

## **The Conflict**

According to the Operational Plan of 1991, no trees were to be felled in Block No.1.

In Block No 2, all trees were to be retained that were near the water sources, open places, and the road; trees, excepting mango and *Khair*, would be felled in other places. Details are given below.

- Only one *Sal* tree was to be felled in 1992. A rest house was to be constructed by the side of the motorable road.
- No timber-producing trees were to be felled in 1993.
- If necessary, two trees were to be felled in 1994.
- A maximum of four trees were to be felled in 1995.
- A maximum of five trees may be felled in 1996.

Despite these restrictions in the OP, trees such as *Sal*, *Chilaune*, and *Mahuwa* were harvested in 1992, and the total production of timber was 966.21cuft (Table 1). Earlier, the group had extracted a stack of fuelwood of *Sal* and half a stack of fuelwood of *Chilaune* from weeding/cleaning operations, and the DFO had given permission to sell this wood. According to the JWCFG, timber and fuelwood extraction was carried out under the supervision and direction of the DFO and Range Office, but the group could not produce any written document to verify this. The DFO officials did not confirm whether or not such instructions were issued.

**Table 1: Species and Quantity of Harvested Timber**

No	Species	Quantity cuft
1	<i>Chilaune</i>	317.06
2	<i>Mahuwa</i>	506.00
3	<i>Sal</i>	143.15
Total		966.21

The dispute was triggered by a seemingly innocuous decision of the women's group. In order to maximise its income from the sale of harvested timber, the JWCFG decided to market the logs in Kathmandu rather than in the village or within Gorkha district. This decision, based on the perception that the timber would fetch a higher price in the more competitive market environment of Kathmandu, threatened the livelihood of local timber contractors. Seeing that the women's group could deprive them of their comparative advantage, they decided to politicise the issue and the dispute.