“Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are”

- Bertolt Brecht
Collaborative Forest Governance Policy: Learning from India

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3. Government holds control over “who” can access (for livelihood needs) and actively participate.

2. Political participation: women inclusive policy is not a panacea to ensure tribal women’s political participation.

1. No devolution of power = legacy of colonial scientific forestry in contemporary ‘right-based’ governance.
Central Research Question

How can decentralized forest tenure reform improve local institutional systems in ways that help *tribal* people’s forest rights?

Sustainability of tribal self-governance
Question for this Paper

How does decentralized forest policy ensure tribal’s political participation?

* How can “reservation of seats” become a meaningful instrument to ensure tribal’s participation in forest governance??

* What policy factors impede or facilitate tribal’s ability to access forest resources and gain tenure rights??
Who are Scheduled Tribes in India?

- 8% i.e. 84 million ethnic minority defined by Government
- "Indigenous People" acc UN Dec 2007; not in India

What is a Scheduled Area (Tribal district)?

- District with high domination of Scheduled Tribes
- Central Govt; special laws to protect rights of tribes
Bhil Tribe of Western India

- Semi-Arid Hilly Area
- 70% wasteland
- 65% degraded forests
- 0.5 ha land holding
- Not CASTE system
Mosse (2005) describes

(...) scientific forestry when exported to India. Colonial and dependent, tribal people's resistance became a recurring theme. Power set about 'civilizing' the tribes and forests, highjacking both in perpetuity as privileges.
Institutional Choice vs. Compulsion
Joint Forest Management (1990),
Panchayat Act (1996) and
Village Forest Institution (2007)

Institutional Participation vs. Reservation.
Quota - women’s seat @ 30%, Tribal @ 3
Findings: Individual Empowerment

- Adapting to “people’s participation” in new ways
  Open informal institution => closed literate formal institution

- New conflicts with statutory forest governance policies
Social Learning: Pre-conditions

- Devolution of resources to local government (panchayat)
- Inclusive participatory but discretionary decision-making
Points for Discussion

- Dichotomy of forest (tribal) policy -- created power pluralism and institutional proliferation
- Decentralization of resources -- another way of 'controlled authority' over marginalized
- Equitable resource management -- marginalized groups need more power
Conclusion

3. **Government holds control over “who” can access (for livelihood needs) and actively participate.**

2. **Political participation:** women inclusive policy is not a panacea to ensure tribal women’s political participation.

1. **No devolution of power = legacy of colonial scientific forestry in contemporary ‘right-based’ governance.**
Thank you!

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