

**Quality and Effectiveness of Tourism Governance in  
Mudumalai Forest, Tamilnadu state, India**

**By**

**Jayaseelan Padmanabhan, B.E, Grad. Dip**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for**

**Masters of Environmental Management at the**

**School of Geography and Environmental Studies,**

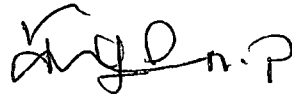
**University of Tasmania**

**(September, 2010)**

## **Declaration**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jayaseelan P.', written over a horizontal line.

Jayaseelan Padmanabhan

Date 9/9/2010

## **Annotation**

This thesis is an uncorrected text as submitted for examination.

## **Abstract**

In this thesis, I examined the quality and effectiveness of forest governance, particularly in relation to tourism, in a protected area, the Mudumalai forest in Tamilnadu state, India. This forest has been chosen as a case study because of the growing popularity of tourism in the area, as well as the challenges of developing effective relationships between forest governors and local communities. This thesis aimed to assess the quality of tourism governance in Mudumalai forest in terms of legitimacy, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and fairness; and effectiveness in terms of supervision and monitoring. The overall quality and effectiveness of the tourism governance in Mudumalai forest is found to be good, based on evidence gained from key informant interviews, field visits and from the literature. This thesis has made recommendations for improving tourism governance in Mudumalai forest, including:

- a need to shift from a purely conferred legitimacy status to a combination of conferred and earned legitimacy;
- addressing local community fears and concerns by implementing regular and improved community engagement programs;
- using a transparent and inclusive process to develop a management plan for the forest, and effectively communicating the plan to stakeholders;
- improving the downward accountability of governance from local officials to the local community;
- treating inclusiveness and fairness as principles of good governance, rather than treating them as a means to control or change the forest dependent lifestyle of the local community; and
- modernising the supervision and monitoring techniques used in Mudumalai.

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

The idea of forest conservation evolved from the necessity, particularly in the last two decades to manage forests in a sustainable way. Forest degradation constitutes a threat to biological diversity, global climate, and local environmental sustainability, including the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of the communities (Brown, 2001). The need to conserve the forest from these threats has demanded the better understanding of forest governance. The basic objective of sustainable forest governance is to conserve the forest in the face of these threats. However, it is important that this governance be both effective and of good quality. Governance quality is related to ethical and rational conditions for good governance, while effectiveness is determined by the ability of governance structures to deliver outcomes relevant to their mission.

Tourism is one industry that poses challenges in achieving good governance. The financial opportunities made available through tourism may conflict with other governance and management objectives. Financial opportunities have to be pursued in a way that does not compromise the main objectives of the area concerned. The challenge for the governors will be to take advantage of financial opportunities with little or no impacts on their primary objectives.

Tourism is a particularly important activity in forest protected areas. A protected area is “an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means” (IUCN, 1994). IUCN category two protected areas, which are termed national parks, are set aside for both conservation and recreation (IUCN, 2010). Tourism is one of the key industries which contribute to the economic value of a protected area. Achieving good quality tourism governance in protected areas is very important if the dual objectives of conservation and tourism development are to be met. It is a challenge for protected area governors to meet the recreational needs along with the conservation objectives of a protected area which open for tourism. The governors have to be able to accommodate the tourists’ demands, look after the well being of the local community and achieve their primary function which is to conserve the forest. A good and effective governance system is required to achieve these multiple objectives.

In this thesis, I will examine the quality and effectiveness of forest governance, particularly in relation to tourism, in a protected area, the Mudumalai forest in Tamilnadu state, India. This forest has been chosen as a case study because of the growing popularity of tourism in the area, as well as the challenges of developing effective relationships between forest governors and local communities.

## **1.2 Research questions**

This thesis aims to assess the quality of tourism governance in Mudumalai forest in terms of legitimacy, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and fairness; and effectiveness in terms of supervision and monitoring. This thesis has five research questions. They are:

### **1) What constitutes “good” and “effective” governance?**

This question focuses on developing a theoretical idea about good and effective governance from the literature. Ideas developed from answering this question will help to find answers for the other research questions.

### **2) To what extent can the governance of Mudumalai forest be considered to be legitimate?**

This question focuses on assessing the level of legitimacy in Mudumalai forest tourism governance. Answering this question will help reveal the legitimacy of forest officials’ powers and the level of acceptance of these powers amongst key stakeholders.

### **3) To what extent can the tourism governance in Mudumalai forest be considered good with respect to:**

- transparency;
- accountability; and
- inclusiveness and fairness.



This question tries to find the quality of tourism governance in Mudumalai forest in terms of transparency and accountability. It also tries to find the stakeholder inclusiveness and fairness in the Mudumalai forest tourism governance. Answering this question will help establish the quality of tourism governance in Mudumalai. If the system is found to be deficient, the reasons for this sub-standard governance quality will be explored as a part of answering this question.

- 4) How effective is the tourism governance in Mudumalai forest in terms of monitoring and supervising the tourism activities?

This question will try to find the effectiveness of the Mudumalai forest tourism governance system in terms of monitoring and supervising the tourist activities. If the system is found to be deficient, the reasons for poor governance effectiveness will be identified as a part of answering this question.

### **1.3 Methodology**

Three methods were used to answer the four research questions. The relationships between these methods and the research objectives are given in Table 1.1.

#### **1.3.1 Literature review**

Environmental governance literature was reviewed to understand and characterise good and effective governance. Different ideas gained from the literature about good governance were used to develop a set of good governance principles applicable to Mudumalai forest tourism governance. The review was used to answer the first research question. The set of principles were also used as criteria to check the quality and effectiveness tourism governance in Mudumalai.

In addition, specific documents related to Mudumalai forest tourism governance were examined to understand the governance structure and its management objectives. Documents related to legislation, governance structure and management objectives were examined.

### **1.3.2 Interviews**

Key informant interviews were used as a method in this thesis to address the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> objectives. The forest officials who are the governors of the Mudumalai forest and the local community people and the tourists who are the stakeholders of the Mudumalai forest tourism were interviewed. These interviews were carried out from 1<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2010. A total of 29 participants were interviewed, including forest officials, tourists and local Mudumalai forest stakeholders. The interview procedure and questions were approved by the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee. This thesis preserves the anonymity of each individual who participated in the interviews. The number of participants have been categorised into three different groups and given codes are as follows:

- FO - Forest officials in Mudumalai forest (7 interviews)
- LCP - Local community people in Mudumalai forest (12 interviews)
- TP - Tourists visiting Mudumalai forest (10 interviews).

Each participant was given an explanation of the objective of this thesis before the interview and any questions were answered. Once they expressed their willingness to participate in the interview, the interview questions were put to them. The questions asked to the interview participants are given in the Appendix 1. Each interview was done with one individual at a time. Interviews are recorded and notes were also taken during the interviews. The interview questions were used as a guideline and participants were also encouraged to speak generally anything they knew about the research topic.

The recordings and the notes taken during the interviews were used to identify participants' views on the quality and effectiveness of tourism governance in Mudumalai forest. These data were organised according to key themes relevant to research questions 2, 3 and 4. Each participant's answers were also considered in relation to their role in Mudumalai forest.

### 1.3.3 Field observations

Results from the document examinations and interviews will be cross checked with field observations. These observations were conducted approximately 3 kilometres around the Mudumalai forest reception office, which is the ground zero for Mudumalai forest tiger reserve. Field observations were done during the same time period as the interviews- that is, between 1<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2010. Photographs and notes were taken to record the field observations. Field observations were typically done before or after interviews. Field observations were also used as an opportunity to collect data which was not covered in the interviews.

**Table 1.1: Relationship between methods and the research questions**

Method	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
Literature review	✓	✓	✓	
Interviews with governors, stakeholders and tourists		✓	✓	✓
Field observations				✓

#### **1.4 Thesis structure**

This introductory chapter is followed by a second chapter giving an introduction to the Mudumalai forest area, including location, natural features forest flora and fauna, and tourism opportunities and facilities. Forest governance structures and the legislation applicable in Mudumalai are also described.

In chapter 3, ideas from the literature are discussed in relation to the quality and effectiveness of forest governance. In the chapter 4, the forest official and stakeholder interview results are presented, according to the themes of legitimacy, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and fairness, supervision and monitoring. Contradictions and issues raised by the forest officials and the stakeholders are identified.

In chapter 5, the interview results are discussed in comparison with the ideas given in the literature review. This chapter comments on the quality and effectiveness of forest and tourism governance and analyses the reasons underlying this assessment. The thesis concludes with a summary of the findings and a set of recommendations.

## **Chapter 2 Description of Mudumalai forest**

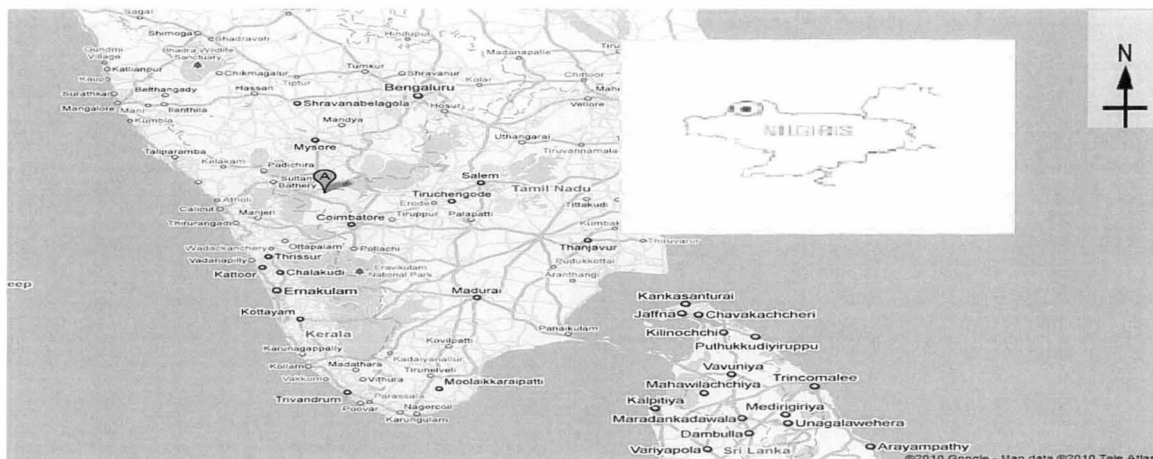
### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will give an introduction to the Mudumalai forest and its governance. As a part of the introduction location, tenure, flora and fauna of the forest will be explained. Tourist opportunities and tourist facilities in Mudumalai forest are explained to understand the tourist value of Mudumalai forest. This chapter also explains about the governance structure and legislation applicable in Mudumalai.

### **2.2 Location and tenure**

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park is situated at the tri-junction of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka on the North Eastern Slopes of the Nilgiris part of Western Ghats descending to the Mysore Plateau (Figure 2.1). An erstwhile game reserve, Mudumalai was declared a wildlife sanctuary with a 62 sq KM area in the early 1940 by the then Madras Presidency. With Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka) in the north and Wynad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) in the west the region forms a single, continuous viable habitat for a varied range of wildlife (TFD, 2010). Being a national park Mudumalai forest protected area can be categorised as IUCN category 2 though it's not officially listed in the IUCN list. Tiger reserve which is part of the Muudmalai forest National Park is an important tourist attraction in Mudumalai forest which attracts tourists.

**Figure 2.1: Location of Mudumalai forest in Nilgiris district, Tamilnadu (Google map, 2010)**



### 2.3 Flora and fauna

Mudumalai forest is rich with both flora and fauna. Tropical moist-deciduous vegetation towards the western parts of the sanctuary gives way to dry-deciduous and thorn-scrub along the east. It is varied with tall grasses called ‘Elephant grass’, Bamboo, valuable timber like Teak, Rosewood, Mathi, Vengai, Venteak and fine flowering trees and shrubs like Indian laburnum, Flame of the forest and Coral trees. Riverine patches and swamps add to diversity. Among the fruit bearers are jamun, nelli, jujuba and varieties of wild figs.

It is an exciting place to see Elephant, Gaur, Chowsingha, Mouse deer and Sloth bear. The animals include, Tiger, Panther, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer, Blackbuck, Common Langur, Malabar Giant Squirrel, Flying Squirrel, Four-horned Antelope (Chowsingha), Wild Dog, Jackal, Mongoose, Jungle Cat, Rusty Spotted Cat, Leopard Cat Striped Hyena, Leopard-cat, Small Indian Civet, Striped-necked Mongoose, Ruddy Mongoose, Sloth Bear, Indian Giant Squirrel, Sloth Bear, Wild Boar, Porcupine, Striped Hyena, Slender Lories, etc.. Tigers are largely elusive but leopards or a pack of Wild Dog, on the move are frequently seen.

Some of the rare birds of prey like the Rufous bellied hawk eagle can be occasionally seen in this Sanctuary. Avifauna is varied with Changeable Hawk Eagle, Black Eagle, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Jerdon’s Baza, Bonelli’s Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Besra, Mottled Wood Owl, Brown Hawk Owl Minivet, Hornbills, Golden Oriole, Chloropsis, Paradise

flycatcher, Golden backed and Malabar Great Black woodpeckers, Bluewinged parakeet, Fairy bluebird, Jungle fowl Racket tailed drongo, Peacock Grey, Junglefowl, Red Spurfowl, Grey Francolin, Painted Spurfowl, Painted Bush Quail, White bellied Woodpecker, Lesser Yellownappe, Golden Woodpecker, Streak-throated Woodpecker, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Emerald Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Pompadour Green Pigeon, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Indian Cuckoo, Alpine Swift, Black-hooded Oriole, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Grey-headed Bulbul, Forest Wagtail, Crimson-bcked Sunbird, Loten's Sunbird. The reptiles present are the Python, Monitor Lizard, Flying Lizard, Cobra, Krait , Vipers etc (TFD,2010) .

## 2.4 Tourist opportunities and facilities

A variety of opportunities and facilities are offered to the tourists visiting Mudumalai forest. The tourist opportunities and facilities are offered by both forest officials and the private tourism operators. Some tourist opportunities like camping, trucking and fishing are restricted by the forest officials in certain seasons of each year.

The tourist opportunities and facilities available in Mudumalai are summarised in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1, Tourist opportunities and facilities available in Mudumalai forest**

<b>Tourist opportunities</b>	<b>Tourist facilities</b>
Elephant safari	Tamilnadu tourism department guest house
Elephant feeding	Forest department guest house
Wild safari	Online bookings
Night safari	Forest canteen
Bird watching	State government transport facilities
Trucking	
Camping	
Fishing	

## **2.5 Governance and legislation**

### **2.5.1 Governance structure in Mudumalai forest**

Mudumalai forest governance is run by the Tamilnadu State Forest Department. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests is the head of Tamil Nadu Forest Department. Five Additional Principal Chief Conservators of Forests and eight Chief Conservators of Forests function under his control in the head office. All the Chief Conservators of Forests are assisted by the Conservators of Forests and Deputy Conservator of Forests. Tamilnadu state is divided into twelve territorial circles. Mudumalai forest located in Nilgris falls under the Coimbatore region circle. Chief Conservator of Forest for Coimbatore circle is assisted by a Conservator of Forest in Nilgris district. Forest officials in Mudumalai are working under the command of Conservator of Forest based in Nilgris (TFD, 2010).

Mudumalai forest has seventy two uniformed staff headed by the Mudumalai forest warden. The uniformed staff list includes rangers, forest guards, watchers, drivers and office staff. Temporary employees were also appointed in Mudumalai on a contract basis when ever needed.

### **2.5.2 Legislation applicable in Mudumalai forest**

There are various national and state policies, acts, codes, rules, notifications and guidelines that deal with the conservation of forestry, wildlife and environment in the State of Tamilnadu in India. Some of the important legislations applicable in Mudumalai Forest are as follows:

- National Forest Policy 1988
- Tamilnadu Forest Act 1982
- Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

#### **National Forest Policy 1988**

This policy is developed to follow the resolution No. 13/52-F, dated the 12th May 1952, recommended by the former Ministry of Food and Agriculture of that time to develop a



forest policy to be followed in the management of state forests in India. The ever-increasing demands for the forest resources caused serious degradation of forest and forest resources due to misguided and inadequate management policies. The National Forest Policy took this in to account and it gives guidelines for the state government in managing the forest and its resources. The basic objective of this policy is to maintain the forest environmental stability through preservation and through restoration, where necessary. This government policy gives legislative power to state governments to restrict or approve any kind of usage over the state forest. This policy encourages state governments to promote the tribes and other customary owners of forest to take on management roles concerning the protection and development of the forest on which they are dependent. This policy also recommends state governments not to take back the customary ownership and concessions enjoyed by the tribes and other poor people over the forest goods like fuel wood. However, where such measures are necessary, the basic needs of the tribes should be made available at reasonable price through conveniently located depots. The policy also encourages state government to provide local communities with employment and economic opportunities in the forest management. This policy also outlines the Indian Government's guidelines on wildlife conservation, forest industries, forest education and forest research to the state governments. State governments will take this in to account in their environment and forest policies (IG, 1988).

### **Tamilnadu Forest Act 1882**

The Tamilnadu Forest Act gives power to the State Government of Tamilnadu to declare any forest in the state to be reserved forest. This can be done through a notification in the official government gazette. The gazette will specify the reason to declare it a reserved forest, situation and limits of such lands. Through the gazette, a forest settlement officer will be appointed who will be normally a person other than from forest department on behalf of the state government. The officer will investigate and enquire about any existence or claimed rights of any person or group over that forest. This Act specifies the role and limits of the forest settlement officer's powers. This Act gives any person or group the right to make claims over any part of the forest or it sresreocues to the forest settlement officer. A report on the claimed rights over the forest is then submitted to the State Government by the forest officer. The State Government will then consider the report before announcing any forest to be reserved forest. This Act gives the State Government powers to make rules once a forest is

declared to be a reserved forest. Rules will include regulating or prohibiting activities like agriculture, hunting, selling timber, kindling of fire and cutting of grass for cattle. Penalties and prosecutions in case of violation of rules are also specified in this Act. The Act also gives the State Government the legislative power to lease or acquire any land with the interest of forest management. Guidelines about giving licenses, timber transit, royalties over forest resources, forest courts, punishments and appeals also been given in this Act (TG,1882)

### **Wildlife Protection Act 1972**

This Act was established by the Government of India for the protection of wild animals, birds and plants and for all the related matters connected to achieving that. This Act is applicable all over India except Jammu and Kashmir. The Act came in to force in Tamilnadu from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974. Through this Act the Government of India appoints a chief wildlife warden, wildlife wardens and such other appointments as required. All the wildlife wardens, officers and employees appointed under this Act are subordinate to the chief wildlife warden. The appointed chief wildlife warden is then subject to the general or special directions given by the relevant state government. The chief wildlife warden, with the previous approval of a state government in writing, has the power to delegate all or any of his powers and duties under this Act, to any officers and employees subordinate to him. Under this Act hunting of any wild animals listed by the Indian government is prohibited. In some situations like when an animal become a threat to humans and human property or when an animal becomes diseased beyond recovery, the chief wildlife warden or other authorised officer may permit a person to hunt that animal. Any wild animal killed or wounded in defence of any person shall be government property and the person did that won't be prosecuted. Permission for hunting can be granted by the chief wildlife warden for special purposes like education, scientific research and management, collection of specimens and for the manufacture of life saving drugs from animal products. The Act gives the chief wild life warden with the power to grant, suspend and to cancel the licenses given for various purposes if these are found to threaten the wellbeing of wildlife (IG, 1972).

## **Chapter 3 An overview of governance quality and effectiveness**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the ideas from various literatures on the quality and effectiveness of the governance system are discussed in relation to Mudumalai forest tourism governance.

### **3.2 What is governance?**

Governance is important in protected area management as it covers wide range of topics such as “from policy to practice, from behaviour to meaning, from investments to impacts” (Borrini-Feyerabend, 2003, p.92). Governance refers to “the combination of policy, practices and institutions, both explicit and implicit, which regulate public life” (Barber et al, 2004, p.101). Governance can be described as “interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine directions, how that power is exercised, and how the views of the citizens or stakeholders are considered by those making decisions” (Dearden et al, 2005, p.89). In general, governance “is about power, relationships and accountability: who has influence, who decides, and how decision-makers are held accountable” (Graham et al, 2003, p.2).

### **3.3 How governance in protected area has changed and changing?**

Protected area governance is a global concept which has been evolved over a period of time. In general global change of any kind can be defined as a transformation which occurs on a worldwide scale and/or have a worldwide impact. An example such as the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the atmosphere or the local species extinction that causes the global loss of biodiversity clearly explains the change in the global level (Barber et al, 2004). We are witnessing a lot of transformations such as climate change, fragmentation of landscapes and seascapes, and many others that occurs in our day-to-day life. We are facing lots of problems which have significant impact globally that in turn in one or other way affects us and our environment (WCPA, 2003). All these changes have a huge impact in the protected area management as well. The ideas and values regarding the protected areas and ecosystem conservation have undergone many changes due to the “socio-economic changes, biophysical

changes, political changes and institutional changes” which happened around the world in the past century (Barber et al, 2004).

The recognition of the modern protected area concept evolved at the end of the 18th century. The Yosemite National Park (California) which was established by U.S. Congress is the first national-level model of protected areas; all though Yellowstone (1872) was the first time the term “National Park” was officially used (McNeely, 2005). Since the founding of Yellowstone, protected area governance has seen a gradual democratisation that some claim has still not gone far enough (Mulongoy & Chape, 2004).

The reason to protect an area is derived from the values attached to it. The service they provide to humans, their ecological importance and their cultural and spiritual meaning are the three main historical reasons why the protected areas have been valued (McNeely, 2005). Another important value of the protected areas is that in the long run they have the potential to reconnect the increasing urbanised societies to nature (Putney, 2003). The system of protected areas in the world has grown greatly over the past two and half decades, particularly in the developing countries. The current mission of protected areas is not only about biodiversity conservation but also about improving human welfare (Naughton –Treves et al, 2005).

In the recent decades, the traditional state-based ‘top-down’ governance model has been felt by some authors to be inappropriate to meet the changing values on protected area management. It has been replaced in some cases by diverse forms of collaborative management, partnership arrangements, delegated authority and community management. Powers and responsibilities in modern protected area governance are encouraged to be shared among the indigenous and local communities, NGOs and individual landholders, often working in partnership with each other. The idea of non-state protected areas is not new as the indigenous communities have had it for millennia over their special places (Lockwood, 2009). Top down governance approach in cases such as managing Aboriginal lands, or areas which are strongly connected to the local community would result in less effective management because of the lack of co-operation by the local people. The local people if not

recognised properly might not co-operate with the authorities and the effectiveness of management could be affected.

Apart from the most common top down government governance in the past, other governance types such as shared governance, private governance and governance by indigenous peoples and local communities are also considered as effective protected area governance types (Dudley, 2008). The recognition for nongovernmental management systems like community based management is increasing. Decentralised community based management approaches are successful in avoiding the practical and moral failures of centralised state based governance (McCarthy, 2007).

The rapid growth in the information systems and technology has provided the individuals with an opportunity to get and share data. In the context of protected areas, people who are given information about the decisions that may affect their lives will make them demand a greater say in the decision making process (Lockwood & Kothari, 2006). “In many countries government protected area agencies have, while retaining ultimate authority, opened their decision-making processes to wide stakeholder input. Major NGOs such as Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy and World Wide Fund for Nature have shown a commitment to involve local and indigenous communities in their initiatives and to act in partnership with governments, the private sector and other NGOs” (Lockwood, 2009, p. 3).

There are several more changes which have happened and are happening in the protected area governance and natural resource management. The overall changes happened and happening can be said to be based on the idea of decentralising power by sharing it between higher and lower governance levels (Lockwood, 2009).

### **3.4 Why is good governance important?**

One of the main purposes of establishing protected areas is to conserve and protect ecosystem from various threats. Effective management of protected areas is the way to achieve the conservation goal. Having good governance is an important aspect in managing the protected areas (Dearden et al., 2005). Good governance is all about how power is

exercised to effectively manage protected areas and also making sure that stakeholders have their say in the decision making process in relevant circumstances. Appropriate power and accountability in the decision making process and good governance make sure that the decision made is legitimate, fair and accountable. In some cases where these power and accountability are not established properly then it wouldn't result in a good protected area management. Establishing protected areas in aboriginal and indigenous people lands purely driven by a top down approach will cause many disadvantages such as loss of co-operation and other political issues (Lockwood, 2009).

In other cases, top down government governed protected areas in many developing countries have failed to achieve the conservation goals since the local community did not understand the importance of protected area. The local communities in those protected areas constantly rely on it for resources and other traditional activities such as poaching (Lockwood, 2009).

Public are playing an active role in many decision making process that shapes their life. Easy communication technologies, increased levels of awareness and education also enabled public to have their say in managing the environment by establishing protected areas (Lockwood and Kothari, 2006). So many management authorities including government and non government organisations through good governance have included stakeholders in their decision making process (Lockwood, 2009).

### **3.5 What are the characteristics of good governance?**

The characteristics of good governance are interpreted in different ways by different sources. “Attributes of “good governance” include respect for existing rights and the rule of law, as well as procedural elements such as informed public participation in decision- making processes, transparency in the provision of information, effective and impartial application and enforcement of rules by governing authorities, and systems by which authorities can be held accountable for their actions by the public” (Barber et al, 2004, p.106). Good governance system has been classified into as many as eight important characteristics to it, namely: “participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It seeks to minimise corruption, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most

vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. A good governance system is also responsive to the present and future needs of society” (UNESCAP, 2010).

Humane governance is a concept which talks about three good governance principles. To achieve the characteristics of a good governance “humane governance involves those structures and processes that support the creation of a participatory, responsive and accountable polity (that is, good political governance) embedded in a competitive, non-discriminatory, yet equitable economy (that is, good economic governance). This requires the resources contributed by people to be ploughed back to serve their own basic human needs, which will in turn expand the opportunities open to them; people must be given the ability to well-organised (that is, good civic governance)” (Weiss, 2000, p.78). These three good governance principles are further segmented into five underlying principles by various sources such as the United Nations Development Program (Barber et al, 2004).

Good governance characteristics in general can be put together under five principles. The fifth World Parks Congress recommended the following five good governance principles: legitimacy and voice, accountability, performance, fairness and direction to achieve good governance in protected area management (Barber et al, 2004). These five principles articulated by UNDP are widely used with slight variations in many literatures and there are strong evidences that these principles claim to have a universal recognition (Graham et al, 2003).

In some of the literatures the five good governance principles are further segmented to seven good governance principles such as legitimacy, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, fairness, connectivity and resilience (Lockwood, 2009). The idea of treating legitimacy and transparency under separate topics unlike other literatures bring value to the principle of transparency on its own.

Five governance principles namely legitimacy, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and fairness will be used to analyse the quality of tourism governance in Mudumalai forest.

### **3.5.1 Legitimacy**

The importance of legitimacy in good governance was well established when decision making processes are influenced by global norms. Also at that time decision making process is largely influenced by top down approaches rather than a bottom up democratic process. These problems created a need for the legitimacy in the decision making process. Legitimacy can be simply defined as justification and acceptance of any action or rule by the people. This definition also raises the question of who make the rules, who justifies and who accepts (Bernstein, 2005). Legitimacy can also be understood as a legal entitlement of an authority to make decision. With government governance, these legal rights for decision making are usually given through public elections or other constitutional arrangement. Although the government have legitimised decision making power through legislation, the power can be transferred or shared with the people who would be affected by that decision (Boedeltje & Cornips, 2004).

Governance of protected areas by many different authorities such private land owner, Indigenous people, local communities and NGOs attain legitimacy through different processes in order to make a decision. Private land owners by having the property rights over the purchased land can make decisions about their lands and those decisions can be legalised by the supporting law. Indigenous people have rights towards making decision about their land because of the deep emotional and sentimental values which connects them with their lands (Lockwood, 2010). "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People" gives the Indigenous people right to morally claim the ownership of the land. Decisions made by a group of people or community should be consensus oriented. NGOs can attain legitimacy through legally obtaining the property or having partnership with the owners of the property (Lockwood, 2010). This legitimacy should be properly exercised by the authorities without manipulating the results and including all the stakeholders with a consensus oriented decision.

Legitimacy is an important governance principle which is a key element in achieving the good quality governance in Mudumalai. A legitimate government set up makes them accountable and it allows the stakeholders to claim their rights to them. Lack of legitimacy in Mudumalai forest governance will affect the management of the forest.



### **3.5.2 Transparency**

Transparency refers to the governance openness and accessibility which makes it easy for the stakeholders to access the process of decision making. Accessibility of information is a basic right of the citizens and the transparency in the protected areas management governance helps to gain trust of the stakeholders. Transparency can also be seen as a matter of professional ethics where the authorities are obliged to be transparent in their decision making process to the stakeholders. The process of decision making and performance should be constantly reported to the public. Transparency also concerns about how the information is available to the stakeholders such as whether it is easily understandable/readily available. Transparency in governance makes it easy to identify whether the decision made is legitimate and made upon consensus, having professional/expert opinion using formal decision making guidance (Lockwood, 2010).

Transparency is an important aspect of tourist governance in Mudumalai forest. Transparency is an indicator reflecting the quality of governance in the Mudumalai forest management. Transparency also allows the stakeholders to view and to develop their opinion on the other good quality governance principles like accountability, inclusiveness and fairness.

### **3.5.3 Accountability**

Accountability in governance is about who holds the responsibility and to what extent. The accountability of a planning authority starts with identifying the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and then accepting those roles and responsibilities. Accountability is classified into two categories: upward accountability and downward accountability. Upward accountability is one where the governing body is accountable for its performance either directly through the law or indirectly through the reports produced to the public. The governing body should be accountable for meeting its performance standards against international treaties and conventions and also should comply with the laws and regulations. The higher authorities above the governing body should also make sure that the governing body is accountable for the performance and the management. Whereas the downward accountability emphasis on the governance body's accountability to its stakeholders. One of the major problems with the devolved governance arrangement includes that the

responsibilities are also devolved and the accountability could be ineffective (Lockwood, 2010).

Mudumalai forest officials should be accountable for various factors such as biodiversity conservation, finance and local community livelihoods. The tourist governance in Mudumalai will demand a downward accountability model to address the concerns of the local community people. The idea of accountability to stakeholders will also be useful in achieving fair and inclusive tourist governance in Mudumalai. The accountability principle is an important quality which should be present in the Mudumalai forest tourist governance to make it good governance.

#### **3.5.4 Inclusiveness and fairness**

The level of involvement of the stakeholders facilitated in the decision making process can be described as inclusiveness. This is also a moral factor where the persons who are concerned by the decision made can have their say. This is an important case where indigenous people are concerned; governing aboriginal lands requires the traditional land owners to make decisions and by that definition the governance inclusiveness is vital. There are also other cases where the protected area not only benefits/affects the local people but everyone. So the inclusiveness of non local people in the protected area management is an important element of good governance (Van den Born et al., 2001; Leiserowitz et al., 2004)

Inclusive governance is all about embracing diversity of opinions, values, ideas and having policies and structures to develop stakeholders' involvement. Such inclusiveness not only develops solutions for complicated problems but also provides opportunities for innovation. Inclusiveness will be effective when the governing authority take necessary steps to make sure that all the stakeholders have equal chance to have their say in the decision making process and extra measures should be taken to include the disadvantaged (Lockwood, 2010).

Diverse opinion and consensus decisions are the most favourable part of the governance inclusiveness. Inclusiveness and fairness are the effective ways to mediate conflicts in the decision making process, provides pathway to new perspectives and increases capacity to manage them all (Lockwood, 2010).

Fairness is about applying fair treatment in recognising stakeholders views and opinions; having a good two way relationship between higher and lower authorities; having an unbiased legitimate decision making process; a comprehensive yet detailed understanding of natural values and consideration of the distributions of costs and benefits for current and future generations (Lockwood, 2010). Stakeholders are the key people to be acknowledged in the decision making process. Respecting their values and opinions is an important way to gain their trust and support for the management. Being fair is a way of achieving governance transparency. Higher authorities should have a good co-operation with lower authorities to achieve fair governance. Respecting the lower authorities, giving them appropriate level of freedom in decision making and serious consideration of their views are some of the principles through which higher authorities can achieve governance fairness; respecting and accepting the higher authorities' views by lower authorities is the other way to achieve good governance (Lockwood, 2010).

A person who is accused by protected area manager/authority should be subjected to fair trial through procedural fairness/natural fairness, so that the person will have a chance to explain/defend himself/herself. Civil rights, human rights and indigenous rights are to be respected but in some cases these rights contradict each other. Extra measures should be taken to make sure that the fairness in the governance is maintained. Fair governance through moral obligations should take all necessary measures to satisfy all claims and where appropriate should compensate for any damages. Both the benefits and burdens that may arise due to the decision making process should be considered not just for current generation but for future generations as well. Careful fair governance should be established to prevent any unreasonable inequalities that may arise from any action or the decision making process (Lockwood, 2010).

Inclusiveness and fairness principles are also identified to be very important to achieve a good quality governance system in Mudumalai. Mudumalai forest being the livelihood of the local community people, tourist destination for the visiting tourist and a protected area for the forest officials, demands a fair governance model with stakeholder inclusiveness. Without achieving wide support among the stakeholders, it will be hard to achieve management objectives in Mudumalai. Following the inclusiveness and fairness as

governance principle will help Mudumalai forest management to reach common ground among the stakeholders in decision making process.

### **3.6 What is meant by effective governance?**

Good governance may not necessarily be effective governance. “Management effectiveness evaluation is defined as the assessment of how well protected areas are being managed – primarily the extent to which management is protecting values and achieving goals and objectives” (Hockings et al, 2006, p.1). Effective governance can be explained as governance which functions with all of the good governance principles as its backbone and upon implementing should best serve the purpose of the protected area establishment. Management effectiveness is about the ability to deliver on protected area objectives (Hockings et al, 2006). The common protected area objective will be to protect and conserve the protected area. The objective of protecting and conserving a protected area demands the effective monitoring and supervision to achieve it.

It is important for a government to be effective as it will help to achieve the management objectives and it will assist in effective resource allocation. It will also involve the community in the governance and promote protected area values (Hockings et al, 2006). Being effective governance also means it will enable lawful activities and prevent any unlawful acts that may affect achievement of the management objectives (Rogers and Hall, 2003). In this thesis the idea of effective governance is related to the supervision and monitoring in Mudumalai forest. Even though protected area governance may be good in terms of governance quality, if it is weak in monitoring and supervision it will have a negative impact on achieving management objectives. Protected area governance with weak supervision and monitoring will struggle to assert their governance effectiveness.

## **Chapter 4 Results**

### **4.1 Interview results**

In this chapter the participant's interview results are discussed to determine participants' opinions on the quality and effectiveness of tourism governance in Mudumalai forest. Participants are divided into three categories namely forest officials (FO), local community people (LCP) and tourists (TP) visiting Mudumalai. Forest officials in this chapter refer to the forest department staff governing Mudumalai forest area. The three participant groups have expressed their perspectives in the interviews about the quality and effectiveness of tourism governance in Mudumalai. The results from the interviews are discussed below under the five good governance principles explained in Chapter 3.

#### **4.1.1 Level of legitimacy in Mudumalai forest tourism governance**

Forest official's legitimacy in Mudumalai forest is conferred by their democratic statute by various Indian constitutional legislations. There are various national and state policies, acts, codes, rules, notifications and guidelines that deal with the conservation of forestry, wildlife and environment in the State of Tamilnadu in India. In Chapter 2 some of the important legislation applicable to Mudumalai forest has been explained.

Among the legislative acts and policies, Mudumalai forest officials report that the Wildlife Protection Act is the most important. The reason is that the Act provides the members of Indian Forest Department with the constitutional legitimacy to govern the forests in India. The Wildlife Protection Act provides the forest officials with legislative powers, giving them governance control over the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. This Act has national effect, providing forest officials with the power to control, manage and maintain any wildlife sanctuary in India. This allows them to control key features of sanctuaries, such as prohibiting entry into the forest by building fences and erecting barriers:

“We feel legitimate to govern the forest through the constitutional legislation. In addition to it we also feel legitimate to govern this forest because all the important management activities are instructed by the chief wild life warden through weekly circulars” (FO 1)

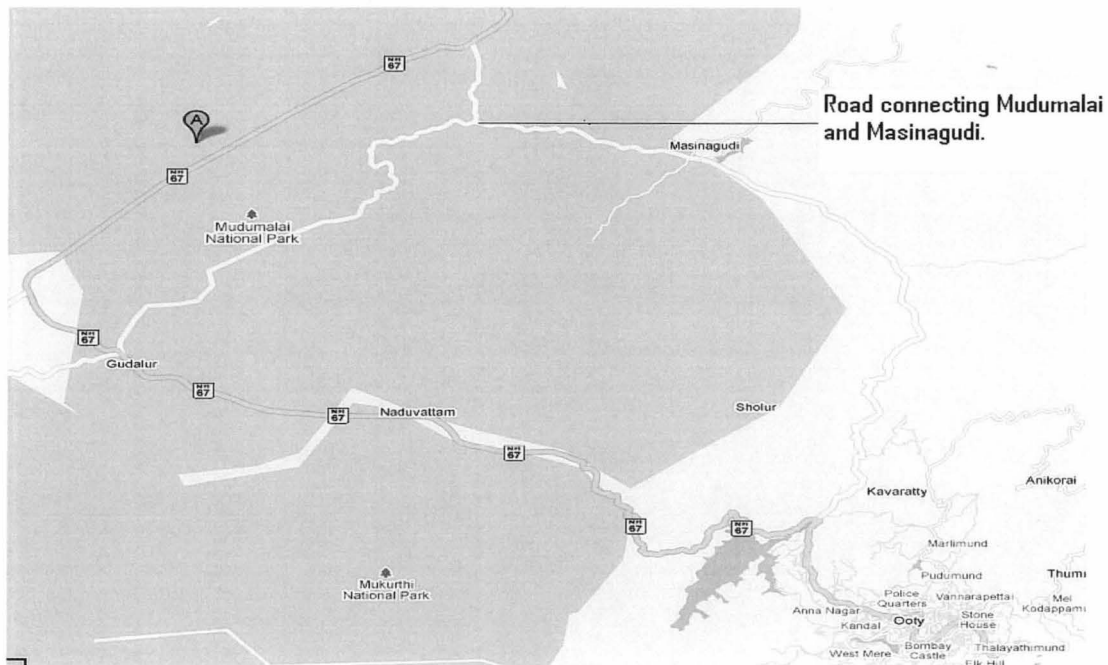
An additional expressed justification made by the forest officials for being the legitimate authority in relation to the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary was that their day-to-day activities were regulated by detailed directives from higher officials. Weekly circulars from District Managers gave instructions as to how forest officials should conduct their activities, meaning that they did not operate in an ad hoc manner. Although the forest officials felt it as strength of their legitimacy, it raises questions about their legitimate powers to make decisions on their own. It points out the lack of autonomy with the forest officials to make decision. They seem to be dependent on the weekly circulars from their higher authorities to carry out their governing role.

Forest officials admitted that sometimes they have made decisions beyond the limit of their authority. For an example, forest officials said they are trying to control the number of vehicles using the road between Mudumalai and Masinagudi in the night time. A national highway NH 67 is passing through the Mudumalai forest connecting Tamilnadu and Karnataka states. They said usually vehicles' using the national highway reduces after nine in the night. This is because the neighbouring state Karnataka has a rule to close the road passing through their national park after nine pm at night.

The forest officials said in the past despite the fact the road is closed in Karnataka, the road was busy in the night time in Mudumalai region. This is because of the private tourist operators operating from Masinagudi which is a small town close to Mudumalai. Private tourist operators in Masinagudi were taking tourists for night safari through the road connecting Masinagudi and Mudumalai forest shown in Figure 4.1. Their night safari route extends to the Karnataka border through the national highway connecting Tamilnadu and Karnataka. They were using the road between Masinagudi and Mudumalai as an access way to the national highway in the night time:

**“The road connecting Mudumalai and Masinagudi was closed in the night time to stop the operation of the private tourist operators. It led to the corruption in our system. The tourist operators still managed to operate through that road by bribing the road keepers in the night” (FO 2).**

**Figure 4.1, Road connecting Mudumalai forest and Masinagudi (Google map)**



This made the forest officials worried about the wildlife safety and as well as the corruption in the system:

“In order to stop that, we called upon the tourist operators for a meeting. We said to them that we are ready to allow them to use that road in the night time if they promised to reduce their number of trips in night. Our offer was accepted by them and now it’s in place” (FO 3).

The forest official added that they are not supposed to do that as it is beyond their legitimacy to make an unofficial deal with the private tourist operators. Forest officials claimed that they did that to reduce the number vehicles using the road passing through Mudumalai forest in the night time. The forest officials didn’t explain how they convinced or what they offered the private tourist operators to reduce their night safaris. The need felt by the forest officials to make decisions beyond their legitimacy level is an issue with the Mudumalai forest governance. The example given by the forest officials leads to the suspicion about potential undisclosed agreements and deals made between the private tourist

operators and the forest officials. Forest officials' acting beyond their legitimate powers raises questions about their respect on their legitimacy limits.

Apart from a small minority, most of the local community people completely accept that the forest officials of the Mudumalai forests are legitimate to govern the forest as they are appointed by the Indian Government. People in the local community feel that they have to accept the forest officials as the legitimate authority to manage the Mudumalai forest as they are appointed by the Government. However, locals also expressed a reticence to question the legitimacy of the forest officials in any way as they feel they are too weak socially, economically and politically:

“They (forest officials) are government people. By what means can we question their legitimacy? I don't believe we have the strength to do that” (LCP).

Some younger and more educated local community members did express some concerns and doubts in accepting the legitimacy of the forest officials. When asked for the reason, they said they can't really point particular issues, but they are not convinced the forest officials have legitimacy to govern the forest. It might be because, this generation has grown up watching their parents and community humiliated and threatened by the forest officials in the past. The disbelief and the fear among the young local community towards the forest officials may have a negative impact in maintaining forest official's legitimacy in Mudumalai.

Tourists report that they accept that the forest officials of Mudumalai are legitimate managers of the area as they are appointed by the State Government to do their job. Tourists from outside Tamilnadu also accept that the forest officials of Mudumalai are legitimate managers of the forest. However, some tourists from outside Tamilnadu said that they couldn't comment on questions of legitimacy, as they did not know who the governing authority was:

“We can't really comment on the Mudumalai forest governor's legitimacy as we haven't made any contact with them in any way in this visit. We actually don't know who the governors are” (TP)

The chance for a tourist to visit and leave Mudumalai forest without meeting any of the forest officials have left them without having any idea about the legitimate governors of



the forest. This has made some of the tourist to be unaware about the legitimate powers of the forest officials. This may give the visiting tourists an impression that there are no active governors directing and controlling management in Mudumalai. This is an issue where the forest officials have to make sure all the visiting tourists are aware about their legitimate governance system in place to avoid any unlawful activities.

#### **4.1.2 Level of transparency in Mudumalai forest tourism governance**

Mudumalai forest officials said that their management objectives are based on the guidelines given in Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and in Tamilnadu Forest Act 1982. Forest officials claimed that their guidance about management objectives from the legislation is transparent. Forest officials listed the following topics as being important for transparent governance in Mudumalai forest:

- transparency in terms administration;
- transparency in terms of charges, facilities and activities; and
- transparency in terms of tourist safety and risk.

#### **Transparency in administration**

The forest officials said that their job descriptions and legislative powers to govern the tourist activities are accessible to all to see, through government websites and documents. Forest officials particularly refer to the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, which list the duties and powers of the forest officials in the protected areas. Forest officials insisted that any decision they make should and will comply with the guidelines given in Wildlife Protection Act 1972. Forest officials said that their decision making process is transparent to certain degree. Forest officials felt that their decision making process is transparent enough with the local community people as they are included in the decision making process through meetings. Forest officials said they will be in uniform while on duty which they believed contributes to maintaining transparency.

Forest officials allow research people, media and other non governmental organisations to visit, enquire and question them. They believe by doing this they maintain a

democratic and transparent system where people are allowed to check and question them. Forest officials said any Indian citizen can obtain any reasonable information regarding their governance in Mudumalai through the Right to Information Act 2005. The Right to Information Act is an act which enables any citizen of India to access any information he/she wants from any government department. Procedures to apply for any information through the Right to Information Act will be available in the each government department website. The forest officials said that the procedures to ask for any information through the Right to Information Act are given in the forest department website. Forest officials in Mudumalai claimed that Act as an important example for their willingness to share information with the stakeholders to achieve transparency.

### **Transparency in charges, facilities and activities**

Forest officials said that they are transparent in terms of charges, facilities and activities offered to the tourists visiting Mudumalai. Forest officials maintain openness with tourists about the facilities and activities they offer and what the tourist can expect from them:

“We don’t hide anything from the tourist when it comes to what we have got and what they can expect. We even tell the tourist that seeing an animal is purely by chance and we can’t guarantee them that, on their wild safari or elephant safari” (FO 4)

Before the start of elephant and wild safaris, tourists are pre informed by the forest officials that the sighting of wild animals is purely by chance. Forest officials said this as an example that they are transparent with the tourists about what the tourist can expect for the money they have paid. Forest officials said, in the Mudumalai forest reception office, any tourist can enquire about the tourist activities and facilities provided by the forest department. Cost for any tourist activities like elephant safaris, wild safaris and costs for any tourist facilities like accommodation are the same for every tourist. All the charges for the activities and facilities are listed in the reception office cash counter. All the charges paid by the tourist for facilities and activities are collected only in the reception area cash counter and given with computer generated receipts. Forest officials believed that this is a way of maintaining transparency with the tourist in terms of charges. Forest officials added that the booking for any tourist activities and facilities are done in a transparent way. It is based on the “first

come, first serve” policy. The bookings are available online and booking can also be done in the head office in Nilgris. Any data regarding the tourism, such as the number of tourists and amount of money collected can be obtained directly from staff in the reception office. However, the extent to which this works in practice is unknown.

### **Transparency in tourist safety and risks**

Forest officials said enough warnings are given to the tourist in reception office and through the sign boards about the risks involved with the forest. Warnings are also given about the risks of animal attack if the tourists are not following the sign board instructions. At times, when the forest is closed for tourists in fire season, and for other reasons like tiger census, this closure is advertised to the public through newspapers and other media. Forest officials said enough warning signs and boards were deployed inside the forest for the tourists. The warning signs and boards explain the “do’s and don’ts” inside the forest area. They are written in English and in local language, warning about the possible fines and legal prosecution.

Tourists visiting Mudumalai forest said that the forest officials are fairly transparent with their tourism governance. Tourists from Tamilnadu believed that the governance is transparent enough when it comes to tourist activities and the facilities offered to them. They felt that the bookings are really on “first come, first serve” basis. Charges for the tourist facilities and activities are transparent and computer generated receipts are given for what they pay. Tourists visiting from outside Tamilnadu felt that they couldn’t really get to know the activities and facilities offered by the forest department in Mudumalai. They felt providing brochures and maps with all the important sights and activities would help them to know what is actually offered. They felt the reception centre is not helping them as they would like, because most of the time it is closed. The reception centre’s appearance also makes it unfriendly and inapproachable. Tourists visiting from outside Tamilnadu felt that the governor’s announcement during closed periods is not transparent and accessible enough for them. Though the forest officials claim they are transparent in tourism governance, their failure to make them approachable and their failure to use an effective communication system with the public had led to questions about their transparency by tourists.

Local community people in Mudumalai are convinced by the transparency of tourism governance. They felt that the tourism governance is transparent enough for them to know about the tourist activities and facilities offered by the forest officials. Local community people said that the forest officials are transparent with them about the possible adjustments they have to make regarding tourism operations. Local community people agreed with the statement of the forest officials on transparency in management decisions. Local people are happy that the management decisions like closing the forest during the fire season are informed with prior notification to them through meetings and media.

#### **4.1.3 Level of accountability in Mudumalai forest tourism governance**

The forest officials in Mudumalai said that, they are completely accountable for every decision and action they take regarding tourism governance. They indicate that they are accountable for the preservation of the forest, preservation of the wildlife, and for tourist safety. They said, they also have financial accountability for all the revenue they get from the tourist activities and for all the money they spend for governing the tourist activities and providing facilities.

Forest officials are accountable for providing water facility to the animals during the dry season. Forest officials are also responsible for the closure of the Mudumalai forest in the times of drought or fire season. These responsibilities will be directed by their higher authorities through circulars, after the forest officials have asked for permission to carry out these tasks. Forest officials will be accountable for any mistakes and errors and they have to explain their actions to the higher authorities.

The forest officials said that the Mudumalai forest is part of the tiger project which includes the areas of other two neighbouring states (Kerala & Karnataka). Any death or killing of animals anywhere in tiger project area will be discussed and investigated by all the three state forest officials in meetings. This makes the governors of all the three states accountable to each other, when it comes to wildlife preservation in Mudumalai.

Forest officials accountability includes tourist safety by providing the tourist with enough warnings and supervising their activities through monitoring. Although they have accountability for tourist safety, forest officials said that they can't be accountable for the tourists who have not followed the instructions and warnings given by them. One of the forest

officials mentioned about a recent incident, where an old British woman was killed by an elephant while going for a night walk in the forest with her husband. Forest officials said they can't be accountable for this, as the woman has ignored their warning against night walking in the forest. Tourist safety is an issue where the forest officials are not taking complete responsibility. Taking full responsibility for the tourist safety inside Mudumalai forest will increase the trustworthiness of the forest official's accountability.

Forest officials said they are also accountable for the welfare of the local community people. Local community people lifestyle has been altered by the forest department for the good of forest management. Local people lifestyle is altered by the forest officials in a way to reduce their dependency over the forest resources like wood. Forest officials had made themselves responsible to provide the local community with alternate energy resources like gas stoves and electricity. This had helped the local community people to meet their daily needs without causing any damage to the forest.

The local community people believed that the forest officials have accountability over the forest and wild life preservation, and secondly for tourist safety and financial accountability. Local people said that they believe that the forest officials have accountability for the forest and wildlife preservation. They said that the forest officials interest in supervision and monitoring make them believe that the forest officials are responsible for the forest and wildlife preservation. They are aware of the interstate meeting on forest and wildlife preservation through which the forest officials have to be accountable for any incident in the forest. The local people said that they don't feel that the forest officials are accountable to them in any way and they believed that the forest officials are only accountable to the State Government. Young and educated among the local community people said that the forest officials do have some accountability towards them. They believed that the forest officials have accountability towards the economic, social and cultural welfare of the local community. They said they are not sure about how much financial and tourist safety accountability the governors have. Almost all the local community people said that they believe that the forest officials have accountability over the conservation of the forest and wildlife.

Tourists said that the forest officials in Mudumalai forest seem to be accountable in certain aspects. They consider that the governors are accountable for the money generated by

tourist activities as they are given with dockets for the money they paid. They feel that the governors seem to have the responsibility to preserve the forest and wildlife, as they can see the sign boards with instructions and warnings. The tourists said that they feel that the governors may have accountability over natural incidents as they can see the governors are doing controlled burning on the edges of the roads. They also said that the governors have accountability over tourist safety as they can see they are sending forest guards with them on the wild safaris and also have other safety measures such as speed limits and warning sign boards. Tourists from outside Tamilnadu feel it to be hard to comment on the accountability of the governors as they are completely new to the place. They said that they are not sure about who the governors are, as they haven't interacted with them in their stay. They too accept that the governors of the forest might have accountability for forest and wildlife preservation as evidenced by sign boards, check posts and patrols in the forests area.

#### **4.1.4 Inclusiveness and fairness in Mudumalai forest tourism governance**

Forest officials in Mudumalai said that their system of running the tourist governance is very much inclusive and fair. Forest officials referred to their predecessors who developed a new management approach around 1975 in Mudumalai forest. Forest officials of that time realised the importance of involving the local community people in the governance. They named the newly developed joint governance idea as "Joined Forest Management Concept". Forest officials said they have only 72 uniformed staff to govern an area of 321 sq km. They said without including the local community people in the tourist governance they can't run their governance system successfully.

As an example of inclusiveness and fairness, the forest officials explained about "Economic Development Committee". The Economic Development Committee is funded by the Forest Department of Tamilnadu and run by the forest officials in Mudumalai. This committee is headed by the chief ranger of Mudumalai forest. A revolving fund of around hundred and eighty six thousand Indian rupees (around 5000 Australian dollars) is kept in a bank account by the forest officials. This money is to help the Mudumalai local community people in the times of need. The local community people can borrow this money without paying any interest on it. The idea behind lending money to the local community is to support them with their financial needs and to encourage them to start their own businesses. An issue with this committee is that it doesn't have any local membership. It will be hard for the chief

ranger to understand the economic needs of the local community without including them in the committee to know their opinion. Another issue with this Economic Development Committee is that it has no exact procedure to follow in lending the money. The warden, who is the head of the committee, will make the decision on sanctioning money to the local person in need. This method of running the committee opens the possibilities for biased decision making by the warden. It also allows for corruption in the system. Despite the fact it is providing economic assistance to the local community, it can also be used by the forest officials as a tool to control the local community.

The forest officials said they are also trying to provide other means of tourism related employment opportunities through both direct and indirect means. They have appointed fire protection watchers, anti-pouching watchers, a secret intelligence squad and a tiger squad all from the local community. The forest officials claimed that watchers and squads are providing good employment opportunities to the local community. The forest officials also said that the forest canteen with a public telephone booth is given to the local community to run:

“Our last chief forest officer is a strong believer in community engagement. He made this order to lease the forest canteen to the local community people for free. In his order he included that all the employees should be from the local community. He did it in order to generate some income and employment opportunities among the local community” (FO 5)

Forest officials’ higher authorities play an important role in achieving inclusive and fair governance in Mudumalai forest. Forest officials’ higher authorities are involved in every important management decision. This is because the Mudumalai forest officials don’t have a separate management plan and they are just working within the general guidelines given in the Wildlife Act. This allows the forest officials higher authorities to play an important role in achieving inclusive and fair governance in the decision making process they are involved.

The forest officials said that handmade crafts and paintings of the local community people are sold in the information centre. Forest officials claimed that this is encouraging the local community people to work on handcrafts targeted for tourists visiting that area. Though the forest officials claim it to be successful, the forest officials don’t seem to be serious

about promoting the handcrafts of the local community people. The handcrafts are kept hanged in a single board near the cash counter without any price tags or descriptions. It is hard for the tourists to know that they are actually for sale.

Forest officials gave an important example of inclusiveness and fairness in Mudmalai forest. Forest officials said they make any important decisions only after consulting the local community people in an “Executive Committee”. Forest officials claimed that in Mudumalai forest, the Executive Committee plays an important role in decision making process. The forest officials said that the committee will usually have around 20 members. The Mudumalai forest warden will be the permanent head of that committee. The members of the committee include both the forest department officials and the local community people. Local community leader will be the head of the local people included in the committee. The committee will have a minimum of 35% women representing the local community. The idea behind doing this is to give the local community women a say in decision making process. This committee will meet to make decisions about policies and implementations regarding forest governance management. Meetings can be initiated either by forest officials or by local community members who can ask the permission of the warden to arrange one through their local community leader. The committee is authorised discuss the socioeconomic issues for the local community, as well as any aspects of forest management. Though the committee members are allowed to express their opinion in the meeting, it will be the forest warden and community leader who will make the final decision. A concern with the Executive Committee is how much importance will be given by the forest officials to the views of the local community members. As indicated above, some of the local community people said that they are vulnerable and lack the power and influence of forest officials. Though there is no evidence, it is possible for the forest officials to treat the committee meeting as token effort towards making their system look like it is inclusive and fair.

The Forest Department organises various events and festivals like elephant day, tiger day and awareness camp for the local community people and for tourists. Forest officials says that they are well aware that without reducing the local community dependency on the forest for their daily life by providing them with basic needs like gas stoves, it is impossible for them to change their lifestyle which is basically depended on forest resources. To deal with



this issue they ask the State Government for funds and schemes to provide the local community people with what they need to be to reduce their dependency on forest resources.

The governors feel that they are also inclusive when it comes to tourists visiting that area as they are welcomed and given opportunities to make their suggestions and give their opinions for better management. The governors say that they also have a complaint box for tourists to make any complaints.

Local community people in Mudumalai forest feel that they are included in the tourism governance as they are allowed to be part of decision making and management. They feel that the forest governors respect their knowledge about the forest and wild animals and they are willing to listen to them about the forest and wildlife preservation. They said that the executive committee meetings are good platform for them to convey their opinions and needs to the forest officials. They are happy about the way the tourism management is done as it provides them with lot of employment opportunity to their community. They said that the forest officials are always directly approachable in their office and that they are able to express their opinions regarding issues with which they are concerned. They said that although the forest governors listen to their opinions, they cannot influence some matters such as the closing of forest in the fire season and during the animal census period. Local community people are just informed by the forest officials when such decisions are made. Local community people feel that these kinds of management actions don't take into account their opinions and they are made purely on a scientific basis. During the closed periods like fire seasons, locals are banned from entering the forest which makes their daily life challenging. Some of the local community people said that the local forest officials are just using their knowledge about the forest and wild animals to do what senior officials want. They felt that the opinions of the local community people are not seriously taken in socio economic issues faced by them. All the local community people accept that the tourism in Mudumalai forest is helping them to increase their economic status and provides them with employment opportunities. They are also happy about the educational opportunities provided by the forest officials for their children.

Tourists visiting Mudumalai forest area says that they feel included in the tourism governance as they can see number of signs and warning boards in the forest for the tourist people instructing them what to do. They also feel that the information centre helps them to

better understand the forest and provides them with opportunity give their opinion. Tourists are asked to report any animal sighting in the forest to the information centre and they therefore feel that they are contributing to wildlife preservation. Tourists from outside Tamilnadu feel that the governors of Mudumalai are catering for them as they can see most of the signs and warning boards are in English rather than in local language. Local tourists don't have any negative opinions regarding the English sign boards, as they say sign boards are more important for "outsiders" than for them. Some tourists said that they would like to have more interactive system, for example through a complaint and suggestion box in a place where they can easily see it.

#### **4.1.5 Effectiveness in supervision and monitoring Mudumalai forest**

The forest officials in Mudumalai forests said that they are one hundred percent confident over their supervision and monitoring skills. Forest officials believed that they are well equipped with vehicles, G.P.S, walkie talkies, wireless systems, fire arms and facilities such as staff quarters. They said that the government is providing them with sufficient funding. Forest officials said that their supervision and monitoring squads include the fire protection watchers, anti poaching watchers and secret intelligence squads. These squads are recruited by the Mudumalai forest officials from the local community people. Local community people working in these squads are paid by the Mudumalai forest officials from the fund allotted by the government. These squads help the forest officials to meet the human resource demands of supervision and monitoring in Mudumalai. These squads are also helpful in preventing the local community people undertaking illegal activities like hunting. Forest officials said that these squads make the local community feel part of the monitoring team, and generate income among the local community through the salary paid to the squad members.

The forest officials said they consider the intelligence squad to be very important in monitoring and supervision. They said that the intelligence squad helps them to take preventive measures to avoid illegal activities like hunting. The intelligence squad is spread across the Mudumalai forest area with different people doing different jobs. This includes people who are working as drivers, bar owners and tourist guides. Squad members' prime

role is to look out for any suspicious people and suspicious gangs entering the forest area. If the intelligence squad members find any person or gang planning anything illegal, they will inform the forest officials. That particular person or group will be monitored closely throughout their stay in the Mudumalai forest area. Once the forest officials get any proof or evidence against them, they will be arrested. This helps the forest officials to stop the crime before it happens inside Mudumalai. The forest officials believe that the system of running the intelligence team with the local community people has been very successful and effective.

The Mudumalai forest is also supervised by a “watchers squad” around the clock. Forest officials said that when the intelligence squad operates outside the forest, the watchers squad will be operating inside the forest. Forest officials said that the watchers squad is active inside the forest for the whole year on shift basis. Forest officials added that the Indian judicial system also helps them to be successful in supervision and monitoring. Forest officials are convinced that the Indian judicial system is strong and very strict against the crimes related to hunting and poaching. The forest officials shared an example about a recent case in which a highly influential north Indian film actor was involved. Forest officials said that cases booked against famous persons in the society bring awareness among the people about the seriousness of the crimes like hunting:

“Our legal system is very severe and straightforward against the crimes like poaching and hunting. You might have been aware about the deer hunting case against a famous Hindi actor. Despite his fame and political influence, he is not cleared from that case yet. It is because of our legal system which makes it harder. Once a person is booked for poaching or hunting, then he has to go through the judicial procedures. Nobody can escape from the legal system until they prove themselves to be innocent in the court. This makes the people involved in hunting and poaching to think twice now days.” (FO 6)

Forest officials added that they are granted with special powers like arresting a person on suspicion without any warrant. As a safeguard above of this power, if an official is proved to be acting for personal gain, then the particular person will be punished by their department. Forest officials said they are well aware that their monitoring and supervision methods are “manual” with little or no technical assistance. Forest officials don’t have any problems with the resources they get for their supervision and monitoring. Forest officials believed that the

responsibilities like fire control, drought control are also part of their supervision and monitoring. They carry out the controlled burning as a part of their fire control measures, which is again done without any scientific or technical support. Weather reports, wind speed or soil fuel are not analysed before doing the controlled burning. They only rely on their own and local community peoples knowledge. Fire control is a serious issue in Mudumalai forest which will challenge the forest officials' supervision and monitoring abilities in the future. The only fire station they have and the very limited resources and staff won't be enough to deal with any major incident in Mudumalai.

Forest officials admitted that there are some loopholes in their supervision. They felt they need more cooperation from local community people and tourists. They said things like exceeding speed limits inside the forest area, smoking and drinking inside the forest area, throwing garbage in the forest area and increasing plastic waste are making their job harder. They are also worried about the attitude of some tourists' people who want to make most out of their visit and therefore take risks, make the supervision of tourists' safety challenging. Another issue is the private tourist operators operating in that area who cause disturbance to the wild life preservation and forest conservation. The forest officials said that the private tourist operators take the tourists for night safari in their jeeps with bright lights on. They are worried that it is causing disturbance to the animals. They said it is happening because the national highway passing through the Mudumalai forests is not closed in Tamilnadu during the night time as they do in neighbouring Karnataka state. This kind of loophole makes their work challenging and complex but they are working on reforms to address the situation.

However forest officials' appear not to be aware of some deficiencies in monitoring environmental damage and tourist safety. Forest official's lack of attention to environmental damage caused by tourists will bring them problems in long run. Forest officials also seem not to be aware of the risky jeep transportation system, run by the private people to connect the Mudumalai and Masinakudi. The jeeps are always overloaded and with loud speakers. This is an issue which will disturb the wildlife and also a potential risk to the tourists using it. Things like restriction of plastic usage, reducing the rubbish found in forest area, preventing tourists from feeding the wild animals, and reducing pollution caused by the humans in the river needs to be included in the agenda of their supervision and monitoring.

Local community people said that in their opinion the forest officials are very effective with their monitoring and supervision in the forest. Local community people said that it is their own people who work with the forest officials. Their knowledge people about the forest are very helpful for the forest officials in achieving effective supervision and monitoring. Local community people gave an example about tracking the animal hunters who entered the forest. Once the intelligence squad informed the forest officials about the hunters who have entered in to the forest, the forest officials will discuss how to respond with local people who have good knowledge about the forest. The local people will provide the forest officials with the possible routes and possible timing when the suspects may come out of the forest. This helps the forest officials to arrest the hunters without giving them a chance to escape. Some local people complained that the supervision and monitoring of the forest officials are sometimes excessive. They said they can't even go out for a walk inside the forest when they need things like wood for cooking. They added that even in the night time they are not allowed to walk in to the forest for any reason. Some of the local community people said they are annoyed by the questions put to them by the forest officials in the name of supervision and monitoring:

“We are not even able to enter the forest for our cooking needs like wood. We are afraid about the forest officials as they might blame us for any illegal activities carried out by other people inside the forest. Even if we are carrying a piece of dry wood from the forest, the forest officials will stop and enquire us.”(LCP)

They also added that the forest department people are always suspicious about them as they are hunters in the past. Young and educated people said that they are not sure about the effectiveness of the supervision and monitoring skills of the forest officials. They said it is possible for some lawbreakers to do illegal activities inside the forest without the knowledge of the forest officials. They also felt unhappy about the monitoring and supervision nature of the forest officials on their local community people by restricting their entry in to the forest. Some of the local people's statements are opposite to what the forest officials said. Though the forest officials claimed that local community is part of their supervision, the scepticism of some local community members is an issue which may affect the cooperation offered by the local community in future.

Tourists from Tamilnadu believed that the forest officials are good with their monitoring and supervision as they can't see any illegal activities around the forest. They said that the check posts and patrolling vehicles around the forest area make them to feel that there is an active supervision and monitoring program. They said that they would be happy to contribute to supervision and monitoring of the forest by informing officials of any illegal activities. This could be done if they were informed of the necessary phone numbers to contact. Tourists from outside Tamilnadu also felt that the monitoring and supervision is good as they can't see any illegal activities happening in Mudumalai. Some of them said they are not sure whether the governors have the potential and resources to monitor deep into the forest. They also felt that the priorities of the governors may focussed on anti poaching and hunting, with less attention given to other environmental damages like plastic wastes and river water pollution.

## **Chapter 5 Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the interview results along with the ideas gained through the literature review and the field visit observations.

### **5.2 Legitimacy in Mudumalai forest**

The forest officials' legitimacy to govern the Mudumalai forest is widely accepted by the local community people. Most of the local community accepted that the forest officials are legitimate to govern Mudumalai forest as their powers are conferred by national and state legislation. Forest officials said the same in their interviews. The strength of the Mudumalai forest governance is that its legitimacy is widely accepted the local community people and the forest officials. Apart from a few tourists from outside India, all the other tourists are happy with the legitimate powers of the forest officials in Mudumalai as they acknowledge the fact that the forest officials are appointed by the Indian Government.

Legislation applicable in Mudumalai forest plays an important role in providing the forest officials with the confidence over their legitimate powers. Being appointed by the Government of India to govern the forest and with the legislations providing them with the powers to govern, the forest officials' confidence over their legitimacy is reasonable. Instructions they get from the higher authorities are also raised by the forest officials as another supporting argument for their legitimacy. The fact that forest officials consider abiding by their higher authorities' instructions supports their legitimacy raises certain questions. It is necessarily the case that forest officials are legitimate simply because they execute every instruction they get from their higher authorities. There may be tensions arising from internal contradictions between the guidance given in legislation or policy, or tensions between legislated powers (conferred legitimacy) and maintaining the support of local communities (earned legitimacy). For example, a central office instruction to stop local people from using the river water for their own consumption, on the grounds that they are polluting the water, may not be legitimate if in fact they are not acting on good local information, or if the local community disputes the impacts that they are having. In that scenario the forest officials should be able to explain their higher authorities about why they should not execute the instructions. Whereas if the forest officials believe that their higher

authorities' instructions provide them with legitimate powers, they will try to execute it using their force against the stakeholders if needed. This may demand the forest officials to act beyond their legitimacy. On the other hand it can also be understood that the forest officials are trying to make a point that each of their actions are approved by their higher authorities before it is done. In this way, illegitimate actions will be screened by their higher authorities before they are implemented. To avoid these kinds of doubts, it is desirable that forest officials realize that their higher authorities' instructions can be questioned, if they are concerned that these instructions will compromise earned legitimacy with local people.

Various reasons have been identified through the interviews with the local community for accepting the legitimacy of forest officials in Mudumalai. Local people are quiet happy with the forest governance with respect to improvements to their children's' life style in terms of education and employment opportunities. As indicated by the local community people in their interviews, their socio economical status is not strong. Most of the local community elders are uneducated. Local community people are also not wealthy as they are traditional hunters living in the forest and depending on its resources. A negative aspect of this, however, is that some local people appear to feel themselves too weak to question the forest officials, who are government people in a powerful position. This leads to the concern that even though most of the local community people said that they accept the legitimate powers of the forest officials, it is possible that the local community don't really accept the legitimacy fully. Some of the educated and young local community people who said they have concerns over the legitimate powers of the forest officials add weight to this doubt. Local community people who said they accept the legitimate powers of the forest officials may have said so in fear of communicating their true beliefs, and their lack of confidence to question forest officials. Nearly every local person said in the interviews that they don't think they can question the legitimacy of the forest officials as they are very fragile community compared with the government. This is an important issue which has to be addressed by the forest officials. Taking advantage of the fear among the local community people may help the forest officials to do their job easily in the present time. But it will be hard for them to do the same in the future as the local community people are having a growing number of young and educating people. They are already expressing their concern in accepting the forest officials' legitimacy to govern the Mududmalai forest which is owned by their people in the past. This thought is supported by the young and educated people



interviews in which they said they can't completely accept the legitimate powers of the forest officials as they are interrupting their basic right over the forest for their basic needs like wood. It is important for the forest officials to move their current conferred legitimacy status to an earned legitimacy status.

Shifting from the conferred legitimacy status to both conferred and earned legitimate status will help the forest officials to convince the local community who are having concerns in accepting their legitimacy. Forest officials have already engaged to achieve the earned legitimacy status through various actions. Involving the local community in the decision making process is a good method followed by the forest officials which will help them to find acceptance for their legitimacy among the local community. This will make the local community people to be integrated in the decision making process thereby reducing their fears and concerns over the exercise of forest officials' powers. It is important for the forest officials to update and revise the ways through which the local community can be engaged more successfully. Forest officials should also realise that acting beyond their legitimacy in issues like controlling the number of night safaris will cost their credibility among the local community people. This will make the local community people think that the forest officials are capable of acting beyond their legitimate powers and will increase the fear among the local community members.

Some of the tourist's views on forest official's legitimacy are also of concern. It is important to build a good impression over their governance system beyond Mudumalai forest. Being recognised as the legitimate governors of Mudumalai forest by both Indian and foreign tourists will help them to strengthen their ability to prevent inappropriate or illegal activities by tourists. In addition, it would aid good governance to be more available to any tourist who wishes to make a complaint or suggestion. Forest officials already have a process in place through the reception office. However, the unapproachable and unwelcoming location and the design of the reception office are such that few if any tourists take up this opportunity. Refurbishment of this facility would encourage more tourists to visit the reception office and will help the forest officials to introduce themselves as the legitimate governors of Mudumalai forest.

### 5.3 Transparency

The level of transparency in Mudumalai forest governance is quite good. It is good in terms of availability of data's regarding the tourism governance and the openness in decision making process. Transparency in the governance is particularly good in terms of information available for the general public to ask and check from the forest officials. Information regarding the tourist facilities and activities are available in the reception office in Mudumalai. Other information like the cost of the tourist activities and facilities is also available through the reception centre notice boards. Forest official's willingness to answer any query is also adding value to the level of transparency in Mudumalai forest tourism governance.

The forest officials are transparent with the tourists about what they can expect in Mudumalai in terms of tourist activities and tourist facilities. It helps to avoid the disappointment of the tourists by expecting something which is not offered. Tourists are also pre informed about what is allowed and what is not allowed inside the forest if they visit the reception centre. A number of warning and instruction sign boards have been placed around the forest.

Friendliness in the way the reception office is run and the easiness in approaching it are very important for achieving transparency in the Mudumalai forest tourist governance. It is important because all the information's regarding the tourism is said by the forest officials to be available in the reception office. As noted above, the look and location of the reception office is an issue raised by the tourists. The reception office is located in the same building with a big anti-poaching centre name on it. The reception centre is badly maintained without a good lighting and ventilation. It is also kept closed most of the time. These factors make tourists to be hesitant to approach the reception office for any assistance or for any enquiry. If the forest officials are seriously willing to welcome any queries from the tourists and the local community people then they should concentrate on achieving a friendly reception office. This will help to develop the image of Mudumalai forest governance as a transparent system.

Decision making processes are also claimed to be transparent by the forest officials. This can be accepted to a certain degree. Local community people are included in the decision making process through methods such as the Executive Committee. . The level of transparency in their decision making process also relies on the willingness of the forest officials to listen to the ideas of the local community. Even in the executive committee where they claim to make transparent decisions, forest officials can just treat the engagement as a token effort. Any final decision in the executive committee is left to the forest warden and the local community leader. It is notable that the Mudumalai forest warden is the permanent secretary of the Executive Committee. Once the forest warden is able to convince the local community leader, the opinions of the other members can be neglected in the final decision. To avoid this, it would be helpful if the forest officials could include some people from outside the local community on the Executive Committee. The outside members could be without any powers to influence the decision but just can be allowed to share their views. Such members from outside the local community could at least make sure that the voice of the local community is heard and their doubts are addressed in the Executive Committee before any final decision is made.

Another important issue with the Mudumalai forest governance is that it doesn't have a separate management plan. The forest officials said that the guidelines given in the Wildlife Protection Act are good enough for them to consider it to be there management plan to govern Mudumalai forest. It will be hard for every general public to read and know the ideas given in that Act. Forest officials should develop and publish a separate management plan for Mudumalai forest and make this available to the public This would will help the tourists and local people to check and compare the management policies implemented by the forest officials with the actual Mudumalai forest management plan.

Encouraging the media, non-government organisations and students to use the forest for various purposes is a good practice followed by the Mudumalai forest officials. This helps in achieving a transparent governance image among the people who are given the chance to meet and question the forest officials. Decisions like closing the forest for the tourists in fire season can be more effectively advertised through the media advertisements. Important announcements like this regarding the tourism can be made in the state and national wide news papers and TV channels instead of relying on local media. Developing an exclusive

website for Mudumalai forest would also help them to use it as an effective media to make any important announcements. This is important as some of the tourists have said that it is very hard for them to know about closure of the forest before reaching Mudumalai.

The Right to Information Act mentioned by the forest official is important for the credibility of transparency in Mudumalai. It is important for the forest officials to make sure the local community and tourists are aware about the applicability of that Act in Mudumalai. The information about the procedures through which the Act can be used to get information is not mentioned anywhere in the reception office. It will be wrong to expect every general public to be aware of this opportunity. Promoting this Act among the local community and tourists visiting Mudumalai can be done through the notice boards and the local media. Executive Committee meetings can also be used to give seminars about the importance of the Act and the way through which it can be applied. This will make locals believe that the set up of the governance in Mudumalai is open enough to share any information with the general public.

#### **5.4 Accountability**

Overall accountability in Mudumalai forest tourism governance is good with a strong upward accountability system. Forest officials in Mudumalai forest have an upward accountability to their higher authorities. Most of the decisions made by the forest officials are based on the circulars they get from their higher authorities on weekly basis. Decisions and actions taken by the forest officials based on those circulars have to be reported back to their higher authorities. Through their contact with local officials and the occasional visit of higher authorities, local community people in Mudumalai are also aware that the forest officials are accountable for their actions to their higher authorities.

The forest officials claimed that they have a good financial accountability. All the money collected through the tourist activities are audited in their higher authority's office. The financial accountability claimed by the forest officials is accepted by all the tourists and the local community people who have paid money in the reception centre. The local community people and the tourists trust in the forest officials financial accountability is gained through the computer generated receipts provided to them. Forest officials also

mentioned this to be the main proof for their financial accountability as the receipts will be verified by their higher authorities on a daily basis by using the interconnected computer system connecting reception office and the head office.

Forest officials are accountable for the tourists' safety to a certain degree. Forest officials are accountable for the safety of the tourists whom they are taking for activities like an elephant safari. Forest officials are refusing to take accountability for tourists' safety when they are clients of private tourism operators. This is unsatisfactory, because any incident related to tourist safety may affect the number of tourists visiting Mudmalai. Forest officials should accept the safety of all the tourists visiting Mudumalai.

Forest officials' responsibility for wildlife and forest conservation is the other accountabilities they held towards their higher authorities. As part of this accountability they are also responsible for managing the natural events like bush fires and drought. These accountabilities are widely accepted by the local community and tourists. This trust by the local people and tourists has been developed through the forest officials' management actions. Management actions like setting up no litter sign boards, frequent patrolling inside the forest area, carrying out controlled burning in the fire season and educating the local community about the importance of forest conservation have made them believe that the forest officials are responsible for the forest and wildlife conservation. Even though the local community people and the tourists generally accepted the forest officials' accountability, there are some issues to be addressed. The important issue with the Mudumalai forest tourism governance is that it is an upward accountability system and it has very little downward accountability.

Forest officials are under no pressure to be accountable to the local community. Forest official's accountability towards the local community is also linked with the quality of inclusiveness and transparency in their governance. This is because being accountable to the local community will make them feel included in the governance system as it will provide them with a voice in the governance. Forest officials can achieve this by briefing and explaining the local community people before and after making any important management decisions. This will give the forest officials a chance to explain their stand and to clarify the doubts of the local community. Though this may not be helpful to achieve a complete downward accountability, it will at least be an improvement over the current situation.

## **5.5 Inclusiveness and fairness**

Forest officials are very keen to include the local community people in their governance system particularly in supervision and monitoring. Appointing the local community people in monitoring and supervision squads have resulted in positive impacts on the society. The economic status of the local community people have been increased from the past. Job opportunities available for them in monitoring squads are one of the important reasons for that. Including the local community people in monitoring and supervision is not necessarily because the forest officials believe in inclusiveness and fairness. It may be because the forest officials are very much dependent on the local community in achieving the effective supervision and monitoring in Mudumalai. It may be also due to the limited number of uniformed staff available to do the supervision and monitoring in Mudumalai.

Forest officials are trying to make the local community people benefit from the income generated through the tourism activities. They are trying this in ways like leasing the forest canteen for free to the local community to run. Providing them with economic opportunities like running the forest canteen will help them avoid pursuing unlawful activities in the search for money. However, even though the idea of leasing the forest canteen is good, the forest officials are showing no interest in its success. The forest canteen is run in a bad way with less hygiene and with the lack of experience of the local community people in running a business. The forest officials don't seem to be helping them in these regards. It is important for the forest officials to make sure the opportunities they provide for the local community people to increase the socio economical status is utilised effectively by them.

Forest officials' ideas on inclusiveness can also be linked with their desire to reduce the local community's reliance on the forest resources. This is because the forest officials are worried that the local dependence on forest resources will damage the forest environment. To avoid this they try to include the local community in the forest governance system by giving them employment opportunities and by providing them with economic opportunities. In some cases the forest officials have forced the local community to change their lifestyle in the name of trying to improve their living standards. For an example, the local community people are forced by the forest officials to use gas stoves for cooking rather than using forest wood. Before providing the local community with gas stoves, the forest officials should have addressed the fears local people have in using gas stoves as an alternative to forest wood.

Even though the idea of reducing the local community's dependency on forest resource is good, the forest officials should be able to approach this in a much more inclusive manner in the future by addressing the doubts of the local community people.

The Executive Committee serves as a good contribution to inclusive governance in decision making processes. The Executive Committee gives a platform for the local community people to participate in important decision making processes. However, as noted above, the issue with the Executive Committee is that it can be used by the forest officials to force their ideas on the local community. As the local community people declare themselves to be too weak to question the forest officials, it is hard to believe that their ideas will be seriously considered by the forest officials. The presence of third party in that committee to witness the way it is run would increase its reliability. The Executive Committee can be very effective if it gains some credibility among the local community people as a platform to express their views on Mudumalai forest governance.

The revolving fund used by the forest officials to increase the socio economic standard of the local community by encouraging self employment is a good idea. However, the sole authority of lending this money to the people in need is with the warden of the Mudumalai forest. This may allow the forest officials to make a biased decision to lend that money to a particular local community member. It may also stop local people making any stand against the forest officials because they may fear that they won't be granted money if they speak out against the forest officials. To avoid these concerns, the forest officials could form a local community committee. The committee could be asked to make recommendations to lend money to their community people who are in real need. If this is not possible, the forest officials should develop a publically available policy on lending money to local people

Encouraging the local community to make hand crafts which are sold at the reception office can be done more effectively. The forest officials seem to show no serious interest in promoting local hand crafts. The hand crafts are kept in an unattractive dark display without any price tag or description. The lack of interest shown by the forest officials in promoting the forest canteen and hand crafts of the local community is not a good sign of inclusive governance. So while the forest officials seem to know the importance of inclusive

governance and income generation among the local community, they should show more interest in things like promoting the forest canteen and local hand crafts.

The sign boards in English without the local language have made Indian tourists feel left out. It is important to include the local language on the signboards. The location and presentation of the reception office is an issue not only for inclusiveness but also with transparency and legitimacy. It is important to have a friendly reception office as it will help the forest officials to make tourists feel included. Keeping complaint and suggestion boxes in an easily visible place close to the reception office as suggested by some of the tourists is also important. Forest officials should make sure their reception office is kept open in the working hours. Friendly customer service in the reception office is also expected by the local community people and tourists. Forest officials working in the reception office should be fully aware of the importance of the reception office role in achieving good quality governance in Mudumalai forest. As many tourists have shown interest over being part of the supervision and monitoring, providing them with a phone number to inform any unlawful acts would also be useful. It would also help to make the tourists to feel included in the governance process of supervision and monitoring in Mudumalai forest.

## **5.6 Supervision and monitoring**

Forest officials in Mudumalai forest are fully confident over their supervision and monitoring skills. Forest officials are happy with the work force and other resources available to them to do their supervision and monitoring job in the Mudumalai forest. Forest officials' supervision and monitoring in Mudumalai is convincing to the local community and to tourists visiting the forest. The strength of the Mudumalai forest supervision and monitoring lies on the participation of the local community in direct and indirect ways. Local community people working in the anti poaching squad, tiger squad and intelligence squad are very helpful with their knowledge in supervising and monitoring the forest. Forest officials are successful in recruiting and training new local community members for the squads. As the forest officials said in the interviews, role clarity of the each squads and effective coordination among the squads are very helpful in achieving the effective supervision and monitoring.



The resources available for the forest officials to monitor and supervise the forest are very limited. Most of the supervision and monitoring duties of the forest officials are carried out manually. Forest officials operating without a single surveillance camera is an example for the lack of technical assistance available for the forest officials. Issues like speeding vehicles in the highway passing through the Mudumalai forest can't be monitored throughout the day without a surveillance camera. It is important for the forest officials to realise the value of technical assistance like video surveillance in supervising and monitoring the forest.

The forest officials' lack of readiness to face any unexpected natural disaster is a huge issue. There is no rescue plan for any natural disasters. Things like controlled burning are carried out without any technical or scientific assistance concerning, for example, the expected wind speed and amount of fuel. In case of a bush fire the forest officials will have to face it without any sophisticated fire fighting mechanisms. The ability of forest officials in locating and managing a fire or locating a missing tourist is a questionable with the current level of technical assistance. Forest officials should realise the importance of keeping them ready for any major incidents and the importance of technical and scientific assistance they may need during that time.

Another issue with the supervision and monitoring is the priorities of the forest officials. Other than hunting, poaching and fire, the forest officials don't really seem to be attending to important issues like river pollution, plastic and other wastes, domestication of wild animals, and speeding vehicles. Forest officials should realise that these things are also part of their supervision and monitoring responsibilities, as they may also have an impact on their forest and wildlife conservation agenda. Addressing this issue will make their supervision and monitoring to be more effective in conserving the wildlife and the forest.

## **Chapter 6 Conclusion and recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

The overall quality and effectiveness of the tourism governance in Mudumalai forest is good from the impression gained from the interviews, field visit and from the literature. The legitimacy in Mudumalai forest is well placed with support of the constitutional legislation. The need for shifting from the conferred legitimacy status in Muudmalai to both conferred and earned legitimacy status is felt through the interview results. The forest officials in Mudumalai are also acknowledging this need and they are working on it. An important aspect in achieving this will be to remove the fear and doubts among the local community people towards the forest officials' governance.

Quality of transparency and accountability is good in terms of information available to the stakeholders, openness in decision making processes to a certain degree and with an upward accountability in the system. It is important for the forest officials to prove themselves in a more effective manner by bringing awareness among the stakeholders about the transparency in the Muduamlai forest tourism governance. The stakeholders should also be given more awareness about the present set up available for them like Right to Information Act to make the idea of transparency active in the governance. The forest officials are highly accountable to their higher authorities, which makes the governance in Mudumalai to be a strongly upward accountable governance system. The stakeholders' interviews have indicated that the young and educated among the local community are also expecting downward accountability from the forest officials particularly for their management decisions. It is important for the forest officials to keep their system accountable to the local community to meet the rising demand for downward accountability from the stakeholders.

Inclusiveness and fairness in the Mudumalai forest tourism governance is convincing to the stakeholders. Forest officials are trying to make the local community people benefit from the revenue generated through the tourism industry. Including the local community members in monitoring and supervision is proved to be an effective way to monitor and supervise in Mudumalai forest. Issues and doubts about the way the Executive Committee is run should be addressed by the forest officials immediately. Forest officials have to avoid

using inclusiveness and fairness as a technique to alter the forest dependent life style of the local community.

Monitoring and supervision in Mudumalai forest is carried out in an effective manner. Inclusion of the local community in the supervision and monitoring squads has been a successful method implemented by the forest officials. Forest officials have succeeded in reducing the number of anti lawful incidents inside Mudumalai forest. Implementing scientific methods and introducing technology is important to face the future challenges of supervision and monitoring. Forest officials should also revise their priorities in their supervision and monitoring agenda. Environmental impacts by the tourists like plastic wastes, river water pollution, speeding vehicles, domestication of wild animals and other such impacts have to be included in future supervision and monitoring.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

These recommendations are made on the ideas gained through the interviews and the field visit regarding the tourism governance in Mudumalai forest.

- 1) The demand for a shift from a purely conferred legitimacy status to a combined conferred and earned legitimacy has to be addressed by the forest officials.
- 2) The fear among the local community people over the forest officials has to be addressed by the forest officials through regular and improved community engagement programs.
- 3) Available methods like Right to Information Act to check the governance transparency have to be promoted among the stakeholders.
- 4) Developing a separate management plan and publishing it to the stakeholders will be useful to add strength to the transparency and accountability of governance.
- 5) Forest officials should develop downward accountability in their governance towards the local community people.

- 6) Inclusiveness and fairness have to be genuinely adopted as principles of a good governance, rather than being treated as a technique to control or change the forest dependent lifestyle of the local community.
- 7) Local community people have to be encouraged more to benefit from the income generated from the tourism industry and they have to be helped in this process by the forest officials.
- 8) Inclusion of the local community members in the supervision and monitoring squads have to be retained as this is producing good results.
- 9) Modernising the supervision and monitoring in Mudumalai by including scientific methods and technology will be useful in facing future challenges.
- 10) Given that the findings of this thesis were generated from a relatively short field visit of 24 days, a more extended study on the quality and effectiveness of governance in Mudumalai forest is needed to confirm the conclusions offered here.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Quality and effectiveness of tourism governance in Mudumalai Forest Interview Schedule

#### Introduction

- *Reiterate the purpose of the research and of the interview.*
- *Discuss and clarify the meaning of 'governance'.*
- *Reiterate the format and structure of the interview, noting that all the questions relate to governance of the Mudumalai Forest.*
- *Show interviewees a map of Mudumalai Forest and the protected areas within it.*
- *Invite any general questions and points of clarification.*

#### Question 1

##### **To Governors:**

Can you briefly outline your governance role for Mudumalai Forest and tourism?

##### **To local community people, tourism operators and tourists:**

Can you please describe your interest in Mudumalai Forest and tourism?

#### Question 2

- *Explain legitimacy.*

##### **To Governors:**

Do you think that the governance arrangements for Mudumalai Forest and tourism are a good thing? Please explain.

In what ways do you think your governance role for Mudumalai Forest is legitimised?

##### **To local community people, tourism operators and tourists:**

Do you know who is responsible for tourism governance in Mudumalai Forest? *[If 'no', then the governance arrangements will be explained]*

Do you think that these governance arrangements for Mudumalai Forest and tourism are a good thing? Please explain.

To what degree do you accept the governing body in Mudumalai Forest as legitimate? Please explain.

#### Question 3

- *Explain transparency.*

##### **All interviewees:**

Do believe that tourism governance in Mudumalai Forest is transparent? Can you please explain your answer, and give examples if possible.

#### **Question 4**

- *Explain accountability.*

#### ***All interviewees:***

Do believe that tourism governance in Mudumalai Forest is accountable? Can you please explain your answer, and give examples if possible.

#### **Question 5**

- *Explain fairness.*

#### ***All interviewees:***

Do believe that tourism governance in Mudumalai Forest is fair? Can you please explain your answer, and give examples if possible.

#### **Question 6**

- *Explain inclusiveness.*

#### ***All interviewees:***

Do believe that tourism governance in Mudumalai Forest is inclusive? Can you please explain your answer, and give examples if possible.

#### **Question 7**

##### ***To Governors:***

How much confidence do you have in your enforcement, supervision and monitoring methods and resources?

Would you like to have more contribution from local people with regard to these matters? If yes, please explain how?

##### ***To local community people, tourism operators and tourists:***

How effective do you think the governing authority is in enforcing the rules and in monitoring compliance?

Would you like to have more contribution from local people with regard to these matters? If yes, please explain how?

#### **Question 8**

#### ***All interviewees:***

Overall, what is your general view on tourism governance in Mudumalai Forest? Is there anything else you would like to say on this topic?