CHAPTER-V
CONCLUSION

One of the major objectives of the study was to evolve suitable strategies for making the J.F.M intervention successful and measure them against the existing parameters governing the functioning of J.F.M. This micro level of study on social, ecological, and economic aspect of J.F.M activity in Naginayani Cheruvu thanda reveals the following.

• Overall performance of J.F.M was found to be moderate, and impact of the programme in the study was satisfactory.

• There is a scope for improving the performance of the committee meticulously developing the capacities of the main actors.

• A well thought-out state level strategy for training and capacity development would go a long way ensuring the statewide enhancement of the J.F.M. Committees performance.

• It is felt that there is difference in the understanding of the programme at various levels of the Forest Department and NGOs play a key role in the JFM programme, involving them in training will ensure uniformity in
understanding, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

- The study also indicates that there is uniformity among the committee in preparing micro-plan, which plays a stellar role in forest department, finalized a uniform format for micro-plan preparation and this is introduced in to the state.

The study also reveals that "sense of ownership" enhances the effective functioning of the committee. It has been observed that the local communities, who are directly, are indirectly dependent on forest for their lively hood, participated more actively in the activities of the committee. Thus interventions to increase lively hood options, based on forest produced in to the state.

The VSS President, Members, village people were interviewed, and asked for their suggestions on Method of enhancing the functioning and development of the committee. The recommendations of these stakeholders, who represent the village community and the most important functionary of the Forest Department who deals directly with the committee, are recorded here.

The constitution of VSS and the EC was done in a democratic fashion with the active involvement of the local communities. The JFM micro level plans were prepared through a process of mutual consultation between the concerned forest department officials and local communities and reflected the views of the people. The quality of such plans is good.
The implementation of the JFM plans was smooth and was suitably modified depending upon the local situation. The locations chosen for rock-fill dams, intensive plots and the choice of species for plantation programme reflected the views of the people. The JFM has been successful in protecting and regenerating the degraded forests in the VSS area as a result of various measures taken by the members. The species composition as well the green cover is greatly improved. A look at the VSS areas when compared to the adjoining forest areas brings out this fact clearly. The programme led to the natural regeneration of plant species, bushes and fodder species. There is also a considerable growth in the number of wild animals in the forest.

The programme resulted in the generation of additional income and employment to a considerable extent directly though the execution of different VSS works and indirectly through the support activities that facilitated the members to take up income generating activities. The programme also had a positive impact on agriculture in terms of an increase in the cultivated area and crop productivity to a certain extent.

The funding helped the villagers to reduce pressure on forests to some extent through the distribution of smokeless Chulhas. The transformation of agriculture during the last three decades on account of mechanization seems to have played a supplementary role in this regard; this was reflected in the shift of even the small cultivators from bullocks and bullock cart to hiring of tractors and use of the iron implements.
The programme has created good awareness among the people regarding the need to protect and develop forests. The training programmes and exposure visits helped the VSS members to learn appropriate forestry practices. The number of GB and EC meetings conducted and participation of members in these meetings serve as a pointer to the active involvement of local communities in the programme.

There is a positive impact of the programme on the economic and to some extent social status of women in the VSS villages. The importance of women seems to have increased because the financial assistance from the government and outside agencies as well as other programmes has being channeled through them. The promotion of thrift habit and the payment of wages in VSS works had given them enough confidence and courage to take up Income Generating Programmes (IGPs) on a small scale. Thus, the JFM have been instrumental in the empowerment of women at the grassroots level.

The JFM programme has certain built-in safeguards for maintaining equity in the benefits from VSS activities. There could be problems in the sharing of forest produce likely to be obtained in future, if suitable mechanisms are not evolved with the active involvement of the members. The programme has the potential to be sustainable, provided proper measures are initiated for creating alternative opportunities of income and employment.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

On the basis of the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made for the effective implementation of the JFM programme to ensure equity and sustainability.

1. Elections may be held regularly for EC once in two years so as strengthen the democratic credentials of VSS.

2. There could be some flexibility in the norms fixed for the extent of rock-fill dams in a given area if the situation demands. Some of the rock-fill dams have sited up and hence there is a need for undertaking desilting operations on a regular basis.

3. There is a need for planning the support activities to be taken up in VSS area / village in coordination with other government departments. Care has to be taken to build the capacities of the people to demand and achieve their tasks on their own. In other words, the philosophy of self-help needs to be promoted more vigorously.

4. There is a need to promote income-generating activities that could be built around the existing thrift groups so that alternative opportunities are created in order to sustain the efforts being made to reduce dependence on forests. The thrift groups need to be moulded self-sustaining through regular meetings conducted and saving activity will develop among the members.

5. The training programmes like capacity building, institutional building, microfinance, lively hood promotion activities undertaken so far need to be strengthened further by arranging more such programmes for the
members of the VSS formed under different schemes in the district, particularly for women.

6. A mechanism has to be evolved for raising revenue from the forest produce being used by the members in order to create a maintenance fund at the VSS level with which the programme can be made sustainable to some extent.