CHAPTER III

VILLAGE FOREST DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (VFDC) IN CHAMPHAI TOWN

General Information on Champhai Town

Champhai is the third biggest settlement in Mizoram in terms of population. It is the head-quarter of Champhai district. It is located in the eastern part of Mizoram near Myanmar border. Champhai town lies in between 93°30’14’’ to 93°22’17’’ longitudes and 23°25’56’’N to 23°30’56’’ N latitudes. The total area of Champhai town is 5206.70ha, and is the largest settlement in Champhai District. In 1954 Champhai was given a Villages Council with 6 members, it became a sub-town in 1956. In the year 1974 Champhai town was made the head-quarter of Civil Administrative Sub-Division and in 1998 Champhai town became the district headquarter of Champhai District.

Champhai town is divided into 11 wards/villages which are Champhai I, Champhai II, Champhai III, Champhai IV, New Champhai, Chungte, Hmunhmeltha, Zote, Tlangsam, Zoltang and Ruantlang. It is a Class III town, according to the National Commission on Urbanization (NCU) classification of town. According to 2001 census the total population of the town is 26465, out of which 13367 are male and 3098 are female. The literacy percentage in the town is 79.75%. The literacy percentage of male is 80.83 whereas the literacy percentage of female is 78.64%. The educational facilities in Champhai town
are 41 Primary Schools in which 29 are Government and 12 are private, 25 Middle Schools in which 9 is Government, 8 private and 8 deficit/ aided, 1 Higher Secondary School which is Government and 1 college also Government.

Champhai has a flat land area which is 784.09ha and is utilized for wet-land rice cultivation during kharif season. It is called the rice bowl of Mizoram and is the largest wet-land rice cultivation area in Mizoram. Champhai also holds a very significant place in trade centre due to its proximity to Myanmar.

Climate

Champhai enjoys a moderate climate owing to its tropical location. It is neither very hot nor too cold throughout the year. The district falls under the direct influence of the south west monsoon. As such the area receives an adequate amount of rainfall which is responsible for a humid tropical climate characterized by short winter and long summer with heavy rainfall.

Depending on the variation in temperature and general weather conditions, four different types of seasons are observed for the district. They are as follows:

1. The Cold Winter Season (*Thlasik*):- This season starts from the month of December to the first half of February. This is the coldest season of the year. During this period rainfall is much less as
compared to other seasons, and rainfall received is originated from North East Monsoon known as the retreating monsoon. This season is very pleasant with clear blue sky in the absence of cloud and it is a festive season as the most celebrated festival ‘Christmas’ occurs in this season.

2. Spring Season (Thal):- This is the shortest season of the year. It starts from the second half of February to the first half of March. Temperature is mild during this period and the sky is clear and according to customs new houses are built during this season as there are no weather disturbances during this period.

3. Summer Season/Rainy Season: - This season is the longest season of the year covering about seven months starting from second half of March till first half of October. The early part of this season that is from second half of March till First half of May is characterized by bright sunshine and clear sky with little or no cloud till it is disrupted by the coming of Monsoon showers. The hottest months, i.e., April and May, prevails during this period and maximum insolation is received during this season.

A study from the daily rainfall records reveals that the heavy outpour generally starts from the second quarter of May and this heavy outpour is usually subsides in the first quarter of October. Rainfall during May, June, July, August and September i.e., 5
months, alone contributes 76% of the annual rainfall. This is the season when the cyclonic rains are often felt. The temperature remains high, but is kept down to a considerable extent by the usual rain.

4. Autumn Season (Favang):- this season covers for a period generally starting from the second part of October to November. The season is very pleasant and the summer rain already diminishes. This is the season the people most long for since there is no work in their jhum field as they just wait for the paddy to ripe. In this season a festival called ‘Mim Kut’ also called ‘Thalfavang Kut’ is celebrated.

**Land Use/ Land Cover**

The major land use/ land cover classes within Champhai town can be classified into built-up land, agricultural land/ horticulture land, primary/dense forest, secondary/open forest, forest plantation, shifting cultivation, water body and road network.

**Built-Up Land**

This class includes settlement areas, stone quarries, recreational areas like playgrounds, isolated government buildings and compounds, etc. the largest settlement *i.e.*, Champhai town is located at the centre of Champhai District surrounded by adjoining 5(five) settlements, namely, Hmunhmeltha,
Zote, Tlangsam, Ruantlang and Chhungte. Government complexes such as Sericulture quarter, District Jail and the recently constructed D.C Complex are also classified under this category. This class covers an area of 404.20 ha, which accounts for 7.76% of the total geographical area of the town.

**Agricultural Land**

Agricultural land can be classified into wet rice cultivation and agricultural/ horticultural plantation.

a. **Wet Rice Cultivation**

One of the most prominent agricultural cultivation in the Champhai area can be attributed to the Wet Rice cultivation practiced in the lower valley/plains, which is a key feature of the study area. These areas are given names such as Awmpui phai and Sesih zau literally named after their location in the plains. The local rice varieties grown in Champhai town area, in order of their abundance include Buhtawisang (cross hybrid of Manipur and Burma var.), Manipur rum, Manipur nem, Vuitawia, Rau buh, Ido (Buhban), Manipur hmul, Lalenga, Usena. Wet Rice cultivation land covers an area of 784.09 ha or 15.06% of the total area.

b. **Agricultural/Horticultural plantation**

Farmers are also engaged in plantation of a variety of horticultural crops, namely, Grape (*Vitis vinifera*), Passion fruit
(Passiflora edulis) and Kiwi (Actinidia deliciosa) introduced by the Horticultural department. The most prominent of which is Grape plantation carried out by majority of the local residents. Most of these plantations are located in and around settlement areas of Champhia, Ruantlang, and Tlangsam and in the lower valley/plains adjoining wet rice cultivation areas. Passion fruit plantation is also found in almost all villages sometimes cultivated in association with farm crops; however, its occurrence is not as prevalent as Grape plantation in the town area. Kiwi is another upcoming horticultural plantation, which is gaining value and introduced by the Horticultural department recently. These plantations are found on small hillocks of the low lying plains and adjoining settlement area of Tlangsam. The plantation is still in its introduced stage and therefore its occurrence is not too widespread in the study area. There are also plantations that are not mapable, found along roadsides and near houses. Horticulture plantation occupies an area of 138.08 ha, accounting for 2.65% of the total area of the town.

**Forest**

The forest types of the study area are Sub-tropical broad leaved hill forest and Sub-tropical pine forests. The forests are classified into Primary/dense, Secondary/open and forest plantations.

a. Primary/Dense Forest
This class of forest constitutes those forests that are not disturbed by biotic factors like shifting cultivation and any other human activities, having a rich biodiversity with closed canopy and crown density greater than 60%. These forests are distributed throughout Champhai area as small patches on the eastern side and in comparatively larger patches to the northern and south-western part of the town area. Vast coverage of dense forests is generally found at a radial distance of about 2-3 km from the main settlement areas. The dominant tree species found in these forests include *Amoora chittagonga*, *Dipterocarpus turbinatus*, *Dysoxylum gobara*, *Betula alnoides*, *Kydia calycina*, *Wendlandia grandis*, *Canarium strictum*, *Phoebe goalparensis*, *Castanopsis tribuloides*, *Cratoxylum sumatranum*, *Helicia excelsa*, *Callicarpa arborea*, *Terminalia myriocarpa*, *Quercus helferiana*, *Quercus polystachya*, *Quercus leucotrichophora*, *Macaranga indica*, *Quercus dealbata*, *Ficus semicordata*, *Ficus prostrate*, *Lyonia ovalifolia*, *Schima wallichii*, *Prunus cerasoides*, *Engelhartia spicata* etc. This type of forests occupies an area of 767.64 ha, contributing to 14.74% of the total Champhai area.

b. Secondary/Open Forest

Secondary/open forests are those forest which exhibit open canopy, less crown density (50%), found mostly at lower elevations and are the resultant regeneration of forests once disturbed by biotic/human
activities like shifting cultivation and urbanization. The tree species found in this type of forests are *Myrica esculenta*, *Quercus griffithii*, *Quercus serrata*, *Pinus kesiya*, *Duabanga grandiflora*, *Diospyros glandulosa*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Ficus semicoradata*, *Trevesia palmate*, *Semecarpus anacardium*, *Acacia pennata*, *Pyrus pashia*, *Maesa indica*, *Albizia chinensis*, *Schima wallichii*, *Albizia odoratissima*, *Callicarpa ardorea*, *Bischofia javanica*, *Chukrasia velutina*, *Sapium baccatum*, *Engelhartia roxburghiana*, *Rhus semialata*, *Eurya cerasifolia*, *Firmiana colorata*, *Lyonia ovalifolia*, *Juglans regia*, *Rhus succedanea*, *Rhododendron arboretum* etc. This class of forests covers an area of 1269.33 ha, accounting for 24.38% of the total area of Champhai.

c. Forest Plantation

Champhai houses two main types of forest plantations well distributed and prevalent towards the northern and eastern belts and with few patches of occurrence on the western side. Pine (*Pinus kesiya*) and Oak (*Quercus serrata*) plantations are the two main forest plantations found within the study area. Pine plantations are found at Hmunhmeltha, Zote, and Ruantlang and to the northern part of Champhai. Vast Pine plantations are found on hill slopes/roadsides and small hillocks of the velly/plains, starting from New Champhai to peripheral areas of Zote. This plantation occupies an area of 579.82 ha or 11.14% of the total Champhai area. Oak was found to be the native of the study area;
however, on grounds of forest conservation they have been retained and conserved as plantations. There are also areas where Oak plantations are initiated especially in areas near Tlangsam. Most of these plantations are found in Tlangsam, Ruantlang, and Zote and in small distributed patches on hillocks of the Wet rice cultivation plains and to the western part of Champhai town. The plantations found on hillocks of the plain areas show very poor signs of growth and vigour and mostly remain stunted, often confused to shrubs or dwarf trees when viewed from a distance. Oak plantation occupies an area of 303.49 ha, constituting 5.83% of the total study area.

Other roadside plantations, which are not mapable, are also found which include species like *Grevelia robusta, Eucalyptus globules, Thuja orientalis, Delonix regai, Caesalpinia pulcherrima* etc.

**Shifting Cultivation**

Shifting cultivation area can be classified into current shifting cultivation and abandoned shifting cultivation.

a. Current Shifting Cultivation

This class mainly refers to those areas where land is being utilized for cultivation of crops. Shifting cultivation commonly known as *Jhuming* is still a prominent farming system practiced by farmers in the study area, mostly in small patches/land holdings near forests and settlements. Although traditional methods of shifting cultivation is still
practiced, the farmers do not shift the cultivated lands as it was done in the past due to scarcity of available land in the study area. Mixed cropping is commonly practiced and the common cultivated crop species include *Oryza sativa*, *Zea mays*, *Brassica* spp., *Pisum sativum*, *Phaseolus vulgaris*, *Brassica oleracea* var. capitata, *Brassica caulorapa*, *Lycopersicum esculentum*, *Daucus carota*, *Trichosanthes anguina*, *Cucumis sativus*, *Zingiber officinale*, *Solanum tuberosum*, *Solanum lelongena* var. esculentum, *Solanum indicum*, *Cucurbita pepo*, *Capsicum annum*, *Ipomoea batatus*, and *Elsholtzia communis*. These crops are cultivated in rotation and according to seasonal suitability for its cultivation. Besides these field crops, some of the farms are also dotted with a variety of fruit bearing trees like *Carica papaya*, *Artocarpus heterophyllus*, *Citrus* spp., *Mangifera indica*, *Pyrus communis*, *Elaeagnus pyriformis* etc. In some cases, part of the farm is utilized for cultivation of Banana (*Musa paradisiacal*) as a subsidiary cash crop. These pockets where shifting cultivation is practiced covers an area of 289.55 ha or 5.56% of the total geographical area of Champhai.

b. Abandoned Shifting Cultivation/Scrubland

This class includes land that has been left fallow or abandoned for many years comprising of shrubs, herbs and grasses as the dominant vegetation. Dominant plant species found in these lands are *Saccharum*
**longisetosum, Eupatorium odarata, Ageratum conizoides, Imperata cylindrical, Plantago major, Urena lobata, Rubus rugosus, Lantana camara, Gynura bicolor, Spilanthes acmella, Stellaria media, Senchus arvensis, Latuca indica, Inula cappa, Cyperus kylinga, Cynodon dactylon, Obeckia chinensis, Blumea lancealaria, Smilax perfoliat, Thysolaena maxima etc.**

**Water Body**

This class includes land that has been modified or excavated for storage of water as well as harvesting water (e.g., farm ponds, reservoirs etc) from adjoining rivers/streams. The study area abounds with a number of such water bodies especially in the plains near rivers/streams and near residential compounds made by the villagers. Most of them are too small to be mapped; some are found within settlements and are classed along with the settlement areas. However, a prominent and mapable one are found to the north of the study area between Hmunhmeltha and Zote, at downstream part of River Tuipui. The water body accounts for 0.70 ha or 0.01% of the total study area.

**Road Network**

The study area is well connected with roads. Most of the villages surrounding the main town Champhai are accessible by metalled roads and few by unmetalled- jeepable roads like the road leading from Hmunhmeltha to Zote. Roads within Champhai are well established and connected to commercial and public utility systems in the town. The nearby villages are well
connected with the main town by metalled roads; however, most of the roads within these villages are unmetalled. The total length of mapable roads is about 55.19 km, of which 25.76 km is metalled and 29.43 km is unmetalled according to the report of the environmental studies of Champhai by the Technology and Environment Planning Department of Mizoram.

Table 12: Physical Features of Champhai Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Per cent age (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Built-up land</td>
<td>404.20</td>
<td>7.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Wet Rice Cultivation</td>
<td>784.09</td>
<td>15.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Plantation</td>
<td>138.08</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Primary/Dense</td>
<td>767.64</td>
<td>14.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Secondary/Open</td>
<td>1269.33</td>
<td>24.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Plantation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pine</td>
<td>579.82</td>
<td>11.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oak</td>
<td>303.49</td>
<td>5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shifting Cultivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Current</td>
<td>289.55</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Abandoned</td>
<td>640.95</td>
<td>12.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Water Body</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constitution of VFDC in Champhai Town

The Village Forest Development Committee in Champhai town started in the year 2003, the scheme was adopted for further involvement of people in the planning, protection, regeneration, improvement and development of forests cover and also bring development to the forest fringe villages, with this same aim, VFDC in Champhai town was adopted and implemented in different villages within Champhai district/ Champhai range.

As per the guideline of JFM, public/general meetings were conducted in each and every fringe locality and village, in which all the adult members of the locality/ village were summoned and with the consensus/ majority vote VFDC were constituted. In this meeting the Forest officials brief the people the importance of Afforestation, the necessary information or awareness were discussed, aims and objectives of the programme were discussed and the various developmental schemes which were available towards the forests and towards the village were discussed with the people.

When the VFDCs were formed in order to ensure people’s participation in management of resources, Micro-plan was prepared jointly by the concerned
villages and the forest department. The Micro-plan prepared were aimed to ensure, decentralized down-top inter-sectoral planning process, to make a proper linkage of the programme with the beneficiaries, making an adequate role for villagers in decision making process, assessing the needs of the participating communities by themselves, it aimed at planning, projecting and regulating the flow of benefits to the participants in a participatory way, identify the local resources and setting the priorities by the user groups themselves and prepare a local site-specific plan which is simple, transparent and easy to work.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was conducted in each and every village which adopted VFDC by the Forest Department with the assistance of the members of VFDC. Through this exercise of PRA various problems were identified and prioritized. The problems identified during the exercise of PRA were set as target to be undertaken through the Entry Point Activity (EPA). EPA is a funding mechanism in which the government provides fund to the VFDC which is utilized for fulfilling the needs of the people or the members.

Through PRA exercise Social Target Groups were also categorized based on the wealth of the family from among the members, the most marginal groups/poor forest dependent families were identified and listed. These families were given special attention during the plan implementation, by
providing them more employment in various project works so that their dependence on forest was minimized.

**Structure of the VFDC as followed in Champhai Town:**

The structure of VFDC comprises of two bodies namely the General body and the Executive body/ Managing Committee. The general body is basically the bigger body comprising of all the members or the beneficiaries. The Executive body is the smaller body comprising of the office bearers in the structure of the VFDC.

**The structure of the General body comprises of the following:**

The structure of the General body in descending order is given below

![Figure: 3](image)

In the composition of the General Body the Chairperson/ President is elected by consensus/ majority vote and will hold the position for a period of
two years. According to the guidelines it will be ensured that a woman member is elected as President at least for alternative terms. The secretary is the member secretary of the Executive Body who shall be an ex-officio member in the General body. All adults of the village/ locality who willingly joined the VFDC are considered as members.

**The structure of the Executive Body/ Managing Committee:**

The Executive Body/ Managing Committee which is the central figure comprises of the office bearers, who play an important role in managing the affairs of the VFDC concerning activities. The composition of the Executive Body/ Managing Committee in descending order is given below:

Figure: 4

![Diagram showing the structure of the Executive Body/Managing Committee](image)

- Managing Committee/Executive Body
  - The Chairman/ President
  - Member Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Executive Members

The total number of the Executive Body/ Managing committee/Executive committee should not exceed more than 10 members according to
the guidelines of VFDC. The Chairperson/President is the same chairperson of the General Body, the member secretary is a forester or a block forest officer. The treasure is appointed from among the members by the member secretary in consultation with the President. The executive members are drawn from the General body to be elected by a majority of at least $2/3^{rd}$ members of General body present in the meeting and voting. The number of the executive members should be seven members of whom three shall be women. From among the executive members, one member should be from YMA, one member from MUP, one member from MHIP.

**The function of the VFDC as per the Guideline is given below:**

a. To prepare Micro-plan of the village, this includes both the development plan of the forest under the VFDC and the development plan of the village.

b. Choosing the species of plants to be planted in the project forest.

c. Suggesting physical and financial targets, suggesting physical target means suggesting the site area and financial target means how to achieve financial gains through the project which would lead to the development of the members or the village.

d. To propose Entry Point Activity.

e. Raise awareness programmes among themselves and other villagers and also act as a usufruct sharing mechanism.
They should also have fund creation activities.

**Functions of the Members of the Managing Committee/Executive Body**

(1) The Chairman/President:-

The chairman/President is an elected member voted by majority of the members present, as the president he is in-charge of the meetings, he convenes the committees meeting. He maintains with him the Registration certificate, membership register, policy decision of the VFDC and of the forest department etc.

With regards to funds, the President along with the secretary holds a joint account in which is deposited the funds of the VFDC, which means only the President and the Secretary can withdraw fund from this account.

(2) The Secretary:-

The Secretary is an appointed member an out field personnel of the forest department who represents the department in VFDC. His function is to coordinate the actions of the VFDC; he is the link between the forest department and the VFDC. The secretary maintains the minute book in which every action/decision of the committees meeting is recorded. He also maintains a plantation journal and Micro-plan of the specific VFDC, in which is recorded the details of the project, the developmental activity implemented towards the
village and also the forest, the funds incurred on the plantation, the areas coverage and the Map of the plantation site. As a representative of the department he provides the VFDC members technical support, since he has the training and technical know-how in the field. He inspects the project site, guide the members on creation of plantation process such as planting seedlings, creating soil moisture conservation (SMC), creating fire break line etc whatever is necessary for conservation and protection of the project site. His one important function is that of a monitoring device, he provided the function of a checks and balance in the VFDC.

The secretary also provided financial support to the VFDC as he and the President holds a joint account in which all the funds of VFDC is deposited.

(3) The Treasurer:-

The treasurer maintains with him records such as Revenue and expenditure of the VFDC towards the plantation and towards the village, Bank account records, Audit and Annual Report, evaluation report and also the harvesting yields record from the plantation, if harvest has been done.

(4) Executive members:-

The executive members the elected from among the General body as have been explained in the previous paragraph. As executive members they are the decision making body who along with the President come to the executive
body meeting and make decisions regarding the workings of VFDC, plantation project and the developmental activities towards the village and for the members as a whole.

One of the major functions of the Managing Committee is to hold meetings which can be divided into three categories;

1. **EPA meeting**— in this meeting the agenda is concern only with how, where, in what way, for what purpose, should the fund gained be utilized.

   - E.g. many localities have utilized the fund for constructing basic community needs like water tapping facilities, construction of community halls and roads, culvert, public conveniences, playground, funeral sheds, provision for public address system, furniture for halls, school building, and bridge etc which collectively benefits the whole community/village. In other cases members are provided Gas stove and cylinder, cooker, plough, knife, spade, barrel for storing water, blanket etc which is distributed only to the members.

   - The way in which EPA is spent is up to the members of the VDFC of the locality/village. In this the secretary who is a member of VFDC but also a forest official is excluded.
- EPA (Entry Point Activity) is that provision under which the govt. /FD provides fund to the VFDC for surrendering their land for plantation to the Department.
- It is allotted only once and at the start of the plantation.
- The amount of EPA in the initial of the programme was on the basis of Rs 4000/- per ha, at present the rate has been reduced to Rs 1000/- per ha.

Note: - it has been observed that EPA is the scheme which draws the major attention of the people as of now. In terms of benefit sharing since the whole scheme of plantation is a long term process no such benefit has been derive as yet so as to get feedback on how the people have benefitted from it. EPA is a major motivator but since the amount has been reduced it has become less beneficial/de-motivating for the people/VC to surrender land for the purpose of plantation to the Forest Department.

2. **Work meeting** — in this meeting the agenda of the meeting is regarding the plantation. In this maintenance is discussed. In this the labor involve in activities and how should labor be taken is discussed. Depending on the amount of labor required the committee decides who should be considered to take up the work and usually the lesser privileged members of the locality are given consideration. In the work involved in the plantation the laborers are given daily wage.
3. **Awareness meeting**— in the awareness meeting the members of the Managing committee/ Executive committee along with the forest officials, generally give awareness campaign to the village people/general body such as importance of conservation, protection and regeneration of forest cover, maintenance, facilities which members can avail/enjoy through EPA, the availability of funds etc are brief to the people. This is the only meeting in which the General Body participates and it is regarded as a meeting cum training for the general members and it is conducted on very often.

**Table 13: Showing the year wise figure of plantation area under VFDC in Champhai Range**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Year of Plantation</th>
<th>Area in Hectare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2003 – 2004</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2004 – 2005</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2005 – 2006</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2006 – 2007</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2007 – 2008</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2008 – 2009</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2009 – 2010</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2010 – 2011</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2011 – 2012</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4320</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plantation Models for the VFDC

The Plantation Models under the NAP Scheme followed by the VFDC for their plantation project can be classified into seven models which are (Revised Operational Guidelines of NAP, GOM: 2009):

a. Artificial Regeneration (AR)

b. Aided Natural Regeneration (ANR)

c. Bamboo Plantation

d. Mixed plantations of trees having MFP and medicinal values

e. Pasture Development/ Silvipasture

f. Planting of canes

g. Regeneration of perennial herbs and shrubs of medicinal value

Depending on the choice of the committee and according to the vegetation of the area these schemes are adopted by the VFDC for their plantation projects. The models of plantation have different unit cost and maintenance. Below is given in the form of a table the unit cost of plantation including the maintenance cost as prescribe in the guideline of the NAP scheme.

The plantation models according to the NAP scheme have different cost norms/ model cost which is given in the table below:
### Table: 14 Models of Plantation and its Unit Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Model/ Intervention</th>
<th>Unit Cost of Plantation including Maintenance (per ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aided Natural Regeneration (200* plants/hectare)</td>
<td>9750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Artificial Regeneration (1100* plants/hectare)</td>
<td>17100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pasture Development/ Silvipasture (400* plants/hectare)</td>
<td>11100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bamboo plantation (652* plants/hectare)</td>
<td>9300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Planting of canes (625* plants/hectare)</td>
<td>11100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mixed Plantations of trees having MFP and medicinal value. (1100* plants/hectare)</td>
<td>17100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regeneration of perennial herbs and shrubs of medicinal value. (2000* plants/hectare)</td>
<td>20400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the above table the model cost for the plantation models are listed and the * represents the number of plants per hectare is acceptable to the costing indicated. However according to the guideline of 2009 if a project proposal envisages any change in the plantation density it would be eligible for a corresponding proportional change in the cost norms. The cost norms in the above table have been worked out at a suggestive wage rate of Rs. 75 per day as per the guideline.
Plantation Work Schedule of VFDC:

The work plan schedule is the step followed in creation of plantation, which is carried out by the VFDC members; the work plan is listed below:

- 1\textsuperscript{st} Creation—which is the first step taken towards plantation, in which clearing of the site is done.
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} Advance/Pre work—in this planting of seedlings, fencing of area, inspection path creation, putting up sign board, fire line cutting, soil and moisture conservation (SMC), is done.
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} Weeding—in this weeding of the plantation area is done.

Plantation work Schedule year wise is as followed in Champhai town:

i. In the 1\textsuperscript{st} year- Clearing/ site preparation also called Pre work or Advance work is done in the month of January to May

- March—burning or clearing site is done.
- April—inspection path creation, fencing site area, soil and moisture conservation SMC is done.
- May—planting seedlings is done.
- Weeding is done 1\textsuperscript{st} in the month of June, 2\textsuperscript{nd} in the month of August, 3\textsuperscript{rd} in the month of October, and 4\textsuperscript{th} in the month of December.
Fire line cutting is also done in the month of December.

ii. In the 2nd year- weeding is done in the month of May, June and September.

iii. In the 3rd year- weeding is done twice in a year, in the month of May and August.

iv. In the 4th year weeding is done once in a year.

**Micro Plan for VFDC**

To ensure people’s participation in management of resource, development and Management plan of VFDC Micro plan was set as per the guidelines of the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) but also accommodating the local need. Micro plan was then circulated in each and every village/district/forest division range where VFDC was adopted.

The objectives of Micro plan can be broadly grouped into two categories *viz.*, Short term objective and long term objective

**i) Short Term Objective:**

- To meet immediate need of bamboo fuel, fodder and small timber of the villagers through sustained production.
- To generate employment for rural poor dependent on the forests and adjoining lands and for gainful production of food and non-wood forest products.
- To inculcate enthusiasm towards JFM among the village community by involving them in planning and regeneration efforts.
- To encourage farmers to grow multipurpose trees on their farm lands under agro-forestry.

**ii) Long Term Objectives:**

- To rehabilitate the vegetative cover of degraded forests for ecological restoration, conservation and improvement of the Biomass productivity in respect to NFTPs besides fuel-wood and fodder.
- To conserve and improve the productivity of NFTPs, fuel wood and fodder.
- To conserve soil and moisture and improvement of overall water holding capacity of degraded lands and water resources for the agricultural land.
- To develop water resources for agriculture land.
- To check forest degradation and promote conservation of Biodiversity.
To help achieve the national objective of getting 30% land area under tree and grass cover.

The Micro-plan consists of the Basic information of the Village such as Population, human demography, occupational information of the residents, and educational information of the village. The record of constitution of VFDC in the village, the PRA identified problems, etc. In the Micro-plan the blue print of the plantation site is also available and what models of plantation is taken up etc is provided. In the Micro-plan the list the general body members is provided and the list of members of the Managing Committee is also provided.

**Mizoram Forest Act 1955:**

The guidelines with which the VFDC refers to forest offence are in accordance with the Mizoram Forests Act (MFA) 1955. Below is listed the important sections of the Act which specifies penalties towards forest offence. According to the Act Penalties for forest offences are:

1. **Section 23.** Penalties for trespass or damage are:

   Any person who in a government Reserved Forest-

   a) Trespasses or pastures cattle, or permits cattle to trespass, or

   b) Causes any damage by negligence in felling any tree or cutting or dragging timber, shall be punished with fine which may extend to fifty rupees, or when the damage resulting from his offence
amounts to more than twenty five rupees to double the amount of such damage.

2. **Section 24.** Acts prohibited:

   Any person who in the government Reserved Forest-

   a) Sets fire or in contravention of any rules made by the State Government kindles any fire or leaves any fire burning in such a manner as to endanger such a forest, or

   b) Kindles, keeps or carries any fire except in such season and in such manner as the State Government may from time to time notify, or

   c) Fells, cuts, girdles, marks, lops, taps or injures by fire or otherwise any tree, or

   d) Quarries stones, burns lime or charcoal or collects subject to any manufacturing process or removes any forest produce, or

   e) Clears or breaks up any land for cultivation or any other purpose, or

   f) Poisons water or in contravention of any rule made by the State Government, fishes or sets of traps or snares shall be punished
with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees or with both.

3. **Section 25.** Penalty for offences committed by persons having rights in the forest is:

   Whenever fire is caused wilfully of by gross negligence in Government Reserved Forest by any person having rights in such forest or permission to jhum therein, or by any person in his employment the State Government may, despite the infliction of any punishment under this Act, direct that in such forest, or any specified portion thereof, the exercise of all or any of the rights of pasture or to forest produce shall be terminated, or for such period as it thinks fit be suspended.

4. **Section 26.** De-reservation of forest:

   Any area constituted as Government Reserved Forest will be preserved only by or under the orders of the State Government.

5. **Section 27.** Jhumming in ‘Government’ forest:

   The right to jhumming or any shifting cultivation in the un-classed Government Forests is conceded subject to any regulation, rules or orders that may be made or prescribed by a Village Council or may other body granted powers similar to a Village Council by the Government of Mizoram.
6. **Section 29.A.** Presumption that the forest produce belongs to the ‘Government’:

When in any proceedings taken under this Act or in consequence of anything done under this Act, question arises whether any forest produce is the property of the Government; such produce shall be presumed to be the property of the Government until the contrary is proved.

7. **Section 29.B.1.** Power to compound:

   a) The State Government may accept from any person against whom reasonable suspicion exist that he has committed any forest offence specified in Section 23 and 24 in this Act, a sum of money by way of compensation for the offence which such person is suspected to have committed, and

   b) When any property has been seized as liable to confiscation, the same may be released on payment of the value there of estimated by the State Government.

8. **Section 29.C.** Procedure for disposal of perishable property:

   Notwithstanding anything herein before contained, the Court concerned may direct the sale of any property seized under section 29, if it is subject to speedy and natural decay, and may deal with the proceeds as the Court might have dealt with such property as if had not been sold.
9. **Section 29.D.** Power to arrest without warrant:

1) Any Government Forest Officer not below the rank of Assistant Forester or Police Officer may, without orders from a Magistrate and without warrant, arrest any person reasonably suspected of having been concerned in any forest offence punishable with imprisonment for one month or upwards, if such person refuses to give his name and residence, or gives a name or if there is reason to believe that he will abscond.

2) Every Officer making an arrest under this section, shall put with delay, take or send the arrested person before a Magistrate having jurisdiction in the case.

3) No Officer shall detain in custody a person arrested under this section for a longer period exceeding 24hrs, exclusive of the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the Court of Magistrate concerned.

10. **Section 30.** Penalty for counterfeiting or defacing marks on trees and timber etc.:

Any person who with the intent to cause damage or injury to the public or to any person or to cause wrongful gain as defined in the Indian Penal Code:-
a) Knowingly counterfeits upon any tree or timber a mark used by forest Officers to indicate that such tree or timber is the property of the Government or some person, or that it may lawfully be felled or removed by person, or

b) Unlawfully affixes to any tree or timber a mark used by forest officers or

c) Alters, defaces or obliterates any such mark placed or any tree or timber by or under authority of a Government Forest Officer or

d) Alters, moves, destroys or defaces any boundary mark of any forest to which this Act applies, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

11. **Section 34.** Persons bound to assists Forest Officer:

Every person who exercises any right in any class of Government Forest or who is permitted to remove any forest produce from, or to pasture cattle or practice Jhum cultivation in such forest and every person who is employed by such person in such forest and every person in any village contiguous to such forest shall be bound to furnish without unnecessary delay to the nearest forest officer any information which he may possess respecting the occurrence of fire in or near such forest; or
the commission of or intent to commit any forest offence, and shall assist any officer demanding his aid-

a) In extinguishing any fire occurring in such forest;

b) In preventing any fire which may occur in the vicinity of such forest from spreading to such forest.

c) In preventing the commission in such forest of any forest offences, and

d) When there is reason to believe that any such offence has been committed in such forest in discovering and arresting the offender.
References


