DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND EXTERNAL INTERVENTIONS

External Intervention

Intervention through external agencies or government offices in these villages is minimal. The Jarajuri Award brought prestige to the people. After the people of Hattisunde-Mahadevsthyan received this award, the neighbouring villagers began protecting patches of land around their villages also. Some of the spill-over effects of this award are as follows:

1. Villagers from Amarai, Ward No 2, Nalang Panchayat, began protecting three patches of forest land, namely "Rato Mate Forest", "Banskote Forest", and "Kali Thupdo Forest", from June 1987. They became interested in forest protection after Hattisunde won the Jarajuri Award.

2. Villagers from Apprechhap also began protecting four patches of land namely, "Patal Pakhera" (5 ropanis), "Chhap Ko Bhir", (6 ropanis), "Thumki Pakhera" (4 ropanis), and "Terse Barra" (2 ropanis). They also began protecting these patches of land from June 1987 after Hattisunde won the Jarajuri Award.

3. A small patch of land, in Ward No 5, is being protected by villagers of Thati Bhanjyang, Ward No 5, Nalang Panchayat. This was also initiated in the summer of 1987 after the protectors of Hattisunde Forest received the Jarajuri Award. This protected area is called "Bistar Ko Dando".

Dhading District Development Project

A small water project has been implemented with financial assistance of Rs 11,300 from Dhading District Development Project (DDDP) in Khahare Village.

Forestry Department

A nursery has been established with the help of the Forestry Department. This is just above Hattisunde at Sukkha Dando which falls under Ward No 4, Nalang Panchayat. The Forestry Department has also planted 16,000 seedlings at Sukkha Dando and in neighbouring areas of the four villages studied (but in different wards).

Villagers mentioned that, as trees are being regenerated in the village-protected forest, panchayat representatives, as well as forestry department representatives, have suggested that the forest be handed over to them so that they can put a fence around it and hire a forest guard for invigilation purposes. The villagers neither feel the need for a wire fence nor for a guard to keep an eye on the forest.

The most important point is that they do not want to hand over Hattisunde Forest, protected and conserved by them for so long, to the Panchayat or to the Forest Department. They fear that if they involve the Panchayat or the Forest Department in its protection, the right to make decisions
related to its management and use might go to the Panchayat or the Forest Department. They also do not want to share the resources of this forest with any other than the residents of these four villages.

**Constraint Analysis**

In the process of protecting the forest, villagers have faced some constraints. For instance, as the forest is growing fast, it is throwing a lot of shade on the cultivated lands that border Hattisunde Forest. As a result, a portion of this land has become less productive. One woman said that her *bari* land near the forest has yielded less every year due to the shade.

Another constraint involves the fear of wildlife. One woman lost five goats in a year due to jackals from the forest. The same woman also complained about the loss of a male calf and this, too, was the complaint of a woman from Kharka. A fourth woman stated that four years previously one of her goats was eaten by jackals. All these animals were attacked in the animal-sheds right outside the houses. However, the villagers prefer to protect the forest because they believe that one day they will be able to harvest it and get a fair share of its resources.

**Failure Analysis**

So far, no significant failure of any kind has been noticed. Some small conflicts seem to have arisen at the village level. At one point, when some villagers felled *Sal* branches, another villager reported the incident to the rangers' office at Gajuri, Dhading district, before trying to settle the conflict among the villagers. When the villagers came to know about her complaint, they were very upset and immediately resolved the conflict on their own before the representatives of the rangers' office could investigate the incident. As reported previously, there was also a conflict concerning the *Jarajuri* Award that was also settled at village level.

**Participation of Women**

So far, the development of this forest is the result of village motivation and is not due to outside stimulation. Villagers' participation is genuine and self-motivated. No significant exploitation of women by external agencies is observed. Although women are not expected to attend formal meetings, they do not lose much because most of the meetings are organized in an informal setting. It is likely that, if the management system becomes more formal, women will be excluded from participating in decision making and this is because their participation in formal settings is still not socially accepted.

**Remuneration and Equal Pay.** Women are paid Rs 10 and men are paid Rs 12 for a day's labour. This is socially accepted because it is felt that women do less strenuous work than men. No wage labour has been used to protect Hattisunde Forest as everyone in the village acts as a guard and strictly follows the rules. Hence, paid labour is not required to protect Hattisunde Forest.

**Recognition of Women's Contribution.** Women's contribution to forest protection is fully recognised throughout all the villages. As noted before, they have *equal* responsibilities and equal rights in forest management and invigilation.