decades. We saw each other developing in the long run through our engagement with the APJFM/CFM intervention…. Whenever we needed help the new elite leadership came to our rescue…even before the start of

the Adavipalli VSS. The new elite has been helping us in finding agricultural labour in the village, and occasionally in other locations. Since the inception of the VSS, the new elite leadership has been effectively mediating and representing our interests through the VSS…. We owe our housing deeds and the close association and general acceptability and trust we enjoy to our association with the new elite…. We *Yanadi*, as a tribe would not have been able to develop on our own but for the continuous help and support we get from the new elite. We are confident that the new elite leadership is capable of dealing with the APFD authorities, and the facilitating NGO's dominance now and in future, as it always did.[8]

As explained in chapter 4, the *Yanadi*, the SC and the new elite have enjoyed strong partnerships right from the inception of the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM project in 1994. This association also made it possible for the new elite to gain ground as a leader with promise and potential. The new elite leader himself admits the same in an in-depth interview. He claims,

We [new elite leadership] would not have been able to achieve whatever legitimacy we achieved as the leadership of Adavipalli VSS but for our association with the *Yanadi* and the SC communities. All of us together acted as a network and as an association enjoying the mutual trust and support we provided for each other over a period of time…. Looking back, I feel that we would not have had this mutual trust and respect if we did not share common interests and goals of development…. Yes, it is normal for us to face a lot of pressure from the APFD and the facilitating NGO when it comes to our participation and role in decision-making in the VSS, but we stick together as a network and try to negotiate with them…. We do get successful from time to time in achieving our demands, but we may have to give in sometimes to gain more…both the SC and the ST groups know that, and they trust us while we make decisions and deliberations on behalf of them with the APFD and the facilitating NGO.[9]

The facilitating NGO that interacts with the new elite leadership on a regular basis does not enjoy mutual trust, which is present between the new elite, and the SC and the ST communities. However, the facilitating NGO leader acknowledges and appreciates the role of the new elite in ensuring the development of marginalised sections like the ST, the SC and women. He comments that,

The presence of new elite leadership makes things work more efficiently at the Adavipalli village. Both in terms of its role as VSS leadership and its

networking capabilities with key actors like the APFD, it established as a constructive bridge between the APFD and the Adavipalli community members dependent on the village and forest landscape for their livelihoods…. Without its presence at the Adavipalli, implementing the APJFM and CFM projects would have been very difficult…. It is also true that its presence, and association makes the ST (*Yanadi*) and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) socially more active and acceptable. However, it is important to make sure their close social and economic affiliations do not result in the misappropriation of VSS funds, and my role is to promote an open and fair implementation of the APCFM intervention, within the supervision of the APFD.[10]

Hadiz (2003: 124) describes the new elites as 'ambitious political fixers and entrepreneurs, wily and still-predatory state bureaucrats, and aspiring and newly ascendant business groups, as well as a wide range of political gangsters, thugs, and civilian militia'. However, in Adavipalli context we could argue from the testimonial evidence that the new elite class is essentially a socio-political body of entrepreneurs who possess a strong will towards development of the community through forest-based conservation interventions such as the APJFM/CFM. Because of its positive networking and trustworthiness the new elite class of Adavipalli cannot be categorised into what Hadiz calls a wide range of political gangsters, thugs and civilian militia.

5.3   Implications for Adavipalli Community

From the testimonies of various key actors presented in the previous section, it can be inferred that the making/emergence of the new elite class and its eventual graduation to the leadership of VSS took place as the APJFM/CFM interventions unfolded in the Adavipalli context. Though Samayya worked as a labour contractor before the APJFM intervention started, he and his fellow caste (BC) members managed to gain prominence as the new elite through their leadership of the Adavipalli VSS. Since, the aim of this chapter is to account for the emergence of the new elite- one could conclude from the evidence that the roots for the emergence of new elite class were laid before the APJFM/CFM intervention has started operating in the Adavipalli. However, the then existing network of relationships (viz. of Samayya as a labour contractor with the ST, the SC, and the other village based actors and the APFD as well) at the time of the inception of the APJFM intervention in Adavi-

palli helped the new elite to embark on the task of leading of the VSS. This development not only helped the ST and the SC sections of Adavipalli to better their life standards but also helped the APFD to better its relationship with the villagers. The BC sections/the new elite class themselves benefited due to their participation in the APJFM/CFM through the VSS.

One interesting observation made by the new elite leader himself is reflective of the same. To quote his words,

> It would have been impossible to assume the leadership or to achieve the respect and trust of the Adavipalli community members, without their continuous support and reciprocity. The *Yanadi* and the SC communities have been instrumental in giving us the credibility of being the VSS leaders. Through continuous association and interactions with the ST and the SC, we [the new elite] are able to perform and deliver. Without the *Yanadi* and the SC communities' presence our leadership of Adavipalli VSS is meaningless…at the same time we also realise that the APFD and the facilitating NGO personnel have their reservations on our leadership as well as our close ties with the other VSS members like those of the ST and the SC communities. With these varying perceptions regulating our actions and relationships, it is a challenge to lead the VSS.[11]

Analysing the new elite leadership and its perceptions, strategies and negotiations at the Adavipalli VSS gives us a better picture of the grassroots power dynamics in Adavipalli (Long 1997: 7-8). By focusing on the emergence of the new elite leadership in this chapter, we get to appreciate the intricate relationships operating within the Adavipalli setting during both APJFM and APCFM phases. The new elite leadership and the other actors in its network like the SC and the ST continuously exercise their capacity for agency, for decision-making and joint action (Hindess 1988: 45; Long 1992b: 22-3; Ramirez 1999: 110) on shared and specific agendas such as VSS work and wages with respect to the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. Thus, agency[12] of these actors always played a major role while pursuing their interests through negotiations, lobbying (Long 2001: 240) with the APFD and the facilitating NGO. These interactions in due course determined the intervention outcomes rather than the premeditated objectives and designs (Long and Van der Ploeg 1989: 226).

Emergence of the new elite and its network's eventual espousal of the leadership of the Adavipalli VSS can be analytically explained in its en-

tirety by using the actor-network theory as a tool. Actor-network theory as explained in chapter 3 helps to spell out how various heterogeneous actors of Adavipalli community as well as Forest Department officials have been enrolled in the new elite network. Actor-network theory demonstrates how the network-based interactions come to exist and help in understanding the order of the new elite network.

The concepts of *translation* (Law 1989: 58-9)[13] and *performativity* (Law and Hassard 1999: 3) [14] can be applied to analyse the process of the new elite network formation. The new elite leadership emerged over time through its continuous interactions and negotiations with various actors with differing capacities and social authorities ranging from the most powerful Forest Department officials to the least influential *Yanadi* (ST) people. It not only came to prominence through its benevolent representation of the weaker sections of the community, but also successfully retained itself in power by enrolling the same actors (the *Yanadi* and the SCs) repeatedly in its network. The moral power enjoyed by the new elite would cease to exist when actors fail to enrol or engage through its network for various needs. The moral authority of the new elite leadership gets re-affirmed each time a particular section of the village benefits through the new elite actor network, or every time it manages to strike a balance with the Forest Department in favour of the Adavipalli community. Without these periodical reaffirmation acts of faith, trust and consent the new elite network is likely to shrink and eventually may die away. Thus, the new elite leadership works along with the other actors like the ST and the SC through the VSS and engages in continuous reproduction of various relations of dependence and negotiations within and with outside actors (the Forest Department and the Facilitating NGO) of the Adavipalli APCFM.

The new elite class enrolled the SC and the ST into its actor-network through its continuous interactions and negotiations both before and after inception of the APJFM/CFM intervention. However, after the inception of the intervention, the new elite took over the VSS leadership as various testimonials mentioned in the section above, leading to a change in its social status and its relative power position. Even the less powerful actors like the *Yanadi* and the SC by enrolling and getting performed in the new elite network, managed to gain a platform for their voices and concerns albeit through informal social networks like the new elite.

Table 5.1
Transformations in the Adavipalli socio-economic landscape

Developments	Situation before APJFM in 1994	After the initiation of APJFM in 1994	After the initiation of APCFM in 2002
ST (*Yanadi*) colony	No fixed housing colony	Allotment of stable housing colony; quality of housing-poor dilapidated structures	Permanent housing colony on the fringe of the village; quality of housing- average, thatched with mud walls
Acceptance of the ST (*Yanadi*) in the main village	Somewhat restricted movement in the main village	Comparatively free access and acceptance in the main village	Enjoy good levels of acceptance in the main village, total free movement in the main village
Community-based infrastructures	No infrastructures	Construction of community hall, and village water tank as part of the APJFM village development activity through VSS	Constructed a bus stop (which is in very poor structural condition), as part of the APCFM village development activity through VSS
Housing of the BC and SC communities	Very few 'good' houses for the BC and the SC; AP state govt. gave the SC place for constructing their own houses.	Although the AP state government did not give any support, the BC community members who enjoy the leadership of the VSS, acquired solid houses on the main street of the village	The SC have also started pulling up resources to build solid houses near the village centre

Source: Oral testimonies (oral histories), in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the Adavipalli community members (especially the *Yanadis*) and the APFD and FNGO personnel.

The new elite class is continuously performed in, by and through its relations with other actors in the Adavipalli setting. These interactions and negotiations at the grassroots level resulted in significantly positive developments in the process changing the socio-economic and political landscape of the Adavipalli community. The following table tries to present in brief, the socio-economic and political developments in Adavipalli as they occurred during the new elite leadership of the Adavipalli VSS. These developments were acknowledged in the oral histories and in-depth interviews of the Adavipalli community members, and were

checked for reliability through focus group discussions across caste, class, gender and age parameters. Nevertheless, these developments are not solely attributed to the efforts of the new elite, as much as they are to the complex networking processes that took place through the crucial role played by the new elite leadership of the VSS.

Thus, emergence of new elite class in the Adavipalli context can be taken as an example of how local actors take internationally sponsored interventions as opportunities to network, and to prosper socially, economically and politically and legitimise their respective roles within the span of that intervention through continuous networking with other actors operating at the grassroots level.

5.4   Conclusion

The account for the making/emergence of the new elite leadership at the Adavipalli VSS level indicates that it is more a political and social class compared to the purely 'authoritarian' traditional elite class (the *Reddys*) of the Adavipalli community. The testimonies and concrete developments at the grassroots level also second this conclusion. Apart from effectively exercising its agency as the leader of the VSS, the new elite class also has been relatively successful in negotiating with the APFD on behalf of the otherwise marginalised sections like the SC and the ST. It has been acknowledged by all the sections of the community and by the APFD and the FNGO as being 'accountable' to the Adavipalli community throughout its leadership of the VSS. Hence, it is essential to recognise that the new elite class of Adavipalli is not engaging in the elite capture of the APCFM intervention, but is in control of it on behalf of the Adavipalli community.

Although the Adavipalli VSS is controlled by the new elite, we observed a trickle down of the benefits to those who needed it most (e.g. the *Yanadi* gaining legal rights over their housing area- refer to table 5.1) in this arrangement. Despite being continuously shadowed by the FNGO and the presence of 'controlling' APFD, the new elite class/leadership of the Adavipalli community/VSS has been actively promoting the participation of the marginal sections like the ST and the SC; albeit through informal arenas, nevertheless contributing to the development of the community within the Adavipalli APCFM setting. From a careful observation of the chronological order (constructed through oral histories and Focus Group Discussions conducted in

Adavipalli), I conclude that the maturity of a labour contractor Samayya into a new elite leader of Adavipalli VSS occurred as the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM intervention unfolded. This however does not mean that the emergence of the new elite class can solely be attributed to the APJFM/CFM intervention which started in 1994 in Adavipalli.

The Adavipalli case proves that the presence of a strong new elite class has resulted in re-distribution of resources and contributed to the development of the Adavipalli community in the long-run. With the evidence emanating from the Adavipalli case study, this thesis demonstrates that the local informal practices and behavioural norms followed by various actors of the Adavipalli community harnessed gradual development in the social security levels for the weaker sections of the community through the elite control of the VSS. This major finding highlighted in this chapter is the role of the new elite in harnessing gradual control of the Adavipalli community over the planning, resource allocation and decision-making powers during the APJFM and CFM phases. The evidence emanating from the Adavipalli case confirms the presence of elite controlled forest governance institutions like the Adavipalli VSS are functioning rather efficiently in representing people's aspirations without necessarily directly participating in the formally designed 'participatory mechanisms and spaces'.

Notes

[1] The term 'new elite' is coined in this thesis for the specific purpose of distinguishing it from the more powerful, authoritarian and dominant *Reddy* community of Adavipalli, whom we refer to as traditional or old elite. Some villagers like the Yanadi and SC use a term that denotes similar meaning for the new elite. The Telugu word they use is *Chinnayya*.

[2] Source: In-depth interviews and historical accounts recorded with elderly people from SC, ST, BC (*Yadavas* in particular) and *Reddy* communities during 2004 and 2005 in Adavipalli.

[3] Panchayati Raj is a constitutional system of governance in India, wherein village Panchayat or Grama Panchayat is the basic/lowest unit of administration within the three-tier administrative system.

[4] Oral history & in-depth interview with the APFD range level officers in July 2005 in Adavipalli forest range office.

[5] Source: Oral history and in-depth interviews with OC (*Reddy*) elders in July 2005 in Adavipalli.

[6] Source: Oral history and in-depth interviews with BC elders in July 2005 in Adavipalli.

[7] Source: Oral history and in-depth interviews with the SC community elders in July 2005 in Adavipalli.

[8] Source: Oral history and in-depth interviews with ST (*Yanadi*) elders in July 2005 in Adavipalli.

[9] Source: Oral history and in-depth interview with the new elite leader in July 2005 in Adavipalli.

[10] Source: In-depth interview of the new elite leader in July 2005 in Adavipalli.

[11] Oral history & in-depth interview of the new elite leader in July 2005 in Adavipalli.

[12] Refer to chapter 3 (section 3.8) for a detailed exploration on the concept of 'agency' from an actor-oriented perspective.

[13] Callon and Law (1989: 58-9) define *translation* as 'a process in which sets of relationships between projects, interests and goals and naturally occurring entities-objects which might be quite separate from one another- are proposed and brought into being'.

[14] The concept of *performativity* is also applicable to the present context in terms of its insistence on the idea that actors are performed in, by and through these relations with other actors. *Performativity* results in a continuous flow of relationality/negotiations between the actors in the network, resulting in transformation of the power and role of the actors (Law & Hassard 1999: 3)

6 Gender-based Dynamics in Adavipalli APCFM Intervention

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how gendered power relations influence the scope and nature of women's participation within both formal and informal participatory spaces in the Adavipalli context with the aim to contribute to the on-going debate on the role of women in participatory natural resource management. The key assumption guiding this gender analysis is that the occupation and management of the decentralised participatory spaces depends on a set of informal norms and practices operating within the Adavipalli community. These informal dynamics produce the gendered norms and practices and simultaneously are reproduced through gender-based perspectives of key actors, and the caste, class and gender-based power relations operating at the grassroots level (both at the individual and community levels).

Another hypothesis tested here on the basis of field-based evidence is that the sheer creation of representative spaces for women does not ensure their participation in decision-making processes at the VSS level. This thesis argues that the already existing informal norms and practices along with the structural and institutional dynamics tend to regulate these spaces. The linkages between the formal and informal practices are assumed to hold opportunities for local politics to play out on yet another new stage.

Recent research on women's participation in invited spaces has proved that planning formal institutional interventions like community forestry without sufficient attention to intra-community differences, especially across gender lines, renders the intervention gender blind (Buchy and Subba 2003). Sunder (2000: 269) points out that many women in Andhra Pradesh were not aware that they were members of the village 'General Body' and some VSS members were unaware of their member-

ship in the same. The evidence we gathered from Adavipalli not only complements this situation but also demonstrates that there has been little progress in the situation since Sunder's study. She further analyses that this exclusion of women despite being an age old practice of village politics is reproduced under the pretext of JFM rules, where female members are successfully excluded by male members (ibid 269). In this chapter, we examine these processes of women's participation and exclusion (if any) in the decision-making processes taking place in the VSS. Even with formal structures in place, informal norms and regulations affect the way various sections (like women and the poor) of the community access and participate in these spaces (Agarwal 1997b: 39). Hence, more attention is given in this chapter to analyse these informal norms and practices and structural and institutional factors operating at the grassroots level.

This chapter analyses the gender dynamics operating at the grassroots level of APCFM intervention to analyse various factors that influence women's participation in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. To analyse how and through what mechanisms the participatory spaces created through APCFMP are occupied, managed, manipulated and co-opted is the major focus of the present chapter. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the nature and scope of women's participation in decision-making activities amidst the gendered power relations operating at the Adavipalli VSS level.

6.2   Gender Policy in APCFM Intervention

Gender equality is one of the major characteristic aspects of the design of Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management (APCFM) intervention. This principle aims at nourishing possibilities of better participation of both men and women in conservation intervention eventually leading to community empowerment.[1] Another aim behind this idea was to give female members of the community, a better launching platform to engage in the VSS and decision-making processes at the grassroots level. This has been done with the premise that the creation of formal participatory places in Executive Committees and general body of VSS will ensure women's participation and empowerment.

In the Joint Forest Management (APJFM) phase, this special attention to gender equality was lacking, although there were specific efforts to ensure women's representation in the VSS Executive Committee. How-

ever, the drive towards formal representation of women in places of power in APCFM has been driven by the depoliticised categorisation of women, and an absence of attention to the political aspects of women's participation in conservation intervention. The present study emphasises the need for embarking on genuine efforts like 'social analysis' in place of 'policy rhetoric' (Waldie 1993: 6) in CBNRM interventions like APCFM.

To ensure gender equality in APCFM phase both in representation and in participation in the VSS, a male and a female member from each household were made members of the VSS general body. The Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Castes (SC) households were given membership in the VSS general body. Most crucially, the minimum number of female members in the VSS Executive Committee was raised to 8 out of 15 members from the village community. All the external bodies including the FNGO and the APFD personnel fall under the advisory committee to the VSS. In addition to this, the clause that either the president or the vice president must be a female member provided space for participation of women in decision-making processes at the VSS level (GO Ms. No. 13, 2002 & 2004). Critics of APCFM intervention in the northeastern districts of Andhra Pradesh claimed that these measures have not fared well in bringing about anything close to gender equity in place.

Sarin observes that even when women are included in the participatory formal structures of control, implementation of the policy seems to be gender biased (1995b). The aim of gender-sensitive planning should be to find 'ways in which women can institutionalize the few bargaining strengths they have, and in working out leverages and incentives that would ensure a voice and space for the most marginalized groups within decision-making processes' (Shah and Shah 1995: 81-2). This requires following strategies to 'confront trade-offs, expose alternatives and make choices free from unrealistic notions of generalized synergy' (Jackson 1993b). The following sections show the formal and informal gender-based dynamics operating in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

6.3   Gender Roles and Division of Labour in Adavipalli APCFM Context

All the data collected in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention context shows that the roles of 'women' and 'men' differ across caste, class and gender-based parameters. Women and men play different roles in terms

of division of labour at the household and community level in Adavipalli. The presence of social stratification within gender results in the complex web of division of labour both at the intra-household and inter-household level in Adavipalli community. Although the *Yanadi* and the SC women tend to take responsibility for household chores and parenting, men at times take their turn in parenting responsibilities when the women spend longer hours in collection of NTFP, firewood or fodder in summer months. Gender roles are articulated well within the dominant castes like the *Reddy*'s, with the women taking care of the household chores and parenting. Some women in the absence of an adult male (especially from female-headed households) participate in agricultural supervision, by employing labourers from the BC, SC and ST. The *Reddy* and the *Yadava* women also supervise livestock management by hiring helpers from the poorer sections of their community. This gives a little more control to women over the intra-household decision-making processes. However, the financial matters are left to the men. Occasionally young boys and girls also help their parents in these activities. However, both the young and adolescent boys and girls from the upper castes are sent to fulltime schools. Women in the dominant castes tend to confine themselves to their roles with very little variation in their daily routine. Men from the dominant castes generally enjoy the position of patriarch and decision-maker for the family.

The division of labour tends to be slightly different in the lower castes of the Adavipalli community. In the *Yanadi* and SC households, the division of labour is often negotiated along the lines of availability and seasonality of work from various sources. In general, men and women from the SC and ST sections engage in both agriculture and VSS labour. In addition, men and women from the SC and ST perform different but complementary roles in virtue of their multiple livelihood strategies. The seasonal calendar (Table 6.1) gives an idea of gender-based annual activities in the Adavipalli village. For example, women mostly collect firewood and NTFP; whereas the responsibility of the sale is taken-up by the men. Some poor BC households also follow the same routine. The boys and girls belonging to these households are involved in the agriculture and household chores regularly. Boys attend school up to a minimum level (7th standard), whereas girls are out of school and into helping the mother in household chores and other forest and agriculture-based activities at a very early age (as young as 8 years old). Some of the regular

activities performed by boys and girls are cattle grazing, fetching water for household consumption, NTFP collection and, firewood and fodder collection.

Gendered roles and division of labour are directly related to the issues of property rights and power within and across households (Agarwal 1992, 1997b; Rocheleau 1995; Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997). In the context of Adavipalli, the men from the dominant castes are the sole owners of the property in the household. Women in Adavipalli community in general are dependent on their men for access to land and other resources. Even when a woman from a rich family has legal title to her land, in reality it remains under the control of the patriarch of the family, who is referred to as the 'head of the family'. *Reddy* men also own private grazing lands, occasionally (in dry seasons) allowing access to the poorer households in their caste to tend to their livestock. Women from the upper castes do have some informal personal possessions like the gold jewellery they get from their maternal house at the time of marriage (*Varakatnam*- Price paid to the groom), and small pieces of agricultural or housing land (directly controlled by the men in her family). This gives these women bargaining power within the household, but only in terms of controlling and commanding respect from the younger women in the household. The patriarchal value system does not allow women to have property rights once they get married, and after marriage, her husband, or the patriarch of her new family own and control her properties. Women in general access land through marriage, they have little or no control over the natural resources (Agarwal 1994a). A closer observation on the power relations within households and kinship-based relationships reveals that gender differentiation influences culturally constructed land tenure and other property rights norms in all caste groups in Adavipalli.[2] Rather than challenging the existing power relations, women tend to go with the flow, and thus try to access family-based resources for their household and personal usage. To quote a BC (*Yadava*) woman in this regard,

> The moment we raise voice about property that rightfully belongs to us, we will lose all credibility and respect within the husband's family…. As women we need to be very careful even while talking about our own property…we are supposed to use the expression: "our family property" instead of "my property"…otherwise we will be branded as selfish.[3]

Both the SC and ST communities have been given land for housing since the JFM/CFM intervention was initiated in Adavipalli. However, many SC and ST households have neither access nor entitlements to agricultural land. They have to depend on upper castes for leasing pieces of land or for working as agricultural labour in their fields. The SC and ST households also do not have any private grazing land and depend on the forest areas and the few remaining communal pastures. It was also observed that the women of the SC and ST households are not given land for lease by the upper castes or the BCs. The presence of an adult male household member has been a prerequisite for leasing land or livestock.[4] Thus, women from the SC and the ST experience more inequity in accessing the productive resources in and around the Adavipalli village.

At the community level, all the households are said to have equal access to communal grazing lands, however, in practice only those households with more livestock are utilising the grazing lands. Moreover, the livestock owners in Adavipalli are spread across different castes, and the dominant castes tend to occupy the best grazing areas, despite having their private grazing lands to feed their livestock. They leave the used and less nutrient-rich lands for the SC and ST communities for grazing purposes. Even if the SC and the ST lease the cattle and livestock from the landowners, they are expected to respect the informal norms set forth by the upper castes of the village community. For example, one ST (*Yanadi*) woman said, 'feeding these sheep (leased from the landlord) is becoming increasingly difficult day-by-day. *Dora*'s (landlords) grazing land is green all the time, as they graze their sheep in our communal lands'. [5]

Based on their gendered roles and responsibilities, women and men have different mobility levels that influence resource use patterns and division of labour as discussed earlier in this thesis. The process of community branding of women's spaces occurs based on differentiated usage of available space in and around the village. For example, BC, SC and ST women of Adavipalli use the communal area adjoining the ST colony as a public lavatory. They also use the same area to graze their cattle and livestock. Men do not enter these women's spaces, and do not direct their cattle through these areas.

Table 6.1
Seasonal calendar: Gender-based activities in Adavipalli village
(in ST, SC and BC households)

Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Agriculture labour	F ----- M xxx				F ------ M -----	xxxxxx xxxxxx
Cattle rearing	F ooo M ooo	oooo oooo	ooooo ooooo	oooooo oooooo	oooooo --------	oooooo
Firewood collection & sale	F(c)oo M(s)--	oooo oooo	ooooo ooooo	oooooo oooooo	oooooo --------	oooooo
Domestic service (laundry)	F ----- M ----	----------- ---	----------- -----	----------- -------	----------- -------	
Fodder collection	F(c)oo	oooo	ooooo	oooooo	oooooo	F(c)---- M (s)---
Livestock rearing	F ooo M ooo	oooo oooo	ooooo ooooo	oooooo oooooo	oooooo oooooo	oooooo oooooo
NTFP collection & sale	F(c)oo M(s)--	xxxxx -------	xxxxxx --------	xxxxxx --------	xxxxxx --------	-------- --------
Petty business	F ooo	oooo	ooooo	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo
VSS labour				F ----- M -----	xxxxxx xxxxxx	ooooooo ooooo
Water collection	F ooo M ----	oooo ------	ooooo --------	ooooo --------	ooooo	ooooo
Activities	**July**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
Agriculture labour	xxxxxx xxxxxx	xxxxxx xxxxxx	xxxxxx xxxxxx	xxxxxx xxxxxx	xxxxxx xxxxxx	xxxxxx xxxxxx
Cattle rearing	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo	F ----- M -----	----------- -------	----------- -------
Firewood collection & sale	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo
Domestic service (laundry)						
Fodder collection	----------- -------	----------- -------	----------- ---------	--------	--------	--------
Livestock rearing	oooooo oooooo					
NTFP collection & sale						
Petty business	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo	oooooo
VSS labour						
Water collection	ooooo	ooooo	ooooo	ooooo	ooooo	ooooo

Legend/ Symbols: M= male, F= female, ooo= Ongoing activity, ----= Sporadic activity, xxx= Intense activity, c=Collection, s=Sale. Source: Qualitative data collected during 2004-05; participants filled the boxes themselves according to their own assessment.

At the intra-household level, women bargain and negotiate for access to and control over decision-making processes within the available institutional parameters. However, at the level of household and its relationship with the community, gender dynamics play out in more subtle ways. For example, every time a poor farmer borrows money or leases land, s/he is expected by the landowner to return the favour by being submissive and faithful to him. Thus, the occasional leasing of agricultural lands and livestock from the rich sections only makes the borrower more vulnerable in face of larger community-based power dynamics. The presence of formal and informal rules nested within a power hierarchy or, alternatively, embedded within a moral economy framework at the community level (Rocheleau 1997: 1352) regulate the gendered access and control over the productive resources of the Adavipalli community.

As shown by the seasonal calendar (Table 6.1), VSS labour is only available for three months in varying degrees of concentration. Trenching, singling, earth moulding, pit digging (sunken gully pits), planting, watering and pruning the plants, weeding and cleaning the designated forest plot are some of the major VSS work done during the season, which normally starts at the end of the dry season and continues into the early parts of the wet season. The VSS labour and the income derived from the labour is gender specific. Although both men and women spend equal hours in VSS labour, the payment differs. Women receive an amount of INR 40/-, and men receive INR 60/- per hour through VSS labour. Women generally perform jobs such as planting, weeding, pruning and watering the plants as most local people consider them less labour intensive. Men generally are involved in labour intensive activities such as trenching, singling, pit digging and earth moulding. Some women occasionally perform the jobs of pit digging as well, whenever there is a shortage of labour. However, they do not receive the same wage as men even if they do the same work. This could be the reason why women also seem to prefer the work branded as less labour intensive as explained earlier on.[6] One SC woman commented, 'whether we do or don't do a man's work, we are always paid a woman's wage…why not then do what we [women] are supposed to do, and get what we can!'[7] The wage discrimination between the sexes also percolates down to the choice of type of work regulating what women can earn compared to their counterparts.

During the peak season, the VSS labour provides good income for some of the BC and many SC and ST households. Both men and women do VSS work in the season, and benefit from it. However, the payment for men is always more than that of women, as women generally do not have access to work around digging and ploughing in the forest areas identified for conservation. Women's work normally entails carrying head loads of mud, planting, watering the plants and weeding, which are equally tedious and time consuming as the work done by men. This gender bias acts against the interests of women across all castes and men of the weaker sections. However, lack of continuous availability of VSS labour makes both men and women equally dependent on the other income generating activities during the rest of the year.

Women and men participate in similar activities like firewood and NTFP collection apart from working as agricultural labour. Women seem to engage in firewood and NTFP collection mainly to fulfil their household responsibilities, whereas men carry out the collection in large quantities for commercial purposes. Although there is availability of work throughout the year through multiple sources like agriculture labour, NTFP and firewood collection and sale, the ST and SC sections are more or less completely dependent on the rich classes of Adavipalli for their livelihoods. This dependency also leads to further vulnerability of weaker classes. Since the SC and ST of the Adavipalli village community have literally no ownership of productive resources like the rich OC and BC do, they try to maximise their earnings by engaging in multiple activities throughout the year.

These socially stratified resource usage patterns also exert differing results within the same caste group. For example, the female-headed (widow, divorcee or a wife whose husband left her or has migrated) households in the BC community are relatively poor compared to their relatively rich counterparts. The women in these households also have less support structures available within their households due to the absence of an adult male. Hence, these women do not enjoy the extra support that BC women from male-headed households enjoy. Although the presence of strong male domination exerts restraint on women's decision-making capacities within the household, it also enables relative control over other intra-household aspects (e.g. health and education of children) for the women. Thus, the informal rules and regulations active

at the community level act as constraints as well as enabling factors for the women to benefit within their household.

However, at the community level, the gendered relationships between men and women across various castes tend to be more subtle and biased. For example, the women in the SC and ST castes face more gender bias compared to those from the BC and OC sections at the community level, in terms of access to and (informal) control over productive resources. However, within the household the ST and SC women enjoy relatively more flexible gendered roles and responsibilities (e.g. parenting duties), but are subjected to discrimination at the community level. For instance, at household level, a *Yanadi* or ST woman is free to decide to cook for the family or not to, compared to a BC woman who is expected to cook for the family and perform the parental duties before she goes to work. As explained earlier in this chapter, this relative freedom for the SC and ST women comes from men sharing the household chores and parental duties; which is absent in upper castes like the BC and OC of the village. However, at the community level, the *Yanadi* and SC women have less chances of accessing community resources that a BC/OC woman has including a reliable credit base and leasing of fertile land for agriculture from the BC and OC households.

On the other hand, most women from the dominant castes like the OC and the BC have greater autonomy and decision-making power in some aspects within the household (e.g. supervision over house maids, labourers) at the expense of personal autonomy at the community level, *vis-à-vis* the informal norms and social regulations of 'acceptable female behaviour'. Women from the upper castes are not expected to take part in public occasions like VSS meetings, occasional street plays in public areas, etc. Whereas, women from lower castes are not stigmatised over their public participation in political meetings, community shows, etc. in public places, which makes their mobility in the village more accepted.

Evidence shown in this discussion demonstrates that access to resource areas in Adavipalli is gendered as women and men have distinct use of these areas and differential control over their resources. These patterns of resource use have implications for women's role in forest management institutions and other related structures. Access to and control over resources influences who participates in decision-making processes as well as in institutional structures that regulate access to the same. The following section analyses participation of women in decision-

making processes at the Adavipalli village and VSS level in order to understand through what mechanisms women engage in everyday decision-making both at the household and community level. It is observed that participation of female members at VSS level is influenced by the intra-household and community level power dynamics.

6.4   Gender-based Dynamics

Gender-based perspectives of men and women on their respective roles are captured through their self-images. This section tries to capture the linkages between these self-images and their influence on the institutional framework and participation, including in the decision-making processes at the VSS level. These self-images directly lead us to the rationale exercised by men and women in making decisions both at the household and community level. These self-images of men and women also provide clues in understanding their behaviour in spaces of power and participation, such as membership and leadership of the VSS.

The groups of respondents that were involved in generating these self-images comprised of a mix of men and women from various castes of the Adavipalli community. However, if only the female-headed households were considered for this exercise, the results would have been different. Ages of participants in these groups ranged from 20 to 60. Women and men were separated from each other and asked, 'What is it that woman/man symbolises for you?' Each group consisted of 15 respondents. Answers were recorded in order of preference for both men and women. Box 6.1 gives an overview of the self-images of men and women in Adavipalli community.[8]

As clearly shown in Box 6.1, from the perspective of women, emphasis is placed on the multiple gendered roles women play, and the problems they encounter came on top of the preference list, while men are seen as leaders, bread-winners, decision-makers and patriarchs. Women also highlighted the biological roles of men and women within the household. There is clear lack of attention to leadership in women's perception of their own self-image. At the community level, they gave men the same status of leadership and decision-making as they tend to give at the household level. Men's view of themselves highlights their perceptions that they are leaders, and that women are followers both at the household and community levels. The same view also resonates in their view of women's role in the VSS. Box 6.2 gives the gendered perceptions

of their roles from men and women in Adavipalli. The group of respondents included male and female VSS members. Both groups were asked 'What do you perceive is your role as the VSS member?'

Box 6.1
Self-images of men and women across Adavipalli community

What is it that a 'woman' symbolises for you?	
Women's group responses in order of preference: -home is where woman is -hard worker -child bearing mother -bonding family together -responsible for home planning -sign of family respect -*varakatnam* (brides' family pays cash or kind to the groom in marriage) -woman's life is made hard by God -cooking, feeding & raising children -giving respect & love to man/husband -taking care of family health -household chores -No time for myself	*Men's group responses in order of preference:* -family pride & respect -mother of my kids -follower, helps me in running our home -selfless and sacrificing for family -responsible for cooking, feeding children & taking care of my parents -looks after my home -helps me in the field -gives me love & respect -my old age investment -brings money and property in marriage -I go home to her -hardworking wife & mother -implements my decisions in & outside our home
What is it that a 'man' symbolises for you?	
Women's group responses in order of preference: -father of my children -breadwinner -decision-maker -oppressive & bossy -sometimes physically abusive -cares for me & my kids -leader & financial planner -owner of everything (land, house, cattle, etc.) -head of the household & controller -I am not respected without him -I must listen to him even if I don't like	*Men's group responses in order of preference:* -breadwinner -head of the household & controller -decision-maker -leader & financial planner -owner of everything -leader -problem solver -respect in community -wealthy among peers -powerful -hardworking person -father & husband -without a man, a woman is not valued

Source: Formal and informal interviews, focus group discussions conducted during 2005 by the author.

Box 6.2
Perspectives of male and female VSS members on their role in VSS

Q: what do you perceive is your role as the VSS member?	
Responses of female members in order of preference: - attending meetings by invitation showing up when there is inspection of VSS - attend general body meetings when required - sign the minutes book and other documents when asked - approving decisions made by the VSS, supportive. - informing about VSS work to other VSS (general body) members - use this membership as constructively as possible, maintain community respect & caste group respect	Responses of male members in order of preference: - leadership of my caste group/membership in VSS - organising and attending VSS meetings - decision-making through negotiation & lobbying - dealing with FNGO & APFD personnel - confrontational if needed - approving VSS decisions - discussing financial matters - informing female members - communicating with village community based on the VSS leadership directives

Source: Formal and informal interviews, focus group discussions conducted during 2005 by the author.[9]

This representation clearly indicates the different perceptions men and women have on their respective roles as the VSS members. The correlation between self-images and perspectives of their role in VSS are complementary to each other. They flow from each other, the self-images of women and men of themselves and of their counterparts have direct influence over their perceived roles in the VSS.

This analogy shows that people's perceptions have a strong bearing on their functioning and decision-making. This analysis also helps us to understand why female members keep to household chores, while they send their men to represent them in the VSS meetings. Analysing women and men's self-images helps in explaining the nature and patterns of interactions between men and women especially in formal arenas like the VSS.

However, men and women from different castes of Adavipalli have different images of each other with respect to their role at the household, community and VSS levels. There are subtle differences in the perceptions of lower caste groups compared to those of higher castes like the BC and OC. Box 6.3 gives a clear idea of the heterogeneity within gendered perceptions and self-images across the BC, ST and SC castes. The perspectives of the OC (traditional elite class) are not included in here because of their inactivity in the Adavipalli VSS. The perceptions of the

Reddy community are totally driven by the conventional equations of themselves as the traditional landowners and the BC, SC and ST as their tenants and agriculture labour. Since, the inception of the VSS, the *Reddy* community started counting the BC (the new elite) leadership as more powerful than they were earlier on.[10]

Both men and women across castes perform at the VSS platform guided by their self-images and their perceptions of their and other actors' roles as well. However, when men are portrayed as strong leaders and decision-makers at both the community and household arenas, woman's job of making use of traditions and patriarchal system for her advantage becomes tough. That is when formal representation provides her with a platform at the household and community level to bargain even in adverse conditions. It is important to reiterate that 'women' is not a homogenous category. The possibilities of a married woman compared to that of a single woman (widow/unmarried/divorcee) at the household and community level differ greatly. For instance, a female-headed household in Adavipalli does not enjoy the discreetness enjoyed by a married woman while accessing resources. A 40-year-old widow, head of a BC household is constantly watched for any possible misconduct, in the absence of an adult male, and all her efforts to achieve access in productive resources like leasing agricultural lands, cattle and livestock, and labour from Adavipalli people are viewed by her caste group with suspicion. She claims in her in-depth interview,

> If I draw a line of acceptable norms and values, which other married women can afford to, I will not be able to feed my family…. These values and norms are for people who have adult men at their rescue…not for me and my family who have to struggle everyday to get a square meal.[11]

In comparison to this widow, another married BC woman is treated with great respect as she fulfils all her duties within the household and the caste group in an 'acceptable' way regulated by patriarchal norms and values. It is crucial here to observe that all her requests are met with respect in the Adavipalli community, which the widow from the same caste group does not enjoy.

Box 6.3
Perspectives of male and female members across castes on each other's roles

Responses of the ST (*Yanadi*) men
1. On themselves: We are followers of the new elite leaders in the village and the VSS. At household level, we are the heads with equal parental responsibilities with our women.
2. On the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) men: They are also like us, followers of the new elite leadership at the village/VSS level, and heads of their households.
3. On the BC (*Yadava*) men: They are the new elite leaders as strong as the traditional elite were, both in the village and in the VSS. We work closely with them on forest related issues. Their women treat them as heads of their households with respect.

Responses of *Yanadi* women
1. On themselves: We are subordinates like our men to the new elite leaders in the village and the VSS. At household level, we have equal responsibilities with our men in parenting and house chores.
2. On the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) women: They are also like us, followers of the new elite leadership at the village/VSS level, and subordinate to their men in households.
3. On the BC (*Yadava*) women: They are more active than we are as VSS members, both in the village and in the VSS and we go to them when in need. They are respected in households and VSS compared to us.

Responses of the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) men
1. On themselves: We are followers of the new elite leaders in the village and the VSS. At household level, we are the heads and our women follow our decisions.
2. On the ST (*Yanadi*) men: They are also like us, followers of the new elite leadership at the village/VSS level, and we work together with the new elite leadership of VSS. The *Yanadi* men receive less respect in their households compared to us; nevertheless, they are treated as the heads of their household.
3. On the BC (*Yadava*) men: They are the leaders, both in the village and in the VSS. We work for the VSS through them. They are heads of their households and enjoy more respect than we do in our houses.

Responses of the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) women
1. On themselves: We are subordinates of the new elite leaders in the village and the VSS. At household level, we have more responsibilities compared to our men in parenting and house chores.
2. On the ST (*Yanadi*) women: They are also like us, followers of the new elite leadership at the village/VSS level, but have equal status with their men in households.
3. On the BC (*Yadava*) women: They are more active than we are as VSS members, both in the village and in the VSS. In their households, they are also well respected compared to us. We communicate with them when in need.

Responses of the BC (*Yadava*) men
1. On themselves: We are the leaders in the village along with the traditional elite (*Reddys*) and we successfully lead the VSS. At household level, we are the heads and providers.
2. On the ST (*Yanadi*) men: They are active members of the VSS, and heads of their households. We both work together for the VSS along with the SC.
3. On the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) men: They are active members of the VSS like the *Yanadi*, and heads of their households.

Responses of BC (*Yadava*) women
1. On themselves: Some of us are members of the VSS along with our men; however, we are subordinate to our men inside and outside the house as well as in the VSS.
2. On the ST (*Yanadi*) women: They are active like us in VSS, followers of their men and the new elite at the VSS level, and equal to their men in households.
3. On the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) women: They are members of VSS, followers of their men and the new elite men at the VSS level, and subordinate to their men in households.

Source: Data collected in 2005 in the Adavipalli village through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.

At the VSS level, these self-images and perceptions of self-roles seep into their actions and interactions with all the members. These images also percolate down to the interactions of community actors with those from outside such as APFD personnel and FNGO personnel. These powerful actors like the APFD and the FNGO also perpetuate these images through their interactions with community members. For example, the APFD officials and the FNGO openly tell women to go home and take care of their work as the VSS meeting is not so crucial for them, and because their men would brief them on everything that is important.[12] In Adavipalli, the APFD and FNGO personnel rarely interact, or seek the opinions of the women of the village. As discussed in previous sections at all informal and formal levels, these images of male and female are widely circulated and continuously legitimised, to maintain the existing gender-based status-quo. Adavipalli evidence shows that self-images and perceptions are a potentially crucial area to concentrate while implementing a formal conservation intervention like that of APCFM. The following section demonstrates in detail how these self-images carry significant bearings on the level of participation of women in VSS meetings and decision-making processes.

6.5   Women's Participation in Decision-making at VSS

Women's participation in Adavipalli VSS can be characterised in formal and informal structures as ad-hoc and varied across castes and class-based social networks. In the VSS Executive Committee (EC), there is an official provision for a minimum of eight female members out of total 15 members, with a condition that either the president or the vice president should be a woman. The total number of elected EC members should not exceed 15, with at least 50 per cent of them coming from the ST and SC communities (GOAP, Ms. No. 13). Although all these official provisions are in place to ensure that women and lower caste people can participate in the Adavipalli VSS processes, in reality the functioning of VSS has largely been regulated by and accommodative of the existing patriarchal and caste-based hierarchies rather than catering to the needs of the weaker sections and the poor.

In practice, the rules and regulations of VSS have been mended in the Adavipalli context to accommodate the already existing demands for political power and pressure from elite sections of the village to have control over available natural and economic resources. Nomination of the

Reddy elder as the *de-jure* VSS president by the new elite sections served as a means to ensure smooth co-option of the newly decentralised spaces created through APCFM intervention. However, as mentioned earlier, the new elite class leader Samayya, has been acting as the *de-facto* president since the VSS inception in Adavipalli in 1994. Since the rules (GOAP Ms. No. 13) required a woman to be president or vice president, Lalithamma (female from BC community, cousin of Mr Samayya) was nominated by the same new elite class. The rest of the female members were nominated from the ST, SC and BC castes, by the same new elite leader, in line with official regulations of proportional caste-based representation in VSS EC.

Lalithamma has been serving as the vice president since the Adavipalli VSS inception. So far, she has yet to be briefed by the VSS leadership or by the FNGO personnel on the amount of money that she authorises to be withdrawn for VSS work. Even the expenditure patterns have not been discussed in general body meetings. Some of the female EC members claimed that they were unaware of their official membership and role in the VSS, until the researcher informed them in their interviews. One of the female EC members interviewed stated that, 'the new elite leader told her husband that she has been nominated as a member in the forest committee and that she should be ready to present herself whenever there is an inspection from higher officials'.[13] Box 6.4 presents the gravity of gender exclusionary practices at the Adavipalli VSS level.

Participation of women in the VSS meetings is an area of special interest for the present study, to map how gender and power dynamics operating at the grassroots level influence women's participation in the VSS. In Adavipalli, VSS general body meetings happen occasionally when there is an official visit or APFD inspection scheduled. The government order (GOAP Ms. No. 13) directs the VSS general body to meet at least twice a year, and present the progress to the general body (the villagers) and discuss VSS-related matters such as the micro plan and the income and expenditure of the VSS in public. In Adavipalli, these occasional general body meetings happen in public places like in the centre of the village, or in a traditionally significant place for the village community. These meetings are presided and facilitated by men, usually the leaders of the dominant caste groups and the *de-facto* president of the VSS, in the presence of the APFD and FNGO personnel.

Box 6.4
Interview with a senior female EC member of Adavipalli VSS

Researcher: Have you attended any VSS executive committee meetings this year?
EC member (female): Yes, twice in this year.
R: What was the agenda in the meetings?
EC: I am not sure. I am never informed about the agenda of these meetings. I cooked for the members who were talking in our courtyard.
R: Were all EC members present in these meetings?
EC: No, in the first meeting on New Year's eve, there were only six people, the president, the facilitating NGO person, and other caste leaders like the *Yanadi* and the SC leaders. There were even less members in the second meeting. It was only me, the president, and the FNGO leader. It happened in the evening hours.
R: Were there no other female members present in these two meetings?
EC: No, we women are busy during the evening times, freshening up from day's labour in the fields and cooking for the family dinner. Moreover, it is not considered feminine to leave your house and attend meetings along with men of the community after sunset. There are limits... and by crossing these limits we will brand ourselves as the 'spoiled' or the 'rowdy' women.
R: Then how do you get the information on VSS plans and works? Don't you want to participate in important decision-making processes in VSS?
EC: What is there to know? If there is something important, Samayya will inform me, and I pass the information to other women in my caste and other castes. Decision-making...our men are the decision-makers, we simply follow.
R: Thanks for your time
Source: Interview dated: 8 August 2005.

The upper caste women stay away from these meetings, because of the pressure exerted by the idea of 'socially acceptable female behaviour' and partly because they have no serious stakes and interest in forest management. The lower caste women from the SC, ST and BC communities attend these public meetings/general body meetings when their men explicitly ask them to join the meeting. The SC and ST women claimed that they were only invited to attend these meetings primarily to contribute to the numbers, on the directives of the FNGO. One such occasion recollected by an old woman from the SC caste was the meeting held in 2004, when an observer came to evaluate the progress of the APCFM programme in Adavipalli.[14]

Those who attend the general body meetings relatively often are the female members of the EC. Even the EC members are only invited when the *de-facto* VSS president or the FNGO leader perceives a need for their presence.[15] A female EC member from the *Yanadi* tribe (ST) said,

We don't attend these meetings without getting an [explicit] invitation from our men…. If there is a need they will invite us, if they don't ask us

to come, it means we are not expected or needed there…. Moreover, who will cook for my children if I sit in these meetings for hours together?[16]

Meinzen-Dick and Zwartveen (2001: 76) observe that because of their high domestic and productive workloads, the opportunity cost of time to attend meetings and do other work for organisations is different (and often higher) for women, than for men. In addition, it is not easy for all women to leave some of their responsibilities to their husbands, as it is for men to leave some of their tasks to their wives.

In the focus group discussions with women, both members and non-members of VSS Executive Committee, they agreed that men in general have more prestige and accomplishment attached to their membership in the committee, and tend to feel their leadership as one that deserves respect in their community.[17] Some women, who are also EC members, observed that they experienced pressure from male members; more than feeling fulfilment through participation in VSS. The fear of challenging the norms of acceptable female behaviour and the existing status quo were among the most important concerns for female EC members. Meinzen-Dick and Zwartveen observe that, 'for women, as for the poor, to claim a right to the resource and take an active role in its management…challenges the status quo, especially in patriarchal and highly stratified societies' (2001: 72).

The VSS Executive Committee is supposed to meet every month to discuss the progress and make new decisions for future VSS work. In Adavipalli, EC meetings happen in closed quarters with very few female members in attendance. Women members (of all caste groups) of the VSS seldom attend these meetings as timing of the meeting conflicts with their household chores and routine. Lalithamma, the vice president of the VSS is present in most of the EC meetings, as most of the time they happen in her own courtyard. One of the female EC members (SC) claims,

> Lalithamma is part of them [the new elite class], and so the meetings happen in her place…so, she can afford to speak up in the meeting if allowed by her cousin Samayya…. Even her words are not taken seriously by the men…. Whenever I attend a meeting on invitation, I find myself alone and outnumbered by men, so I would keep quiet.[18]

However, Lalithamma complained that most of the time the male members meet in private even before the EC meeting is announced, and decide on the course of action, and then come to her for the EC meeting

to get her approval as she is the vice president.[19] Buchy and Subba, from the experiences of community forestry of Nepal, also document these trends. They mention that, '…men first discuss issues among themselves and reach a consensus. Then they may come to women's group to get their decisions confirmed by the women, who accept their decisions without opposition' (2003: 320).

Other practical situations stem from the gendered nature of the division of labour and gendered roles played by men and women in the Adavipalli community. Apart from the issue of inappropriate timing of the meetings (ibid 320), other issues that influence the participation of women in the EC meetings are the attitude of male members, level of acceptance of a female member's behaviour, norms around acceptable female behaviour and finally the perceived benefits and losses on part of female members through their participation. Most of the female EC members expressed concerns over losing respect in their community for 'crossing the line' of accepted female behaviour. A cross section of women said that the fear of tarnishing family pride and respect prevented them from acting independently, outspoken and straightforward in the VSS general body and EC meetings. A female member from the BC community claimed that she is able to command respect in her community by being submissive to the men in her household, and by being not involved in the VSS matters.[20] A majority of female EC members perceive losing respect in the community in order to be an active member of VSS as an unworthy cost.

The presence of patriarchal norms and regulations and the expected norms around female behaviour influence female members' involvement in decision-making processes. The attitudes of male members in the VSS also regulate women's attendance and active involvement in EC meetings. A female EC member belonging to the BC caste said, 'I was invited to the EC meeting a couple of times last year. Whenever I spoke up in the meeting male members did not pay attention to my opinions and requests'. [21] Another female EC member complained that '…the worst part was when I had to spend the whole afternoon silently in the meeting and had to rush to work in my papaya field. I had to cook for my family in a hurry…from then on I decided not to waste my time any more in these long meetings'.[22]

Another important factor that impacts women's participation in formal institutional structures like Adavipalli VSS is the irregular informa-

tion flow from relevant sources. The absence of proper information passage to women mainly stems from the view that men represent the households perfectly, and that they will and can inform their women of relevant information. Thus, whatever information flows from above (e.g. APFD or FNGO personnel), is passed on to the new elite leadership of VSS. Through the VSS leadership, male members get the information, deemed necessary by the VSS leader (*de-facto* president). These male members in turn use their discretion in letting the information pass onto their women. Thus, women are at the bottom of the 'information passage chain' and feel alienated when they attend the EC meetings.[23] One female member shared her and her fellow female members' experiences in the EC meeting saying,

> We are seldom informed of the agenda of the EC meeting in advance. Our male colleagues feel that as women we don't need to know all these issues…they say it openly in the meetings too…. If one of us tries to say anything, we are silenced by comments like, "you women don't know what is at stake here, please mind your own business", by the facilitating NGO leader. [24]

Another woman recalled how frequently she was asked by the Facilitating NGO leader to sign the 'minutes book', even if she did not attend meetings, or even if there was no meeting taking place. In her own words,

> I don't know what is written in the book, I can't read. Sometimes I ask what is written in the book, the answer from the facilitating NGO leader is rude…. He said, "You don't need to know what is written here". I am obliged to sign in the book, and they expect me not to ask them what I am signing for!

Female members of the VSS also complained about the nexus between the facilitating NGO and the new elite leadership, and observed that together they hide or misrepresent the VSS related information and financial dealings.[25]

Meinzen-Dick and Zwartveen (2001: 73) explain that there are two factors that determine the extent of participation by men and women in organisations for natural resource management. They are, rules of membership- which determine eligibility to participate; and the balance of costs and benefits derived from involvement- which influences individuals' decisions to participate. In Adavipalli VSS both men and women

have equal rights to participate by virtue of their membership. However, the female members of the VSS echo the fact that it is easy for women to get things done in their favour without actually challenging the patriarchal norms and existing status-quo. As mentioned earlier, the costs of openly challenging the patriarchal norms not only puts the women under unnecessary spotlight, but also limits the possibilities of successful pursuit of their interest. For instance, dominating male members of the EC ignore or silence the priorities and requests women make in the meetings, when the women try to speak up. Yadamma (ST), a senior female member of the EC, expressed her anger saying,

> I was silenced by the VSS leader in the EC meeting last year [in 2003] when I tried to speak up on the issue of planting fruit bearing trees in the VSS forest area for better yield…. They wanted to plant Eucalyptus trees as they grow fast, and cover the forest quickly…. Eucalyptus trees!!! What will we do with them, they have no fruit and they don't even give us firewood.

Yet another socially active member said, 'I stopped attending the EC meetings as my husband barred me from attending after my effort to speak up…he says "if you come to the meeting, say yes when I indicate…or else be silent". These examples show how existing male dominance is reinforced by male counterparts of these women' (Sarin 1995b).

Agarwal (1997: 25-6) identifies five basic types of constraints on women's formal participation in emergent institutional initiatives like VSS. They are formal rules governing membership; traditional norms of membership in public bodies; social barriers; logistical factors; and attitudes of forest department personnel. Evidence from Adavipalli contributes other important factors that can join this list of constraints such as presence of gender-blind NGO, nexus between powerful actors such as new elite leadership and FNGO and APFD against the weaker sections like the women and the poor, and the co-option of gendered democratic spaces by the elite class. Thus, women in Adavipalli do not enjoy active representation in formal forest management institutional structures and are less likely to influence formally the decision-making in the same. However, Meinzen-Dick and Zwartveen (2001: 79) from a gender perspective indicate that, the dynamics of natural resource management in South Asian societies cannot be properly understood when attention is limited to the formal organisation. Hence, we focus on the informal as-

pects around women's participation and non-participation in the Adavipalli VSS related activities and decision-making.

Recent literature on community-based natural resource management documents women's indirect means and strategies to gain access to natural resources in detail (Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997a; Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997). However, these scholars also stress that, gaining access through indirect and informal means does not provide much control over the resource, or the ability to make decisions regarding its management. They point out that, relying on connections to access resources through relatives, officials or others increases women's dependence on others. Whereas independent rights to resources can raise standing and bargaining power of women in both the household and community.

Long (1989: 240) observes that 'the question of non-involvement should not be interpreted to imply that non-participants have no influence on the constitution and outcomes…. On the contrary, they can, as "backstage" actors, have a decisive influence on strategies and scenarios'. In spite of not formally being members of EC, or participating in its meetings, women play crucial roles in informal domain in Adavipalli. Women in Adavipalli devised a variety of strategies that ensure their needs and interests are conveyed or considered in the resource management structures as well as indirectly contributing to the decision-making processes at the VSS level.

As mentioned earlier, Lalithamma, the vice president of VSS, is responsible for endorsing the cheque for drawing money for VSS related work. She displays enormous amounts of trust towards the VSS leadership with her cousin Samayya as the leader, and completely leaves the financial dealings to him. In return, Samayya makes sure that she gets continuous water supply for her fields and comes to her rescue in times of need. Lalithamma has learned over time that, not being publicly active as the VSS vice president and not challenging the authority of her cousin Samayya gave her a lot of social respect and control over other lower caste women in the Adavipalli community. For instance, when Lalithamma suggests something, most of the BC, SC and ST women follow her suggestions.[26] Moreover, when they do not follow her suggestions, Samayya directs their husbands' to influence their wives regarding her suggestions. Lalithamma also attended a couple of training workshops organised by the APFD and facilitated by NGO personnel at the district headquarters. Hence, the other women and some men from her own

caste and the SC and ST communities give her the superior position in the village community. With these backup factors, Lalithamma sometimes uses her influence to get the demands and interests of other women communicated in VSS meetings. Sometimes these requests are met with. For instance, when all the women members signatures are needed the new elite leader makes concessions on the timing and venue of their meeting. Lalithamma and the other female VSS members try to voice their work based needs to the new elite leader during these occasions.This way, both the party gets their message communicated across through Lalithamma. The fact that Lalithamma has gained that trust from the other community women indicates a steady progress in her ability to negotiate with the VSS male members. This shows that factors like kinship ties and social position in the community also help to influencing the decision-making at VSS level.

In occasional general body meetings, women from the SC and ST communities start murmuring if they do not agree in what is being said or decided. Although their influence in decision-making at the village level is low, their grumbling drives home the point they want to make. The communication of the SC and ST women with the village elite is indirect either through their husbands or through Lalithamma. For instance, female EC members are seldom invited to the VSS Executive Committee meetings, where all the important decisions are made or finalised. When these women members have a special request for a specific variety of plantation in the VSS territory, they communicate their interest via their husbands. The men in turn communicate at the VSS meetings with the female preferences as their own. Since the chances of successful direct communication are low for women, these indirect means deliver in times of need. For men, the costs of speaking on behalf of their women are high at the community level, as they will be branded as 'slave of wife'. Hence, they adopt the demands of women and represent them as their own at the community and at VSS level. At the household level, the costs are high for men if they do not pass on the demands of their women, as their own. If they do not yield, women tell their men that they may as well not come back home (to bed).[27] Thus, women exploit the social construction of gendered roles in society and traditional norms to their advantage, although these norms and patriarchal structures seem oppressive and rigid.

As pointed by Locke, women cope with new dilemmas and problems in which the physical resource problem is mediated by and infers social relationships, which may include household and conjugal responsibilities, status within the community, relationship *vis-à-vis* the forest department's authority, and upholding caste responsibility (1999: 278). Adavipalli women publicly acknowledge their reluctance to attend the VSS meetings, as this puts them in the category of 'responsible and committed women'. They do it to confirm their gendered roles and responsibilities and earn respect from their men and from other people in the community. Even if they attend the meetings by invitation, they keep quiet or take leave soon claiming their need at the household. Most of the time men encourage women's absence from the meetings, and offer help to be present on their behalf. Women also seem to let men represent them on the pretext that they are following the norms and traditions to be followed by a good housewife. The common interests of male foresters and male villagers in perpetuating the 'invisibility' of women members (Agarwal 1997: 26-8; Arora 1994: 695) are worth mentioning here. For example, rights on the collection of *boda* grass are left to women by the male villagers, because of their non-interference in the VSS matters on a day-to-day basis. Women from the SC, ST and BC communities collect this grass and make broomsticks out of it for household use and sale. These are examples of actions at the VSS level, in which women are not directly involved in the decision-making activities (Leach 1991), but are able to wield them in their favour. Through their abstainance from directly participating and influencing in the VSS decision-making, Adavipalli women have managed to gian benefits related to their livelihoods.

Women are branded as 'spoiled' or called rebellious if they publicly challenge traditional and institutional norms and structures. Women are kept under control through these patriarchal norms and regulations. As the Adavipalli evidence shows, women use the same norms and regulations that are in place at the Adavipalli community level for their purpose. Thus, the same 'disciplinary power' (Foucault 1976, cited in Masaki 2003: 724) that constrains individual thoughts and actions, also provides a common frame of reference for what serves as a medium through which different actors renegotiate their interpretations of reality. This renegotiation of realities for Adavipalli women happen through their daily social interactions with other actors in the same social frame, which keeps checking their mobility and participation in public domain. These

interactions also enable creation of spaces for manoeuvring their way around patriarchal control for Adavipalli women. They show their obedience and subordination to their men in the public domain at the community level, and use their bargaining strategies and powers at the household level as in case of the SC and the ST women. Their networks and alliances do play a major role in coming to their rescue in times of need. The following section explores the nature of networks that Adavipalli women engage in or derive specific types of benefits and support.

6.6 Gender-based Networks in Adavipalli Context: Across Caste and Class

Social networks in the Adavipalli context are diverse in terms of their composition, purpose, activities and in their mutual interactions. This section explores various networks of actors in the Adavipalli APCFM setting in order to contextualise the formal and informal engagement of women in the village and VSS-based activities. These networks influence the involvement of community in forest conservation through VSS. Especially, women's participation in these networks regulates their formal and informal involvement in the VSS as members. Cleaver (1998: 350) argues that within the institutional literature, there is a tendency to concentrate on formal structures, committees, constitutions and property rights as mechanisms for reducing transaction costs and institutionalising cooperative interactions. Such an approach would not be helpful in understanding various rural social networks and their influence on the levels of participation of women and the poor in formal and informal arenas of institutional engagement. Table 6.2 presents various forms of gendered networks in the Adavipalli community. These are networks formed on the basis of day-to-day interactions that depend on non-codified rules and norms. Many women and the poor participate in these networks for livelihood sustenance and other household level needs. It is important to observe that in Adavipalli context these networks are dynamic and rather flexible and adaptive in nature as they are constantly influenced by grassroots level politics and availability of resources at any given point in time.

Table 6.2
Gender-based networks found in Adavipalli

Type	Members	Purpose	Major activities	Problem/comment
Informal networks for women & men	Adult male and female members of the community	Helping each other in need	Financial help, friendships, peer groups for sharing general knowledge & info.	These networks are active in normal times, when there is a conflict of interest between members, these networks suffer discontinuity
Informal networks for women across castes	Adult women across and within various castes groups	Moral and financial back up	Small financial help through personal loans, sharing information on many issues including that of forest management	Although SHGs provide benefit to the poor women from various castes, these bonds do not translate into VSS/village level networking activities
Caste-based networks	Adult male & female members & children belonging to the same caste group	Intimate relationship based on trust and a strong caste identity	Strong material and moral support for each other, a sense of social security and reciprocation	Quite rigid in their operations, members of other castes are treated respectfully, but they remain outsiders, agreements for mutual benefit are commonplace (e.g. Nexus between the *Yanadi* and the SC to negotiate with the VSS leadership)
Kinship-based networks	Both within and among women and men	Intimate relationship based on trust and a strong kin identity	Moral support, family and property related support and consolidation of identity	Fall short of efficiency during events at the scale of whole village community, may not work well with collective action
Traditional rituals for women	Adult women and occasionally the youth and girl children	Sense of gendered unity and consolidation of gendered identities	Celebration of rituals related to womanhood, puberty, marriage, pregnancy, and death	Men are forbidden in these spaces and places, the collective knowledge and beliefs shared by women remain in this public (women from all castes and classes) yet private (only women) territory
VSS-based formal networks	VSS executive committee members, both adult men and women	Sharing information, knowledge and power concerning the VSS	Decision-making regarding VSS matters- financial and VSS work-related issues discussed in EC meetings	Since this network is formal, although women are in majority in the EC, in actual practice they are excluded from participating in the VSS EC meetings
NTFP collection and sale networks	ST, SC and BC men and women	Teaming up to maximise benefits	NTFP collection, processing and sale	These networks are very efficient, but remain oblivious to other aspects of village life such as health and education for children
Firewood collection and sale networks	ST, SC and BC men and women	Teaming up to maximise benefits	Firewood collection, processing and sale	Only members with bullock carts benefit from teaming up, as a result the poor men and women from the ST, SC and the BC communities are left out to their own efforts and strategy.

Type	Members	Purpose	Major activities	Problem/comment
Ad-hoc convenience-based networks (e.g. using water sources in summer, animal husbandry, etc.)	All the villagers and sometimes outsiders as well (e.g. the NGO and APFD personnel)	Moral, financial and general help needed in times of emergency to people or to the cattle & livestock	Ad-hoc needs and necessities are met with the help of villagers, emergency situations like shortage of water, etc. are dealt with	Very efficient, but, rare to occur. When they occur they bring the whole village community together across caste and class barriers
Female self-help groups	Women from various castes	Financial support through mutual help	Monthly meetings, networking, financial decision-making	Almost perfect and efficient in functioning, men have no say whatsoever in decisions made by their wives in these committees

Source: Author's observation of actors in Adavipalli APCFM setting.

The presentation of these networks in clear and concise manner in table 6.4 is by no means a reflection of the actual network dynamics that take place in the heart of the intervention. The tabular representation shows a typical combination of actor networks for men and women in Adavipalli. They represent various interactions that these actors engage with each other in their everyday lives. This representation allows us to have an understanding of the magnitude of networks and interactions between these actors on caste basis. Some women belonging to the same caste may have access to and depend on different networks, and some may draw different benefits from being part of the same network in order to gain social status and support they need in their everyday interactions. Some women have access to many networks, while others have less. Chapters 7 and 8 will carry on the discussion on gender-based and other VSS (crosscutting gender and caste) networks, with an objective to provide a better understanding of the nuances of network interactions in Adavipalli APCFM.

Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen (2001: 78-9) opine that networks of women (work groups as well as social groups), which provide domains of interaction for women, directly or indirectly (co)determine women's access and control of resource-based services, especially when networks for the female and male are segregated. In Adavipall out of all the networks, kinship-based, traditional and financial networks are crucial for women as they directly influence the standing of a woman in terms of her access to and control over productive resources. VSS-based net-

works are equally important as they gave additional recognition and status in the community.[28] Their engagement with local resource persons and their membership in various formal and informal networks acted as sources of power for these women.

Actors of one caste group engaged in multiple social relationships of varying nature with actors from other castes. Women on their own had less networking with men from other castes in general, but had access to the important local resource persons like the new elite leader. These differential relationships ultimately determined actors' mobility, acceptability and social status in the community. Women's networks in Adavipalli although strong are not as robust as those of men. As a result, even if a typically popular network of women enrols actors from various levels, strengthens and legitimises its existence, it may not necessarily translate into having access to formal decision-making activities. For example, the women's network that includes the ST, SC and BC women although active in the village on other fronts like the 'self-help groups', did not have access to decision making activities at the VSS level. This is also true for women who are formally placed into decision-making bodies such as the Adavipalli VSS. Not all decisions were taken through formal institutional structures of the community. And certainly not all of them were made visible.

A well-known activity that took place in Adavipalli women's circle is, 'female gossip'. Men generally kept away from these places and occasions that are known for female gossip. The elderly women of the Adavipalli community recalled how difficult it was for them to initiate these gossip meetings in the first place some 20 years ago (on 23 July 2005). Older women across various castes presided over these informal gatherings of women, sometimes along caste lines and at other times on the basis of age group and/or VSS affiliation. The men of the invitee's household where women meet are generally asked to remain outdoors, as long as they can to facilitate free movement of women in the house. These gatherings served as platforms for women across all caste and class cross-sections to come together and strategise for any particular purpose. One such 'gossip meeting' arranged by the mother-in-law of a VSS member, was dominated by issues around the type of work and payment women were given in that VSS work season. The discussion between the women, around 15 of them (I was allowed to be part of the gossip club), was quite dynamic and open. Among the strategies they worked out

through this 'gossip meeting', most crucial were pushing for increased pay for women and hours of VSS work. Women who are active in networking through these 'backyards' do not usually operate within the ranks of mainstream organisations or official policymaking (Rocheleau et al. 1996). The decisions taken in these informal gatherings were then pushed through the intra-household dialogue, through the men of the household. Their efforts paid off as they were given a Rs. 10/- increase in their wages for VSS work.

Rocheleau and Roth (2007: 2) claim that a whole range of entangled and embedded power relationships such as power over (control), power against (resistance) and power with (solidarity) including power alongside, power from beneath and power in-spite-of can be observed in such complex situations. Although there were only occassional successes for these initiatives, the women were happy to have communicated through their backyards, thereby keeping these informal channels alive through continuous meetings for sharing new knowledge and liberating experiences.

Although Adavipalli women run the self help groups successfully, the competitiveness and the success it has augmented in women's lives is paradoxically providing men of Adavipalli community with the excuse that VSS matters should be left to men since the women are already occupied with SHGs. They do recognise the need for women representation at the VSS, and welcome their (token) membership. The reasons for women's participation are not gender equality and empowerment, but that, women members on the VSS committee would easily legitimise financial and executive decisions made on their behalf. However, despite the paradoxical situation where women excel in SHGs yet are treated as puppets in the hands of their men in the VSS, women in Adavipalli drew upon these other informal networks to muster support for their immediate needs and use them whenever possible to achieve incremental levels of control within and outside their households.

6.7   Re-reading Adavipalli APCFM Intervention

Adavipalli case has shown evidence of the complex play of gendered roles and perceptions operating in the APCFM intervention. The gendered power relations in grassroots level institutions like the VSS have varied implications for women's participation in APCFM intervention in Adavipalli. Highly stratified and socially differentiated communities like

Adavipalli are hubs of complex social, political and cultural interactions between various actors. Introducing conservation interventions like APCFM without paying attention to these important details, renders the intervention unsuccessful and counterproductive at the formal level, as the example of Lalithamma's vice presidency has shown.

On the brighter side, some of the SC and the ST women also found new spaces to manipulate their spouses in favour of their personal interests by trading off their role as VSS member to conform to the dominant patriarchal system. At the household level, their bargaining power definitely increased (albeit within the acceptable limits of patriarchal norms) and evidence from Adavipalli showed that there have been relative transformations in the status of women at the household level due to their indirect use of formal membership in the VSS. However, since these formal roles have been co-opted by traditional and informal rules of gendered behaviour, it can be concluded that at present the opening of formal spaces indirectly helped these women to gain more bargaining power within and outside their households.While VSS membership helped women like Lalithamma to gain respect in her village and community, it however, did not translate in exercising her direct participation in VSS decision-making as the vice president. These observations show that equity and empowerment envisaged by the interventionists through women's formal participation in the APJFM/CFM is still a distant reality for the women of Adavipalli.

The examples provided in this chapter on the nature of female members' participation in VSS activities, demonstrates that the formal arrangements, recruitments and reserving democratic places for women do not necessarily result in gender equality and empowerment, as it is the informal that holds the key for these women. Hence, restricting analysis to formal institutions and related structures alone cannot help us understand the gendered dynamics of natural resource use, management and more importantly the levels of women's participation. Indeed, Adavipalli case demonstrates that the factors influencing the quality and scope of women's participation in the intervention lie beyond the formal- at the intersection of the formal and the informal. It is easy to blame either the intervention proponents and the actors or the patriarchal social system for the co-option of the formal participatory spaces in the VSS; and this study does not support these conclusions. Rather, Adavipalli evidence

points out the need to look beyond the blame game towards an analysis of the processes (both formal and informal) leading to these outcomes.

Evidence coming out of Adavipalli analysis highlighted the informal and less recognised ways women follow to gain access and control over natural resources to serve their purpose. In Adavipalli's case these informal ways have proved helpful for women to indirectly benefit their formal VSS based affiliations. These informal strategies should be given a niche to increase the quality of women's participation along with the promotion and creation of formal representative spaces in grassroots level structures.

On the other side, a clear lack of attention to the informal gender dynamics in the designing the intervention played a major role in influencing women's participation in formal decision-making processes at the grassroots level in Adavipalli. The gender insensitive attitudes of FNGO operating in nexus with the APFD nullified possibilities of women's participation through formal arenas. Commenting on success and failure in community-based conservation interventions, Ostrom remarks:

> Failure is almost guaranteed when policymakers think that they can design a rapid, foolproof blueprint for achieving the difficult goal of conservation…. Even if legislation or policy boasts a "participatory" or "community" label, it is rare that individuals from the community have had any say at all in the policy. Further, many of these centrally imposed "community" programs are based on a naive view of community. It is unlikely that any policy based on such views has a chance to produce more than a few minor successes (Ostrom, in Agrawal and Gibson 2001: ix).

Ostrom's (2001) argument is extended to APCFM intervention in Adavipalli village in the backdrop of the discussion provided by this chapter. Evidence from Adavipalli case has indicated that the formal participatory policy designed by the AP state government and the World Bank has not taken informal norms and practices into consideration. Absence of an enabling environment and gender blindness in Adavipalli APCFM intervention has lead to women's token participation in the formal decision-making processes at the VSS level. Mere creation of these formal participatory spaces does not necessarily translate into gender equal participation paving way to gender balance and mainstreaming at the community level. These formal participatory spaces created through the decentralised community-based forest management never-

theless are replete with power relations adversely affecting women's formal participation.

Adavipalli evidence showed that, when it comes to gender analysis, the intra-household and community-based gender dynamics and the power relations interact and weave an uneven platform of action and participation of actors in formal and informal spaces. This asymmetry poses robust challenges to the implementation of a rather uniform and 'one form fits all' mode of APCFM implementation. My reading of Adavipalli case is that the friction between the informal gendered norms and practices deep-seated in the self-images and perceptions of the actors' (both male and female) heavily permeate the top-down gender mainstreaming frame of APJFM/CFM. This friction produced new sets of gendered negotiations at the heart of the Adavipalli intervention, which involved better intra-household bargaining for the women involved. At the same time, the power asymmetries regulating gender relations at the grassroots level produced further inequality and exclusion of marginalised women through their token participation in the Adavipalli VSS. Adavipalli evidence shows that there is less compatibility between the participatory structures (created through the APCFM intervention) in their current form and their appropriateness and responsiveness towards the gendered norms and needs of the Adavipalli community.

The evidence from Adavipalli context exhibits plausible discrepancies in the planning and practice of a rather uniform and top-down gender equality model on a highly stratified societal fabric, which is characterised by robust informal institutions regulating the communities' behaviour. One major lesson learned from the Adavipalli case is that there is a thorough need for gender analysis of the communities to be incorporated into APCFM intervention in every forest range, coupled with an analysis of gendered perceptions of adult community members. Each case of community-based forest management must be treated with equal rigour and alertness to make the intervention more flexible, contextual and appropriate for the benefit of grassroots level communities and the weaker sections like women and the poor. Gender analysis of participatory dynamics operating at the grassroots level in the informal and formal arena of Adavipalli APCFM setting demonstrated that there is an urgent need to look beyond formal participatory dynamics while making sense of gendered asymmetries and marginalisation within APCFM intervention.

Notes

[1] Refer to APCFM Project Implementation Plan (PIP-2002)

[2] Source: Author's field notes and observations in Adavipalli during 2004-05.

[3] Source: In-depth interview with *Yadava* woman in 2005.

[4] Source: Focus group discussions with BC community members in August 2005.

[5] Source: Focus group discussions with the SC community, August 2005.

[6] Source: Field data collected through focus group discussions, interviews and participant observation during 2004-05.

[7] Source: Focus group discussion with SC women in July 2005.

[8] These exercises were done in public or in specific caste groups. I conducted these exercises through a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions during the second phase (July- November 2005) of my field-work in Adavipalli village.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Source: In-depth interviews with *Reddy* leaders, and historical accounts of elderly *Reddy* men and women, from 2005.

[11] Source: In-depth interview with the BC widow on 3 August 2005.

[12] Source: Focus group discussions with Adavipalli women across the BC, ST and SC caste groups, from 2005.

[13] Source: Author's interview with (SC) female EC member, 7 August 2004.

[14] Source: Focus group discussions conducted by the author with SC and ST women, 12 & 13 September 2005.

[15] Source: Author's observation and FGD with female EC members, 5 August 2005.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Source: Author's focus group discussions with women, July 2005.

[18] Source: Author's informal interview with female SC VSS member, 9 August 2005.

[19] Source: In-depth interview and informal discussions with Lalithamma in August 2005.

[20] Source: Author's informal discussions with female members, 10 October 2005.

[21] Source: Focus group discussion with female SC members of VSS, 5 August 2005.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Source: Author's observations during 2004-05 at Adavipalli village.

[24] Author's focus group discussion with female EC members, 5 August 2005.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Source: Author's participant observation in 2004-05.

[27] Author's informal discussions with Adavipalli women across castes in 2005.

[28] Status here is defined as the relative (social) position of women within the hosehold and outside in the village and their community.

7 Actors, Networks and Relationships

7.1 Introduction

Actors, networks and interactions in Adavipalli APCFM context are the major units of analysis for the present chapter. This chapter explores actors' perceptions and their networking in and around the APCFM intervention. Key actors living in the Adavipalli village and their relationship to, and their perceptions of the landscape are explored in order to understand their respective agendas in the APCFM intervention. Actors' perceptions on the intervention and their respective roles, and that of their counter parts (for example, the *Yanadi's* perception[1] on their own role and that of the APFD and other key actors) are examined. In order to spell out the opinions and worldviews of leaders and prominent resource persons from each group of key actors, text boxes have been added separately along with the general exploration of what the group members had to say. The processes of network formation at the grassroots level, and how various actors get enrolled into a network at the grassroots level are discussed. This discussion on grassroots level networks focuses on how the resulting intricate and dynamic power relationships between various actor-networks play out in the Adavipalli context. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of these networks for the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

7.2 Actors' Relationship to, and Perceptions on Adavipalli Landscape

The relationship between actors and landscape has specific historical, cultural, social and ecological dimensions. Studies on natural resource management interventions have highlighted that factors such as gender and caste play a major role in mediating people's relationship with land-

scape (McGean et al. 1996; Sarin 1998; Karlsson 1999). This section presents the analysis with a specific focus on the four major caste groups—the OC (*Reddy*), the BC (*Yadava & Mutrasi*), the SC (*Mala & the Madiga*) and the ST (*Yanadi*) here on the grounds of their geographical dependence on the Adavipalli landscape (village and surrounding forest area). In the context of Adavipalli village, most of the families have been living for many generations in and around the village.[2] They continuously shape the landscape (which includes the village and the forest surrounding the village) in which they live and in the process are influenced by the changes in it. As one BC elderly woman pointed out, 'we have always lived here in this village and depended on the forest, seen how much the place has changed because of our activities over decades and also how we changed along with it'.[3]

The way actors interact with each other and with their networks and institutions is influenced by the way they relate to their landscape. For example, official recognition of the rights of the ST and the SC over collection and sale of non-timber forest produce (NTFP), by the government can be attributed to their socio-cultural and ecological dependence on the forest for survival. Especially the *Yanadi* as a tribe have been known traditionally as the 'hunter-gatherers'. Their historical and sociocultural background is characterised by their livelihood pattern (Raghaviah 1962; Rao 2002). The *Yanadi* have traditionally preferred a seminomadic forest subsistence of hunting, fishing, and gathering nuts, yams and roots (Rao 2002). The *Yanadi* claim close spiritual ties with their forest, and they even refer to themselves as the 'forest people'.[4] As an elderly man of the *Yanadi* community pointed out,

> We breathe and live on mother forest…as long as we feel this connection we are safe and happy. Unfortunately, forest has changed a lot in past 50 years…. Now it looks like our next generations may not have that fortune to benefit from forest like we did for generations…. It [the forest] has gone rather dry, and is not yielding in as much NTFP as it did before. [5]

At present many *Yanadi* depend on the forests as well as on agricultural and VSS-based labour for their subsistence. These multiple livelihood strategies are dependent on different types of sources available through the landscape and the formal and informal institutions operating at the village level. Accordingly, they enrol[6] in various livelihood networks operating at the village level, and at the VSS level, owing to the multiplicity of their livelihood strategies.[7]

Figure 7.1
Social resource and landscape mapping of Adavipalli village

Source: PRA exercises with the Adavipalli village community and transect walks during 2004-05. Legend: ⬡ - *Yadava* & SC households; ⬭ - *Reddy* household; ⬡ - *Yanadi* (ST) hut; ⬚ - Farm lands; 🌳 - Community trees; ; 🌴 -Coconut trees (private); 🌿 - Banana cultivation (private); 🌾 - Communal grazing land; ▨ - Wasteland used for latrine and grazing; ● - private cattle sheds.

The SC community equally depends on the forest for their subsistence, which explains their close interaction with the *Yanadi* in collection and sale of NTFP. However, they do not experience the spiritual connections expressed by some of the *Yanadi* with the forest landscape. On the contrary, they recognise their rightful share of the village landscape owing to their constant association with the Adavipalli village over generations. [8]

There are informal norms prevalent between the *Yanadi* and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) regulating mutual access to and ownership over various types of NTFP available in the forest falling under Adavipalli VSS. These informal regulations are binding over both the ST and the SC, and occasional conflicts of interest are resolved mutually with the help of their group leaders.[9] For example, the SC and ST make and sell broomsticks from a particular type of grass (*boda* grass) that grows in the forest in the summer season. SC (*Mala & Madiga*) and the ST (*Yanadi*) collected dry *Boda boda* grass in specifically demarcated areas of the forest in order to prevent possible conflict of interest. The SC and ST make these informal agreements with mutual consultation and respect. In addition, both the ST and SC communities are 'by default' members (GO Ms. No. 13, 12.02.2002, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh) of the VSS Executive Committee (EC). This additional social status through their VSS membership also adds to their mutual respect and co-operation.

Upper castes' ownership and complete control of fertile lands in and around the village is key for their dominance over the rest of the Adavipalli community. The majority of the upper castes (*Reddy*) own the fertile lands in and around the village since pre-independence era.[10] This continued control over resources in and around the village landscape has made the upper castes scarcely dependent on the forest; and consequently uninterested in its sustainable management.[11]

On the contrary, the BC sections (*Yadavas* in particular) have been historically dependent on both the fertile lands and the forests for their livelihood. Since VSS has considerable power over funding allotted for the implementation of APCFM programme, the BC group has taken up the leadership of the VSS Executive Committee with the tacit approval from the *Reddy* class. As pointed by a BC leader, 'The *Reddy* landlords did not have an explicit interest in taking up the VSS control at its inception…may be they did not see it appealing much as opposed to holding on to the fertile agricultural lands in and around the village'.[12] The BC

sections of the Adavipalli community closely interact with the OC (on agriculture-related issues) and the ST and SC communities (for both agriculture and forest management) equally.

The social map of Adavipalli (figure 7.1) above presents the social resource mapping and landscape of the Adavipalli village. The spatial demarcations, such as the *Yanadi* colony (top left hand corner of the map) on the fringes of the village and in the beginning of the forest are clearly laid out. The categories such as 'villagers', used to identify people living inside Adavipalli village have been transformed over time, due to the changing boundaries of the village itself. For example, three generations back, the *Yanadi* (ST/tribal people) lived in the forests and moved constantly all over the forest landscape without a permanent base. Since 1994 when the World Bank sponsored APJFM was initiated in the village, they have been allotted a permanent place to live along with the village community of Adavipalli on the fringe of the main village.[13] In 2005, the state government of Andhra Pradesh recognised the *Yanadi*'s ownership rights of the housing area, and allotted permanent housing contracts as part of the rural and tribal development schemes.[14] In addition, the two public structures highlighted in the sketch, namely the community hall and the village water tank were constructed as part of the World Bank sponsored village development scheme under APJFM/ CFM.

The way landscape is perceived by various sections of the community in Adavipalli differs according to their relationship and levels of dependence over the resource in question. These different perceptions are regulated by actors' access to- and priorities over resource usage, and ownership patterns. Between forest and the village, the *Yanadi* in general keep the forest at the top of their priority list compared to the village. A *Yanadi* woman observes,

> We [the *Yanadi*] are happy to be the children of mother forest…. She protected us for generations, and unlike earlier, these days [since the APJFM/CFM] we have unrestricted access to collect and sell NTFP and earn some livelihood from it in a rightful way'.[15] An elderly man from the *Yanadi* community points out, 'We know how to take care of our forest…our home for generations… even before this intervention was started…. Yes, the APJFM/CFM intervention gave us the unrestricted access to use our own forest, but it does not recognise that we own the forest…. We do make sure that forest resources are not ruthlessly exploited…. We always try to preserve enough so that the forest can regenerate and give us more when we go back again…. Unlike what the

forest officials and the outsiders may think, we know how to appreciate this forest, as we own it.[16]

Thus, the *Yanadi's* preference for the forest over the village can be understood as based on a combination of factors such as the spiritual connections and ownership they feel with the forest as well as their guaranteed access to the forest through participation in APJFM/CFM interventions.

Although the *Yanadi* also depend on the other caste groups of the village for their subsistence through agricultural labour, they feel that the forest is closer to their heart. This perception is also echoed in the main village as well. The remaining caste groups living in the main village also acknowledge that, although the *Yanadi* interact on a day-to-day basis with them, they still prefer referring to themselves as forest people rather than as villagers.[17] At the same time, in one of the focus group discussions with the *Yanadi* women, it was observed that compared to earlier times (before the start of APJFM in 1994), they are now able to freely move in the main village, owing to their constant interactions with the BC and SC communities. Before the initiation of APJFM/CFM, they were working as agricultural labour for the upper castes and the SC community of the village. However, since the APJFM/CFM started, their interactions with the larger village community have undergone considerable qualitative change. This is due to their increased social status (as members of the VSS) and their interaction with villagers through VSS, resulting in frequent visits to the main village. The same phenomenon can be observed in the context of the SC community accessing the labour in the fertile lands falling within and around the main village.

As explained earlier in this thesis, the OC (*Reddy*) sections of the Adavipalli village have been almost totally dependent on the agriculture of fertile lands for many generations; hence their perception of the Adavipalli landscape is more dichotomous (village/forest) and linear. It is relatively easy for them to identify the village as theirs, and the forest as an outside entity. In one of the in-depth interviews with OC community leaders, it was pointed out, 'we [the *Reddy* community] have never gone for fetching anything from the forest…although the occasional firewood supply by the *Yanadi* and the SC people comes from the surrounding forest areas…forest has always been the territory for the *Yanadi*, especially since they are poor'.[18] BC sections of the community have been engaged in both agriculture and forest-based works even be-

fore the World Bank sponsored APJFM programme was initiated in Adavipalli in 1994. Their perception of the village and forest landscape is relatively non-dichotomous, non-linear and holistic compared to that of the OC sections. As pointed out by one BC elderly woman, 'we have always benefited from the forest; although not as much as the *Yanadi* and the SC community…. I think the forest and the village have always supported our livelihoods over generations…we owe mother earth our life…isn't it?'[19]

The APFD personnel and the FNGO have different perceptions of the Adavipalli landscape, as they do not directly depend on the Adavipalli landscape for their livelihoods. Their perceptions are more formal and impersonal compared to the *Yanadi* and the larger village community. Interviews with key informants from the APFD and FNGO revealed that they observe that the forest landscape is facing danger of overexploitation by the villagers, and hence the need for closely monitoring people's access. As observed by one APFD senior official,

> Although it is important for people to have greater access to the forest resources for securing their livelihoods, we [the forest department] have the responsibility to make sure that the villagers are not over using/exploiting the forest beyond repair…that's why we are always caught between what's best for people and what's best for the forest'.[20]

As discussed earlier the perceptions of various actors and groups of actors have differing and often conflicting perceptions over the Adavipalli landscape. These different perceptions are crucial to understanding their interactions and negotiations with each other in the intervention setting. The perceptions of key actors over each other also stem from these differing perceptions over the landscape. Accordingly, their interactions and negotiations with each other are influenced through these perceptions. For example, the interactions between the *Yanadi* and the APFD officials are most of the time characterised by the uneasiness that comes out of these mutual perceptions.[21] These differing perceptions also regulate the way actors negotiate their agendas while participating in the intervention. For instance, when the *Yanadi* have to communicate with the APFD on any issue, they choose the VSS leadership (new elite leadership) as a medium of communication, as they believe that their own voice does not stand a chance with the APFD officials.[22] Actors' agendas with respect to their engagement as well as that of others in the APCFM intervention are also influenced by these differing perceptions.

Key actors' perceptions on intervention and their roles in it are presented in the following sections.

7.3   Key Actors' Perceptions on Intervention and their Respective Roles

In this section, I will enumerate the perceptions of key actors on three key factors, namely actors' perceptions of their respective roles, those of others and on the APCFM intervention. While these accounts do not reflect the opinions and perceptions of various communities discussed here in totality; they give a sense of what some of the villagers from various caste, class groups; and the APFD and FNGO personnel perceive as crucial when it comes to the intervention and their roles in it. This is done to focus on the important issues such as how these perceptions guide while various actors (individual actors and groups, networks of actors) participate in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention, and to focus on how and why 'communication, and sharing information' between these actors becomes crucial in determining their interactions *vis-à-vis* the intervention.

The notion of 'perception' here is understood as a 'viewpoint' or 'a set of ideas' of that actor on a particular issue. This concept is broader in scope than what is referred to as actors' 'interest'[23] in the stakeholder analysis (Grimble and Wellard 1996). The individual cases and anecdotes presented here are drawn from a broad selection of in-depth interviews and are representative of the views and perceptions expressed by the members of that particular group. Gender-based dynamics and perceptions are extensively covered in chapter 6 of this thesis. Pseudonyms are used for all the names, persons as well as places to protect the identities of the informants.

All the key actors engage in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention in the backdrop of their own perceptions of the intervention, their role in it and the role of others engaging in the intervention. Four key groups of actors from Adavipalli context are discussed in this section, namely the *Yanadi* (ST), the new elite VSS leadership, Facilitating NGO personnel and the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department at the Adavipalli forest range level. The presence of organisational heterogeneity in key organisations and groups of actors is acknowledged by the present analysis. Though a cross-section of actors from among villagers, VSS members and APFD officials have been interviewd and their perceptions included

in the analysis, it is however recognized here that these views do not necessarily represent or reflect those of the others in their respective communities in entirity as such. Although individual responses and narratives are *not* used to typify the views of all the members of the group, the perceptions of the individuals who are quoted here in text boxes become significant on three accounts. First, that these key respondents are the leaders of their respective groups. Second, their perceptions tend to guide the other members (both men and women) of the network in particular or, group in general. Third, they tend to reflect the logic of functioning and agenda of their network or group as a whole. Focusing on key informants' perceptions enables a thorough analysis of the core issues and ideas in the Adavipalli context as the actors see them, and enables a clear understanding of the linkages between the leadership and the group dynamics at large. This focus on the perceptions of key actors also helps us to understand the linkages between the individual actors and their networks. As mentioned in the analytical framework of the thesis in chapter 3, the methods of Actor-Network Theory are applied in 'following the actors' (Latour 1987, cited by Kaljonen 2006: 205) in their ethnographic settings as they move around their networks. This helped to map their perceptions and actions and to observe their negotiations with each other and with other networks in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention context. As action arises within the context, it can, respectively, only be understood from that context (Kaljonen 2006: 205). To complement and triangulate these observations, as and when feasible members randomly picked from groups of key informants were also interviewed; their perceptions are also presented here.

7.3.1 Perceptions of the *Yanadi*

There are 15 *Yanadi* households in total living in the Adavipalli village for at least four generations. All the *Yanadi* households are members of VSS by default. Recently in 2005, the AP state government gave them legal rights over the land on the village border in which they lived for some 30 years now. At first, the *Yanadi* were not very approachable, as they were unsure of my role as an outsider. An outsider has never interviewed most of them before. It took quite some time for them to accept my presence, but once they were sure, they were open to discussions and interviews. After that, every time I interacted with them, all men and women expressed their views with ease on APCFM intervention, on their role and

on the roles of other key actors engaging in the intervention through Adavipalli VSS. The perceptions of our key respondents are more or less representative of what the *Yanadi* as a group has to say. Their leader, Mr Thimmana, is one of our key respondents from the group. He is one of the oldest members on the VSS Executive Committee since its inception in 1994. Even before the inception of the VSS, he acted as the leader of the *Yanadi* while negotiating for agriculture labour with the other caste groups in the Adavipalli village.

For Thimmana and some other *Yanadi* community members, forest is primarily a resource that provides their food like a fertile agricultural land. Forest resources are primarily used for everyday food purposes, although there is also some kind of income generation from the collection and sale of NTFP from the forest. However, since the initiation of the APJFM/CFM intervention in 1994, the *Yanadi* have definitely experienced a shift in their livelihood trajectories.[24] Although the income generated through the NTFP collection and sale add up to their regular incomes as agricultural wage labourers, along with it came the additional social standing and a platform to negotiate and build long-term networks with the emerging new elite class and other potential partners in the village like those of the SC community. In the Box 7.1, some of the views expressed by Thimmana are presented.

Thimmana and other *Yanadi* members argue that the forest is the abode of the tribal people, and that there is mutual dependence between the forest and the *Yanadi* (in the Adavipalli context). He elaborates further that the *Yanadi* depend on the forest for their survival, as much as the forest depends on them. He says in an in-depth interview, 'We are not foolish to cut our own feet on which we stand. Forests are our livelihood; no *Yanadi* is as selfish and shortsighted as to overexploit the forest beyond repair…. We not only take from the forest but we also give back to it'.[25] He explains that his tribe has been dependent on the forest like the non-tribal people are on agriculture for generations. He recollects how they were threatened to be barred from accessing the forests, every time they had a conflict with the APFD people prior to the start of the APJFM/CFM intervention. He expresses his happiness over the initiation of the intervention in Adavipalli especially in light of APFD's slowly changing attitude towards their access to the forest, and on the less number of threats and warnings, they receive from the APFD these days on the same issue.

Box 7.1
Perceptions of Yanadi leadership

Thimmana is the leader of the *Yanadi* group of the Adavipalli village. He is 50 years old and has five children, all living with their families in the same hamlet. He is a senior member of the Adavipalli VSS since the inception of APJFM in the early 1990s. He has been active in attending APCFM or VSS meetings in and outside his village. People from his hamlet feel that he is a perfect leader representing the *Yanadi* in the Adavipalli VSS managing committee. He is illiterate like his fellow tribesmen. 'The younger generation in the *Yanadi* tribe is more demanding and impatient when it comes to the APJFM/CFM intervention...they want to challenge everyone in power without thinking of the consequences', he says. He tells his people to be patient and appreciate the fact that the world changes slowly, but it does change for the better. He recollects how he and his community members have been able to gain the mutual trust and confidence over the years with the rest of the caste groups in the Adavipalli village by being cooperative and understanding. He prefers the *Yanadi* being in control of the forest resources, and feels there is an opportunity for peacefully negotiating their agenda with the others through VSS.

He plays an important role in bringing his tribe together, and briefing them on the VSS information, if and when he is informed of any by the FNGO and the new elite leadership of the VSS. He communicates with the new elite leadership of the VSS whenever he has an issue to be represented on behalf of his tribe. As a senior member of VSS, Thimmana opines that the number of working days in general and those available to the *Yanadi* community through VSS in particular should be increased, and that the payments be settled in a timely and just manner. (Source: In-depth interview with the tribal leader, dated 10.09.05).

Another *Yanadi* leader tend to argue that 'the principle of conservation of forests is itself very good...as long as it displays a bit more common sense, trust and flexibility towards the lives of people who depend on the same forest for their bonafide needs'.[26] However, the *Yanadi* perceive a major difference in their understanding of the intervention and that of the APFD. Thimmana and his wife observe that

> APJFM/CFM for the APFD means promoting forest conservation through us...but for us forest conservation is part of our life...it goes beyond the intervention for us...in a way they [APFD] are trying to use us as a means to achieve their goals of protecting the forest...but the sad thing is they do not seem to realise the fact that we genuinely care for the forest, and we don't see ourselves as separate from it.... So, they end up always being suspicious of us and our intentions, and we are also constantly trying to find ways of coming around their ways'.[27]

They further elaborate that the 'ways' of APFD include using the facilitating NGO as their agent and watchdog, policing the *Yanadi* and other marginalised sections of the Adavipalli community.

His role in the VSS is to be representative of his tribe and deliver the goods for the benefit of his tribe. However, he acknowledges that in the presence of big players like the OC (*Reddy* landowners) and the BC (new elite VSS leadership) in the village, it is wise on the part of the *Yanadi* community to hold their ground, and to work in cooperation with the SC community for their mutual benefit. For him his role as VSS Executive Committee member is an opportunity to ensure the development of his tribe, and expresses his gratitude to the new elite leadership of the VSS for recommending their housing contracts from the state government.

Thimmana's perception on the role of other key actors such as the FNGO, the new elite leadership and the APFD personnel in the intervention is that they need to adopt strategies that are more inclusive towards the marginalised sections in the intervention. At present, he opines that except the new elite leadership, both the APFD and the FNGO still try to exclude the *Yanadi* and women in general from the VSS meetings, and key activities like VSS funds distribution. He points out that even though the general attitude of APFD towards the *Yanadi*'s role in the intervention is slowly changing since the inception of APJFM/CFM, the way they are excluded from the decision-making processes at various instances (e.g. micro plan preparation, allocation of finances to various VSS activities, selection of plants for forest regeneration) needs to change. His group's feeling is that the APFD as an organisation has not yet started trusting the *Yanadi* as capable members of the Adavipalli community to entrust them their due responsibility. This they claim needs to change if the village community has to protect the forest resources for all the right reasons.

Thimmana recollects an incident in one of the VSS closed meetings when the Facilitating NGO leader shut him down from seeking clarifications on the labour charges in VSS. The presence of the new elite leader also could not stop the FNGO leader from snubbing Thimmana. Since then, Thimmana says he could hardly ever raise any issue in front of the FNGO leader without fearing consequences like a delay in wage payment for the *Yanadi* engaged in VSS labour. In light of the FNGO's authoritarian behaviour, he finds the new elite leadership more sympathetic towards the *Yanadi*'s involvement in the intervention through VSS. He says, 'the new elite leadership is more sympathetic towards our needs and demands…. These days we request the new elite leadership to represent

our issues in the VSS and with the FNGO and the APFD, and we know we do have a good chance of being heard if we go through the new elite'.[28]

When I enquired about his and other *Yanadi* members' role in the Adavipalli VSS, their answer was rather comprehensive. They said,

> It is true that we are members of VSS, but all the decisions are taken by the APFD and the FNGO personnel on behalf of us, as they don't entrust us with the responsibility.... The new elite leadership is the only force for APFD and FNGO to reckon with, as the new elite leader questions their authority from time to time when they perceive that things are going out of our [villagers] hands.... Of course, we trust the new elite leadership very much...but even the new elite leadership sometimes cannot manage a successful negotiation on behalf of us...then all we do is go with the flow until another chance comes our way to benefit from.... After all change happens slowly, but it happens for good.[29]

Thimmana also perceives a sense of exhibitionism in the actions of the FNGO and the APFD when higher officials from the state and national forest departments or the World Bank come for inspection or visit. He claims,

> It is only when some outsider comes to inspect the progress that we are made to feel full and active members of the Adavipalli VSS...especially our women are shown as samples of success and empowerment.... My wife has more pictures with officials than anyone else in the village [smiles].... We play along as that is what we need to do to gain space for negotiations with the APFD and the facilitating NGO...sometimes we lose and sometimes they [APFD] give up.[30]

He claims he does not know whether to feel happy or sad for his tribe being the object of exhibition.

On the issue of their participation in the intervention, the *Yanadi* felt that they received only a token representation, as they are never involved in any kind of decision-making, concerning the issues of forest conservation measures or the financial matters. Thimmana's wife says, 'We do know that we are being used as token representatives in the VSS...major decisions are made by the APFD, facilitating NGO communicates with the new elite leadership, and the new elite leader informs us of what we should do'.[31] Commenting on the decision-making process, Thimmana explains,

> Contrary to what they [APFD and FNGO] claim in the evaluations of the intervention, the decision to plant a particular variety of saplings is always taken by the APFD officials. The facilitating NGO passes the information on when and where to plant, we simply are made to do the manual labour and our opinions or needs are almost never sought by either the APFD officers or the facilitating NGO. Occasionally we discuss with the new elite leadership the possibilities of procuring a plant variety (e.g. Tamarind) that results in better NTFP collection and income generation…. However, our opinions are not taken into consideration even if we communicate them via the new elite leadership…sometimes we [the *Yanadi*, and the new elite] work together to negotiate regarding issues like VSS wages and work days.… We know that we need to be patient to get our things done, if not this time, maybe next time around.[32]

He perceives a serious lack of genuine trust between them and the APFD, and that the FNGO acts more like the agent of the APFD in adding to the mistrust rather than acting as a facilitator to facilitate their voice at the VSS level. However, all the *Yanadi* view the new elite as the trustworthy leadership for the Adavipalli VSS.

7.3.2 Perceptions of the new elite

The decentralised democratic spaces created through Adavipalli VSS have been occupied by the erstwhile contractor class from the BC community (especially the *Yadavas*), who attained the status of new elite class in the village community. [33] Mr Samayya the leader of the new elite also acts as the *de-facto* president of the Adavipalli VSS. Although the *de-jure* president of the VSS is nominated from the *Reddy* caste (to respect the village tradition of having an OC/*Reddy* leader as the president); the BC caste groups fully dominate VSS functioning. Samayya's authority as the new elite leader is unquestioned as well as welcomed by the Adavipalli villagers in general and the VSS members in particular. Here though, Samayya as the leader of the new elite section represents his groups' perceptions as our key informant. Some of his perceptions are presented in Box 7.2.

Box 7.2
Perceptions of the new elite/ BC leadership

Mr Samayya is a 50 year old labour contractor and the leader of the new elite group in the Adavipalli village. He is one of the highly educated people in the village possessing a junior college degree. He has been involved in the APJFM/CFM intervention in both phases. He views his own role as a senior member in the VSS as one that can make a difference to the poorer sections of the village who depend on the forest for their subsistence. He views his position in the village and the VSS as one that can help foster the development of community.

Samayya's perception is that the APJFM/ CFM have changed the relationship between the APFD and the village community. He is happy that the APFD no longer restricts access of Adavipalli community to the forest, and that through VSS they are able to ensure as much as 90 work days in a year for the ST and the SC communities. He however, feels that the number of VSS work days should be increased in order to secure the livelihoods of the poor and the marginalised of the Adavipalli community.

On the other key actors' roles in the intervention, like the facilitating NGO and the APFD, he opines that they should make efforts to ensure more free and fair participation of the village community in APCFM intervention, by working in the areas of mutual trust and delegation of responsibility to the villagers. Asked whether he can qualitatively distinguish between the APJFM (phase-1) and APCFM (phase-2), he says, 'both are the same, with different names, we still do the same now as we did in APJFM phase'. However, he is happy to acknowledge that during both the phases community development initiatives have been undertaken along with forest conservation efforts (Source: In-depth interview with Samayya, dated 11.09.2005).

Samayya's long standing experience as the senior leader (both before and after the inception of APJFM/CFM intervention) makes him more acceptable even for the FNGO and APFD officials. As the *de-facto* president of the Adavipalli VSS, Samayya perceives the intervention as an opportunity to regenerate the forests, while achieving village development. He considers the betterment of the *Yanadi* community through the APJFM and APCFM phases as a phenomenal success of their efforts as leaders of the VSS. Nevertheless, he observes that the ST and SC sections of the village are still not entirely secure in their present condition, and that the AP state government should continue the APCFM intervention even when the funds from the World Bank stop flowing in 2007. He views the *Yanadi* and the SC communities as weaker actors of the lot, and so requires more protection from the aggressive facilitating NGO, which has been turned into an agent of the APFD.[34] The role of the traditional elite in the village, for him is neutral as they are tolerant. Although they do not directly participate in VSS, they do not obstruct its functioning in Adavipalli village.[35]

On the role of other key actors like the APFD and the FNGO, his perceptions are multifaceted. For example, he expresses his disappoint-

ment over the attitude of the FNGO while interacting with the other VSS and village community members. He feels that although the FNGO is on good terms with the VSS leadership, it actually filters the information according to its interests, instead of passing on the information directly from the APFD. He also observes that he and the other VSS Executive Committee members cannot avoid the presence of FNGO personnel even when they want to communicate directly with the APFD on any important issue related to the VSS or the intervention in general.[36] His view is that the APFD is actively promoting this attitude of surveillance in FNGO personnel to safeguard its controlling position. At present, he views the role of the FNGO as that of the agent of the APFD, rather than that of a facilitator. On the other hand, he also recognises the position of the FNGO as one that is so precarious that it is completely dependent on the APFD for its existence (NGO's monthly compensations are paid by the APFD). He says in the in-depth interview, 'if only the facilitating NGO was paid directly from the World Bank, they would function fairly in favour of the community as opposed to what they do now'.[37]

Samayya perceives the role of the APFD as one that has not fully transformed into that of a facilitator, as is advocated by the World Bank and the AP state government. He says that they are still in control of the whole conservation intervention as they were in the APJFM phase. He opines that it is not reasonable on the part of the proponents to assume that APFD officials will now take a backseat and let the community run the show, in the APCFM phase. He views the continuous presence of FNGO personnel as a tactic followed by the APFD to keep an eye on the VSS Executive Committee and financial matters at the VSS level. He opines that although there is a change in the name of the first phase (APJFM) to the second (APCFM), there is little qualitative difference in what all the key actors like APFD and the FNGO do in both phases. As the leader of the VSS, he feels that the participation of the Adavipalli community remains dependent on the APFD's directives as opposed to its engagement as an empowered community, as proclaimed by the proponents of the APCFM intervention.

7.3.3 Perceptions of the facilitating NGO

The APFD identified the FNGO in the Adavipalli range level, to facilitate the progress of the APJFM/CFM intervention through the Adavi-

palli VSS. Mr Ramulu is the FNGO leader working for the entire forest range to which Adavipalli belongs. He is paid on a contract basis by the APFD for the services of his NGO. Ramulu's NGO is working with the APFD and other state government departments situated in the same *mandal*[38] headquarters for almost 30 years. He and his NGO personnel are well integrated in their functioning with the APFD and other government bodies in the *mandal* headquarters.[39]

Ramulu is well versed on the perceptions and attitudes of the APFD officials on Adavipalli community involvement in conservation through APJFM/CFM. He views his role as that of facilitating the intervention progress smoothly as per the official planning and guidelines given to him by APFD officials in the forest range. He claims that APCFM intervention helps in conserving the forests and the process helps to develop the community engaged in conservation. In the context of Adavipalli APCFM intervention, he opines that the village community in general and the VSS member community in particular are very much interested in benefiting from the intervention. He perceives the intervention as a success in terms of meeting its major aims, namely the protection and regeneration of the forest and the development of the Adavipalli village.

Ramulu's perceptions on the other key actors such as the new elite leadership and the ST and SC communities are that they are not yet ready to be in control of the whole intervention process. He states that the new elite leadership is potentially dangerous if left unmonitored. He feels that with its strong social networks at the village level, the new elite could easily manipulate the finances of the VSS to its advantage, which will be a disaster for the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. He claims that his role is that of ensuring free and fair distribution of APCFM funds for all VSS functions. He also observes that the *Yanadi* and SC communities are not powerful enough to check on possible collusion between the traditional elite and the new elite leadership in the Adavipalli village. He claims that unlimited access to such large amounts of money coming from the World Bank needs to be monitored strictly by both the APFD and his NGO. At the same time, he also states that it is imperative to have trust and respect for all the actors involved including the new elite and the marginalised sections like the *Yanadi* to ensure the success of the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.[40] Some of the views of the FNGO leader, Mr Ramulu are presented in Box 7.3.

Apart from facilitating the APJFM/CFM interventions for the APFD, the FNGO also has the responsibility to collect data on a regular basis-evaluating its activities and the overall performance of the APJFM/CFM intervention, at all 10 VSS of the Adavipalli range. One such evaluation happened when I was present in Adavipalli village during the second phase of fieldwork in 2005. To my surprise, I observed that the FNGO leader actually filled almost all the evaluation forms/booklets in the most agreeable format, omitting all that could give a negative impression without even asking the opinions of Adavipalli community members. These filled booklets were later presented to APFD officials at the range level to use for state level inspections.[41]

Box 7.3
Perceptions of facilitating NGO leader

Ramulu is a 55 year old BA degree holder leading the facilitating NGO to work in Adavi-palli and nine other VSS villages belonging to the same forest range. He strongly believes that it is his duty to cooperate with the Adavipalli community in general and the VSS managing committee in particular, in the backdrop of the official guidelines he received from the APFD officials. He feels that the forest is being over exploited by the villagers and that there should be strict guidelines in place to prevent the forests from degenerating due to human pressure and cattle grazing.

He has high regard for the APFD officials as he worked with them closely for almost 30 years. His perception of the Adavipalli intervention is very similar to that of the APFD officials that 'left on their own the villagers will not be able to sustain the present level of forest conservation and village development' and that they need the presence of the 'big brother' APFD to guide them throughout the intervention. Asked if he appreciates the upgrade from APJFM to APCFM (as claimed by the AP state government and the World Bank), he says as long as the funds keep flowing in for the conservation of forests and village development, he is happy with any number of phases as it is vital for the survival of thousands of lives dependent on it including his own (Source: In-depth interview with the facilitating NGO leader, dated: 12.09.05).

As a researcher, it was an inconvenient moment for me to maintain a neutral position and not question the actions of the FNGO leader in public, especially when the new elite leadership and the other members of the VSS were silent. However, it seemed from the general silence that surrounded the whole activity (from the VSS members) as though this practice has been happening for a long time. However, when I had a chance I did enquire about it, Mr Ramulu was quick to point out, 'I know it looks strange for you…but, I know Adavipalli people's opinions on my role and performance and also on the APJFM/CFM interven-

tion…that's why I am able to mark their responses'.[42] Ramulu as the leader of the FNGO plays a major role in influencing the formal procedures and regulations to be followed in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. The fact that APFD officials give the responsibility of evaluating its own role to the FNGO shows how closely both the APFD and FNGO operate in the intervention context. This gives a good example of how various implicit and unspoken understandings function at the grassroots level in the Adavipalli VSS, which in turn have major impact on the behaviour and perceptions of key actors.

7.3.4 Perceptions of the APFD officials

The perceptions of the APFD officials are crucial in understanding their approach towards the whole intervention and the Adavipalli community as such. Their perceptions on the FNGO, VSS leadership and the *Yanadi* are also important to understand their strategies and interactions with the other key actors in the Adavipalli context. In this section, perceptions of two senior forest officials are presented. Apart from their perceptions, a couple of junior APFD staff are also included in the general exploration to get a complete picture, which is a mixture of various opinions and strategies. Their perceptions on the APCFM intervention and key actors role do have subtle differences at state and local levels. The local level APFD personnel in general are more willing to comment on local politics that tend to colour community participation in the conservation intervention in general and APCFM in particular. Box 7.4 exclusively presents the perceptions of one senior APFD official.

The state-level forest officials remain indifferent to acknowledging the regional and local power dynamics at the grassroots level, which lead to the co-option of APCFM intervention in many villages participating in the intervention.[43] Most of the officers gave similar standard answers, which project the positive nature of the intervention, to questions regarding the communities and the other actors participating in it.[44] In one of the in-depth interviews a senior, forest official claims, 'the progress made by the communities through APJFM/CFM is phenomenal….

Box 7.4
Perceptions of the senior APFD official

> Sanjay is a senior level forest officer at the AP state forest department. He has extensive experience in monitoring forest conservation activities in Andhra Pradesh.
>
> His opinion on the APCFM intervention is very positive. He is confident that the level of community involvement in forest conservation has gone up since the start of APJFM/CFM in Andhra Pradesh. He expresses his satisfaction over the progress made by the APFD in general in APCFM intervention. He has full confidence in his staff that they will be successful in guiding and facilitating the communities through the intervention.
>
> However, he feels that the communities need to be more forthcoming and should be taking full advantage of the presence of the facilitating NGO in their localities. He perceives no scope for any misuse of the power and authority given to the local communities through APCFM (Source: Interview with the APFD state level senior officer, date 09.07.05).

Through VSS, the rural communities now have a better chance to participate in forest conservation and benefit from the whole intervention'.[45] His answer to my question on the presence of caste, class and gender-based politics at the community level was, 'we trust that the facilitating NGOs actively negotiate on behalf of the marginalised community members and thus bring them on a level playing field with the others in the community'.[46] However, questions on the possible co-option of the facilitating NGOs by the APFD in cases like that of Adavipalli were completely ignored or were underplayed as false concerns by the senior APFD officers.[47]

APFD officials at the district level displayed a better willingness to acknowledge the local dynamics in the selected forest range. The local forest range officers had informed views and clear ideas on what the situation at the grassroots level in the Adavipalli setting is. For example, one of the forest range-level officers explained how local politics play a major role in deciding the leadership of the VSS in each village. He said, 'sometimes you need to honour village customs and practices, you cannot simply force the villagers to abandon their protocol, which generally includes respecting the village elders from dominant castes by requesting them to be VSS leaders (*de-jure*)'.[48] The case of Adavipalli is one such situation where the village-level *Reddy* leader was been nominated as the *de-jure* leader for the VSS, while the new elite leadership provided the *de-facto* leadership.

To get a clear picture of what the perceptions of the local level forest officials on the APCFM intervention are, and their role along with other

key actors, I interviewed Mr Raju at the selected APFD range office along with the other junior staff in the forest range under which Adavi-palli falls. Mr Raju had a clear understanding of the local dynamics at play in the Adavipalli setting. Contrary to what his seniors at state level had to say, he estimates that the local communities are not fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and expertise in carrying out conservation intervention on their own.[49] Nevertheless, he claims that, as a CBNRM intervention, APCFM has rather positively influenced the relationship of the communities with the Forest Department. He mentions that guid-ance of the APFD officials and the presence of the FNGO are essential to keep the intervention from falling apart. He says, 'Rural communities displayed hostility towards the forest department personnel when we had to strictly monitor their access to the forest…. After the inception of APJFM/CFM, they are trusting us to a large extent, and also are more welcoming compared to earlier times'.[50]

On the role of other key actors like the FNGO and the new elite leadership in the Adavipalli village, Raju claims there is no major conflict of interest among the key actors operating at the grassroots level that could halt the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. About the occasional conflicts of interests that erupt in the intervention process in Adavipalli he comments, 'if there is conflict of interest among the VSS members, we (APFD) don't interfere…we leave the matter to them to decide. But, if there is a conflict of interest between the Adavipalli VSS and the APFD, the facilitating NGO plays a major role in bringing us to a con-sensus'.[51] He also claims that the presence of the facilitating NGO acts as a buffer and prevents serious misunderstandings and mistrust, which characterised the relationship between the villagers and the APFD before the inception of the APJFM/CFM. He strongly believes that the Adavi-palli community benefited from both the APJFM and CFM phases by being open to learning and being adaptive.[52]

7.4   Actors' Perceptions: Implications for Adavipalli APCFMP

Perceptions of key actors in the Adavipalli APCFM setting also explain the strategies they accordingly adopt in dealing with each other; their ap-proaches towards the intervention process; and the community's role in it as such. In all four cases discussed in the previous sections, we mapped differing responses from different actors. For instance, these responses

indicated presence of tension and mutual mistrust between the *Yanadi* and the FNGO; and the Adavipalli VSS leadership and the FNGO and APFD among the key actors operating through various networks on caste, class and gender-based lines.[53] In this section, we list out the major trends that emerge out of the Adavipalli context, with regards to actors' perceptions and the implications they have for the Adavipalli community and for intervention as a whole.

Perceptions of the APFD officials at both the state and local levels (forest range level), indicate a 'protectionist' undertone towards the forests. For example, one senior level forest officer claimed that

> The whole purpose of our being [APFD] is to protect the forests from over exploitation by people who depend on them for various livelihoods, as well as to check on the growing smuggling and illegal felling activity…. APJFM/CFM improved the situation by making people more responsible for forest protection and lessened the smuggling in many forest areas, as the erstwhile smugglers of those areas managed a secured livelihood through being active members of the VSS.[54]

Accordingly, these conservationist and protectionist perspectives also determine their agenda for action when it comes to the Adavipalli intervention. Some of the forest guards who work with the villagers mentioned that,

> Most of the times, people tend to overuse/misuse forest resources for firewood and NTFP, despite being members of the VSS…. That is when we need to step up and check their unlimited activities in the forest…. After all, we are the forest guards with the responsibility to protect it.[55]

On the other hand, one of the prominant SC members of the Adavipalli VSS claimed that,

> This attitude of mistrust and constant policing of our activities in the forest and the VSS by the APFD makes us feel that we are unwelcomed partners of the APJFM/CFM intervention…. How are we supposed to exercise our rights and duties as VSS members in these circumstances?[56]

These developments directly impinge on the general philosophy of the APCFM intervention. In APCFM Project Appraisal Document (World Bank 2002), emphasis is placed on the premise that communities are better managers of the forest because of their dependence on it, and hence they deserve the autonomy over the management of forest conservation intervention.[57]

This evidence shows a clear ideological and attitudinal conflict between the views of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department and the Adavipalli people who use the forest for their daily survival.

The facilitating NGO, owing to its financial dependency and survival on the APFD, also displays the same protectionist attitude towards community use of the forests. This trend can be inferred from the views of these actors on community involvement in APCFM in general and in the Adavipalli context in particular. Although community participation and ownership of the forest management in CFM is declared the means to forest protection and improving forest-based livelihoods,[58] the APFD's lack of confidence in the community's ability to manage the intervention is resulting in the polarisation of control and management, and disenchantment for the communities. For instance, contrary to what the Project Appraisal Document (2002: 5) says, in reality the APFD makes the rules and regulations related to overall forest use and management in CFM, and it dictates the forest conservation activities taken up at the VSS level with the help of the FNGO acting as its agent at the grassroots level.[59] The discussion so far demonstrated that although the APFD officials and the FNGO in the Adavipalli context do not spell out their disagreement with the above-mentioned premise, they do express their concerns over the assumption that communities deserve autonomous control over forest management under the APCFM programme. Thus, the protectionist views of forests officials, and patronage of the FNGO at the range level, undermine the chances of the Adavipalli community to take charge of the APCFM intervention through the VSS as intended by intervention proponents.

It is clear from the previous discussion that the APFD officials express full faith in FNGO personnel and its role in the Adavipalli context. However, the Adavipalli community including that of the ST (the *Yanadi*) and the SC has a different perception of the FNGO's role in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. They view the presence of FNGO in the Adavipalli context, more as an agent of the APFD, rather than as a facilitator.

In one of the focus group discussions with the ST and SC, there were strong arguments against the biased role of the FNGO in the Adavipalli VSS context. One of the SC men explained,

> It is disheartening for us to see FNGO personnel arrange "capacity-building activities" only when a senior APFD officer or a visitor from the

> World Bank comes to check the progress of the intervention…. In the
> normal times even the most simple questions of the *Yanadi* and the SC
> were left unnoticed, and unanswered as in their view they did not matter in
> forest conservation.[60]

They perceive a sense of neglect and manipulation from the FNGO,
and from the APFD. The new elite leadership of the VSS. also echoes
the same. One of the new elite members pointed out,

> There is a bias in the functioning of the facilitating NGO personnel as it
> takes the side of APFD as opposed to facilitating the Adavipalli commu-
> nity…. This can be clearly observed whenever there is a conflict of interest
> between the Adavipalli community and the APFD. The facilitating NGO
> always takes APFD's side, and declares the community concerns unimpor-
> tant or illegitimate. People have even stopped questioning it, as they know
> that these concerns will be ignored anyway by the APFD.[61]

This manipulative role of the facilitating NGO is substantiated by the
account given by the new elite during the preparation of the 'micro plan'
and during the occasional VSS general and Executive Committee meet-
ings. The official guidelines embedded in the Project Implementation
Plan (PIP) of the APCFM for the preparation of micro plans stress the
importance of consulting with the village community and VSS members
throughout the drafting and finalising of the contents of the PIP upon
the approval of the VSS Executive Committee.[62] One of the new elite
members who witnessed the whole process of micro plan preparation
recalled,

> The facilitating NGO first drafted the whole micro plan to suit the priori-
> ties of APFD, and then changed the village names and some other details
> from the text to represent all the VSS villages in our forest range…. If you
> want, you can take a look at the micro plans of the other villages in the
> forest range to see the same text in all [the plans].[63]

Another *Yanadi* member of the VSS mentioned that the facilitating
NGO leader did not even consult VSS members while drafting the micro
plan, let alone discussing the contents of the same with them before its
acceptance by the APFD and the World Bank. However, once the micro
plans and other such resolutions at the Adavipalli level have been passed
unilaterally by the APFD, the same VSS committee members were asked
to ratify them with a thumbprint.[64]

One senior VSS EC member mentioned in a private interview, 'this facilitating NGO leader is more bothered about pleasing the APFD officials, rather than doing his job as the facilitator for Adavipalli community…. Even the preparation of micro plan has been done in a top-down fashion by him to please APFD officials, without even consulting the VSS leadership'.[65] The account given by the new elite leadership also confirms the manipulative behaviour of the FNGO and the tacit encouragement from the APFD towards this end, as the FNGO tries its best to protect APFD's interest.[66]

Evidence presented in this section demonstrated that the Adavipalli community believes in the sustainable use of forest resources through VSS, whereas the APFD believes in controlling and conserving the forests through a protectionist stance for sustainable purposes. For example, the villagers said that they lived in Adavipalli for many years by depending on the forest for their subsistence, and that they would not cause destruction in the forest, as the forest department believes. The issues of forest conservation and community development were always intertwined and inseparable for the Adavipalli village community, whereas the AP forest department officials' perceptions reflected a rather laid-back attitude in perceiving them as intertwined.

The variance of these actors' perceptions outlined here explains the polarised nature of communication in the Adavipalli APCFM context. These differing perceptions indicate deep-rooted behavioural and attitudinal stances of various actors, embedded in their historical and socio-cultural settings. They come from many sources, such as values, life experience and training. For example, senior forest officials claimed that their protectionist stance stemmed from their years of experience working with different communities depending on the forests, and watching their ways of forest use.[67] The tribal leaders stressed their deep-seated values and their intimate relationship with their forest as the driving factors in their involvement in its conservation.[68] The FNGO and the new elite leadership quoted their training and experience as the major influencing factors in forming their perceptions on the intervention and the Adavipalli community's involvement in it.[69]

Added to these varying perceptions and strategies of actors, is the aspect of their diverging agenda, while engaging in Adavipalli APCFM intervention. Evidence from Adavipalli context has shown that the agenda and strategies of key actors have been heavily influenced by their percep-

tions and worldviews, which in turn have their roots in actors' values, resource dependency and their socio-cultural background. Although divergent agenda and strategies pursued by various actors are not problematic in principle, in the context of Adavipalli they become a nail in the coffin, as they mutually cut across actors' spaces for action and negotiations through various networks. These negotiations could be seen as representations of what they perceive in their knowledge as 'the' right way of going about APCFM intervention. This complex web of actors' perceptions, negotiations and agenda in Adavipalli APCFM intervention is analysed in the coming sections of this chapter by mapping actors' interactions and the process of network formation and functioning at the grassroots level at Adavipalli.

7.5   Dynamics of Actors' Interactions in the Context of Adavipalli

Diverging perceptions of various key actors in Adavipalli intervention influence their strategies and guide their interactions with other actors. The key actors ranging from intervention proponents (World Bank and AP state government) to the tribal community (the *Yanadi*) adopted their own strategies within their capacities, to resolve their particular problems or to realise their goals. These strategies are played out in their interactions with each other and with the institutional arena in which they operate.

The APFD and the FNGO are required to act as facilitators, ensuring better community participation, according to the state government orders, (GO Ms. No. 13). In practice, as per the testimonies of the *Yanadi* and the SC discussed earlier, the APFD and the FNGO interact with the village community as 'authorities' rather than as 'facilitators', exercising controlling and monitoring power over the VSS and the whole intervention process in general. According to the Adavipalli village community, APFD officials in particular always show their authoritarian attitude every time they visit the village or, they make them wait for at least two-to-three hours each time they visit the forest range office.[70] When APFD officials come to the village, the *Yanadi* and SC are always made to wait before they get a chance to speak directly with the officials. APFD officials generally do not show any interest in knowing the priorities and concerns of Adavipalli VSS members. Even if there is a concerted effort on the part of VSS members under the leadership of new elite, these ef-

forts are routinely dismissed as unimportant or ignored completely by the APFD and FNGO. One paradoxical finding from my participant observation of the Adavipalli APCFM context is that VSS members did not know that they were entitled to make autonomous resolutions as a body, other than those instructed by the APFD.[71]

The interactions between APFD officials and the villagers are characterised by a lack of 'trust' on the officials' part, and 'lack of respect' on the villagers' part.[72] In addition, the interactions between the APFD and Adavipalli villagers could be characterised as those guided by client-patron relationships. Although the APFD and the FNGO ignore their needs and aspirations as VSS members, it continues to keep an eye on the outliers of the arrangement and keeps them in control through the FNGO. Paradoxically enough the members of Adavipalli community continue their activities in whatever limited space they have from the APFD and FNGO in order to benefit from the intervention. The community members in general and VSS members in particular tolerate and cooperate with the APFD and the FNGO simply because APCFM intervention does provide them with livelihoods in the form of VSS labour, and also strengthens community ties through collective access to forest resources.[73]

The same client-patron relationship also characterises the relationship between the FNGO and the APFD. The FNGO on its part lives up to the expectations of APFD officials by acting as a watchdog for them at village level owing to its financial dependence on the APFD. APFD in turn, turns a blind eye on its rather authoritarian role at the Adavipalli level. Together, their strategy of being 'in control' of the Adavipalli community in general and the VSS Executive Committee in particular could be observed in their authoritarian interactions with the Adavipalli community. As one of the village elders from the SC community mentioned, 'we are familiar with these authoritarian attitudes of the APFD officers and the FNGO leader for some years now, and I have no doubt that they interact on a closer level with each other than they would be with us'.[74]

The way FNGO personnel silences the ST and SC, demonstrates its strategy of dominating the decision-making process at the VSS level.[75] This is also applicable to the way the FNGO tries to dominate the new elite VSS leadership in VSS Executive Committee meetings. The GO, which lists the powers and functions of the VSS (GO Ms. No. 13) in

APCFM mentions that decision-making functions are to be performed by the VSS. As per the Project Appraisal Document of APCFM (PAD 2002: 7), the FNGO is only supposed to facilitate the preparation and implementation of the micro plan to enable transparency and accountability in the intervention. Evidence shows that in Adavipalli, micro plan preparation, agenda setting for VSS meetings, the decision-making, chairing the meeting and preparing the minutes are unilateral on the part of the FNGO.[76] The VSS leadership (new elite) must to agree to the propositions and directives of the FNGO, as it claims that they come directly from the APFD officials.[77]

The 'non-functioning' of VSS is steered and regulated by APFD and FNGO personnel. This non-functioning of VSS can be explained in terms of the FNGO actively discouraging frequent and fully attended VSS meetings. For instance, it has already been observed that the marginalised sections of the community like the *Yanadi* or the female members of the VSS are not invited to the occasional meetings.[78] According to the official state government directives (GOAP 2002a), and the Project Implementation Plan (PIP), VSS Executive Committee should meet at least twice in a year under the VSS leadership, with at least 50 per cent of its female members, the ST and SC members of the community present. Apart from the Executive Committee meetings, there should be at least one general body meeting a year at the VSS level to brief the village community about financial expenditures, plans of the VSS and the work undertaken during that particular year. These meetings seldom happen at both the Adavipalli VSS level and the village level. However, public display of accounts is done by the APFD, with the aid of the FNGO and the new elite. The budget is posted on the public wall in the bus shelter, which was constructed with village development funds from the World Bank.[79] The new elite leadership is left with little choice but to go with the flow due to these complex push and pull factors it experiences from the community and FNGO, and indirectly from the APFD itself.

Another important aspect related to this situation is the issue of dissemination of information related to the Adavipalli APCFM project. The role of facilitating NGO, as instructed by the AP state government (GO Ms. No. 13) is, to facilitate information flow and create an enabling environment for APCFM intervention through building capacities of the community engaged in the intervention. In the Adavipalli context, there has been limited dissemination of information by the facilitating NGO.

Whatever information has been given to the community has been fil-
tered from the top down. The FNGO is given the role of capacity build-
ing and communication with the grassroots level communities under the
guidance of the APFD. In the Adavipalli context, both activities have
been undertaken at a superficial level according to the village community
and VSS leadership (Source: Focus group discussions with the villag-
ers).[80] For example, whenever there was a visit to inspect or monitor the
progress of the APCFM programme, the FNGO arranged a road show
on promoting the awareness of the villagers on APCFM. This pattern
was also observed when I was living with the Adavipalli village commu-
nity.

The VSS Executive Committee under the leadership of the president
should maintain the minutes book and the financial ledger, which should
be made openly accessible to the village community and other key actors.
In the Adavipalli context, in practice, direct access to the village micro
plan and other important documents like the minutes book and financial
ledger are next to impossible for both the VSS Executive Committee and
the village community in general, as they are maintained, and retained by
the facilitating NGO. Whatever information percolates down to the
Yanadi and other actors comes through informal messages, rumours and
heavily censored speeches of the FNGO in VSS meetings, if and when
they happen.[81] Access to information is restricted by factors like lack of
physical access, lack of space (power) to demand access and also lan-
guage and literacy barriers. This gives ample opportunity for the FNGO
to manipulate and maintain records to perfection both in the financial
ledger and the minutes book, which records the meetings/events and
financial disbursements. For example, there was a general body meeting
in August 2005 in Adavipalli. After the meeting was over, the FNGO
leader took the thumbprints of the VSS members and came with his
minutes book for my signature in the visitors' column. I took a quick
look to check out what he wrote in the minutes of that GB meeting. To
my surprise, I found issues like discussion on HIV/AIDS awareness in
the agenda and minutes, whereas in the GB it was not discussed at all.[82]

Effective agency requires organising capacities (Long 1992b: 23),
which are well displayed by the new elite leadership of the Adavipalli
VSS. Despite the overwhelming presence of the facilitating NGO, the
new elite leadership in its capacity as VSS leadership interacts with the
SC and ST (*Yanadi*) communities, through informal meetings, chatting

and consultation, and represents their interests with the APFD and FNGO on a regular basis. On the other hand, although the new elite leadership is on the upper rung of the ladder of influence in the village, it interacts with *Yanadi* and SC communities in an amicable manner in informal ways and means within the limited possibilities it has in the Adavipalli APCFM scenario. The interactions between the new elite leadership and key actors like the APFD and the FNGO are thus characterised by local dynamics at the Adavipalli level.

Actor-oriented sociology regards social actors as those social entities that can meaningfully be attributed with the power of agency. The notion of agency is defined, in turn, as the individual actor's capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion (Long 1992b: 22-7). Drawing from Giddens (1984: 1-16), Long also observes that within the limits of information, uncertainty and other constraints (e.g. physical, normative and politico-economic) that exist, social actors are 'knowledgeable' and 'capable'. They attempt to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them, and monitor continuously their own actions, observing how others react to their behaviour and taking note of the various contingent circumstances (Long 1992b: 23). In the Adavipalli APCFM context, the new elite leadership and the *Yanadi* community has been such actors operating in the Adavipalli village community. For instance, the *Yanadi* have been the outsiders/ forest dwellers as opposed to the other 'villagers' of Adavipalli, for centuries. Despite this, the *Yanadi* community has learned to negotiate for a place to live on the fringe of the main village, and then they went on to own their housing colony with the help of the new elite leadership and their own negotiating capabilities. They earned the respect of the other key actors in the Adavipalli village such as the SC community and the new elite by being sincere and adaptive towards their fellow actors' needs in the Adavipalli community.[83]

Actors' interactions in an intervention setting are based on their social relationships, and these relationships in turn influence the agency of actors involved in the intervention. Here, it is important to emphasise that 'agency' must not simply be equated with decision-making capacities. In Adavipalli context, although key actors like the *Yanadi* and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) have no direct decision-making power in the VSS, they still exercise their agency through various strategies in order to gain certain

claims, like that of the housing colony for the *Yanadi*. Actors' strategies refer 'to the way social groups use their available power resources, or their knowledge and capability, to resolve their particular problems' (Brown and Rosendo 2000: 212). Since the inception of the Andhra Pradesh JFM and CFM projects, the *Yanadi* and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) have gained considerable ground both in terms of their agency and in terms of their interactions (although as subordinates) with other significantly powerful actors such as the new elite leadership of the VSS and the APFD. As pointed out by Giddens (1984: 16), '(a)ll forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors'. In Adavipalli context, the ST and SC learned to trust and obey the new elite leadership (and gain through its interactions with the APFD and the FNGO). The new elite in turn obey the superiority of the APFD, thus gaining ground for mediating their collective claims over the political and economic resources of Adavipalli VSS and the landscape. For instance, one of the *Yanadi* leaders claim,

> When we pushed our demand through the new elite for acquiring the additional VSS labour, the new elite has been successful in getting the approval of the APFD, though it took a long time.... I don't know if we could have done it all alone without the help of the new elite…the new elite's success in negotiating with the APFD has made it worth it for us to be obedient and cooperative with them in VSS matters.[84]

The function of 'enrolling' actors into an emerging network (Latour 1986; Callon et al. 1986) is crucial in the process of organising. For Long (1992b), effective agency requires strategic generation/manipulation of a network of social relations and the channelling of specific items (such as claims, orders, goods, instruments and information) through certain 'nodal points' of interaction. These nodal points in Adavipalli context have been characterised by the long-standing bonds between the OC, BC, SC and ST (*Yanadi*) sections. For example, one major nodal point through which actors like the ST and SC exercise their agency is through their membership in the VSS Executive Committee. Although, not regularly invited to VSS meetings, they do interact with each other, and together they negotiate with the new elite leadership of the VSS to realise their claims. On the other hand, the new elite leadership acts as another major nodal point in generating/manipulating responses from the APFD and the FNGO on crucial issues concerning Adavipalli VSS.

The way actors interact with each other while influencing each other through their respective positions in the ever-changing intervention phenomenon, gives us a good idea of the outcome of that interaction. For example, the new elite leadership interacts with the FNGO, with an agenda driven by personal interest and the concerns of the village community it represents. On the other hand, the FNGO interacts with the new elite leadership with its own agenda influenced by the perceptions and directives of APFD. While both the actors interact with each other, their respective agendas play out leading to some concession on part of both to settle for a 'mid-way', for mutual benefit.

In Adavipalli APCFM context, one such interaction reported by both the new elite and the FNGO personnel is in connection with the construction of the community hall. The new elite proposed the construction of a community hall in the *Yanadi* colony, in order to enable more visible interactions, and direct participation of the *Yanadi* in APCFM intervention. This proposition by the new elite was informed by experience in APJFM phase (where the *Yanadi* were actively excluded by the FNGO from participating in VSS meetings), and the requests from the *Yanadi* themselves for more involvement in VSS. Whereas, the FNGO, under the guidance of the APFD opted for building it in the heart of the village, which makes it more visible for official APFD inspections and visits from World bank officials. After long deliberations between the new elite leadership and the FNGO personnel, a compromise was agreed upon to construct the community hall near the *Yanadi* colony and away from the centre of the village. In this instance, both parties compromised on their original proposals to enable a mutually beneficial solution.

However, despite the construction of a community hall to facilitate more VSS meetings, there has been no improvement in the frequency of VSS meetings, and the exclusion of the *Yanadi*, SC and women from meetings continues. Hence, it can be concluded that mere infrastructural development cannot ensure effective participation of women and weaker sections of the community. The utilisation of the infrastructure for the benefit of the community depends on the political will of the people in power like those of the APFD and the new elite class of Adavipalli village. It can also be observed here that despite the presence of strong actors like the new elite and the FNGO, the *Yanadi* could successfully communicate their points of view and needs (although informally) to the

new elite, owing to their close and long standing ties with the new elite leadership.

When actors are faced with 'multiple realities', in the face of potentially conflicting social and normative interests, and diverse and discontinuous configurations of knowledge (Long 1992b: 22-7), the issue of whose interpretation prevails over those of other actors and under what conditions becomes more important. Thus, studying the micro phenomena characterised by actors' interactions enables an understanding of macro level manifestations. In the context of Adavipalli APCFM intervention, all key actors can be observed and analysed from the abovementioned angles. For example, the FNGO while presiding over a VSS general body meeting (held in October 2005 in Adavipalli), proposed an agenda with 10 points for the meeting. Out of the 10 issues highlighted for the discussion, eight dealt with non-VSS issues, and only two dealt with VSS issues. These two were issues of the VSS being appreciated by the APFD for its work and the issue of promoting its good relations between VSS members. When the *Yanadi* leader tried to raise an additional issue related to timely payment of their VSS wages, the FNGO leader became impatient and snubbed the *Yanadi* leader saying, 'your personal problems are not of importance to this meeting, we have issues like HIV/AIDS to discuss today in this meeting'.[85] This situation where the facilitating NGO prevailed with its perceptions of what is important over the preferences of the marginalised actors like *Yanadi* is a good example of how the phenomenon of lack of space for public communication for marginalised actors needs/interests manifests in their exclusion. Although the *Yanadi* have a different agenda to pursue, in the face of strong bias from the FNGO, they resort to other covert means of reflecting their opinion and position on the issue at hand in their informal meetings with new elite leadership. For example, when they want to gain the attention of the whole group, or to express their discontent in the meeting, they start murmuring in small groups, make physical movements and gestures like keeping their hands on their head (sign of headache), appear to doze, etc.[86] The new elite leadership in turn takes account of their opinions in its informal discussions with them and negotiates with the FNGO and forest department officials in its own right as VSS leadership, albeit with limited success.

Table 7.1
Actors' interactions in Adavipalli APCFM context

Actor/ Organisation	Interacting with	Nature of interaction	Nature of power	Outcomes
APFD	FNGO	Patron-client	Domination & control	Polarisation of power in APFD, co-option of FNGO
	New elite leadership	Commanding	Domination & control	Polarisation of power in APFD, partly co-option and partly domination & control
	VSS EC members	Facilitator, guide, powerful, commanding, in control	Guidance, facilitation, domination	Polarisation of power in APFD; Token representation of members, no real decision-making power to VSS EC
	Village community	Controller, owner of forests, facilitator	Domination & control	Polarisation of power in APFD, weak bonds with the villagers
FNGO	APFD	Subordinate, facilitator	Subordination	Co-option by APFD, failure in the basic role of facilitating
	New elite leadership	Facilitator, in control, manipulative	Domination & control	Patronising attitude of FNGO, partially successful co-option of new elite leadership
	VSS Executive Committee	Facilitator, in control, manipulative, bossy	Domination & control	Manipulative attitude of the FNGO, token representation of VSS EC members
	Village community	Rather limited, facilitator	Very subtle exercise of power	Lack of awareness in the village on APCFM
New elite leadership	APFD	Subordinate representing VSS, occasional resistance	Subordination, representation as a team player,	Interactions with APFD get occasionally tense, generally cooperative thus gaining space for negotiation.
	FNGO	Team players, occasionally FNGO tends to dominate, and manipulate	Equally powerful in many respects	Although sometimes FNGO co-opts the new elite into a nexus in favour of APFD, the new elite leadership manages to steer the outcomes in favour of VSS & villagers
	EC members (SC & ST)	Leader, representing VSS, dominate & facilitate	Guiding, dominating	EC members get dominated by the new elite, new elite leadership is respected
	Village community	Cooperative and guiding	Friendly	Enjoys respect in the village
VSS Executive Committee	APFD	Looking for guidance & orders	Subordinate & submissive	Enjoys no real power as VSS EC
	FNGO	Seeking facilitation, occasionally conflicting FNGO	Dominated by FNGO	Covert tension between VSS EC members and FNGO
	New elite leadership	Seeking guidance, facilitation and leadership	Cooperative & friendly	VSS Executive Committee finds new elite leadership completely trustworthy
	Village community	Cooperative & friendly	Nothing significant	VSS EC members enjoy respect of village community

Source: Field data collected from 2004-05 in Adavipalli.

Further, Long (1992b: 22-7) draws on Giddens' argument that the constitution of social structures, which have both a constraining and enabling effect on social behaviour, cannot be comprehended without allowing for human agency (Giddens 1987). Adavipalli evidence shows that the VSS constitution has been both a constraining and enabling factor in the lives of Adavipalli community members. The creation of VSS enabled the creation of spaces of participation (through VSS) in the APJFM/CFM intervention. Yet, simultaneously it has also resulted in the social exclusion of marginalised sections of the community such as the *Yanadi* from the formal decision-making forums of the Adavipalli VSS.
It is important to notice that the exercise of power can be observed in all interactions of various actors, with a complex mixture of both positive and negative outcomes. For instance, although the *Yanadi* are subordinate to the new elite they were able to use windows of opportunities they gained through close ties to the new elite while negotiating with the APFD and the FNGO. Thus, the same dominance and subordination arrangement that keeps them dominated by powerful actors like the new elite and the APFD gives them the chance to deliberate successfully with dominant actors of the larger network operating at the grassroots level. Table 7.1, given below details various types of power relationships and the relative outcomes as they occurred in the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM context while actors engaged in the formal and the informal institutional structures.

While the FNGO with its 'co-opted conscience' acts in favour of the APFD, nevertheless creating spaces for deliberation for the new elite to represent the interests of VSS members with the APFD. A summary of the actors' interactions and outcomes is presented in tabular format (Table 7.2) to enable a bird's eye view of the general patterns emerging out of various key actors interactions in the Adavipalli APCFM setting. The definition of 'nature of power' in the tabular presentation is reached from its conceptualisation from the post-structural orientation discussed at length in the analytical framework of chapter 3. Thus, power exercise mapped in various key actors' interactions as mentioned in the presentation gives us an idea of how its effects and outcomes can vary both positively and negatively in Adavipalli APCFM context.

7.6   Actor-networks in Adavipalli APCFM Intervention

Understanding the way actors form networks dependent on their needs and capacities, and the manner in which they enrol other potential actors into their network is crucial to investigate the nature of negotiations that take place at grassroots level through these actor-networks. Actor-networks are networks of actors, with specific goals and perceptions over which they base their alliances with each other and with other networks. Application of actor-network theory in analysing rural phenomena/processes has been explored by Marsden et al. (1993) Murdoch and Marsden (1995) and Woods (1997b). Kortelainen (1999) and Mahanty (2000) in particular have attempted its application to natural resource management in general and forest management.

From the insights gained through these studies, the present study attempts an analysis of the processes characterised by social relationships between various human and non-human actors (Callon 1986; Latour 1993) involved in the Adavipalli APCFM context. Human actors can be classified as various groups of people with the power to influence the decision-making process in the intervention context. The non-human actors have been categorised as those entities, which help the networks of these actors function smoothly, and those that give legitimacy to the functioning of these actor-networks in the first place. Drawing on this proposition, natural elements such as forests and boundaries of the village and texts like the 'micro plan' and the 'minutes book' are considered potential actors connecting and sometimes forming the 'nodes' of actor-networks by the present study. Good examples of the non-human entity in this context are the micro plan and minutes book of the Adavipalli VSS. Paradoxically, as discussed earlier, these texts are used by the facilitating NGO in Adavipalli context to manipulate the intervention process and the actors participating in it from the Adavipalli community. Thus, the APFD, FNGO and these texts together form a strong network of human and non-human actors, and occasionally enrol the new elite and other Adavipalli-based actors on an *ad-hoc* basis to give legitimacy and continuance to their own network.

In the context of Adavipalli, various actor-networks have been identified through which actors form into a network based on their needs and dependence on the landscape in and around the village. Actor-network theorists (Law 1999: 6) claim that in a network, elements retain their spatial integrity by virtue of their position in a set of links or relations em-

bedded in the Adavipalli APCFM setting. In the context of Adavipalli, the *Yanadi*, SC and new elite form an actor network by virtue of their positions in the Adavipalli APCFM setting. Their affiliation to the network comes from a set of relations they have with each other and with actors from other networks. These relations in turn get redefined and transformed (Callon 1987: 93) over periods of time and thus give the actor network the ability to engage in negotiations with other networks every time its entities/actors require a particular set of issues pushed through.

From an actor-oriented perspective, two major functional actor-networks are identified for analysis *vis-à-vis* APCFM intervention in Adavipalli. The first actor-network is that of the new elite, the *Yanadi* and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*). These three groups of the Adavipalli village community have made an alliance with each other, in the face of the ever-changing power dynamics between the other key actors of the Adavipalli APCFM setting.[87] Both the ST and SC are more or less on equal footage because of their dependence on the forest as well as on agricultural labour in the village. Hence, they got together to achieve their access to forest resources in the Adavipalli APCFM context through the help of the new elite leader.[88]

As pointed out by Callon,

> An interrelated set of entities that have been successfully translated or enrolled by an actor that is thereby able to borrow their force and speak or act on their behalf or with their support.… The actor who speaks or acts with the support of others also forms part of the network. Hence, the term actor-network, for the actor is both the network and a point therein (Callon et al. 1986: xvi).

For example, on the issue of increasing work days available through VSS in general, and to the SC and ST in particular, the new elite made alliances with the SC and ST and gained influence through strategising in favour of their demand. In the same process, it also established its legitimacy as an effective leader in the face of continuous pressure from APFD and FNGO personnel.

This actor-network is thus characterised by the strong presence of the new elite as the leading force facilitating the other sections of the Adavipalli community. Here it is important to discuss how the new elite accomplished its alliances with the other key actors like the ST and the SC, in order to understand how it enrolled other actors in its own network.

The central tenet of actor-network theory that in order to achieve their intended outcomes, entities have to enrol other actors into a project places the initiating entity as representative of the whole network and its objective as representative of the interests of each of the actors (Law 1986). The ties between the ST and SC community with the new elite leadership are strong owing to the labour contract role of the new elite class, even before the APJFM intervention was started in Adavipalli. The new elite leadership, since the inception of the APJFM, enrolled the *Yanadi* and SC into its network in order to form a collective entity to negotiate with the APFD and the FNGO on issues related to the VSS and its role in community development.

The second major actor network at the Adavipalli APCFM context is the network of APFD officials and FNGO personnel, with occasional inclusion of new elite leadership of the VSS. This is by far, the most powerful actor in itself. This actor-network has taken shape since the inception of the APJFM in 1994, when the APFD identified the facilitating NGO for the APJFM/CFM intervention, and enrolled it in its own network. The same FNGO remained in place, and remained active in its functioning as an agent of APFD, rather than as a facilitator. Every time there is a tussle between the agenda of APFD and the village community (ST and SC in particular), as a faithful member of the APFD network, the FNGO ensured the prevalence of the APFD agenda through its direct control over VSS deliberations in general and Executive Committee meetings in particular. For example, during the nomination of the VSS president, the APFD network enrolled the new elite leadership into its network to ensure that the status quo at the grassroots level is ensured, as well as to enable the continuance of the leadership of the new elite at the VSS level. In the trade-off, the OC community leader was nominated as the *de-jure* president to maintain local protocol, and Samayya's (new elite leader) cousin Lalithamma was made the VSS vice president, leaving ample place for Samayya's *de-facto* presidency.[89] This arrangement ensured the new elite's active role as the link between the two actor networks at the grassroots level. The third major actor-network in Adavipalli APCFM context is the larger network of key actors including the APFD, the FNGO, the new elite and other community-based actors.

These major actor networks operating at the grassroots level determine the institutional dynamics inside the Adavipalli APCFM context. The functioning and non-functioning of the Adavipalli VSS and the na-

ture of power dynamics that operate within and between these actor networks have bearing on the nature and levels of actors' participation in the intervention. The analysis of actor networks and their influence on actors' participation is analysed in detail in the next chapter of this thesis.

7.7 Implications and Conclusions

The actor-networks identified at the heart of the Adavipalli APCFM intervention have been relational, flexible and adaptable. Thus, at any given point in time an actor like new elite leadership could be part of both major actor-networks, depending on the multiplicity of its interactions and interests. For instance, the *Yanadi* are part of the new elite network, and part of their own network along with the SC community. Velugu, a CBO working on Adavipalli, also enrols them as active members. In addition to this, these networks are inherently hierarchical (formed by actors of differing capacities), non-linear and co-exist simultaneously with other networks. Various actor-networks operating at the grassroots level in Adavipalli also act as associations of social, cultural and political interactions and negotiations. The linkages between the new elite leadership and the ST and SC kept the group dynamics of Adavipalli ever changing and progressive. Since there is a strong VSS leadership in the form of the new elite class at the village level, the marginalised sections like the *Yanadi* are able to negotiate their agenda despite the presence of more powerful and controlling actors like the APFD and FNGO. In short, even in the face of co-option of participatory spaces by the FNGO and the APFD, the presence of strong ties between the new elite leadership and other key actors like the *Yanadi* in the Adavipalli context ensured delivery of social benefits to the poor. The conflicting perceptions among the key actors, over the intervention, their own role and that of others, acted as determinants of actors' interactions and networking in the Adavipalli APCFM context. Based on this divergence, their interactions with each other and the agenda they pursued through their networks influenced the overall intervention process.

Notes

[1] Perception is defined as actors' worldview of a certain social phenomenon influenced by their daily life experiences.

[2] Source: Oral histories and in-depth interviews with villagers in 2004-5.

[3] Source: Oral histories of BC elderly recorded in August 2005.

[4] Source: Oral histories of *Yanadi* elderly and focus group discussion with the *Yanadi* recorded in September 2005.

[5] Source: Oral history of *Yanadi* elders recorded in September 2005.

[6] Process of actors' enrolment into various grassroots level networks is explained in detail in section 7.6 of this chapter.

[7] Source: Household survey and focus group discussions in 2004-5.

[8] Source: Oral histories, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with *Mala* and *Madiga* in 2004-5.

[9] Source: Focus group discussions with SC and ST in August and September 2005.

[10] Source: Interviews and historical profiles done with village elders and APFD officials.

[11] Source: Data collected through in-depth interviews with the villagers and observation by the author.

[12] Source: In-depth interview with the BC leader, Samayya, on 11.09.05.

[13] Source: Focus group discussions with the *Yanadi* in September 2005.

[14] Source: Interviews with Forest Range Officer of APFD, the VSS Executive Committee members and the *Yanadi* leadership.

[15] Source: Focus group discussions with *Yanadi* men and women in September 2005.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Source: In-depth interviews with the SC and BC communities in 2004-5.

[18] Source: In-depth interviews with *Reddy* community leaders in October 2005.

[19] Source: In-depth interviews with BC community members in October 2005.

[20] Source: In-depth interviews with APFD officials in September and October 2005.

[21] Source: Participant observation by the researcher in 2004-05.

[22] Ibid.

[23] The concept of 'interest' is commonly used in stakeholder analysis to denote the perceived level of utility or welfare that stakeholders may gain from a system (Grimble and Wellard 1996: 2).

[24] Refer to chapter 4 on the information on the livelihood strategies of Adavipalli community.

[25] Source: In-depth interview with Thimmana's family members on 10-09-05.

[26] Source: Focus group discussions with *Yanadi* community in August and September 2005.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] The emergence of new elite leadership is presented in detail in chapter 5 of this thesis.

[34] Source: Informal discussion with Samayya in September 2005.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Source: In-depth interview with Samayya, the new elite leader, date 11.09.05.

[38] Each district in the state of Andhra Pradesh is further divided into *mandals* for administrative convenience.

[39] Source: In-depth interviews with the APFD officials and FNGO personnel at the range level; participant observation of the author during 2004 and 2005.

[40] Source: In-depth interview with the facilitating NGO leader, date 12.09.05.

[41] Source: Participant observation and field dairy of the researcher.

[42] Source: In-depth interview with the facilitating NGO leader, date 12.09.05.

[43] Refer to chapter 4 for evidence in existing literature on APJFM/CFM.

[44] Source: observation recorded in Researcher's fieldnotes.

[45] Source: In-depth interview with senior APFD officer, date 09.07.05.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Source: observations recorded in Researcher's filednotes.

[48] Source: In-depth interview with range level forest officer, date 08.07.05.

[49] The same views on Adavipalli community's capabilities to carry on APCFM intervention have also been expressed by the FNGO leader in the in-depth interview carried out on 12.09.05.

[50] Source: In-depth interview with range level forest officer, date 08.07.05.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Refer to chapter 6 for gender-based analysis of the actor-network dynamics in Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

[54] Source: In-depth interview with the APFD forest official, July 2004.

[55] Source: Focus group discussion with the forest range department, August 2005.

[56] Source: Focus group discussions with *Yanadi* and SC in August and September 2005.

[57] Refer to World Bank (2002) *Andhra Pradesh Community Forestry Management: Project Appraisal Document* pp. 2-5.

[58] Ibid (2002: 2).

[59] Source: Data collected in Adavipalli through observation in 2004-05.

[60] Source: Focus group discussions with *Yanadi* and SC in August 2005.

[61] Source: In-depth interviews with the new elite leadership, ST and SC leadership in October 2005.

[62] Project Implementation Plan of APCFM, pp. 6-8.

[63] Source: Focus group discussions with the new elite and committee members of Adavipalli VSS.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Source: Private interview with senior VSS member, July 2005.

[66] Source: In-depth interview with new elite leadership, date 7 October, 2005.

[67] Source: In-depth interviews with APFD forest officials in 2004/05.

[68] Source: Focus group discussions with *Yanadi* community in 2005.

[69] Source: In-depth interviews with new elite members and FNGO personnel conducted August and September 2005.

[70] Source: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the *Yanadi* and SC communities of Adavipalli in 2005.

[71] Source: Author's observation during 2004/05 in Adavipalli.

[72] Source: Focus group discussions and observation of key actors in Adavipalli setting.

[73] Source: Author's observations.

[74] Source: Focus group discussions with SC community leaders in 2005.

[75] Source: Participant observation and informal interviews with SC and ST in 2005.

[76] Source: Participant observation and in-depth interviews with Adavipalli villagers in 2004-05.

[77] Source: Participant observation and in-depth interviews with Adavipalli VSS members including the new elite leadership in 2005.

[78] Source: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with VSS members in Adavipalli in 2005.

[79] Source: Participant observation and interviews with the new elite leader and FNGO leader in 2005.

[80] Source: Focus group discussions with Adavipalli villagers in 2004-05.

[81] Source: Participant observation by the author.

[82] Source: Participant observation by the author.

[83] Source: Participant observation and in-depth interviews with *Yanadi* and new elite in 2004-05.

[84] Source: In-depth interviews with the *Yanadi* and participant observation of the author in 2005.

[85] Source: Participant observation of Adavipalli VSS general body meeting in October 2005.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Source: Participant observation and focus group discussions with the new elite, *Yanadi* and SC during 2004-05.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

| 8	# Actor-networks, Power Relations and Community Participation

8.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the power relations of key actors in Adavipalli APCFM intervention through their networks as they engage in negotiations with each other in the intervention context. The exercise of power through various caste, class and gender-based networks is analysed and the impact on actors' participation in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention is investigated. This chapter gives a good description of various actor-networks operating at the Adavipalli level, and graphically presents their operation, nature of negotiations that take place between them, and their influence on actors' participation in the intervention. This chapter focuses on these networks in detail in order to analyse the type of connections between actors, terms of connections, strength of connections, structure of networks and position of actors within these networks. The exercise of power within and between these actor-networks and the resulting forms of participation in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention are explored.

8.2 Actor-networks in Adavipalli

As mentioned in previous chapters, all the key actors in Adavipalli APCFM context engage in negotiations spanning various levels and scales. These networks not only comprise actors within the Adavipalli village, but also key actors who do not reside in the village yet are involved in the schemes such as FNGO personnel and the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department officials from the local forest range office. To present the complexity of the basic actor-networks operating at the Adavipalli APCFM context, figure 8.1 has been used. This graphical presentation represents the non-linear and dynamic nature of actors' re-

lationships with each other thereby constituting the network in its entirety. This figure presented below portrays organised non-linearity (in terms of hierarchy of power positions) in the complex actor-networks at the Adavipalli VSS level. However, this does not mean that this is the only actor-network operating at the grassroots level. The figure given below is only intended to serve as a guideline for understanding the complexity in actors' relationships with each other at any given instance in Adavipalli APCFM context.

Figure 8.1
Basic non-linear actor-network of Adavipalli
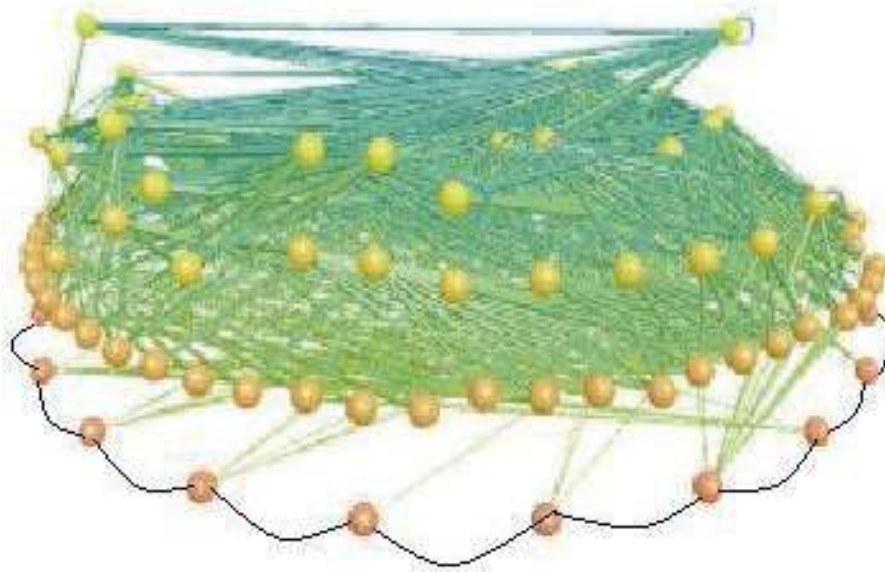
Source: Figure of complex network of 'Food web' used in Strogatz (2001: 269), is adapted and redesigned to suit the present context.

The nature of actors' relationships with each other and with the overall network is non-linear and complex as shown in figure 8.1. This actor-network has the APFD and the FNGO at the top of the network forming the nodes at the top level; the nodes at the second level represent

actors comprising the new elite, VSS members and of the Adavipalli village. The penultimate row of nodes represents the general body of VSS, with the bottom layer of nodes representing the traditional elite class and other community-based actors operating remotely in the Adavipalli context.[1] The linking lines in the network represent the relationships of various actors with each other, as well as the placement and strength of each actor in the larger network. The most well connected actors in the Adavipalli network are the SC, ST and the new elite leadership.

The actor-network theory with its emphasis on the overall system,—the larger actor-network, rather than on the particulars of individual social actors helps in analysing the larger actor-network level dynamics and their influence on the intervention process and outcomes. Specific actors have significance only in relation to the broader network of which they are part (Latour 1999; Law 1999). In a network, elements retain their spatial integrity by virtue of their position in a set of links or relations (Law 1999: 6). As shown in figure 8.1, each actor has its place in the order of things by virtue of its placement in the network and its functioning and vice-versa. For instance, the FNGO as a key actor in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention gets its status by being linked to the APFD and the new elite leadership. The same is true for the new elite leadership of the Adavipalli VSS as it takes the position of VSS leader by virtue of its connections with and representation of the *Yanadi* and SC communities.

Specific dynamics operating within the larger actor-network in Adavipalli can be analysed by focusing on issues like the politics of decision-making, power sharing and negotiations between individual actor-networks and at the same time the collective relationships of all these actor-networks functioning in the whole intervention. However, as pointed out by Long and Van der Ploeg (1989: 226) there is a gap between theory and practice in rural development interventions, as the focus of the intervention may not always be the focus of the local actors involved in it. For example, while the Adavipalli VSS is established to implement the APCFM intervention as envisioned by proponents—the World Bank, the Indian and AP state governments, grassroots level actors participating in it—like the new elite leadership and the *Yanadi* community have their own interests and priorities to achieve. For example, some of the major goals of the *Yanadi* while participating in Adavipalli APCFM intervention are to enhance their livelihood security, gain better access to and

control over forest-based resources and to gain legal rights over their housing area. This is slightly different from the goal and aim of APFD, namely the conservation of the forest.[2]

Nevertheless, grassroots level actors like the *Yanadi* and the new elite leadership plays along with the designs of the intervention proponents, and devises their own ways around proposed structures, intervention practices and institutions taking shape through the intervention to achieve their short-term and long-term objectives. This is done by forming actor-networks and negotiating with the set of intervention processes.[3] For example, the process of emergence of new elite class in the Adavipalli context demonstrates how local actors take internationally sponsored interventions as opportunities to network, to prosper socially and politically and legitimise their respective roles within the span of that intervention.[4] However, the actors that benefit from these interventions may not always be the ones who need them the most. At the same time, it is also true that the benefits did not always reach those with the greatest need. For instance, a poor BC female-headed household has not benefited from the intervention as the major actor networks functioning in the Adavipalli context are male dominated. All her informal connections and kin networks rescued her from complete breakdown. But, the more mainstream actor-networks (e.g. new elite + ST + SC actor network) operating at the grassroots level via the Adavipalli VSS are out of reach for her on account of her limited access to informal social networks as a widow with limited assets at her disposal (Source: Participant observation).

The complex webs of power relations that occur in the larger actor-network (figure 8.1) render dynamism and interdependency to its functioning. Each actor in the network depends on every other actor to maintain unity and to ensure sustenance of the actor-network. Each part of the larger actor-network is at the same time representing/comprised of several smaller parts of a whole, while acting as a smaller part of the larger actor-network. Thus, the nature of relationships within the larger actor-network regulates the quality of the outcome of actors' interactions. These non-linear power relations simultaneously regulate the behaviour of various actors comprising the nodes of this network, while determining the functioning of the whole actor-network. For instance, although the new elite leadership and facilitating NGO leadership are on the same level of influence within the informal arrangement of the inter-

vention, due to its strong connections the new elite leadership becomes a stronger node in the larger network as opposed to the FNGO. At the same time, by virtue of being the strong node with complete trust and support from the ST (*Yanadi*) and SC (*Mala & Madiga*) communities, it negotiates with the FNGO and the APFD through its status as VSS leadership.[5] These interactions between the new elite group and FNGO continuously change the power dynamics at the larger network level, consequently regulating the functioning of the network.

However, the facilitating NGO prevails on average over the strong persuasions and negotiations on account of its acquired status as the 'agent' of the APFD at the Adavipalli range level. During my stay in the Adavipalli community, I observed at least six instances of subtle conflict of interest between the new elite led network and the facilitating NGO leadership. One of the significant conflicts happened over the issue of evaluation of the FNGO's performance in Adavipalli VSS. The new elite leadership preferred to have a general body meeting before the evaluation forms were filled out, whereas the facilitating NGO leader preferred a closed evaluation in the VSS Executive Committee meeting. After long deliberation, the facilitating NGO leadership convinced the new elite to have a closed evaluation.[6] Although there was a lot of push from the new elite leadership for an open evaluation, the facilitating NGO not only managed its way around pressure from the new elite, but also managed to fill the evaluation forms in its favour. More interesting was to observe how the facilitating NGO leadership turned the whole situation to its advantage. There were not many verbal exchanges taking place between the new elite leader and the facilitating NGO leader in public (when I and few other VSS members were with them). After insisting twice for a general body meeting, the FNGO leader told the new elite leader that there would be some grant coming in near future for the village and VSS development, and that the FNGO was asked to write a petition for the grant by the APFD. At this point, the new elite leader started giving in to the FNGO and its proposal for a closed evaluation. Once the new elite leader gave in the rest of the VSS members present gave a positive evaluation of the FNGO. However, the rest of the evaluation forms were left to be filled at a later date, which the FNGO finished at its convenience.[7]

The nature of negotiations and the ensuing outcomes within the larger network depends on the quality of relationships between actors.

For instance, the process of negotiations between the *Yanadi* and the new elite leadership plays a major role in determining the success or failure of the new elite class and thus affects its legitimacy as the leadership of the Adavipalli VSS. Latour (1987: 144), observes symmetry in the efforts of inventors of networks to enrol and control human and nonhuman resources. New elite leadership has made such efforts towards enrolling and controlling the *Yanadi* and SC communities in order to legitimise its hold over the functioning and decision-making processes of the Adavipalli VSS. The enrolment of the *Yanadi* and the SC communities by the new elite in its network happened over a lengthy temporal dimension of more than 15 years (from 1992 to present)[8]. While negotiating for SC and ST housing rights and other matters of significance, the new elite leadership gained credibility and respect from the SC and ST at the Adavipalli village level, and with the facilitating NGO and the APFD at the forest range level. These strong relational ties also enhanced new elite leadership's chances of continuing as the Adavipalli VSS leadership throughout the intervention, without a serious challenge from other actors. To show all these intricate relationships in graphic format is next to impossible, but an attempt is made here (figure 8.2) to show a particular phase of the major actor-networks and their relationships with each other constituting the larger actor-network at the grassroots level in Adavipalli at any given instance.

In this picture, there are skewed networks/hubs comprising strong and weak connected actors involved in the intervention. The nodes with most links signify the strong position of those actors (e.g. the new elite leadership) connected to each other strongly. At the same time, the nodes with less links represent the actors (e.g. OC sections of the Adavipalli) with weak relations/connections with the actor-networks operating in the APCFM intervention at the grassroots level. These strong and weak actor-network connections are represented through thin and thick webs of relationships. The richer the hub (e.g. the centrally located hub of the new elite leadership of VSS with the most substantially linked nodes), the stronger its influence is on the function of the larger network. For example, in this figure the nodes with the most connections represent the new elite leadership, the facilitating NGO and APFD officials. Consequently, these actors have more influence over the decision-making process at the Adavipalli VSS level. Various actors co-habit different actor-networks simultaneously, drawing from any/all of them dur-

ing various spatial and temporal dimensions depending on their relative position/status/influence in specific actor-networks. For instance, the new elite leadership co-habits the VSS network and the network of the APFD and FNGO personnel and draws legitimacy from both networks at the same time. The relative strong position of the new elite leadership enables tapping the power relations to negotiate in its interest. Whereas, the women's network across caste lines (comprising the *Yanadi*, BC and SC women) struggles to tap the same networks due to their week position in the larger actor-network, and also due to various systemic factors such as the gender-based exclusivities discussed in detail in chapter 6. Instead, they depend largely on the informal networks active at various levels in the Adavipalli community.

Figure 8.2
Unorganised non-linear actor-network in Adavipalli context
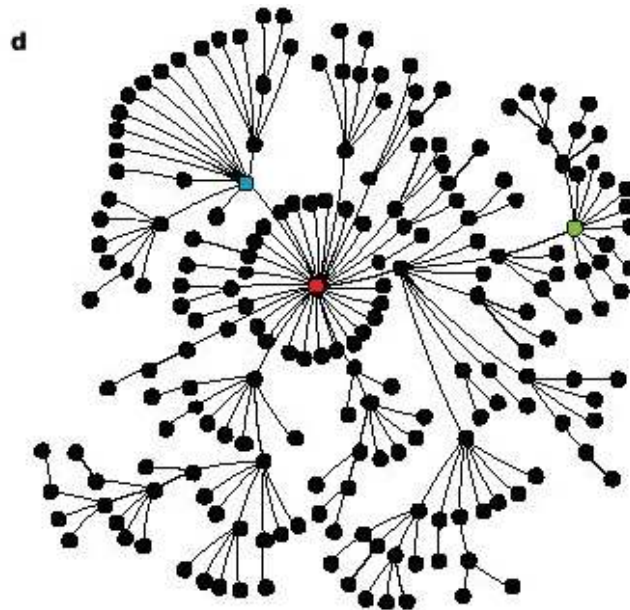
Source: Scale-free graph, adapted from Strogatz (2001: 271).

A non-linear, unorganised and closer to realistic presentation of the broad actor-networks in the Adavipalli context is attempted here (figure-8.2) to throw light on actors' relations with each other and their position in the broader network. This network is an amalgamation of heterogeneous[9] materials (human and non-human), which enables the co-existence of both spatial and temporal facets of social relations (Murdoch 1998: 360). Latour (1994: 792, cited in Murdoch 1998), argues that it is the mixing of human actions and non-human materials that ensure these actor-networks to both endure beyond the present and remain stable across space. In this graphic presentation (figure-8.2) even non-human actants like that of the 'landscape', 'micro plan' and 'minutes book' of Adavipalli VSS are represented to show the continuum of human and non-human entities in forming a complex non-linear and relatively unorganised actor-network in Adavipalli APCFM context.

Various human and non-human entities came together to form a random heterogeneous network comprising socio-technological, ecological, economic and political relations as they take shape within the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. In Adavipalli context, the endogenous actor-networks (e.g. new elite network) are connected to each other through non-human actants like that of the 'Adavipalli landscape', which cultivates their interdependency at the livelihoods level. Other non-human actants are 'micro plan' or 'minutes book', which provide the necessary space for various actors like VSS leadership (new elite class) and FNGO to draw legitimacy for their claims from them. These non-human texts/entities co-exist along with other human actors/subjects in a given network. 'Objects' are never only objective and neutral; they solidify the social relations and allow them to endure through space and time in the networks. These objects contain and reproduce other times and other spaces into the here and now of the network (Murdoch 1998: 360). For example, all parties concerned at the grassroots level in Adavipalli even if they were not part of the consultation team must follow the decisions and guidelines incorporated into the 'micro plan'. The decisions and plans recorded in the micro plan solidify the scope of action for concerned actors at the village level, as they participate in the intervention and relate with the other key actors like the new elite leadership, the FNGO and APFD personnel. Micro plan as a text is used to control and regulate community-based actors by the facilitating NGO every time

there is a new request (which is unplanned by the powerful actors like the APFD) sprouting from the Adavipalli VSS members.[10]

This larger network of actors (figure 8.2) in turn is comprised of smaller and skewed (in terms of linkages) networks/hubs of actors connected through both human and non-human actants (Murdoch 1997: 731-56). The non-human actants act as nodes of connectivity and relationality for actors engaged in relations with each other based on number of factors like common interests, institutional attributes, sharing similar decision-making powers (especially with regards to the nexus between the APFD and the FNGO) with regards to the VSS, etc. For example, the 'minutes book' of VSS is used by the facilitating NGO and the VSS leadership to legitimise claims regarding the activities taken up by the Adavipalli VSS *vis-à-vis* encouraging all actors' participation in the conservation intervention. The fact remains that these claims are very often not verified by the APFD, as they are legitimised through the mere fact that these claims will not be recorded in the minutes book if they were not true.[11] On the other hand, the weaker actors like the *Yanadi* and SC do not challenge the hierarchy of key actors like the FNGO and new elite leadership by demanding access to the minutes book. This actually leaves the claims made in the minutes book unchallenged for their validity, as these weaker actors may avoid going against the status quo to get access to the minutes book.[12]

Throughout this legitimisation process, the minutes book becomes an important actant/node and plays an important role in keeping the connections between the VSS leadership and the facilitating NGO while they demonstrate their accountability to intervention proponents like the World Bank and the AP state government. At the same time the minutes book also performs the legitimate function of serving as the reference point/statement of the nature of Adavipalli VSS functioning for an officer inspecting the functioning and implementation of the APCFM intervention in Adavipalli. In similar fashion, 'micro plan' is also used to legitimise the goals and processes proposed to attain these goals by the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, and the facilitating NGO in the name of the Adavipalli VSS. Thus, the texts like the minutes book and the micro plan take the role of supportive nodes in colouring the whole intervention in favour of dominant actors like that of APFD, FNGO and elite sections of the community including the new elite leadership.

The degree of complexity of visualising such actor-networks is minimised in the following graphical presentation (figure 8.3) of a simplistic visualisation of the network of the *Yanadi* community (ST) members of Adavipalli village. The following figure provides an idea of how within a rather closed actor-network, various actors engage in relationships with each other and give activeness to the whole network. The fact that the actors in this network are close to each other does not mean that they are aloof from the larger network (figure 8.2). On the contrary, these smaller networks come together to form the major actor-network of the intervention in the Adavipalli APCFM context. In the case of the *Yanadi,* community leadership constantly represents and engages in negotiations with other key actors comprising the larger actor-network.

Figure 8.3
Actor-network of Adavipalli Yanadi community members
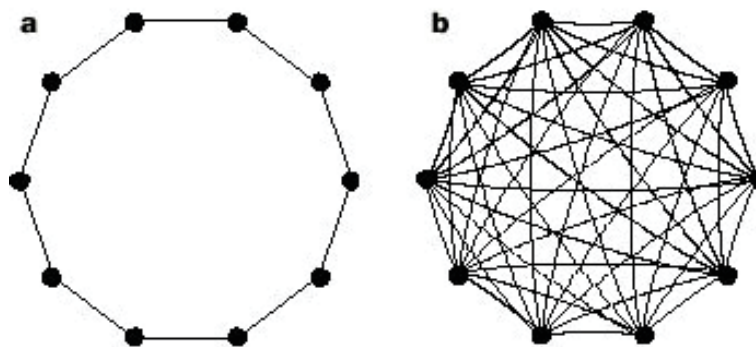
Source: Strogatz (2001:269); Legend: a) ring of ten nodes connected to their nearest neighbours (of the *Yanadi* community) forming a complete actor-network; b) fully connected actor-network of ten nodes.

In this figure, two crucial facets of the *Yanadi* network are represented to show visually how the *Yanadi* form into an actor-network and at the same time engage with each other through their network, producing a complex web of relations with each other. Since the *Yanadi* community is rather closed and stable on ethnic lines, their actor-network remains relatively closed. In this actor-network of *Yanadi* community members, their

interactions are represented by connecting lines in the b-part of figure
8.3. However, the *Yanadi* actor-network is closely integrated through its
leadership with other important actor-networks such as those of the SCs
(*Mala & Madiga* communities) as the other VSS dependent community,
and the BC actor-network, which is headed by the new elite leadership of
the Adavipalli VSS.

Figure 8.4 presents an observation from the field site as a case to ex-
plain how actors form networks through establishing relationships with
various actors coming from other caste and class backgrounds (gender
cuts across these categories). In this figure, there are two levels, repre-
senting the key nodes connecting the other actors in the top level of the
figure and the nodes that connect to these nodes through their institu-
tional attributes. The top level nodes represent actors like the BC com-
munity comprising the new elite leadership of the VSS/ FPC Executive
Committee and the lower level shows how people from the ST and SC
communities (across caste, class and gender categories) connect to these
powerful actors through their membership in the Adavipalli VSS.

Figure 8.4
Actor-networks in Adavipalli VSS
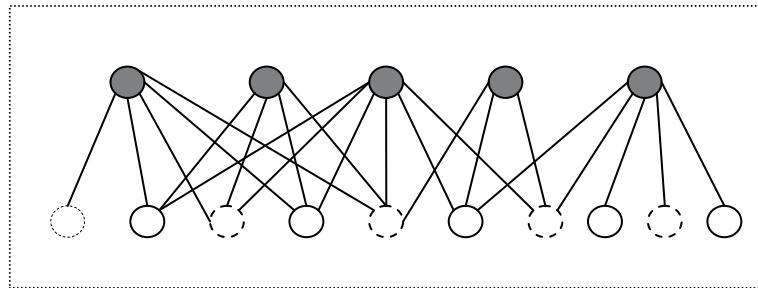
Source: Author's field data,

Legend: ⬤ -- The BC community members comprising the new elite class

◌ -- The SC community members with membership in the VSS

◯ -- The ST (the *Yanadi*) community members with membership in the VSS

In this actor-network, the weaker actors coming from the SC and the
ST communities draw from the strong and well-connected actors coming
from the BC sections of the village by engaging in the VSS as members

of the Executive Committee. One of the well-connected nodes (with six connections) in the middle of the top level represents the network of female members across caste lines. These female members from the second level (the SC and the ST/the *Yanadi*) heavily depend upon the female vice president of the Adavipalli VSS for communication and negotiation purposes within the VSS. As shown in the above figure, there is a clear hierarchy and status quo operating at the grassroots level of Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

Actors not only gain access to power positions and resources by being a part but also claim their rightful positions as key actors in the intervention process through their engagement in these actor-networks. However, as demonstrated through the above illustrations there are numerous shades of actors' involvement across structural and agency-based lines spanning through various spatial and temporal dimensions of these actor-networks. There are positive and negative outcomes every time an actor engaged in the actor-network such as that of the VSS resulting in affecting not only the outcome of the action, but also affecting the position/rank of the concerned actor and the overall network dynamics as well. Hence a clear analysis of the type of connections between actors (+, - or ±), terms of connections, strength of connections, structure of networks and position of actors within these networks is important to understand the nature and affect of power relations that occur inside these actor-networks in Adavipalli context.

The power relations between all the key actors engaging in the APCFM intervention make the intervention process take various shifts and turns as it progresses in the spatial and temporal dimensions. The following section gives an idea to the reader of the nature of negotiations and power relations operating at the level of the larger actor-network at the grassroots level in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

8.3   Caste, Class and Gender-based Power Relations Across Actor-networks

Mapping the type of connections between actors, terms of connections, strength of connections, structure of networks and position of actors within these networks help in analysing power relations within these actor-networks. Various manifestations of power, such as power over (controlling power), power against (resistance), power with (in solidarity), etc. (Schmitt 1995; Scott 1985) along with more entangled and embed-

ded relationships of power including power alongside, power from be-
neath and power in-spite-of; are ever present in these actor-networks
(Rocheleau 2006: 2). A range of other forms of power in terms of its
enabling and transformative/positive character appears in the Adavipalli
APCFM context as well. This section gives various illustrations from the
Adavipalli context to prove the simultaneous co-existence of all these
manifestations of power in several instances like those of actors' formal
and informal participation in decision-making processes at the VSS level,
and in their everyday engagement in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention
through their respective actor networks.

Various actors engaged in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention experi-
ence a combination of all the manifestations of power exercise, both at
the giving and the receiving ends. Each actor co-habits multiple net-
works, occupying multiple power positions, and engaging in multiple
pursuits of its interests amidst varying power dynamics. For example,
women from various caste and class cross-sections of the community are
members of multiple formal and informal actor-networks including the
VSS in order to meet their everyday livelihoods. They are well placed and
well connected in some informal networks such as, the kin groups, self-
help groups, etc., but may be in weaker positions in the VSS network.

In addition, an actor like the *Yanadi* leader may be better placed in his
own *Yanadi* actor-network, but at the same time, he may be a subject of
subliminal subordination within the VSS actor-network despite his legally
equal position alongside other VSS members coming from the higher
caste/class category. Accordingly, his perceptions, decisions and actions
will carry significant impact on his own network, at the same time they
may not stand a chance of surfacing in the larger actor-network at the
Adavipalli VSS level. On the other hand while engaging in negotiations
within their own actor-network, with the other *Yanadi* community mem-
bers; the *Yanadi* leadership may successfully increase its sphere of influ-
ence both at the *Yanadi* community level and at the larger VSS and vil-
lage level as well. Thus, actors' relative positions and its connections with
other actors in various networks bear a significant mark on its power po-
sition and the related network-based dynamics.

The co-existence of these positive and negative types of connections
between various actors inside the larger actor-network of Adavipalli in-
tervention results from the nature of negotiations they engage in with
each other, the strength of their connections as well as the structure of

the network itself. For example, the new elite leadership while negotiating with the APFD and the FNGO on issues related to the financial decision-making processes at the VSS level, experiences the dominating power of the powerful actors, despite its strong connections with the same. In addition to the covert pressure exerted by FNGO leadership and the APFD to dictate the outcome in their favour, there is also a self-inflicted latent pressure on the new elite, based on its long-term existence, legitimacy and sustenance-based interests to fall in line with the designs of the FNGO and the APFD in the Adavipalli context. In spite of this enormous pressure, due to its strategic position in the larger actor-network at the VSS level, the new elite leadership manoeuvres the dominance of the APFD and FNGO personnel in order to accommodate the interests of the villagers and VSS members in such a way that will not result in posing a direct challenge to the authority of the dominant actors.[13]

The outcome of this complex negotiation process has been mixed, it was positive in the sense of enriching the negotiating capabilities of the weaker actors at the grassroots level (the *Yanadi* and SC), along with those of the new elite leadership in the face of all the dominating power of the APFD and the FNGO. In addition, it is positive in terms of yielding a better share of VSS wages for labour and related issues like providing food during VSS workdays for the Adavipalli community. The negative effects (such as the domination of the APFD and FNGO over VSS leadership and members) of the negotiation process itself enabled strengthening of the bonds between the new elite leadership and the weaker actors, while also consolidating the relative power position of the new elite in the larger actor-network at the Adavipalli VSS level. Here in this instance, the new elite group occupies a spatial and temporal entity of the Adavipalli APCFM context where it contributes to the entire spectrum of positive and negative manifestations of power exercise such as the 'power to', 'power over' and 'power against' the VSS leadership.

Connections may be positive, negative or neutral in their effects on the connecting parties in any relation (Rocheleau 2006: 2), depending on the context in which the actors are engaging in the actor-networks. For example, the relations between the SC and ST (the *Yanadi*) members of the VSS remain neutral in spite of the incremental benefits accrued by either side in each instance of negotiation. The fact that the new elite is committed to ensure the percolation of benefits to either side (both the

ST and SC) puts them in a neutral position *vis-à-vis* the VSS at Adavipalli level. Thus, actors' engagement in these actor-networks results in a continuum of positive, negative and neutral effects and manifestations of power exercise in the Adavipalli APCFM context.

8.4   Power, Negotiations and Participation of Actors

Negotiation processes between and across various actor-networks result in incremental transformations in the power position of each actor within their own networks and in the overall actor-network at the VSS level. However, as discussed in the previous section even if the actors' are well connected within their own network (e.g. women VSS members), there are external systemic factors emanating from the larger actor-network determining the boundaries of that actor's scope of participation in the intervention process. For instance, Lalithamma's position as vice president does not automatically give her power to act like one. On the contrary, her informal everyday social positioning within the community influences her formal role in the VSS network. Thus, an individual's position within the actor-network is not a guaranteed entitlement to exercising her agency, but is bound by external regulation of how the individual views her position in the network and how she may act with it (ibid).[14]

Gibson-Graham (2006 quoted in Rocheleau and Roth 2007: 2) explain that "nuanced notions of power can be found in the skilful play, ambiguous meaning and pragmatic affiliations in patron-client relations as well as patriarchal families and political parties". An example of negotiation process between the VSS Executive Committee and APFD and FNGO personnel gives us the opportunity to appreciate the complexity and nuanced nature of power exercised in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. Various actors with the VSS membership participate in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention in differing capacities. The caste and class-based dynamics influencing the participation of actors' in the decision-making processes at the VSS level follow a pattern of patron-client relationship. The APFD patronises the FNGO and the new elite leadership of the VSS in order to propagate its perceptions of the intervention as it unfolds in the Adavipalli context.[15] Not only these perceptions form the basis for the relationships between the APFD and other key actors like the FNGO and the new elite leadership, they also dictate the nature of negotiations and their effects on the overall actor-network at the

Adavipalli VSS level. Because of this client-patron relationship between the APFD and the FNGO, the FNGO is completely co-opted by the AP forest department as an inside agent serving the purpose of the government, in controlling the community from the so-called 'selfish exploitation' of forests.

The other example for the same pattern of co-option can be found at the Adavipalli community level, in the form of co-option of 'invited' participatory spaces (Cornwall 2002) aimed at ensuring the gender-based equilibrium at the VSS level. The possibility of engagement of the marginalised actors is not a given, even if necessary mechanisms are created (Gaventa 2003: 5). The role of existing power relations largely determine the patterns of occupation of these spaces created through decentralised forest resource management via Adavipalli VSS.

As explained in the earlier example, the self-images of men and women (refer to chapter 6) inside the everyday life of the Adavipalli community influence their role and interactions in terms of managing, occupying and participating through these created/invited spaces at the Adavipalli VSS level. As discussed at length in chapter 6, the decentralised participatory spaces created for the purpose of ensuring women's participation in the conservation of forests, thereby strengthening their role and empowering weaker sections of the Adavipalli community in the long run have been co-opted by the larger power dynamics operating at the overall network level. Although there is co-option, the Adavipalli case showed (in chapter 6) that, despite the presence of the 'disciplinary power' emanating from the patriarchal control mechanisms, women do exercise their agency through the informal and less visible/public means of their everyday life. In a way the same disciplinary power that acts as a constraint on their movements and accepted norms of public and private behaviour also enables pockets of spaces for the exercise of their agency through less visible and cooperative means as opposed to overtly challenging existing patriarchal status quo at the VSS/village level (Kesby 2005; Masaki 2003, 2007). However, their direct participation in decision-making processes at the Adavipalli VSS level has been limited to endorsing the already made decisions coming from the above (e.g. APFD, FNGO, new elite leadership and patriarchal forces) as opposed to the vision of intervention proponents to promote their active and self-mobilised participation in the intervention.

In the same manner, participation of the weaker sections of the Adavipalli community through the VSS has been limited to that of a supportive role in the face of the over-arching power exercise through the larger actor-network in the Adavipalli context. For example, the participation of the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) and ST (the *Yanadi*) community members in the intervention has always been that of endorsing the decisions made by the powerful actors' without any real access to the decision-making power at the VSS level. Their participation can be characterised as oscillating among these forms namely, nominal, passive, consultative, activity specific and participation for material benefits. However, the same actors have also resorted to other forms of participatory engagement such as the functional and active participation even in the absence of real decision-making powers. The fact that various actors, ranging from the stronger to the weaker, resort to the adoption of multiple forms of participation depending on their position in their own and the larger actor-networks, the quality and strength of their connections with each other, with the system, and finally the nature of negotiations they engage in through these actor-networks, provides us with a frame of analysis for the operation of power relations inside the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

8.5   Conclusions

An over emphasis on formal processes and institutions in Adavipalli APCFM intervention has been analysed for being blind towards the historical context and social relations of the local community in question. Cleaver (2001: 42) demonstrates that local resource management practices are deeply embedded in the social relations, local norms and practices, and often override the newly institutionalised participatory mechanisms. This chapter elaborated on how people's participation may happen in other informal forms of participatory institutions other than those created through formal engineering of APCFM intervention. Adavipalli APCFM showed that formally designed invited spaces fell-short of their utility, as they did not incorporate local aspirations and informal societal practices.

Based on the discussion in previous sections, the following conclusions derive from the evidence emanating from the Adavipalli APCFM intervention. The first is to recognise that the positive/transformative/ empowering potential of power coexists with its negative/dominating/

oppressive form influencing the participatory spaces to constrain and at the same time enable social action. This confirms that power co-habits in all spatial and temporal dimensions of the Adavipalli landscape in its negative, positive and neutral forms. Second, the evidence from Adavipalli shows that all the participatory spaces are replete with, shaped and influenced by power relations (Cornwall 2002), present in the form of 'disciplinary power/ pastoral power' (Foucault 1982: 215). Third, the created/invited spaces in Adavipalli despite providing channels for the 'tyranny of participation' (Cooke and Kothari 2001) did provide pockets of manipulative spaces for the marginalised (women and the *Yanadi*) to transform and empower their positions in long run. Evidence from Adavipalli showed that multiple forms of participation simultaneously exist as a result of actors' engagement in multiple power relations connecting the formal and the informal social spheres.

Notes

[1] Refer to chapter 4 (section 4.4) for more details on key actors in Adavipalli APCFM context.

[2] Refer to chapter 7 for details on actor perceptions and agenda in Adavipalli APCFM context.

[3] Intervention processes in the Adavipalli context can be identified as forming actor networks; enrolling actors/allies in the network; negotiating through the network; preparation of micro plan; participation in VSS meetings and decision-making processes at the VSS level among others.

[4] Refer to chapter 5 for a detailed exposition of the emergence of the new elite class in the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM context.

[5] Source: Participant observation in Adavipalli in 2004-05.

[6] Source: Participant observation and in-depth interview with the new elite leader in September 2005.

[7] Source: Participant observation in September 2005.

[8] Source: Author's field data collected during 2004-05 in Adavipalli in Andhra Pradesh, India. Refer to chapter 5 for more details of this phenomenon.

[9] Refer to Law (1992) for a summary of the argument of network heterogeneity.

[10] The new elite leadership tried to request an amendment in the micro plan to maximise the work days available for the *Yanadi* and SC. This was suppressed by the facilitating NGO as impractical and lack of practical experience on part of Adavipalli VSS leadership (Source: Author's field data).

[11] On one occasion, I happened to gain access to the minutes book of Adavipalli VSS shortly after a general body meeting conducted in September 2005 by the facilitating NGO and the VSS leadership, for which I was invited to be the guest speaker. To my surprise, the minutes of the meeting drafted by the facilitating NGO were manufactured by issues that were not discussed in the meeting (for example, the awareness of AIDS). And the objections put forth by the women and the marginalised sections of the community on the species of saplings planted were not recorded at all.

[12] Source: Author's field data collected through participant observation during 2004-05. All the *Yanadi* community members of Adavipalli village are illiterate, and the literate members of the SC community do not actually confront the authority of the new elite leadership and the facilitating NGO. It is to my surprise the *Yanadi* women and men who are more active in negotiating with the stronger actors despite being illiterate as opposed to the relatively better educated SC community leaders of Adavipalli community.

[13] Source: Author's field notes from the Adavipalli setting during 2004-05.

[14] Refer to chapter 6 for elaborate explanation of the gender analysis of VSS membership and participation in the context of Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

[15] Refer to chapter 7 for a detailed analysis of actors' perceptions on the Adavipalli landscape, actors' role and on the APCFM intervention.

9 Findings and Conclusions

9.1 Findings and Conclusions

This thesis examined the role of power relations in regulating actors' participation and resulting transformations in the Adavipalli community during the APJFM/CFM intervention. It focused on the 'socio-political phenomena' of the decentralised environmental conservation intervention in Adavipalli to answer the research questions around participatory dynamics in invited spaces at the grassroots level. The analysis includes formal as well as informal platforms engaged in by key community actors like the SC, ST and the new elite. This concluding chapter collates the major findings of the thesis on actors' access to and participation in the invited spaces created through the community forest-management intervention in Adavipalli village of Andhra Pradesh.

This study also examined how formal participatory spaces created through Adavipalli APCFM intervention fall short of delivering equitable participation for actors involved in the intervention. Accordingly, two sets of research questions were developed to understand these phenomena. They are:

- How are the power relations influencing key actors' participation in Adavipalli APCFM intervention at the grassroots level? What are the implications for the functioning of formal participatory spaces created through the intervention?

- How/by, what means various actors engage with the formal and informal institutions operating in Adavipalli? How are the overall participatory dynamics influencing the process and outcomes of Adavipalli APCFM intervention?

These research questions addressed the manner in which power relations influence key actors' participation in Adavipalli APCFM interven-

tion. The means adopted by key actors while exercising power to get their interests materialised through both formal and informal institutions; and implications of the presence of these power relations for the functioning of formal participatory spaces; as well as their impact on intervention processes and outcomes have been investigated. The following discussion answers the research questions based on the Adavipalli experience and summarises the major theoretical findings of the study, and simultaneously explores what conclusions could be drawn from these findings to inform future research.

The key actors' in the Adavipalli setting are mutually dependent on each other through their varied levels of dependence on the socio-ecological landscape, which gets its dynamic character in turn due to their continuous engagement with it. This interdependence also emanates from the livelihood options/strategies of the poor and the marginalised sections like that of the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) and the ST (the *Yanadi*) among other marginalised groups like forest dependent women from middle and lower rungs of the caste ladder. The *Yanadi* have been and are directly dependent on the new elite class for their daily employment apart from relying on other local landowners belonging to the *Reddy* community for seasonal agricultural labour. However, as the new elite class has continuously been delivering to the SC and ST communities of Adavipalli both through formal and informal means, they enjoyed mutually stable ties in comparison to the *Reddy* community who occupied the traditional elite class. The new elite on its part has been constantly representing the needs and aspirations of the ST and SC sections of Adavipalli community by providing employment opportunities and fall back social security mechanisms. Through consistent performance the new elite leader Samayya has gained respect and trust from both the Adavipalli community as well as the APFD. Evidence from Adavipalli showed that the new elite leadership could also simultaneously manoeuvre other powerful actors like the traditional elite (*Reddy* landowners who control the majority of productive resources within Adavipalli landscape); the APFD (which is yet to relinquish controlling authority); and the facilitating NGO (which has been successfully co-opted by the APFD).

Adavipalli evidence shows that the presence of normalised and dispersed 'disciplinary power' in actors' everyday functioning influenced the ways in which key actors conformed to the prevailing social norms

and informal institutional practices within the intervention setting. Similar phenimenon has been reportted by Masaki (2006: 722) in his work with HIV/AIDS fora in the African continent. These informal social norms through which actors' conformed to the insidious disciplinary power included actors perceptions on their caste, class and gender-based roles and positioning in the Adavipalli society; their perceived best interest both within the institutional set-up as well as actor-networks; their gendered self-perceptions and self-images as well as the socially acceptable code of conduct and behaviours. Evidence showed that key actors like the new elite, ST and SC while engaging in the formal participatory spaces followed the same set of informal social norms and practices, thereby rendering informality to their formal roles.

Actors of Adavipalli based their interactions and negotiations on individual and group/network-based agency, while simultaneously drawing on their historical ties of dependence on the Adavipalli village and forest landscape. Adavipalli community is heterogeneous in terms of its livelihoods, degree of dependence on forest-based resources, access to and control over productive resources along the caste, class, ethnicity and gender axes (Refer to chapters 4-8). This heterogeneity and power asymmetry reflected in actors' access to, control over and capacity to exploit the endogenous informal institutional structures. Their access to and control over the exogenous formal institutions such as the VSS also reflected the same level of power asymmetries; especially while they engaged in the formal participatory spaces and processes characterising the Adavipalli APCFM intervention.

Community-based actors like the *Yanadi* participating in the formal participatory spaces of Adavipalli VSS were influenced by the power relations they engaged in at the informal level while negotiating their livelihoods and access to productive resources of their landscape. Hence, their participation as VSS members was also coloured by their loyalty to the new elite class. By virtue of their membership in the new elite's actor-network, marginalised actors like the *Yanadi* and lower caste women could also minimise the potential transaction costs of participating through formal spaces. These costs for the *Yanadi* and the poor women included their livelihood security and bargaining power. Based on their situated agency as part of the new elite actor-network, they acted in compliance with the new elite class both within formal and informal institutional structures functioning in the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM inter-

vention. This compliance has its roots in the fact that the new elite leadership has proven itself to be capable of efficiently representing their interests successfully in both informal and formal institutional structures.

This complex play of power relations through actors' resource-based interdependence, their informal interactions and negotiations through various grassroots level networks strongly influenced their participation in the formally provided participatory spaces. As a result, both the new elite network and the APFD and FNGO alliance successfully extended their informal behaviour, interactions, alliances and arrangements while engaging in the VSS. This phenomenon was captured by this study primarily through the new elite leadership's constant representation of the ST and SC communities of the Adavipalli community at the VSS; and through the general functioning of facilitating NGO.

While the new elite's representation in the VSS fostered gradual transformation in social positions of the ST and SC sections (including women to a certain extent) over a period of time, it has provided a medium for key actors including women; the SC and ST from using direct avenues of participation provided through formal institutions. The most powerful actor, the APFD also contributed to the co-option of the formally created participatory spaces in VSS, through continuing its control over implementation of the intervention at the grassroots level. This was possible through APFD's co-option of the facilitating NGO for surveillance and manipulation of community based actors.

Exercise of power by various actors and actor-networks participating in the APJFM/CFM intervention and its implications for intervention has been explained in Adavipalli context. The marginalised actors like the *Yanadi* and women from lower castes have been nominated as members of the VSS as per official guidelines. In Adavipalli, the new elite class under the surveillance of the APFD and the FNGO presided over this process of nomination. Lack of real power to participate in decision-making activities of the VSS contributed to their token participation. It is analysed through participant observation that this tokenism is largely also voluntary on part of some community-based actors like female VSS members of Adavipalli. Adavipalli case proves that this voluntary tokenism' has its roots in the opportunity costs incurred by the marginalized actors. Actors' agency to draw on these formal participatory spaces of Adavipalli directly depended on the opportunity costs they incurred as the least powerful actors battling for their livelihoods.

Apart from this, the gendered roles and perceptions regulating the everyday interactions between the key actors also were found to have influenced the participation of female members of the VSS. Adavipalli evidence showed that female members are being used as figure heads in formal participatory spaces for legitimising VSS functioning. The core activities of VSS like that of consultation, deliberation and decision-making remained more or less forbidden territories for these marginalised actors. The APFD and the facilitating NGO also colluded to exclude actively marginalised actors like women and the Y*anadi* from formal VSS meetings and other participatory forums intended for decision-making purposes. The role of APFD and the facilitating NGO in nurturing these skewed participatory processes at the VSS level is a factor that cannot be ignored while making sense of the functioning of the larger Adavipalli APJFM/CFM intervention. It is evident from the Adavipalli case that the power relations operating at the grassroots level thoroughly influenced the participation of various actors' within the formal participatory spaces of APCFM intervention.

Despite these unintended consequences, on the brighter side marginalised sections of the Adavipalli community incurred tangible benefits. These include material benefits such as increasing livelihood opportunities leading to forest-based income for the ST and SC along with the legalised right to abode for the ST community. Gaining legal rights to their housing colony substantiated the social status of the ST community as part of the larger Adavipalli community. Adavipalli case also demonstrated that women gained some real benefits both by abstaining from direct participation as well as by accepting token participation at the VSS. Women of lower castes and classes who were dependent on the natural resources could also gain bargaining space within and outside their households through compliance with informal norms and practices operating within intervention processes (eg. right to collect NTFP). While this may symbolise transforming their relative power positions within their households, Adavipalli women have a long way to go before they experience gender equity in both formal and informal participatory spaces.

These benefits are not accrued entirely on account of direct participation of marginalised actors in formal participatory spaces of the APCFM intervention in Adavipalli. However if the APJFM/CFM intervention were absent, the ST and SC sections and the forest dependent women of

Adavipalli could have been deprived of the bargaining power they gained through negotiating and making trade-offs with the powerful actors in exchange for their direct participation in intervention processes. While Adavipalli evidence shows incremental benefits incurred by the marginalised actors, some also experienced significant transformation in their overall social positions. There have been intended consequences taking place in Adavipalli socio-political landscape such as the bettering relationship between community people and the APFD; local infrastructural development; community development through increasing forest-based livelihoods for the poor along with the creation of ST colony. There have been unintended consequences in the form of emergence of a new elite class and its growing control over the formal and informal institutions in Adavipalli; with the APFD's controlling attitude leading to the co-option of the facilitating NGO; and the exclusion and marginalisation of the poor and women from formal participatory arena. Both the intended and unintended consequences directly contributed to the transformations of actors' respective social positions in the Adavipalli setting.

The marginalised actors of Adavipalli village like the ST and SC made situational choices of enrolling themselves into the informal networks of the powerful actors operating in the Adavipalli social landscape. One of the major driving factors behind this choice as explained is their livelihood security. Adavipalli case shows that while making these situational choices actors are guided by the fact that the endogenous institutional structures like informal norms, practices and actor-networks deliver more permanent and tangible results in face of dynamic power relations than the exogenous top-down institutions like the VSS. As one *Yanadi* male VSS member claimed,

> Why bother ruling when the king is benevolent? As long as we have Samayya (the new elite leader) delivering for us we do not need any VSS membership or any decision-making power. Of course, VSS membership gives us other powers to bargain for our livelihood security in the forest and in the village.... Is it not foolish to stir the anger of the powerful people by sharing seat with them on the same level? Do you think we believe that these VSS and other such new arrangements will make us equal and powerful? Even if we manage to become powerful, we will still need help from the *Yadavas* and the *Reddys*, as they are the people with the real power and control over fertile lands.

The Adavipalli case has been a good example for testing the assumption that that the processes of negotiation among actors in a development intervention exert more influence over intervention processes and outcomes than predetermined plans, objectives, goals and strategies. Evidence from the Adavipalli APCFM case showed that the negotiations between various key actors participating through their networks of power resulted in an elite controlled, and yet participatory intervention process. Despite the creation of formal institutions and spaces for participation, Adavipalli community members actively depended on the traditional informal institutional practices and norms while engaging with each other and in the intervention. This shows that functioning of endogenous institutional structures is deep rooted in the social relations and networks operating within the Adavipalli landscape. In the face of the already existing and socially embedded informal institutional structures, a formal VSS ended up being another means to be co-opted into the already existing power asymmetries. This co-option of formal participatory spaces in Adavipalli VSS context can be interpreted in many ways. From the perspective of the interventionists, it may be analysed as a failure of formal participatory mechanisms initiated thoughtfully over a decade. On the other hand, for the marginalised sections of the Adavipalli community the creation of the formal participatory spaces created a new window of opportunity to enhance their respective bargaining capacities with the more powerful actors like new elite leadership and APFD. Thus, although there has been active and complete co-option of the formal participatory spaces within the Adavipalli VSS, it nevertheless proved beneficial for the less powerful actors like the ST (the *Yanadi)* and the female members of the VSS in their informal negotiations.

Through adoption of various informal means, all the key actors engaged in the larger Adavipalli APCFM intervention successfully manipulated the formal participatory spaces as well as the processes within the institutional structures such as VSS. Actors adopted multiple strategies and means to access these participatory spaces, which included consultation (ST, SC and new elite); networking (e.g. new elite network); negotiation (new elite network and FNGO), cooperation (e.g. new elite, the SC and ST); conflict (FNGO and community-based actors); manipulation (all actors and networks); and co-option (APFD and the FNGO) among others.

Implementation of the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM intervention has been characterised by the presence of these dynamic power relations in which actors' engaged on a daily basis through their respective actor-networks. These grassroots level interactions and negotiations between key actors of Adavipalli significantly influenced the implementation of APCFM intervention and resulted in the co-option of formal participatory spaces created through the intervention. Actors like the ST, SC and others indirectly participated in the intervention while the new elite leadership of the VSS represented their interests. Their informal interactions, power relations and institutional structures operating at the grassroots level significantly influenced Adavipalli actors' participation in the formal participatory spaces. Adavipalli case shows that power relations embedded in social negotiations of resource access and use between actors and networks at the grassroots level influence their participation in the APJFM/CFM intervention. It also proved that these power relations characterised the choices, interactions and negotiations of actors, while they participated in the formal and informal participatory structures through their networks. The preceding discussion answered the research questions in brief. Some of the major theoretical findings of this study are discussed below in detail to substantiate these answers.

9.2   Theoretical Contributions

The Adavipalli case showed that separation between the formal and informal institutional structures in the intervention context is not entirely clear and that they have always been interwoven as the actors who engaged in both these realms actually do not separate them in practice. Both of these realms flow into each other because of the interactions and power relations grassroots level actors like the ST and the new elite engaged in with each other and with external actors like the APFD and FNGO. These interactions and negotiations were the means through which, all actors that engaged in the intervention exercised power. Evidence from Adavipalli context proved that there is coexistence and co-operation between the formal and informal institutional structures within the intervention setting, wherein the key community-based actors constantly interacted, reflected and negotiated with each other through their respective actor-networks. These actor-networks are the hubs of power relations, where the formal and informal norms and practices collapsed into one unified network. For instance, the formal and informal roles of

the *Yanadi* were superimposed within the new elite actor-network, as the *Yanadi* VSS members were guided by the pragmatic leadership of the new elite. These actor-networks in turn engaged in the manipulation of both the formal and informal participatory spaces and processes to their advantage. Actor-networks in Adavipalli context are formed through the purposive socio-economic and ecological interactions and negotiations of actors to gain access to and control over the natural and social resources available in the Adavipalli landscape.

Actor-networks are the means through which various actors like the new elite and the *Yanadi* engaged with each other and with other key actors like the APFD and the FNGO. It is within these networks of interactions and negotiations that we found the merging and meeting points of the formal and informal institutional realms; the production of which thoroughly influenced the patterns, processes and outcomes of the participatory dynamics within the formal participatory spaces like the VSS. The Adavipalli experience indeed proved that 'actors' negotiations at the grassroots level exert more influence over outcomes and processes of intervention than the premeditated intervention processes'. Adavipalli case shows that in order for the state to share decision-making and management powers with communities in conservation interventions, decentralisation processes have to be reconceptualised as those directly involving informal networks of actors instead of formal institutions alone.

Contrary to the popular conception that, only dominant powerful actors exercise power, the evidence from the Adavipalli case indicates that all actors engaged in the Adavipalli CFM intervention setting exercise power . The exercise of power by the less powerful actors like the ST and SC sections appears in the manner in which they accessed productive resources like the forests for NTFP collection or securing their right to abode with the help of the powerful new elite leadership. The benefits accrued by the SC and ST also included the agricultural labour and forest-based work through VSS. Exercise of power by the new elite leader has been observed in its negotiations and deliberations with the APFD and the facilitating NGO with regards to planning for VSS labour. The new elite leadership repeatedly manufactured consent and legitimacy to represent the needs and aspirations of the marginalised sections of Adavipalli through its dual role as their leader in the informal sphere as well as a subordinate to the APFD while conducting the functioning of VSS. Here, both leadership and subordination patterns of the new elite

co-existed producing the optimum possible results for all the actors concerned. Adavipalli experience showed that 'empowerment' and 'subordination' are not mutually antagonistic, and that both patterns of subjection co-existed within the actor-networks while producing positive results for the Adavipalli community in general.

Actors in Adavipalli have over time successfully learned to exploit the presence of formal institutional structures while engaging and negotiating with each other within the boundaries of the constraining as well as the enabling informal institutional domain of Adavipalli society. This is how the actors of Adavipalli like the *Yanadi* and the new elite tried to gain maximum benefit out of the restricted scope of opportunities that opened up through the creation of 'invited spaces' through APJFM/CFM interventions. Power relations operating at the grassroots level restricted access to these formal spaces yet at the same time opened up spaces for bargaining for actors and networks seeking access to the socio-political and ecological resources available within Adavipalli landscape. They opened up pockets for bargaining and negotiation for the less powerful actors like the ST and SC of the Adavipalli community as well. This also proved that through their mutual trust and dependence the marginalised sections of the Adavipalli society and new elite leadership constantly supported each other's cause and managed to continue developing in their respective social spheres. They negotiated with each other on an everyday basis forming well-networked relationships that helped them to meet their mutual needs. They also could develop through careful exploitation of existing formal and informal institutional structures and processes within the intervention setting.

In the case of Adavipalli APCFM intervention, the devolution of power through VSS aimed at sharing the decision-making and management powers between the APFD and Adavipalli community. The Adavipalli evidence shows that APFD as an organisation has not yet been able to establish mutual trust with the marginalised sections like the ST in particular. This can be attributed partly to its historical background as the controller and manager of the forest resources. Adavipalli case shows that the APFD remain the *de-facto* controller, even while proclaiming itself a facilitator in community management of the forest. As claimed by Buchy and Hoverman (2000: 19), people from the community often come to the participatory processes expecting to gain greater control over the process while at the same time government agencies rarely want

to relinquish control. Evidence emerging from the Adavipalli case where the new elite, the SC and ST groups have been participating in the intervention in anticipation of gaining long-term benefits through owning the participatory processes confirms this claim. At the same time, the APFD tries to retain its control over the participatory institutions like VSS through the usage of the facilitating NGO for surveillance purposes. However, Adavipalli evidence also shows that the APFD officials have made efforts to develop a friendly relationship with the Adavipalli community through actively promoting the new elite leadership for the Adavipalli VSS.

The power relations that pervade the rural social fabric of Adavipalli also influence actors' participation in both formal and informal institutional structures. In case of Adavipalli community, the same power relations that help the marginalised to manage their livelihoods and gain access to various common pool resources on a daily basis paradoxically resulted in compromising their participation in the formal invited spaces. However, a careful actor-oriented analysis of the Adavipalli case indicates that this compromise was a decision tactfully made by the less powerful actors like the ST (*Yanadi*) and the other actors like forest dependent women.

Evidence from the Adavipalli case showed that the marginalised actors like the *Yanadi* and women Executive Committee members, as well as the powerful actors like the new elite made their choices regarding their formal participation in the VSS with an awareness of the costs and benefits involved in participation. Accordingly, the form and depth of participation differed from actor to actor, across formal and informal realms. At any given point in time, actors engaged simultaneously in both formal and informal institutional structures produced complex interdependent relationships.

Some female members stayed away from the informal discussions, as they were not invited and were not perceived needed by both the new elite leader and other male VSS members belonging to the SC and ST communities. The interesting aspect observed during these meetings is that the female VSS members had few complaints on their exclusion from these processes.

A female VSS member belonging to the *Yadava* (BC) community (the new elite class) mentioned,

I choose to stay out of the VSS stuff as that gives me space to negotiate with Samayya on things that are more important to me and my family like our next land lease for the coming season of agriculture. If I meddle with the VSS business, I may end up losing my respect and affecting my family's good ties with the rest of the Adavipalli community. So far, Samayya has delivered everything good for us and for the ST and the SC people as well. We are already thankful for these good deeds. Why would we want to upset our men and our community by over indulging in VSS matters?

Overall, the marginalised actors of Adavipalli gained benefits in their everyday livelihood struggles through trading-off their formal roles in the presence of a strong and trustworthy leadership of the new elite. New elite leadership while exerting control over VSS functioning simultaneously functioned as a catalyst for development of the marginalised sections like the SC and ST of Adavipalli through exploitation of these formal spaces of participation. One could argue from the Adavipalli evidence that the emergence of the new elite and its control over the intervention processes positively contributed to the transforming positions of the less powerful actors of Adavipalli community.

Adavipalli actors' interactions within these formal and informal institutional structures directly influenced the participatory dynamics within and around the formal spaces created through the intervention. For example, the informal networking ties and interactions between the ST, SC and new elite leadership outside VSS were found to have made significant impact on the way they interacted through the VSS in their formal roles. The new elite leadership as well as the ST and SC communities followed the same informal code of conduct (explained in chapters 5-8) in their formal roles as VSS Executive Committee and General Body members. While bringing forward their informal roles into the formal participatory spaces, the ST and SC left the decision-making responsibility to the new elites as they had accrued various benefits and witnessed upward mobility by a considerable margin (Source: Participant observation and in-depth interviews with villagers of Adavipalli).

All the types of participation quoted in Table 1.2 (Chapter 1) have been observed in the Adavipalli APCFM context across various actors ranging from the ST to the new elite. One of the undesired forms of participation- being told what is going to happen (passive participation) was observed in Adavipalli context across caste groups. For instance, BC women who were also members of VSS were almost always told what to

do and how to behave by their male counterparts of the new elite leadership. Though the SC and the ST were consulted by the new elite informally this has not reflected in the official VSS functioning in Adavipalli. Participation for material incentives like labour in exchange for food cash and other benefits is one of the major forms through which Adavipalli villagers (especially the SC and the ST) engage in on a day-to-day basis in APJFM/CFM intervention. This shows that actors value participatory spaces for instrumental returns. Functional participation where actors engage in implementing decisions already taken by APFD is also observed in Adavipalli context. Actors like the Yanadi and the SC and some female BC community members have been simultaneously engaging in functional participation along with participation for material incentives. Interactive participation has been observed while the new elite class had negotiated with the APFD and the FNGO for various short-term and lon-term benefits for the Adavipalli community as a whole while they engaged in APJFM/CFM. Also observed form of participation is self-mobilisation- and in Adavipalli the new elite section has been taking independent decisions as well as consulting with the APFD and FNGO. However, as pointed out by Drydyk (2005: 260), even self-mobilisation by the new elite section has not been able to challenge the underlined power assymetries in such a way to alter the status-quo in favour of the poor and the marginalized sections of Adavipalli.

This evidence shows that various actors simultaneously use one or more of these participatory forms depending on their respective power positions within the society. From Adavipalli evidence it can be concluded that participation as a pro-people technology operates on a broader scale including formal and informal institutional practices. Various forms of participation may vary in their results depending on the socio-ecological composition of concerned communities. Adavipalli case demonstrates that actors' like the *Yanadi* (ST) and the women tend to make their choices based on their everyday livelihood strategies. Hence, incorporating livelihood concerns of communities in the design of participatory processes is a definite way forward for any decentralised participatory natural resource intervention for maximising community ownership.

From Adavipalli experience, it is observed that participation, as a technique, is highly dependent on the power relations actors engage in; and the endogenous institutions operating in the intervention setting at

the community level. Accordingly, the affects of various forms of participation differ in their results depending on the agency and capacity of actors to draw on their respective actor-networks that characterise the endogenous institutional structures. Depending on the nature of power relations operating at the grassroots level, various forms of participation could result in multiple outcomes for the actors concerned. However, the fact that formal participatory spaces become yet another platform for the local power relations to play should not put us off from adopting participatory approaches. Evidence from Adavipalli showed that the opening of formal participatory spaces through VSS within such a dynamic power laden social setting contributed to the increasing social activity and raise in bargaining capacities of marginalised actors of the community.

Adavipalli demonstrated that actors' agency and their capacity to draw on their social networks has been the real driving force behind the development of the marginalised sections of the community. Although formal participatory spaces in Adavipalli fell short of achieving their intended functionality, they did play a crucial role in manipulating the endogenous institutional practices and transform these for the benefit of the marginalised community-based actors like those of the *Yanadi* and the women from lower castes (Source: Participant observation and in-depth interviews with villagers of Adavipalli). It may be hasty to brand the formal participatory spaces and institutions opened up in the Adavipalli context as inefficient because they did not deliver what the interventionists had intended from them. Evidence shows that actors benefiting from the Adavipalli APCFM intervention have done so despite abstaining from direct participation for strategic reasons. The tangible developments experienced by the Adavipalli community (Refer to Table 5.1) might not have taken place in the absence of participatory spaces through the formal institutional structures like the Adavipalli VSS. At the end of the day, the positive transformations in actors' social positions and their capacity to place a better bargain within their networks is worthy enough an outcome for community-based actors (e.g. ST men placing requests for more VSS-based labour in their networking with the new elite).

The Adavipalli case also shows that actors' self-perceptions on their roles and on the role of other key actors (discussed in chapter 7); including their gendered perceptions around costs and benefits of participation

serve as basis for their behaviour, actions, interactions, negotiations and participation in various formal platforms. This study discovered that actors' perceptions, responses and preferred extent/form of participation, as well as abstinence from participation were embedded in the informal institutional practices, patriarchal norms and power relations, which were continuously reproduced. Adavipalli case suggests that various actors interacting with each other and with the landscape of opportunities emerging through the intervention operated within a spectrum of bounded rationality as individuals and groups aware of the costs and benefits of participation as opposed to strictly being guided by a calculated rational choice.[1] For instance, the Adavipalli APCFM intervention was used very effectively by the new elite actor-network (which also includes the SC and ST groups) to gain tangible benefits from the APFD through its submission to APFD's authoritarian power and by its tolerance towards the overpowering presence of the facilitating NGO. This trade-off on the part of the new elite actor-network contributed in the long run towards consolidation of its own leadership in the Adavipalli socio-political landscape and also contributed to the development of marginalised groups of Adavipalli society.

The case of Adavipalli established that community-based forest management intervention provided a platform for interactions of various grassroots level actors situated in highly dynamic and asymmetrical power relations. The formal participatory structures like the Adavipalli VSS could not deliver to the poor and marginalised of the Adavipalli community despite their inclusivity through positive discrimination towards the SC, the ST and the women. However, the informal power relations of the poor with the new elite leadership delivered through the inclusion of their interests/preferences, protection of their livelihoods and social security leading to the betterment of their standard of living. Adavipalli case demonstrated how these actors with conflicting and cooperative interests render the Adavipalli APCFM intervention its paradoxical character of an elite controlled and yet participatory community-based conservation intervention.

It has been demonstrated through this thesis, that Adavipalli context is typically complex like many other rural communities and far from idealistic. All the community-based and officially designated actors are highly socially differentiated with varying socio-economic, political and ecological backgrounds, perceptions, capabilities and institutional attrib-

utes. As explained in chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 the livelihoods, perceptions, power relations and participation of key actors engaged in the APCFM intervention differ according to their placements in their own actor-networks and the larger Adavipalli APCFM network. Actors' varying interests and interactions also resulted in the relative transformation of their socio-economic and political positioning within these networks and the community in general over time. For example, the new elite, the SC and the *Yanadi* have undergone a significant level of upgrading in their relative social positions within the Adavipalli community owing to their continuous engagement in the APJFM/CFM intervention for past 15 years (refer to historical developments explained in Table 5.1 in chapter 5) .

However, these developments happened in a way peculiar and characteristic to the Adavipalli socio-cultural and ecological landscape. For instance, contrary to the popular projections of elite controlled projects resulting in further social and political exclusions of the marginalised at the grassroots level, the *Yanadi* and SC sections of the Adavipalli community benefited from the new elite leadership of the VSS. As explained in chapter 5 of this thesis, the making/emergence of the new elite has been one of the major developments which coincided with the implementation of Adavipalli APJFM/CFM intervention. By being accountable to the SC and the ST members of the VSS and the villagers in general, the new elite leadership provided the necessary lubricant for the VSS functioning amidst the overpowering presence of APFD and FNGO. The Adavipalli evidence shows that there has been broad-based community participation at the grassroots level through both the formal and informal spheres due to the reassuring presence of the new elite leadership.

Although participation of the marginalised actors like the ST (*Yanadi*) and the SC (*Mala & Madiga*) has been controlled and limited by the APFD and the FNGO, the new elite leadership provided ample space for these actors to negotiate their demands informally and proved itself a force to reckon with in face of restrictions and controls from dominant actors. It is important here to recognise that the new elite class of Adavipalli has not captured the VSS, but offered its guidance for the development of the Adavipalli community as a whole. As argued in chapter 5, although there is elite-control at the Adavipalli VSS level we did not find any actual evidence of misappropriation or capture of benefits by them.

There was clear evidence of new elite being instrumental in distribution of benefits time to those who needed them the most in Adavipalli community (e.g. the *Yanadi* and SC).

Despite the positive role played by the new elite leadership, and the creation of formal participatory spaces to ensure gender equity in the VSS Executive Committee, gender-based exclusions did take place in the Adavipalli APCFM setting. Chapter 6 presented evidence towards the presence of the complex play of gendered roles and perceptions at the heart of Adavipalli APCFM intervention. The gendered power relations operating at the Adavipalli VSS level have serious implications for women's participation in APCFM intervention. Adavipalli case shows that gendered exclusion in the formal and inclusion in the informal spheres happened simultaneously while the women were influenced by the patriarchal norms and practices operating at informal level. However, it is also observed that while female VSS members were used for token representation at the VSS, the same women were also found negotiating to increase their bargaining power at the intra-household level. These women also managed to exploit the social division of spaces into public and private. As mentioned by Lalithamma, the VSS vice president,

> I am now in a better position to bargain with my mother-in-law for everyday household decisions compared to earlier when I had no social status as the VSS vice president. Even if I don't make VSS decisions, now people in the streets respect me more and SC and ST women directly come to me for advice (informal discussion with Lalithamma in 2005).

Evidence provided in this thesis on the dynamics of female members' participation in Adavipalli VSS demonstrates that the formal reservation of democratic places for women is a necessary but not sufficient condition for gender equality and empowerment on its own. Instead, attention on the informal ways and means women adopted to gain access and control over natural resources to secure their livelihoods yielded better knowledge and appreciation of strategies they followed at the grassroots levels. Hence, this thesis observes that restricting gender analysis and attention to formal institutions alone is not sufficient to appreciate the complex gender dynamics operating at the grassroots level in highly stratified communities.

The analysis of gender-based dynamics operating at the Adavipalli APCFM intervention setting has been done through a general gender analysis framework incorporating elements of feminist political ecology

perspective along with feminist environmentalism. The evidence from Adavipalli case confirms that the complex interplay of gendered perceptions, power relations and gendered division of labour influenced women's participation in the formal participatory spaces. This confirms the assertion of feminist ecologists that women tend to have limited authority over formal decision-making processes and hence, the need for increased formal facilitation (Agarwal 1997b) in invited spaces. As observed by feminist political ecologists (Rocheleau et al. 1996), Adavipalli women were also excluded from formal participatory spaces owing to their lack of access to and control over productive resources. This lack of control over productive resources resulted in Adavipalli women engaging in informal networking as a strategy to negotiate access to the same. Evidence incorporated in chapters 6 and 8 showed that gendered exclusions were taking place through co-option of formal participatory spaces reserved for women, but at the same time enabled the increasing bargaining power for women within their households. Hence, it can be argued that these newly created spaces not only opened up new possibilities of intra-household bargaining for these women, but also paved the way for a gradual transformation in their relative social positions as in Lalithamma's case.

Actors' perceptions and choices are influenced by their relative value systems and their drawing upon existing institutional structures both in formal and informal ways. Perceptions of powerful (male) actors like the APFD, FNGO, new elite, and the SC and ST men on women's participation reflected that women should be members of VSS, but are not experienced or well versed enough with the implementation of decentralised APJFM/CFM intervention.[2] They facilitated for women being nominated as members of the Executive Committee, but have not facilitated their participation in decision-making at the VSS. They engaged most of the time in closed and private meetings and unilateral decision-making without extending an invitation for participation of female members of the community. Adavipalli case demonstrated that there is a thorough need for inbuilt gender analysis of the community in the APCFM intervention, substantiated with an analysis of gendered perceptions of key actors who tend to occupy key positions at the implementation level. Clearly, the evidence and insights Adavipalli case puts-forth stresses the need to understand that in the absence of risk-free and profitable institutional choices, and the presence of overpowering gender re-

lations, women prefer operating through informal corridors. In other words, the conceptualisation and vision around ensuring gender equal participation at the grassroots level should be re-channelled through ways involving few transaction-costs and risks for women participating in the intervention.

The Adavipalli case stresses the importance of taking note of the perceptions of key actors on femininities and masculinities as well as the socially acceptable behavioural patterns for both men and women. These perceptions have their roots in the ways actors relate to each other and their landscapes, along with their socio-economic and political background and life experiences within the Adavipalli context. Evidence from Adavipalli (summarised in chapter 7) has shown that these varying perceptions have a major impact on actor's everyday interactions and negotiations with each other and with the actor-networks operating in the intervention setting. These perceptions also depended on and regulated the levels of mutual trust, reciprocity and relative acceptance between key actors like that of the APFD, FNGO, new elite leadership and the *Yanadi*. Accordingly, the Adavipalli case also showed that actors' enrolment into actor-networks and their respective position within it determined the social position of actors as such. Actors like the new elite leadership were simultaneously active in more than one network at a time, providing essential bridges between key actors like the APFD and the *Yanadi* in the event of the FNGO's failure to act as a facilitator between APFD and Adavipalli community. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 accounted for developments leading to the complete co-option of the FNGO based on its political and economic dependence on the APFD. The FNGO's co-option in Adavipalli APJFM/CFM context can be partially attributed to slow transformation of APFD itself from controlling role to that of facilitator.

The grassroots level power operating at the heart of Adavipalli characterise the nature of key actors' participation in VSS. This thesis argues that power relations need not be always negative/dominating and oppressive. Evidence from Adavipalli demonstrates that the presence of powerful actors like the new elite contributed positively to development of marginalised sections like the *Yanadi,* the SC and BC. At the same time evidence demonstrated that authoritative attitude displayed by the facilitating NGO constrained efforts of strategic participation of marginalised sections like that of the ST (*Yanadi*) and SC (*Mala & Madiga*) men

and women resulting in counter-productivity to the functioning of Adavipalli VSS.

The co-existence of multiple forms of participation ranging from 'interactive participation' of new elite leadership to that of 'token/ dummy participation' of women in the Adavipalli VSS context shows the complex nature of the Adavipalli community's engagement in the APJFM/CFM intervention. Evidence in chapter 8 shows that actors enrolled in the Adavipalli VSS have adopted informal avenues of participation according to their relative positions, and their situation in the community. Marginalised actors like the ST and SC, and women across various caste groups indirectly engaged in the Adavipalli APCFM intervention through the new elite leadership negotiating on behalf of them. This is true especially for decision-making processes taking place at the VSS level. Adavipalli case demonstrated that when it comes to decision-making processes the APFD always prevailed over the new elite and other Adavipalli community members through its superior powers. It also used the facilitating NGO as its agent to uphold constantly its interests and authority at the VSS and over the Adavipalli forest landscape. However, actor-networks lead by the new elite with strong support from the *Yanadi* and SC communities managed to negotiate with the facilitating NGO and the overpowering APFD from time to time.

From Adavipalli evidence, one can conclude that disciplinary power regulating everyday lives of community members constrained the marginalised community members like the women and *Yanadi* in both the formal and informal arena but at the same time enabled social action and negotiation through subtle and informal ways and means. Analysis of interests, perceptions and self-images of women and men of the Adavipalli landscape (chapter 6) through adoption of actor-oriented approach revealed that disciplinary power acts through their common frame of reference, values and social knowledge (Foucault 1982: 208-26). This had significant implications for patterns of interaction between actors in both the formal and informal arena. For instance, in both formal and informal gatherings called by the FNGO or new elite leader, except when it involved seeking their signatures for endorsing a particular VSS decision; participation of female members was not given as much value as that of a male member's participation. While on one hand, female VSS members complained about this apathy from the FNGO and the other male VSS

members, on the other hand they preferred not to sit through these meetings as they may be branded bad women by the FNGO.[3]

Evidence from Adavipalli has shown that actors' self-images and perceptions do have a strong influence on their actions, strategies, agenda for participation and their relationships with each other and the networks. These self-images provided the key to analyse actors' interactions as they occurred on everyday basis in Adavipalli APCFM context. For instance, gendered self-images of SC men as bread winners and patriarchs gave them upper hand over ST men, as in the *Yanadi* community both men and women are considered equally responsible bread winners within the household. Accordingly, the agenda of men of each of these communities for participating in VSS differed. For instance, SC men considered it more a matter of pride to be recognised as VSS members apart from being the patriarchs of their household, while *Yanadi* men did share their pride at being a member in VSS equally with their women. The same attitude was displayed by the SC and ST groups while they engaged in their everyday business in Adavipalli community. Adavipalli case shows that social actors are likely to bring their values, perceptions and self-images to the table while participating in conservation intervention. Hence, a thorough analysis of gendered perceptions and self-images of key actors can be a good starting point for understanding actors' agenda for participation and decision-making.

The present study adopted actor-network theory (ANT) as a method to achieve a balance between agency-based and structural analysis of the Adavipalli APCFM case. As a tool ANT proved to be a great help in mapping actor-networks operating at the grassroots level in Adavipalli and helped in mapping the complex interplay of actors' interactions with each other as well as with their networks. Evidence from Adavipalli case showed that actor-networks operating at the grassroots level have been brought into being by virtue of their placement in the intervention setting. These actor-networks were comprised of community-based actors (e.g. *Yanadi* and new elite) as well as outside actors (e.g. APFD and FNGO). The functioning of major actor-networks like that of the new elite, APFD and other small scale networks (e.g. ST network) revolved around mediation and negotiation of actors' interests, and their agenda for participation within both the formal and informal institutional spaces ultimately influencing intervention outcomes. Hence, understanding actor-networks and power relations they engaged in within Adavipalli set-

ting helped make sense of the interplay between situated agency and structural factors that influence actors' participation in formal institutional structure like that of Adavipalli VSS.

While this analysis may indicate that actors in Adavipalli APCFM context make informed choices about their present and future course of actions keeping their interests in view, it is worth noting that Adavipalli case has proven that choices made by these actors are embedded in the situatedness of their social setting. Thus, these choices are regulated through institutional structures and networks in which actors are an integral part. This finding confirms the assertion of actor-oriented and actor-network scholars that social action is actor-oriented and is at the same time embedded in the larger social setting that influences the choice of actors in a situated manner (Law 1997: 3; Long 1992: 21; Long and Villareal 1998: 726; Long and van der Ploeg 1989: 226-7).

Experience of Adavipalli shows that participatory spaces as well as processes within the APJFM/CFM intervention were strongly influenced by power relations between local actors and actor-networks. Power relations were fluid and dispersed in all actor interactions in both formal and informal institutions of participation. Actors possessed the capacity to influence the functioning of these institutions through exercising their situational agency. Adavipalli evidence showed that while institutions embodied power relations between actors and networks, origins of actions that generated power relations existed outside these formal and informal institutions. These dynamic power relations were produced and reproduced within actor-networks, where actors interacted, reflected and negotiated with each other and with other actor-networks while drawing on their agency as well available institutional structures and landscape. This shows that key actors including the least powerful women and *Yanadi* were capable of exercising power irrespective of their exclusion and inclusion into these participatory institutions simply by virtue of being in the new elite actor-network.

Before concluding, it is worth recalling a field-based observation on the voluntary tokenism as it played out in this connection in Adavipalli context. An awareness building activity was organised by the APFD in 2005 with active facilitation from the NGO. After the puppet show on the APJFM/CFM and benefits for participating communities was performed, there were several speeches given by VSS members like the SC and ST along with female members. The first to speak was the VSS vice

president Mrs Lalithamma and it was well appreciated by APFD officials and honorary guests from the Panchayat. In a casual chat later in the evening Lalithamma expressed her resentment over this performance of hers, saying,

> I am never expected or allowed to speak in the VSS meetings by the facilitating NGO. Here I am giving a public speech on benefits of women's participation as per their wishes. They want us to endorse the VSS functioning by giving performances like this but don't believe that we are capable of running the show ourselves…. As long as this show runs their way we go along with it, and get our work done while there is still oil in the lamp.[4]

While this event partially reflects what Kothari (2001)[5] terms 'front stage' and 'back stage' performances enacted by interventionists and external facilitators in development interventions, my reading of this event substantially differs from Kothari's critique of participation as a tool. As shown, 'front stage' performers like women and the *Yanadi* end up being there by their own situational choice, informed by the fact that their informal networking with new elite who runs their real life show has their back; but not because the FNGO has carefully managed a 'back stage performance' to pull them onto the 'front stage'. Lalithamma said in Telugu,[6] *deepam unnapude illu chakkabettukovali.* The literal translation is, 'Get your work done while there is still oil in the lamp'. Lalithamma used this saying to communicate that while the APJFM/CFM intervention lasts they should get their needs and aspirations materialised through taking part in it.

Evidence from Adavipalli showed that this situational rationality in a way prompted actors' volunteering to perform as 'front stage' actors as they are expected to by powerful actors like the APFD and FNGO. As pointed out by Kesby (2005: 2049), '*All* social identity is a contrived performance achieved via compliance with dominant frameworks of power…participatory programs may provide organizational frameworks through which strategic agency can be reconstituted in ways that can outflank existing power structures'. Evidence from the Adavipalli APJFM/CFM intervention scenario does prove that marginalised actors indeed outperform the sheer power of the dominant actors through using the presence of formal participatory spaces for their own advantage. Kothari also mentions that facilitators use strategies like 'genres and pops alien to the performers' to show off project objectives to outsiders.

These props/strategies prove not to be so alien to marginalised actors in Adavipalli APJFM/CFM context, as they displayed awareness of local power dynamics, which constantly play out in both formal and informal performances on an everyday basis. All actors involved in APJFM/CFM intervention in Adavipalli setting seemed to be enacting their respective roles in formal 'front stage' participatory institutions, in order to gain their share of social and political power at the 'informal' backstage of everyday life in Adavipalli cultural landscape. This analysis shows that marginalised actors and networks make situational choices of participation even in the face of highly skewed power relations operating at the grassroots level. Adavipalli case proves that presence of participatory spaces, even though power laden, deliver tangible benefits for those actors drawing on their agency and networks both on 'front' and 'back' stages.

Evidence from Adavipalli case study confirms emerging concerns in the field of Development Studies of the importance of adopting context specific and relatively flexible community-based interventions, which are accommodative of local dynamics. In case of Adavipalli the APJFM/CFM intervention was designed and implemented in a top-down fashion. The formal participatory spaces opened through the VSS were co-opted resulting in token participation of the marginalized and the women. Despite this, the presence of an active new elite leadership and a steady networking between community-based actors compensated for this mis-match and facilitated relative development of the marginalized sections like the *Yanadi*. There may or may not be a constructive leadership in the other similar communities, which can hand-hold the poor and the marginalized in the event of a mis-fit with formal participatory mechanisms put-forth through bilateral CBNRM interventions like APJFM/CFM.

Community-based ownership is the major determinant for successful functioning of formal participatory institutions in natural resource interventions. However, Adavipalli case showed us that externally imposed participatory institutions lack the social support base that is generally enjoyed by the endogenous institutional structures operating through informal norms and practices. One straightforward lesson we can learn from the Adavipalli case is that there is a need for both the communities and for interventionists to engage in a thorough socio-ecological assessment of the area in which formal institutions are supposed to operate.

This way, one can ensure that local livelihood needs, grassroots power dynamics and actor-networks engaged in the targeted landscape are accommodated into formal institutional arrangements. This is more likely to foster community actors owning old and new institutions and the participatory processes therein with reduced transaction costs.

Notes

[1] The concept of 'calculated rationality' assumes that individuals are capable of making rational choices without any restrictions. The principle of 'bounded rationality' refers to the idea that actors are incapable of conforming to a model of absolute rationality because they cannot comprehend all the possible choices (Nemarundwe 2000: 27).

[2] Source: field notes and in-depth interviews.

[3] Source: Interviews with female and male members of VSS.

[4] Source: Informal discussion with Lalithamma in 2005.

[5] Kesby summarises Kothari's (2001) post-structuralist critique of participation saying that the critique highlights a 'front stage', a place in which performances are enacted in order to make an impression in public life. These project arenas cannot allow performers to be sincere because they are devoid of 'backstage' places where unrehearsed, private performances not intended for public consumption take place in rehearsal for the production of front stage performances. Participatory performances are contrived by stage-managing facilitators, who script events to meet project objectives *using genres and props alien to the performers* (emphasis added) (quoted from Kesby 2005: 2043).

[6] Telugu is the official language of Andhra Pradesh, and is spoken in different dialects in various parts of AP. Recently it has been awarded the status of classical language by the Indian Government owing to its rich literary heritage.

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DECLARATION:
This thesis has not been submitted to any university for a degree or any other award.