

*Farmer-led Integrated Upland Watershed  
Management Trainers' Resource Book*

*Module 6*

*Upland Common Property  
Resources' Management  
Processes/Experiences*

# UPLAND COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES' MANAGEMENT PROCESSES/EXPERIENCES

## Objective of the Module

Before going into the objective of the module, it will be helpful to visualise the importance of mountain watershed ecosystems and dependency of a huge population on them.

## Background

### (1) The mountain watershed ecosystems possess vital importance because of the following reasons.

- Mountains contain one-fifth of the earth's landscape and are home to one-tenth of the world population.
- Mountain forest resources not only provide life support to these mountain populations but also to those two billion people living downstream.
- Forest resources contribute to meeting the mountain communities' subsistence needs and provide timber, grasslands, mineral resources, water, and hydro-electricity to the people in the plains.
- Increasing population pressure and increasing demand on forest resources have put undue pressure on already degraded forest resources.
- With the declining forest resources, there is a decline in agricultural production and productivity, groundwater recharge, and the availability of forest leaf litter as organic manure.
- Consequently, upland watersheds are experiencing increasing food grain shortages. Now, food security is at stake.

### (2) Realisation of the problem

An urgent need is felt to conserve mountain natural resources, because:

- the natural resources support the present and future livelihoods and welfare of:

- mountain communities, and
- the people downstream in the plains.

### (3) Why the Community Approach to development?

- It was realised that the local communities had a symbiotic relationship with natural resources, hence local people should be partners in natural resource development.
- For this, participatory forest management as a common strategy is being applied in the upland watersheds.

### (4) Hence, the objective of this module

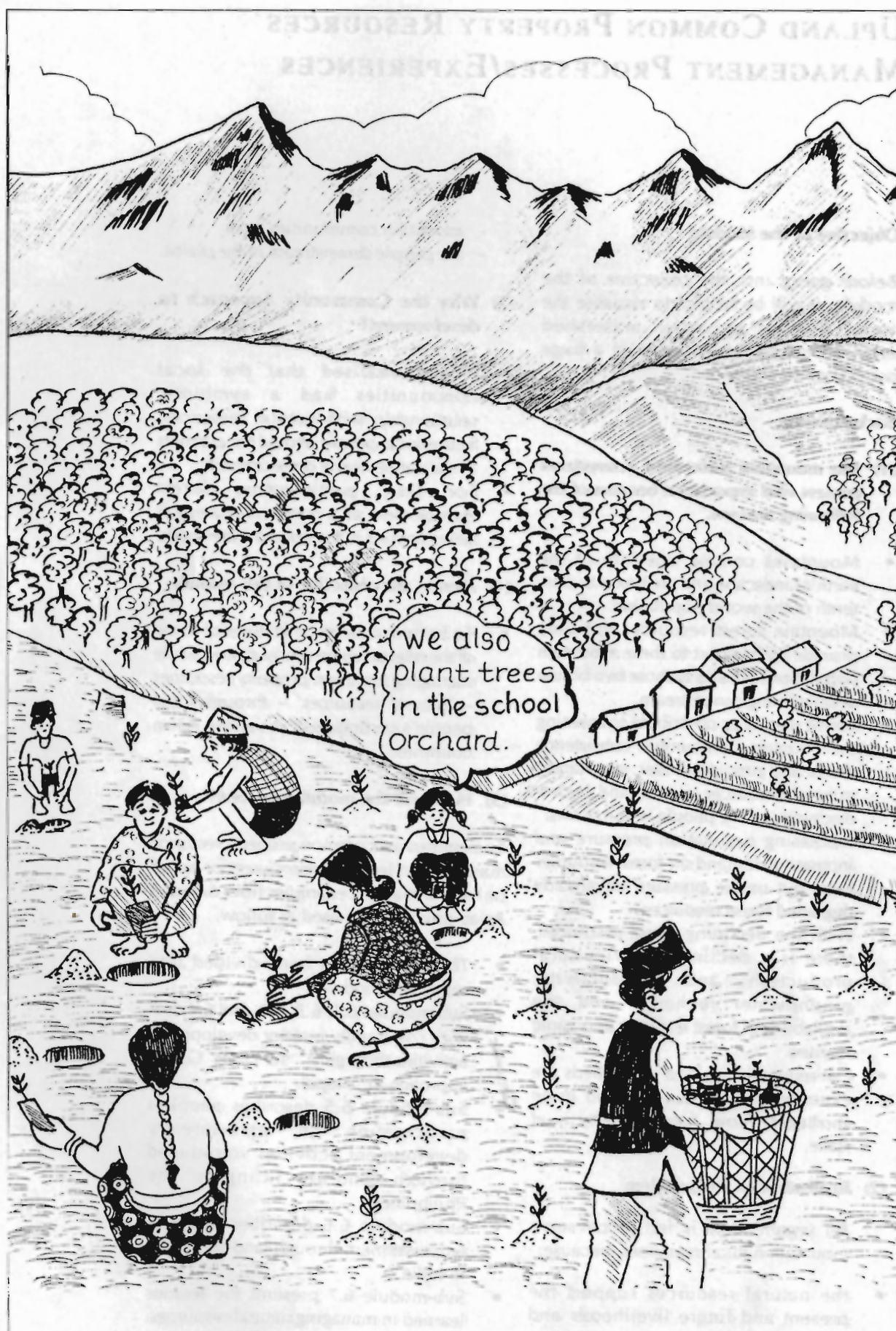
- To bring out the main features of some of the relevant experiences gained while managing common property resources – 'natural resources' – through local people's participation in various Asian countries.

### (5) How will the module proceed?

To demonstrate common property resource management led by farmers/users or based on local initiatives, examples from different Asian countries are used as follow.

- This module has been divided into seven sub-modules.
- Sub-modules 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 deal with community forestry development activities through the Users' Group approach in Nepal.
- Sub-module 6.5 describes people's participation in agro-forestry development activities introduced through land-use titling in the Philippines.
- Sub-module 6.6 describes people's empowerment through land-use titling in India.
- Sub-module 6.7 presents the lessons learned in managing natural resources.





Managing Common Property Resources through Local People's Participation

## MODULE 6.1

### EMERGING ISSUES

#### (6) Objectives of Module 6.1

- To highlight environmental degradation induced effects on human lives and their surroundings
- To present a brief picture of recent and past efforts of relevancy undertaken to mitigate the problems

#### (7) What are the emerging issues in forestry in Nepal?

##### (a) Causes

- Nepal is facing serious environmental pressure due to land degradation.
- This is causing declining agricultural productivity and
- increasing food shortages in the face of rising population.

##### (b) Implications

- This has forced people to bring fragile marginal lands and forest areas under cultivation.
- Nepal's most valuable natural resource, forests, is dwindling at an alarming rate.
- During the period between 1981 and 1985, a deforestation rate of 4.1 per cent was recorded.
- Increasing population pressure in rural areas, inadequate landholdings, and increasing poverty are all associated with the massive deforestation scenario in Nepal.

#### (8) What is responsible for declining forest resources?

It is mainly due to:

- government policies,
- population pressure,
- political interference, and
- poverty.

#### (9) When did the forest started declining?

Although a Forest Protection Act was in place,

- the forests started dwindling after the introduction of the Private Forest Nationalisation Act in 1957.
- This resulted in people felling trees swiftly to establish landownership.
- There was heavy encroachment on forest areas due to the rising population.

#### (10) What did government do to reverse the trend?

Having realised the need for reversing the trend of forest deterioration the following actions were taken.

- His Majesty's Government of Nepal, HMG/N introduced a Master Plan in 1988 for the development of forestry in Nepal.
- It basically aims at promoting forestry development through people's participation, and empowerment of community forest user groups is one of the strategies.
- It is being increasingly realised that, in the effective management of common property resources, people's active participation is crucial.

#### (11) What was the government target?

##### HMG/N's target during the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)

Nepal started its community forestry development activities with a target of

- handing over 252,000 ha of forest area,
- by forming 5,000 forest user groups (FUGs) to hand over the forests.

#### (12) What was achieved?

According to the Community and Private Forestry Division, Department of Forests,



(DoF), HMG/N (Jan. 1997), the latest figures are given below.

- A total of 293,347 ha of forest area has been handed over to about 4,627 FUGs.
- In addition, a large number of FUGs are being given additional areas.

### (13) What is this module attempting to do?

- It describes the salient features of user groups' experiences in managing common property resources.
- In this context it explicitly refers to 'community forestry management through people's participation'.
- Hence, it would be logical here to present a brief account of:
  - what forest acts and regulations indicate and
  - their classification from the forestry development point of view.
- The Forest Act and regulations related particularly to community forestry and forest user groups (refer Nepal Rajpatra, Magh 5, 2049) are presented below.

### (14) What do the Forest Act and Regulations indicate ?

Forests are an area fully or partly covered by trees.

#### National Forest

National forests include all forests other than private forests. From a development and management perspective, forests are divided into the following categories.

- **Government managed forest:** A national forest managed by HMG/N.
- **Protected forest:** A national forest designated as a protected forest by HMG/N because of environmental, scientific, or cultural considerations.
- **Community forest:** A national forest handed over to a users' group for development, conservation, and use for collective benefit.
- **Leasehold forest:** A national forest handed over on lease to any legal institution, industry, or community or individual to produce raw materials, plant trees to sell forest products, operate the tourism industry, operate

agro-forestry, operate wildlife farms in a manner conducive to the conservation and development of the forest.

- **Religious forest:** A national forest handed over to any religious body, group, or community for development and conservation.

#### Private Forest

A forest planted, conserved, and managed on any private land owned by an individual. He/she has a free hand to sell or distribute its products.

#### Community Forests

### (15) How does a community forest work?

### (16) What provisions are there in the Forest Act 1993?

- It authorises the District Forest Officer (DFO) to hand over a national forest area to a forest users' group in the form of a community forest.
- This is done in a prescribed manner entitling the group to develop, conserve, manage, and use such forests.
- It also makes a provision for selling and distributing forest products by independently fixing prices.
- All these operations are carried out according to an operational plan.
- The District Forest Office provides technical backstopping and assists in formulating an operational plan.

#### Users' Group

### (17) What is a USERS' GROUP?

- It is a registered autonomous body of local people in a village established to manage and use their community forest.
- A users' group is an autonomous and corporate body with provisions for raising its own funds from revenue and other sources.
- After meeting the expenses incurred in the development of a community forest, it can use the balance for public welfare activities.

### (18) How does it operate?

- The concerned users of a forest desirous of developing and conserving it may

- form a users' group in a prescribed manner.
- The DFO provides a certificate of registration, together with a constitution and operational plan (OP), on receipt of an application and after having conducted the necessary investigations.

Operational Plan

(19)What it contains?

It gives the total activities to be carried out in a community forest area.

- It describes how forest resources will be developed and conserved.
- It gives the procedure for using, selling and distributing forest resources by maintaining environmental balance.

- It also describes the methods of protection, promotional activities, nursery raising, and the plant species to be grown along with a clear identification of the forest.
- It also describes how revenues will be collected and used.
- It directs the Users' Group to submit an annual progress report to the DFO.

(20)When can a community forest be re-acquired by the government?

A community forest can be taken back, if:

- a Users' Group fails to comply with the operational plan or/and
- if there is significant environmental deterioration.

		(ha)
Hills	4,360	274,212
Teral	267	19,135**
Total for Country	4,627	293,347*

\*\* Source: ICIMOD 1995.

\* Source: Community and Private Forestry Division, DOP, HMG/N, Jan. 1997.

Q23)What does Table-1 indicate?

- The major success in community forestry has been in the middle hills of Nepal.
- The progress in the Terai or lowlands has been slower.

Q24)Why is progress slower in the Terai?

- Social variables in the Terai region is a contributing factor.
- Reciprocal labour exchange farming is uncommon in the Terai.
- Urbanisation and infrastructural development in the Terai have caused forest-related problems that differ from those experienced in the less populated, relatively underdeveloped regions.
- Mostly, forest areas are far from Village Development Committees (VDCs).

- species, the pressure for construction timber is also met by the Terai forests.
- National demand for industrial and development work is met by Terai forests.
- High-value trees and relatively more productive lands and forests are located in the Terai.

(26)Is this greater importance proving to be a curse for the Terai (lowland) forests?

- Forests are vanishing rapidly from the Terai.
- Around 5,100ha of forest are being lost annually.
- The decline in forest quality and quantity is creating a vicious circle of further depletion of the forest resource base.
- Acute shortages of firewood, fodder, and timber are being experienced.
- Forest revenue is declining.
- Forest deterioration-related environmental problems such as floods, wind erosion and temperature increase are on the rise.

## MODULE 6.2

### CURRENT STATUS OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY

#### (21) Objectives of Module 6.2

- To present a brief account of the community forestry development progress made by Users' Groups in the hills.
- To introduce the community forestry development activities in the **Terai or lowlands (Nepal's Gangetic Plain, bordering India)**.

#### (22) What is the current status of forest area under community forestry?

Table 1 shows the number of FUGs and the forest area coverage in the hills and Terai.

**Table 1: FUGs and their community forestry area coverage**

Region	FUGs	Area (ha)
Hills	4,360	274,212
Terai	267	19,135**
Total for Country	4,627	293,347*

\*\* Source: ICIMOD 1995.

\* Source: Community and Private Forestry Division, DOF, HMGN, Jan. 1997.

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- Mostly, forest areas are far from Village Development Committees (VDCs).

- Terai farmers have accessibility to forest resources.
- Identification of Users' Groups is difficult in the Terai because of their location.
- The Terai forests are being protected as national forests.
- Comparatively, there is less effort given to community forestry development programmes in the Terai.

#### (25) Why are the Terai forests more important?

- Presently, Terai forests are supporting both local and national needs.
- Most of the forest-based industries depend on the Terai forests for their raw materials.
- Due to limited availability of hill timber species, the pressure for construction timber is also met by the Terai forests.
- National demand for industrial and development work is met by Terai forests.
- High-value trees and relatively more productive lands and forests are located in the Terai.

#### (26) Is this greater importance proving to be a curse for the Terai (lowland) forests?

- Forests are vanishing rapidly from the Terai.
- Around 8,300ha of forest are being lost annually.
- The decline in forest quality and quantity is creating a vicious circle of further depletion of the forest resource base.
- Acute shortages of firewood, fodder, and timber are being experienced.
- Forest revenue is declining.
- Forest deforestation-related environmental problems such as floods, wind erosion, and temperature increase are on the rise.



## MODULE 6.3

### A SUITABLE STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY FORESTRY

#### (27) Objectives of Module 6.3

- To present, in brief forest development efforts through historical perspectives
- To describe some of the relevant strategies for community forestry development programmes in the form of case studies

#### (28) Why is the *Terai* (lowland) region of Nepal relatively less successful in community forestry development programmes?

- Unlike the hills, there are not many successful examples of community forestry programmes in the *Terai* which can be cited.
- Until December 1994:
  - there were only 267 users' groups covering 19,135ha under community forestry in the *Terai* compared to some 4,360 FUGs covering 274,212ha of forest land in the hills.

#### (29) What does this indicate?

- This shows that this programme is yet to establish an effective impact in the *Terai*.
- The major socioeconomic and agro-ecological differences that make the *Terai* a varied domain are as follow.
  - Farming is less dependent on forests.
  - Indigenous systems are not as prevalent as in the hills.
  - *Terai* trees present several commercial opportunities.
  - There is a higher population density than in the hills.
- The *Terai* may need a different model for forest development.

#### (30) Why do *Terai* people have a different attitude towards community forestry?

- It is argued that most people in the *Terai* are yet to be prepared culturally and psychologically to appreciate community forestry programmes.
- Although, forest law does not look at hill and *Terai* people differently, *Terai* farmers have not benefited from forest activities as much as the farmers in the hills.
- There is a need to change the general attitudes of
  - the *Terai* farmers and forestry officials,
  - motivating them towards a community forestry approach with the belief that their common future lies in:
    - \* developing,
    - \* managing, and
    - \* conserving their common property, 'the community forest'.

#### (31) How important is it for a programme to be need-based?

- Any development programme designed for improving and sustaining the standards of living of a society, should be responsive to:
  - needs,
  - circumstances, and
  - aspirations.
- Societies are composed of various human constituents which interact and behave differently. These components include:
  - various ethnic and caste groups,
  - different sexes,
  - different categories of farmers and labourers, and
  - various other land-use groups.



## Impact of Community Forest Management Practices

### (32) What is the impact of community forest management?

- In places where appropriate community forest management practices are used, their impacts are showing particularly in the following aspects.
  - In checking the process of land degradation
  - Increased supply of forest resources in a sustainable way
  - The system is operating in a local environment under the management of local institutions and local people, i.e., farmers and other land users.

### Past Policy Contributing to Forest Decline

#### (33) How has past policy led to forest destruction?

- In the past, the government policy favoured the misuse of forest resources because they were used:
  - irrationally,
  - unscientifically, and
  - extensively.
- During that time, forests were treated as if they had existed only for exploitation.
- HMG/N promoted the export of forest products to earn revenue and encouraged land reclamation by making grants to its citizens.

#### (34) Was there a need for policy reforms?

### Conceptual change in the government policy

- During the 1970s, HMG/N brought out the concept of the *Panchayat* (local village body) Forest (PF) and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) with the aim of putting the onus of protecting and managing the forests on the local people.
- The concept of PF and PPF was further consolidated by introducing forest decentralisation regulations in the 1980s.
- In 1990, with the emergence of democracy in Nepal, the terms PF and

PPF were changed to 'Community Forestry' to refer to any forest under user group protection.

### (35) How do the external interventions effect forestry?

Interventions by government and other agencies have achieved limited success in:

- protecting,
- managing, and
- sustainable use of the nation's forest resources.

### (36) Is local management the best option?

- In Nepal's context, experiences show that giving forest resource protection and management responsibilities to local communities is the most suitable sustainable option.
- There are many successful examples of forest management and use by local people on their own.
- This suggests that this local community management system is socioculturally part of their tradition.
- In Nepal, government-assisted forest protection and management by local people (known as the community forestry programme) was laughed at during the 1970s.
- However, Nepalese farmers had been using their own indigenous methods for forest protection and use in the past.

### (37) For example, how had the *Sherpa(s)* of the Khumbu region of Nepal protected their forests in the past?

- *Sherpa(s)* of the Khumbhu area in the past had an arrangement for keeping forest guards known as '*Shing nawa*'.
- They were in-charge of the preservation of protected forests close to the village.

### (38) How did it work?

- They derived their mandate from the village assembly.
- Likewise, social and cultural dimensions have also been equally effective in preserving forest resources.
- In this context, communities used religious objects as symbolic fence markers and, because of religious respect, people abided by the rules.

### (39) What were their indigenous methods of forest protection?

- Here, two case studies of a contrasting nature are presented.
- These are given as examples of classical indigenous methods of forest management practices from Baitadi district of the Far-western Development Region, Nepal (Chhetry and Pandey 1992).
- One case study shows how the forest resources were managed and used by establishing an institution, and
- the other case study shows how the forest resources were managed without establishing an institution.

### Case Study - One

#### (40) Karkiko Ban (Binashaun)

- This is a settlement of 76 households.
- The forest area is 18ha.
- The local people recall that, until the Rana regime in Nepal, the forest in this place was in good shape.
- After that period, the forest slowly turned into shrubland.

#### (41) How did the forest regenerate?

- At one time, *Karkiko Ban* was divided into two parts, Malla Gaun and Talla Gaun.
- And neither had allowed the other to make use of the forest resources and had erected fences around their respective forest boundaries.
- This led to natural regeneration resulting in a good forest.

#### (42) How was awareness created?

- By the end of the 1950s, both farming communities had realised that, indeed, protection of the forest was necessary in order to have sustained supplies of forest resources.
- Hence, both the villages united and removed boundaries resulting in one forest and continuation was given to its protection.

#### (43) What were the reasons for rendering the community management system ineffective?

- The local community had tried managing the forest through a committee.

- But it did not work, mainly due to misuse of power by the committee members.
- There is no user group committee.

#### (44) How does the management system work now?

- Decisions are taken collectively by Karki households, especially for felling green trees for timber other household needs.
- The management of forest is facilitated by two *Pujari(s)* (priests from two local temples) based on decisions made by the Karki households.
- There is no restriction on dry fuelwood and leaf litter collection.

#### (45) 'Religious fencing' as a means of forest protection

- For protection of the forest, 'religious fencing' in the form of flags is put up around the forest boundary. They are removed whenever:
  - illegal felling takes place or
  - abuse of the forest occurs.

#### (46) How does the cultural taboo work?

- Their religious belief is that the gods and goddesses will punish all those who deviate from their standard social norms and values.
- This mostly prevents people from breaking the forest norms and regulations.

### Case Study - Two

#### (47) Seliko Ban (Seli-Salena):

- There are 30 households in this settlement.
- The forest land area is about 43ha.

#### (48) What is the condition of the forest?

In general, the following aspects are good.

- The stock condition
- Growth
- Species' diversity.

#### (49) What forest resources are available to the settlement?

The settlement gets the following resources from the forest:



- timber,
- materials for making agricultural tools,
- fuelwood, and
- fodder for the settlement.

**(50) What was the management system used?**

The local people recall that:

- the protection and management of *Seliko Ban* had started with its registration as forest land in 1938.
- People had participated equally in the management of the forest as no committee existed to run it until 1965.

**(51) How was the management committee formulated?**

- A forest management committee was formed in 1965.
- A five-member committee, comprising of a treasurer and four members, was formed.

**(52) Why did the committee not have a president and a secretary?**

- Interestingly enough, this management committee, like most other such organisations, did not have a president and secretary.
- This was done to avoid one single person influencing decision-making.

**(53) How and who chooses the committee members?**

- All user households participate in selection of the management committee.
- The members are chosen for a two-year term.

**(54) What are the criteria used for selecting committee members?**

The criteria used for selection are:

- willingness,
- dependability,
- how active they are, and
- how efficient.

**(55) How are decisions made?**

- Decisions of a general nature are made by the management committee.

- Decisions of a special nature are **carried** out by a general body of all user households.

**(56) How are the rules applied to offenders?**

- Anyone breaking the forest norms is liable to receive a cash fine.
- A fourth-time violator of forest rules appears before the general body which decides the nature of the fine to be imposed.

**(57) What are the rules for conserving and using forest resources?**

- Cutting of green trees is restricted.
- The settlement has access to the following resources during a specified period (December to June):
  - collection of dry fuelwood,
  - grazing animals, and
  - leaf litter collection.
- The use of a limited amount of green timber is allowed per household per year for making agricultural implements.

**(58) What has made these two contrasting systems work?**

**(59) How was the system put to use?**

- *Karkiko Ban* virtually began from nothing.
- There was an element of competition in the form of **use** and **protection** in the beginning between the *Malla Gaun* and *Talla Gaun* of *Karkiko Ban*.

**(60) Was lack of resources the root cause for the clash?**

- Once the availability of forest resources for use improved:
  - the existing clash subsided and
  - they became one functionally.
- They collectively negotiated a way through for
  - managing and using forest resources and
  - brought the forest into a good condition and sustained it.



**(61) Was the management plan a priority?**

- In the case of *Seliko Ban*, the forest was already in good shape, for which different management plans were tried.
- Lastly, they stuck with the one that worked well.

**(62) What are the commonalities in these contrasting cases?**

- In spite of many differences in their approach to forest management practices, a number of commonalities were observed between them.

The most obvious ones were:

- a strong sense of collective ownership,
- dedication,
- awareness about the importance of the forest,
- a sense of collective responsibility, and
- democratic decision-making.

**Case Study -Three**

This is a case study of a successful common property resource management practice through FUG from Eastern Nepal.

**(63) Handikharka Ban** (Dhankuta district, eastern Nepal):

- The total forest area is about 150ha.
- There are 224 households of users' groups.
- There are five different farming communities.

**(64) How was the forest managed in the past?**

- Until 1957, the year of forest nationalisation, the forest was solely monopolised by one farming community only, the Pokhrel Brahmin.
- They had possessed the forest ownership through a Royal decree (*lal mohar*).
- Other communities had to seek permission from the Pokhrel community to use forest resources from this forest.

**(65) What was the condition of the forest in the past?**

- The local people recall that the Pokhrel had kept this forest in good shape while they were solely in charge.

- The damage to this forest was inflicted from 1962 to 1990, mainly due to mismanagement by the government.

**(66) How was awareness created about the importance of the forest?**

- By 1991, people of the Pokhrel community realised that this forest had to be protected for the common good.
- This was only possible with the participation of all users.
- Hence, four additional neighbouring communities were included as user groups.

**(67) What were the activities carried out by the FUGs?**

- With the help of the District Forest Office, FUGs were formed.
- Now, FUGs have started planting timber and fruit trees on their private lands.
- They are practising a controlled grazing system.

**(68) How are the activities carried out?**

- The user members through common consensus are:
  - conserving,
  - managing, and
  - using their common property resources in a regulated way.
- People are enthusiastic and willing and see their future as being attached to this forest.
- Hence, they are managing it well.

**(69) What has made the Handikharka Forest User Group (FUG) work?**

The following are the underlying factors which are mainly responsible for making Handikharka FUG a successful one.

- The local people became aware of the increasing loss of their forest resources.
- Local initiators have succeeded in motivating other fellow community members to participate in their community forest management programme.
- Members are dedicated and committed to the task.

- Technical help and moral support were readily available to them.

### Churia Case Study

#### (70) What does the Churia study indicate?

- The Churia study suggests that:
  - only a manageable size of forest should be handed over,
  - it should match with the capacity of the users' group, and
  - the over-exploitation of forest resources should be stopped.
- It indicates that priority should be given to first handing over scattered patches of forest in upper watersheds.

- It also gives emphasis to the inclusion of landless farmers in the community forestry programme otherwise they can prove to be a potential threat to forest resources.
- Experiences indicate that the intensity of forest destruction is greatest within a three to five km vicinity of the settlement.
- These degraded forest areas can be developed with the help of
  - the local farming communities as they are directly affected, hence
  - they would be more inclined to take part actively.



## MODULE 6.4

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

#### (71) Objectives of Module 6.4

- To describe a case of conflict that surfaced while launching a community forestry development programme through FUG in Nepal
- To describe how the conflict was resolved

#### (72) Background Information

- The conflict arose between a forest user group (FUG) and the forest officials.
- The issue was about the use and the rights of common property resources.
- At the end, the conflict was resolved but not to the satisfaction of the user group involved.

#### (73) Jalbire Women's Community Forestry Group (JWCFCG)

- This user group manages a forest of 3.9 ha located at Khairani bazaar in Gorkha district, Nepal.
- The user group consists of 44 households.
- The forest is divided into two blocks.

#### (74) What was the condition of the forest when JWCFCG took over?

- Block-1 had comparatively good forest cover with many tree species.
- While Block -2 was almost barren land with only some trees here and there.

#### (75) How was the forest in the past?

- It was a good forest about 25 years previously.
- But, with the opening of a highway, the forest was heavily destroyed.
- It was a public forest with open accessibility.
- Local people did not bother to protect it and consequently the forest was lost, mostly to forest smugglers.

#### (76) How did the JWCFCG start working?

- With the help of an INGO, JWCFCG was formed in 1989.
- Plantations were established in 1990 and 1991.
- Later on, this user group was registered with the District Forest Office (DFO).
- A plan of operation (OP) was formulated and an agreement was made.

#### (77) What were its objectives?

- To improve the productivity of forest resources
- To meet the daily requirements of the user group for fodder, fuelwood, and timber (Pradhan Malla 1996).

#### (78) What were the provisions in the OP ?

- According to the OP of 1991, there was total restriction on tree felling in Block-1.
- Similarly, Block-2 had the following restrictions: no trees were to be felled:
  - near water sources,
  - open places and roads, and
  - *Mangifera indica* (mango) and *Acacia catechu* (khair) trees.

#### (79) What did of JWCFCG do?

- Despite these restrictions, the following trees were felled in 1992:
  - sal,
  - *chilaune*, and
  - *mahuwa*.

#### (80) What was the root cause of the dispute?

- According to JWCFCG, the timber and fuelwood extraction was carried out under the supervision and direction of the DFO and range office.



- JWCFG did not have a written document to substantiate this claim.
- The DFO denied having given this permission.

**(81) Did the local contractors incite the conflict?**

- In fact, this dispute was prompted by local contractors.
- Because, instead of selling the timber to them it was sold in the Kathmandu market.
- This was done to fetch a better price, thereby earning more revenue.
- Local contractors did not like it, consequently they managed to turn the opinion of the district administrative authorities against the women's group.
- This simple issue was made into a political issue.
- Eventually, the case was referred to Ministerial level.

**(82) What attempts were made to resolve the conflict?**

- The dispute could have been resolved through a discussion between the user group and the district forest officials.
- But neither made any attempt to do this.

**(83) Was the local institution ignored?**

- This issue was also not referred to the local institution.

**(84) Was there a lack of mutual trust?**

- There was no mutual trust between JWCFG and the DFO.

**(85) Was there lack of initiative?**

- There was no mediator nor did either party take the initiative to resolve the conflict through discussion.

**(86) Did it have a centralised power-culture and lengthy procedure?**

- The district forest office waited for directives from their central office in Kathmandu.
- After a long time, directives came from the Department of Forests in Kathmandu

with an emphasis on the following points:

- the users' committee could be dissolved if it has violated the OP,
- no trees could be felled for the next five years,
- the revenue was to be used in forest development activities only, and
- the general body meeting of the group could take action accordingly.

**(87) Did the revised OP prove controversial?**

- A revised OP was prepared which the user group decided to implement.
- However, some controversial issues surfaced.

**(88) What were the controversial issues?**

- The money collected through revenue was lent to people outside the user group to earn more revenue.
- The new OP did not permit a money-lending arrangement.
- On the one hand, it said that the users' group could make decisions.
- On the other, OP plan restricted their freedom.
- Trees were not to be felled for the next five years which proved to be a disincentive to the users' group.

**(89) What are the results of the top-down conflict resolution?:**

- Dispute has caused uncertainty and loss of confidence in forest officials.
- Today, user groups are less enthusiastic about community forestry and its activities.
- The dispute has caused the women to lose face in their community.
- There is less interest in the building of local institutions.
- The group was formed to help empower them, but this incident has raised the issue of the group's efficacy.
- JWCFG forest is regenerating well, but if the user group concept disappears and forests revert back to the open grazing system, it will be a very unfortunate episode with loss of common property resources.

## MODULE 6.5

### *A KEY TO PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION: LAND-USE TITLES IN THE PHILIPPINES*

#### **(90) Objectives of Module 6.5**

- To describe how an agro-forestry programme was launched through people's participation in Manipsis village in the Philippines
- To illustrate the impacts of land-use titles, on people and their surroundings

#### **(91) What is it all about?**

- It is about people's participation in agro-forestry development activities. Farmers became motivated to take part in this programme because they were given land-use titles.
- The land-use titles are transferred to farmers by issuing a document called a 'Certificate of Stewardship Contract' (CSC).
- This land-use title enables them to manage the land for 25 years, renewable for another 25 years depending upon:
  - the development that the farmer has made in relation to sustainability of production and
  - ecological preservation of upland watershed areas.

#### **(92) Where is this programme being implemented?**

- This exercise is being carried out at Manipsis village in the Philippines.
- Manipsis village is located in the upland areas of Talisay, Cebu with:
  - elevations ranging from 500-600m and
  - steep rugged hills.
- Manipsis village has been declared a model site for an Integrated Social Forestry Programme (ISPF) because:
  - the upland watershed areas of Manipsis contribute to the tributaries of the Mananga River and

- dams are being constructed on this river to supply water to Metro Cebu.

- This programme commenced at the beginning of the 1990s.

#### **(93) What has motivated the farmers to take part in the programme?**

- The CSC was the prime instrument and incentive for taking part in the ISPF programme by the farmers of Manipsis village.
- As a result, they saw an opportunity to improve the quality of their lives.
- Through this, they gained control over their primary means of production, i.e., the land they till.

#### **(94) How is the programme being implemented?**

- This programme is being implemented through a Farmers' Organization called 'ARTHUR' (Agri-based Rural Technology on Hilly and Upland Resources).
- About 200 CSCs were issued to members by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).
- There are more than 500 farmers participating in the programme.

#### **(95) How is the programme succeeding in achieving its objectives?**

- Following establishment of a stable farmers' organization:
  - farmers were given continuous exposure to training and workshops,
  - they identified the needs for improving soil fertility and its water-holding capacity, and
  - slowly, soil and water-holding technologies were adopted.
- Prior to adoption of such technologies, farmers became aware of the effects on



sustaining productivity of their land through:

- exposure to various training programmes and
- agro-forestry farm visits in other areas and meetings with farmers.
- This farmer-to-farmer interaction and training contributed greatly to:
  - successful people's participation in:
    - \* conservation and
    - \* utilisation of upland watershed resources.

**(96) What are the additional local initiatives being undertaken by the farmers' organisation ?**

**(97) Are these helpful for sustaining the programme?**

- Farmers have started installing water spring boxes to tap the existing water springs.
- Farmers now have their own training hall for multipurpose use.
- The farmers' organisation can now stand on its own accord.

#### Natural Resource Management through CSC

**(98) What are the positive impacts of CSC on farmers and their surroundings?**

The assurance of a future guaranteed harvest has encouraged them to carry out the following activities.

#### *Planting Forest Trees for Multipurpose use*

- To plant forest trees not only for fuelwood and fodder but also for their timber values
- The farmers' organisation is now motivated to take necessary steps to protect their own forest.

#### *Adoption of SALT Technology*

- Agro-forestry being the main strategy in the area, the Manipis farmers are adopting Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT). The leguminous tree species included in the programme

also became a prime material for charcoal making.

#### *Silvi-Pastoral Activities*

- Some farmers are even carrying out silvi-pastoral activities in which cattle are kept under a regulated grazing system under forest plantation. Also, goats and pigs are maintained in stall-fed conditions.

#### *Additional Measure for Controlling Soil Erosion*

- With assured stewardship over the land, farmers are enthusiastically planting more bamboo on river banks, gullies and steep hill slopes to minimise soil erosion.

#### *Farming as Enterprises*

- Currently, members of the ARTHUR farmers' organisations have moved ahead from simple agro-forestry farming to farming enterprises, because they already have control over their means of production through their CSC. These activities include:

- elevation of the Manipis model ISF site into a regional training centre for agro-forestry,
- cooperative building and family health programmes, and
- generating funds to sustain income generating projects in the area.

- Growing mangoes is traditionally considered one of the main sources of income among the Manipis uplanders. Farmers have been encouraged to plant more mango trees as a result of the security of tenure they have received with their CSC titles. Farmers are more interested in growing mango trees because of the following reasons.

- High-quality export varieties are available in the area.
- Advanced research on mangoes has enabled farmers to grow off-season varieties
- These off-season mangoes command very attractive prices in the market.



- There are now manufacturing plants for processing fresh mangoes into dried and/or juice forms, i.e., post-harvest processing facilities.
- a Manipis farming family with three, full-grown fruit-bearing mango trees can afford to send all its children to college
- healthy family rights,
- spacing of child births, and
- quality education.

*Effects of People's Empowerment*

- A number of farmers are growing flowers for which there is a readily available market fetching high prices.
- The farmers in Manipis have exhibited an indomitable will to survive even under arduous conditions.
- Another factor for people's participation is the establishment of a farmers' organization on the will and initiative of the farmers themselves.
- Through this organization, farmers have gained a sense of social and political identity thereby improving their capability of looking after themselves.
- This is the essence of people's empowerment in the uplands - giving the people niches, which they can call their own.

*Women Initiated Activities*

- Encouragingly, a large number of women is taking part in the programme. Of the ISFP project members in Manipis, 40 per cent are women. Increasingly more women are taking part in non-farm contract jobs. Women are now advocating:



## MODULE 6.6

### *COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES'*

### *MANAGEMENT: AN EXAMPLE FROM INDIA*

#### **(99) Objectives of Module 6.6**

- To present a brief account of integrated watershed management practices through people's participation
- To present a case study of people's empowerment through land-use titling
- To bring out the underlying factors needing consideration in common property resource management practices

#### **(100) How and who is managing common property resources?**

- The National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation is the government agency for watershed development.
- This is a major thrust programme to develop:
  - the natural resource base,
  - sustain its productivity,
  - improve the standards of living of millions of poor farmers and landless labourers, and
  - work towards the restoration of ecological balance.
- The strategy of the programme is based on the twin concepts of:
  - integrated watershed management through people's participation and
  - sustainable farming systems' development.
- This programme commenced with the beginning of the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-97).

#### **(101) Why is the programme achieving only limited success?**

- Some ten years ago, the Government of India, through a policy decision, made it possible to hand over community land-use rights to groups

such as the Village Panchayat or individuals.

- It was observed that this has generally not occurred.
- Farmers are apparently not willing to use these lands unless they are given land-use titles by the Revenue Department.
- In many instances, the village revenue officials do not allow the people to harvest these lands.
- Although, these lands are often encroached upon by farmers, they are never put to rational use (e.g., orchards, pastures, forests or other long-term uses).

#### **(102) What are the practical problems associated with the programme?**

- Managing common property resources is the responsibility of NWDPA.
- But, the land-use titling authority comes under the Revenue Department which denies people access to common property resources.

#### **(103) Only one single instance of transfer of land use rights to farmers**

##### **A Case Study**

- A single successful case of handing over land-use rights to a farming community was found.
- The case study is from Neekaj village, Alwar, Rajasthan, India.

#### **(104) How was the land-use titling obtained?**

- Basically, this initiative was taken by a woman called Mrs Asha Rani Rathore.
- She organised the community into an interactive force.
- Identification and demarcation of community lands (54 ha) were carried out by the community.
- The community has also succeeded in obtaining the permission of the district revenue officials to use of the land.

- This is a successful case of people's power in community land recovery.

**Constraints with NWDPR**

**(105) Why is there only limited success?**

- This may be caused by the fact that in the NWDPR programme, there is no integration of:
  - the Revenue Department and
  - the Forestry Department.

- Without their integration, common property resource development activities will continue to be severely limited.
- Without local farmers' effective organisation, they will not be able to manage common property resources.
- If land-use titles can be provided to individual farmers, it would seem the farmers will have a direct interest in developing the lands as has been demonstrated:

- in some areas of India and
- in the whole of China.

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- This is a major thrust programme to develop:
  - the natural resource base,
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**A Case Study**

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**(104) How was the land-use titling obtained?**

- Basically, this initiative was taken by a woman called Mrs Asha Rani Rathore.
- She organised the community into an interactive force.
- Identification and demarcation of community lands (24 ha) were carried out by the community.
- The community has also succeeded in obtaining the permission of the district revenue officials to use of the land.



## MODULE 6.7

### LESSONS LEARNED

#### (106) Objective of Module 6.7

- To draw upon lessons and their implications for developing and launching community forestry programmes.

#### (107) From the case studies described above presented as examples of forest/watershed management, and other discussions included in the text, the following lessons are drawn.

- There is a clear indication that there is no universal system for forest management and use.
- There should be no imposition concerning how a management system should be employed.
- Due consideration should be given to the local sociocultural systems before a development approach is advocated.
- The local people should be allowed to manage their affairs by themselves. What they need is technical know-how and inputs that are not available locally.
- There is a need to empower farmers by building on their own existing institutions and systems rather than introducing totally new ones.
- Experiences suggest that a reasonably sized forest, having greater biodiversity, attracts a larger number of users. From such forests, differing needs and interest of users can be met.
- FUGs work well when members are well educated and have received the needed technical support.
- FUGs with heterogeneous as opposed to homogeneous ethnic members work well as each ethnic group watches the other for misuse of common resources. This prevents them from breaking the rules.
- FUG members with qualities such as wealth, education, and bureaucratic contacts have more influence on decision-making.

- The transfer of forest ownership from the Department of Forestry to FUGs, in many cases, is haphazard and not related to the needs and wishes of the farmers involved.
- Operational plans are generally target-oriented rather than based on realistic objectivity.

#### Key to Successful Forest Management

#### (108) Is it essential to have an enabling and clear policy?

- Presence of an enabling and clear policy framework is an important factor.
- This leads to successful community-based forest management.
- A policy statement is only an intention.
- It is important to send the correct message within the forest management institution.
- An unclear or ambiguous policy leads to inertia and can effect the practice of community forestry negatively.

#### (109) Is it essential to have appropriate rules and regulations?

- A policy framework is important, the rules and regulations prescribed for translating policy into practice is equally important.
- In the absence of appropriate rules and regulations, several distortions in practice can creep in.
- In order to prevent this from happening, rules and regulations must be timely and clear.

#### (110) Is it important to have security of tenure?

- Resources are handed over to community-based institutions within the framework of a contract between two institutions.
- Such a contract must be legally binding on both parties and must specify the roles and responsibilities of both.

- It is important that the institutions of the state guarantee security of tenure in two areas:

- the contract must specify the time-frame clearly, and
- the sharing of income and benefits from the resource must be clearly spelled out.

- Communities must have the confidence that the commitments being made by the institution of the state will be fulfilled.
- Absence of such guarantees can act as a disincentive to the community.
- It can effect the quality of protection and management necessary to manage the areas sustainably.

#### **(111) Is it important to have early and visible benefits?**

- This is one of the most fundamental factors which can have a positive impact on the level of motivation of a community forestry users' group.
- Benefits from the areas under their management must be available quickly and must be visible.
- This has implications on silvicultural management plans.
- It is necessary to ensure that the community needs receive primacy over the needs of the forest department.

#### **(112) How is the equity issue addressed?**

- Experiences indicated that the process of formation of a users' group must be based on principles of dialogue with all members of the community.
- This would include:
  - economically or socially deprived members,
  - women-headed households, and
  - those belonging to landless or marginal households.
- Within this context, women's access to decision-making has to be encouraged.
- A local institution which provides a forum for all its constituent households is normally the most sustainable and is likely to lead to sustainable resource management.

#### **(113) What are the mechanisms for conflict resolution?**

- It is important that mechanisms for conflict resolution are established.
- It is preferable that these mechanisms build on existing social and cultural frameworks and that neutrality is guaranteed.
- More often than not, robust institutions can break down if early warning signals to spot potential conflicts are not in place and if appropriate interventions are not made.
- This is especially important when products and incomes are due for distribution.

#### **(114) Conclusions from the Case Studies**

##### **Common Property Resource Management by the local people in Nepal**

- The concept of a community approach for development, particularly in natural resource management, is achieving encouraging success among Nepalese hill communities.
- It is mainly through realisation that the local communities have a symbiotic relationship with natural resources. In the past they had maintained these resources well.
- These natural resources started depleting rapidly from the time the government took them over from the local people.
- This resulted in environmental degradation-induced effects on human lives and their surroundings.
- This has caused declining agricultural productivity and increasing food shortages in the face of a rising population.
- The government realised the need for reversing the trend of natural resource deterioration and introduced a Master Plan to promote natural resource development through people's participation via community forest users' groups.
- This came out of the realisation that for effective management of common property resources, people's active participation is crucial.
- The process of handing back forest land to the local people by the government is picking up momentum.



### **Common Property Resource Management in the Philippines and India**

- The examples (modules 6.5 and 6.6) of common property resources' management practices from the Philippines and India also clearly show that:
  - if land-use titles are given to the local communities and

- if farmers' organization is facilitated
- people can actively participate in the management of natural resources.

The next module is presented to show how community-based land-use practices can rehabilitate even marginal upland watersheds resulting in prosperity for its farmers.



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