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Synopses of Case Studies

Several case studies of advocacy in action have been made available to ICIMOD by different partners. Some have been written up as formal case studies, while others were submitted as concept notes for future research. Some relevant case studies have been selected and presented in this chapter to provide real examples that can be used for capacity building programmes.

Water Preservation System in Uttaranchal, India

Pre-Independence, extensive techniques existed for water preservation in Uttaranchal, India; both before and during British rule. With the help of these techniques people received a reliable water supply, for both drinking water and irrigation. Uttaranchal has hilly areas so it was not possible to dig wells and make big ponds as in the plains. Instead, local people formed committees for the management of 'naula' (canals), 'shroot' (water sources), and 'dhara' (taps). In later years, the participation of the local people was reduced and the use of these techniques dwindled.[16]

Today, these methods of water preservation have been almost completely rejected by local people. As a result, over the last few years the level of underground water has gone down and the natural water sources are also becoming smaller. In the hilly areas of Uttaranchal the water problem is getting worse. Water sources should be recharged up to 25%, but at present they are only recharged by 12% to 14%. Because of the regular cutting down of forests and the land area, it is likely that this recharge percentage will go down further in future.

According to the World Bank, 31 countries are facing a water problem. This problem will be greater in future if the right methods of water preservation are not adopted. Through analysis of the whole situation, civil society organisations have been trying to discover ways to continue traditional water preservation techniques in Uttaranchal.

Questions for discussion
- What is the root cause of the problem in this case?
- What are the policy issues?
- Do you see any scope for advocacy in this situation?

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[16] This case has been adopted from the work of Tarun Joshi from Nainital district, Uttaranchal, India. Joshi wrote this case as a concept note to initiate further research in this area.

Forest Management in Uttaranchal, India

The people of Uttaranchal have developed their own indigenous system of people's forest management through centuries of experience of living in a mountain environment.

With the advent of British rule after the Gorkha rulers were driven out in 1815, the forests in Uttarakhand became commercially lucrative and a destructive process of wholesale exploitation was initiated. By the end of the 19th century, almost all the commercially valuable forests in the region were taken over by the state. This went hand in hand with an increasing curtailment of people's rights, and anger and resentment soon erupted into many rebellions. To pacify people and seek their cooperation, the British constituted a grievance committee that recommended handing about 10% of the forests back to village communities in British-controlled areas.

The state continues to follow the British claim that villagers are solely responsible for deforestation – they are the enemy, and the only reason forests exist is because of state-controlled 'scientific' forest management. However, the experience of many NGOs associated with the SAMBANDH network of working with the people of Uttaranchal and researching the history of forest management in the state clearly indicates that conservation without meeting peoples' basic household and livelihood needs is simply not possible. People have to meet their basic household and livelihood needs from somewhere. Simply declaring forest areas out of bounds and leaving people to fend for themselves does not solve the problem of degradation, and violates all constitutional rights. Real conservation can only happen when people have a real stake in the survival of the forests they use.

People can only justify their proposed control over management regimes when they can prove 'scientifically' that their traditional systems are equally effective or more effective compared to state-controlled systems in terms of cost-effectiveness in providing biomass for household and livelihood needs, conserving biodiversity, conserving livelihoods, and supporting the local subsistence economy.

In order to prove that people's traditional systems are in many cases highly effective and deserve official support, it is imperative to go beyond the present emotional rhetoric on both sides and explore comparatively the real situation as it exists on the ground. The results of people's systems and state systems need to be examined according to ecological, economic, and social parameters, and matched with their management objectives. Convincing evidence needs to be generated and presented to the institutions that control the financing of the forestry sector, particularly the World Bank, to convince them that they are supporting the wrong systems politically, economically, and ecologically.

The main objective of this study is therefore to document good examples of people-managed forest in Uttaranchal Pradesh, India, and provide a historical analysis of the traditional efforts at advocacy of village communities to maintain control over their survival and livelihood base – the land, water, and forests.

Questions for discussion
- What are the policy issues to regain the rights of mountain people over natural resources?
- What are the ways and means of balancing both the national interest and people's rights?
- How can we verify the roles of civil society organisations in this context?

Changing Status of the Dalit Community in the Eastern Hills of Nepal

Generally speaking, 'dalit' is defined as those castes and classes of people that are deprived of their rights, social prestige, and dignity. In the Nepalese context, the classes of people who are considered 'untouchable' have fallen behind economically, are looked down on socially, lack awareness in political participation, are less conscious academically, and adopt caste-designated jobs. They are referred to as the oppressed.[17]

In Nepal a social order composed of four castes and eighteen different sub-castes was put in place in the Lichchhavi period (200-879 A.D.). Since then, the practice of untouchability has been customary. New occupations emerged along with the development of society and the Aryans, the then-ruling class, had to have a double standard in dealing with the non-Aryans. In that situation, the aristocrats and the ruling class people of Aryan origin continued subjugating the working class and slaves in order to establish and maintain their domination and supremacy. Later, when King Jayasthiti Malla (1360-1395 A.D.) divided people into 4 castes, 38 communal classes, and 725 ethnic groups, the customary practice of untouchability became strongly institutionalised in society.

In Nepal there are two types of dalits – the dalits originating from the plains (Terai) and those of hill origin. The dalits of hill origin mainly involve ethnic groups like Kami, Damai, Sarki, Badi, and Gaine. In the Terai region, they involve ethnic groups like Chamar, Dusadh, Dhobi, Dum, Batar, Khatwe, Mushar, Halakhor, Jhangar, Pattharkatta, Kanu, Teli, Kalawar, Jhangad, and Dom. There are also untouchable ethnic groups within the Newar (ethnic) community: the Kasai, Kusule, Pode, Kulu, Harhuru, and Dhobi. But these ethnic groups are only treated as untouchable in some places, otherwise they simply belong to the neglected classes of people.

In 2001, the total population of Nepal was 22.2 million, of which the dalit class constituted 2.9 million or 12.9% of the total population (census of 2001). About 90% of these people live below the absolute poverty line. Their average life expectancy in 1996 was 50.8 years compared with an average life expectancy for Nepalis overall of 55 years (HDR 1996).[17] The literacy rate of the Nepalese in general is 48%, while that of the oppressed is only 10.7%, and that of dalit women only 3.3%. Twenty three per cent are completely landless and 48.7% have pieces of land only big enough to construct a small house. The highest population of dalits in Nepal is in a district called Saptari located on the eastern plains.

The movement for social equity is not a new phenomenon in Nepal. When reviewing this long-running movement, the following can be cited as examples of success.

- In 1948 the dalit students of Nepal were not allowed to sit and study together with students of other castes. Protesting against this practice, some dalits from Dhankuta district went to the 'badahakim' (district administrator) to file a complaint. The badahakim said that a change in the rule was not possible without a policy change from higher up. As a result, Gajaram Yogi, an alumnus of Darjeeling, built a separate hut at

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[17] Subedi, B. (2004) *Changing Status of Dalit Community in the Eastern Hills of Nepal: A Case Study of Dhankuta District, Nepal.* Kathmandu: Human Rights, Social Awareness and Development Centre (HUSADEC)

the side of the playground and started to teach oppressed class students.

- Towards 1978 'Hotel Bhet', a hotel in Dhankuta Bazaar, prohibited dalits from entering the hotel. The dalits had to eat sitting outside and also had to wash their cups and plates themselves. Protesting against this treatment by the hotel owner, the members of 'Nepal Rastriya Dalit Jana Bikas Parishad Dhankuta' (an oppressed class organisation operating in Dhankuta district at that time) went to the district administration office. In response to their complaint, the Chief District Officer ordered the hotel owner to open his hotel to all classes of people.
- On 14 April 2002 the 'Dalit Mahila Sangh Dhankuta' organised a get-together with a view to minimising discrimination against each other within the oppressed community itself. The feast was held at a park and was attended by 50 people including men and women of various ethnic groups belonging to oppressed classes such as Bishwokarma, Damai, and Sarki.

The examples above of successes in campaigning for social equality suggest that the movement of the oppressed class has helped significantly in raising the awareness of the target community and bringing changes to the conservative ideas and attitudes of the non-oppressed communities. It is because of these successes that incidents of inhuman treatment such as discrimination in public places like temples and shrines, government institutions and organisations, inns and rest-houses, hotels, educational institutions, and various cooperatives have not taken place.

Questions for discussion
- What are the root causes of the problem in this case?
- What the policy issues?
- How relevant is this case in other hill areas? What are the common features of the case?
- How do you comment on successful events from an advocacy perspective?

Meeting with members of the Rural Economic Development Association (REDA) in west Palpa, Nepal

Social Capital in Local Governance, Pakistan

Two factors encouraged network formation in Ajad Kashmir (AJK) in Pakistan. Firstly, the National Rural Support programme (NRSP) maximised its ability to reach the poor. Once the networks had been established, NRSP staff were able to save time and resources by using them as intermediaries with the community organisations (COs). The second factor was that activists and CO members wanted to scale up the COs' role in the Union Council by creating a platform to pool resources and undertake collective initiatives to overcome constraints and problems.[18]

The networks lined together groups of COs. The three networks are (1) Women's Welfare Organisation Poonch (WWOP); (2) Kiran Welfare Organisation; and (3) Rural Community Development Foundation (RCDF). The WWOP was formed in 1997, KWO in 1999, and RCDF in 2002. The levels of organisational structure, access to financial support, and ability to undertake developmental activities of these networks are linked to their age: the more established the network, the more refined are its systems and approaches.

The office-bearers of the COs themselves are fully accountable to the members, and report on all financial and operational activities during fortnightly meetings. These mechanisms and processes ensure that benefits are not hijacked by the local elite, and greatly reduce the chances of resource fungibility. As a result, effective local leadership, a prerequisite for social capital formation and utilisation, emerges.

Understanding the role, the tensions, and the successes of COs in the networks is important for understanding the processes of social capital formation and utilisation. The networks are able to act as a means for the flow of information, pooling resources, and sharing expertise, thus bringing the benefits of economies of scale. Discrete COs are far less able to lobby for resources.

In AJK, the scattered settlements, poor infrastructure, and mutual dependence on natural resources result in community interdependence. The establishment of a network made it possible for COs in different villages to share water and other resources. Similarly, the roads benefit a number of contiguous communities. Education and health services need to be centrally located around a number of communities. This suggests that there are fewer conflicts, or better mechanisms to resolve them, in AJK than elsewhere.

The WWOP President and staff say they have been successful in socially empowering rural women and promoting the understanding that rural women are able to undertake development activities and manage education and health activities. The WWOP has also encouraged women's roles in politics. For example, in AJK, both men and women are eligible to stand for election as members of the legislative assembly (MLAs), but in general women do not contest elections. Finally one woman candidate was selected as an MLA and is now working with the WWOP to undertake development activities. With the support of this MLA, the WWOP is now a member of various forums including the AJK National Coordination Council of NGOs.

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[18] Baluch, M. Saleem (2004). *A Case Study on Development of Social Capital to Promote Local Governance in the Mountain Areas of Pakistan*. Islamabad: National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)

Due to their collective strengths and activism, the COs are involved in holding local public ceremonies and festivals, and in promoting community development activities. They are also engaged in measures related to promoting the welfare, good health, safety, and convenience of village residents, in addition to assisting the village-level revenue officials in preparing records, assessments, and revenue collection.

The networks present a successful model of local development, an effective and efficient local governance system in terms of capacity building of the COs. They also help to improve transparency and accountability in the working of Union Councils and line agencies. There are certainly some opportunities for these networks to expand. The government is implementing some large-scale development programmes through CBOs. The most important of these are the Community Infrastructure Services Project (CISP), an IFAD-funded project to be implemented by GoAJK; and the Integrated Land Management Programme. Technical and financial support from the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) is expected to create significant opportunities to strengthen and develop the networks.

Questions for discussion
- What are the differences between local NGOs and networks?
- What are the issues these local networks are dealing with?
- How do you examine the strategies of these local networks for policy advocacy?

Learning how to prepare an advocacy strategy on a selected issue in the Training of Trainers session in Pakistan

Advocacy Approaches in Local Self-Governance

The Rural Technology and Development Centre – Local Self-Governance Group (RTDC-LSG) is an NGO working to promote local self-governance in the state of Himachal Pradesh in India. Having worked on this issue for over a decade, RTDC-LSG has developed a model of local self-governance called panchayat micro-planning (PMP) and has been engaged since April 2003 in an officially declared pilot demonstration of the model in the Bhatiyat Development Block with the support of the state's Panchayati Raj and the Rural Development Department (PRRDD). This study examines RTDC-LSG's advocacy in the Bhatiyat pilot trial with the goal of illuminating successful advocacy approaches.[19]

The contemporary situation of local self governance in the Indian mountains is not encouraging. Although it has been ten years since India made a constitutional provision for local self governance through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), this framework has disappointingly not done enough to support community empowerment in practice. Planning is still done in a top-down manner that does not address the felt needs of the people and results in poor governance outcomes.

In the years leading up to the Bhatiyat pilot trial, RTDC-LSG worked to better understand the nature of local self governance issues, design the PMP model, advocate at all levels for local self governance, network with other stakeholders, and test and refine its perspective through a series of field demonstrations. Local self governance presents an especially interesting advocacy challenge because it involves convincing not only a resistant government filled with vested interests, but also the people themselves who are meant to be empowered through it.

What are the advocacy lessons we can draw from the experience of RTDC-LSG in the Bhatiyat PMP pilot trial? It is important to note that the most effective advocacy would depend on a holistic approach that incorporates all these points. For instance, it may not be especially helpful to network with other stakeholders if one does not pay attention to maintaining a good reputation. Likewise, all of these guidelines are interconnected, in that adhering to any one of them has a positive effect on all the others.

One of RTDC-LSG's strengths is that its advocacy is based on real-world field trials that help improve the model of local self governance and provide unambiguous factual evidence of viability that is more powerful than any theoretical argument. Information, education, and communication about the issue are a vital prerequisite to doing advocacy. The advocate must themself be knowledgeable, and must transfer that knowledge to the intended beneficiaries and other stakeholders at every stage. A thorough grasp of local self governance issues and constant outreach has enabled RTDC-LSG to create understanding, trust, and support among all classes of stakeholders. Personal experience of the Pradhan office and the Bhatiyat area has been particularly helpful.

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[19] Garg, Arjun (2004) *'Advocacy Approaches for Promoting Local Self Governance: A Case Study of Bhatiyat Block, Himachal Pradesh, India.* Mandi (HP, India): Rural Technology and Development Centre

The government is not a monolith. There are sensitive people and sub-institutions in every area and level of the government who will be helpful if identified and given an opportunity. Moreover, different constituencies within the government can be played against one another. Constructive collaboration is generally more effective than confrontation, particularly when trying to reform the bureaucracy. When a confrontational stand is needed, it should be disassociated from the collaborative aspect of the advocacy so that enemies are not made unnecessarily.

Networking with other stakeholders, particularly larger-level organisations and forums, pays off in a variety of ways in the long term, fostering awareness of how one's agenda fits into the larger scenario and building useful contacts for the future. To move ahead with this principle, building and maintaining credibility of advocates must be a constant concern. The attitude of advocacy must never be that of asking for a favour from those in power; rather, advocacy should be used from the perspective of demanding one's rights.

Finally, advocacy has already paid many dividends in Bhatiyat, but it remains to be seen how much further the RTDC-LSG can carry the pilot trial and what impact this success will have on the larger picture. The primary advocacy challenge RTDC-LSG will face in the future is to move beyond local trials and mobilise a state-level, mass movement to build a political and bureaucratic consensus that will finally overcome the stubborn resistance of vested interests in the existing power structure.

Questions for discussion
- What are the main issues of local governance in the Indian mountains?
- What are the policy or behavioural causes of existing issues?
- What are the useful lessons that RTDC has learned from Bhatiyat?
- To what extent are the Bhatiyat lesions replicable in other contexts?

A woman activist speaking to partners and collaborators during the partners' assembly organised by Sungi in Pakistan

Advocacy Strategies and Approaches: A Resource Manual

Livelihood Improvement in Rampuriya Village

Rampuriya forest village is located to the southeast of Darjeeling town in India. It falls within the Senchel Wildlife Sanctuary under the jurisdiction of Wildlife Division I, Darjeeling. Rampuriya forest block has a total area of 300 ha and lies at an altitude of 1500-1800 metres above sea level, facing southeast. Rampuriya village is similar to many forest villages established in the early 1900s when the Forest Department brought in labourers for forestry operations. The labourers were given small pieces of land on lease for cultivation, to be renewed every 10 years, but their main source of income was as wage earners in forestry operations. Rampuriya village was first established in 1953, as a temporary settlement by the Forest Department for people from nearby areas brought in for felling operations. At the time of establishment, there were only 17 households dominated by the Tamang community. The Forest Department provided the labourers with marginal landholdings for basic agricultural purposes and allowed them to collect dried twigs and broken branches for subsistence.[20]

The present livelihood pattern of the village community is primarily agricultural. Potatoes are the main cash crop, supplemented by cardamom and other vegetables, mainly peas, squash, pumpkins, beans, and carrots. Rampuriya forest village community continues to be poor due to the unfavourable agroclimatic conditions. Factors such as extreme cold (minimum temperature 3°C, maximum temperature 17°C), uneven rainfall, sandy loam soil with high acid content, and soil erosion make it very difficult for the villagers to obtain good agricultural yields.

It is, however, interesting to note that the poverty is not purely economic. Poverty also prevails in terms of lack of educational facilities for children, poor health and improper sanitation conditions, inaccessibility to the basic services provided by the state and central governments, and lack of power to voice opinions for access to basic social, economic, and cultural rights.

The meagre landholdings are not enough to sustain the livelihoods of these people. The total village land is 41.38 acres (16.75 ha) with an area of 14.82 acres (6 ha) available for agricultural activities. The average land holding per family is 1.38 acres (0.56 ha), of which 0.42 acres (0.17 ha) is available for agriculture. In total the village has 0.85 acres (0.34 ha) of rainfed land, 2.35 acres (0.95 ha) of wasteland, and 21.45 acres (8.68 ha) used for cardamom cultivation.

In order to mobilise the forest village community, the advocacy strategy adopted by ATREE-EHP included equal participation from the village community, Wildlife Division I, other government agencies, civil societies, and Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council (DGAHC). No economic or social activity within the forest village is carried out without the prior knowledge or approval of the Wildlife Division I. The process of establishing relationships with the concerned institutions starts right from the very first step of selection

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[20] This case is adopted from a case study carried out in 2004 by ATREE (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment) about the impacts of social mobilisation in Rampuriya village

of project villages. All the project villages of ATREE-EHP have been selected after detailed consultation with Wildlife Division I.

One of the most distinct advantages of the participation of the authorities in the process is in galvanising the community members to turn the objectives for village and community development into success stories. This results in an energetic community and raises the probability of achieving the goals and objectives of attaining basic human rights through sustainable livelihood patterns. The other advantage of this strategy is that it gives to the village community the much-needed exposure to the authorities in power. As a result, fear and the perceived antagonistic attitude between the village community and the authorities is also diluted. This exercise has opened up avenues for the village communities to communicate directly with the authorities in power to address issues of utmost importance. The community members are no longer wary of the departments and interact regularly with these bodies.

Periodic visits by the concerned authorities to Rampuriya forest village has also increased due to their involvement in the activities. This serves a dual purpose of effective implementation of the programmes and also keeps a check on the surrounding ecosystem that most of the community members are heavily dependent on. Through all these activities, interaction between the villagers and the authorities has improved significantly and this can only augur well for the community of Rampuriya Forest Village.

Questions for discussion
- What are the policy issues in this case?
- Examine the activities carried out by ATREE in Rampuriya from the advocacy point of view
- List the learning points from this case as examples for advocacy

Partners' Assembly organised by Sungi Development Foundation at Abbottabad, Pakistan in 2006

Advocacy Strategies and Approaches: A Resource Manual