INSPIRATIONS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

ICIMOD
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

Report of the Seminar on Himalayan Community Forestry
Kathmandu, Nepal
June 1-4, 1992

Editors: J. Gabriel Campbell & Jeannette Denholm

ICIMOD Workshop Series

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development began professional activities in September 1984. The primary concern of the centre is to search for more effective development responses to promote the sustained well-being of mountain people. One of the continuing activities of ICIMOD is to review development and environmental management experiences in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region. Accordingly, International Workshops are organised in major fields to review the state of knowledge and practical experiences and also to provide opportunities for the exchange of professional expertise concerning integrated mountain development. The reports published in this series are given below.

- **International Workshop on Watershed Management in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya**
  14-19 October, 1985, Chengdu, China
- **International Workshop on Planned Urbanisation and Rural Urban Linkages in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya Region.**
  25-29 March, 1986, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- **International Workshop on District Energy Planning and Management for Integrated Mountain Development.**
  3-5 May, 1986, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **International Workshop on Off-farm Employment Generation in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya**
  17-19 May, 1986, Dehra Dun, India
- **International Workshop on Mountain Agriculture and Crop Genetic Resources**
  16-19 February, 1987, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **International Workshop on Women, Development, and Mountain Resources: Approaches to Internalising Gender Perspectives**
  21-24 November, 1988, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **International Expert Meeting on Horticultural Development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region**
  19-21 June, 1989, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **International Expert Meeting on Apicultural Development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas**
  21-21 June, 1989, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **Regional Workshop on Hydrology of Mountainous Areas**
  11-15 December, 1989, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **Consultative Meeting on Mountain Risk Engineering**
  20-22 February, 1990, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **International Workshop on the Role of Institutions in Mountain Resource Management**
  1-4 May, 1990 Quetta, Baluchistan, Pakistan
- **Seminar on Rural Energy and Related Technologies in Nepal**
  26-28 March, 1991, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **International Workshop on Mountain Off-farm Employment**
  17-20 February, 1992, Kathmandu, Nepal

These Workshops were attended by experts from the countries of the Region, in addition to concerned professionals and representatives of international and bilateral agencies. A large number of professional papers and research studies were presented and discussed in detail.

Workshop Reports are intended to present the discussions and conclusions reached at the Workshop and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICIMOD or other participating institutions. Copies of the reports are available upon request from:

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Foreword

This document reports the highlights of a meeting of professionals involved in Community Forestry Projects in Nepal and in Joint Forest Management initiatives in India. Representatives from donor agencies, NGOs, and government forest departments constituted other members of the group. In keeping with its mandate of organised exchange and dissemination of information relevant to the integrated development of mountain areas, ICIMOD organised this meeting with support from the Ford Foundation and the Asian Development Bank. Thanks are due to the special efforts put in by Dr. Gabriel Campbell of the Woodlands Mountain Institute, Jeff Campbell of the Ford Foundation, Delhi Office, and Jeannette Denholm of the Mountain Farming Systems' (MFS) Programme of ICIMOD.

The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate an exchange of experiences between personnel from two programmes (Community Forestry and Joint Forest Management) in order to help identify the gaps and opportunities associated with them and to use this understanding to influence the future direction of people-centred forest management programmes.

The meeting was organised by the MFS Programme of ICIMOD. The programme is currently focussing on the identification and promotion of sustainable options for mountain agriculture. The latter is defined very broadly to include all land-based activities ranging from annual cropping to forestry.

Apart from screening the potential technological and institutional options, using the specially developed "mountain perspective - sustainability framework", the MFS programme promotes "replicable success stories" as a low cost, short-gestation, and already well-proven component of development strategies. More than twenty successful initiatives are currently being examined by MFS for possible replication. They range from the Chinese experience in the promotion of seabuckthorn as an environment-friendly tree with high income-generating potential for marginal, fragile Trans-Himalayan areas to urea-molasses brick, a winter feed supplement for the middle mountains of Nepal.

MFS, through its past work (including thematic reviews and field studies), has observed that, in mountain areas, the sustainability of production systems is inseparable from the sustainability of the resource base. An integrated approach to the two calls for an integrated approach to all land-based activities (crop, livestock, horticulture, and forest-based). An important feature of these activities in the HKH Region is that, whereas the former three are managed privately the latter (i.e., forest based) often incurs little involvement from people. The alienation of the people from community forests or other common property resources has led to their over-extraction, degradation, and low regeneration. This has adversely affected the other components of mountain agriculture. Hence the crucial need for the involvement of people in the management of common property resources. This led to the organisation of the Hattiban Meeting, which has offered several useful insights and lessons for the future. The informal approach adopted during this meeting proved very effective and ICIMOD would like to follow this approach for future interactions between personnel from common or similar projects in other fields of activity in the HKH Region.

E.F. Tacke
Director General

Introduction: A Dialogue between the 'Doers'

As part of ICIMOD's attempt to facilitate replicable successful experiences in the area of people-centred natural resource management, two initiatives, community forestry/user group-managed forestry (Nepal) and joint forest management between forest departments and communities (in selected areas of India) were identified.

Rather than duplicating efforts made by others in documenting and disseminating experiences through academic papers, ICIMOD opted for a different approach.

Key figures involved in these two programmes were assembled to facilitate an exchange and synthesis of experiences through direct and informal interaction with one another. The main underlying reasons for this approach are as follows:

- to provide an opportunity to the personnel from the above initiatives to look critically at their own programme from a distance, especially in the light of experiences from other programmes, and the concerns as well as criticism expressed by non-project participants in the meeting;
- to facilitate free and informal exchange between different groups to help synthesise common experiences without being constrained by their respective formal positions, programme philosophies, work cultures, and other programme dictates driven by the perceptions of donors/governments; and
- to help enable participants to find time for introspection as well as collective thinking on future initiatives. This activity hardly receives time and priority in their routine work.

In keeping with the above understanding, other constraining activities such as preparation and presentation of scholarly papers, rigidly-structured formal agenda, time and space limits on discussions, and prior listing of do's and don'ts were disregarded.

In short, it was a meeting to facilitate a "dialogue among the doers", with a "focus on ideas rather than on papers", assigning primacy to direct communication rather than its means. Assembled in the forest surroundings of Hattiban and isolated from city life, the participants had three days of freedom and flexibility to concentrate on the issues and concerns that influence the emerging patterns of participatory forest management in South Asia. They also had an opportunity to reflect on their assessments while meeting farmers during the field trip.

Despite its focus on personal interactions and group discussions, the workshop did provide participants with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the two programmes through presentations from both countries. From Nepal, the results of a recently completed ICIMOD-sponsored study on "User Group Forestry in the Far-western Region of Nepal" were presented by Dr. Ram Chhetri, who noted the efficient management performance by indigenous user groups there and commented on ways to expand their activities in accordance with community forestry programme objectives. A paper on, "Equity and Self-reliance in the Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project", summarised by Michael Nurse, gave the participants an indication of the problems and possible solutions encountered in a project's efforts to promote equal distribution of forest products amongst community members. A group from the Institute of Forestry in Pokhara (K.M. Shrestha,

C. Richard, M. Gautam, and D. Messerchmidt) gave a team presentation on the results of their recent cross-country examination of technical, institutional, social, and economic factors that have a bearing on the success or failure of user groups (Forest User Groups in Nepal: Perspectives on What Works and Why).

A briefing on the Indian experience in Joint Forest Management (JFM) was given by Arvind Khare and Jeff Campbell and elaborated through short presentations by Madhu Sarin on the involvement of women in the process, by Apoorva Oza on the role of NGOs in JFM, and by P. Guhathakurta on technology issues in JFM.

Brief ten-minute presentations were then given by all other participants from NGOs, government agencies, and donor agencies on issues and constraints felt to be important by these individuals. Identification of some "burning issues" right in the beginning sparked intense discussions that persisted throughout the meeting.

Most of the expectations from this meeting were fulfilled. In keeping with the unconventional approach of the meeting, its proceedings are also presented in an innovative manner. The report summarises several highlights of the meeting and their possible follow-up. One important lesson is that the "dialogue between the doers" (like the farmer-approach to agricultural extension) could be an effective approach to promote adaptations and replications of innovative approaches to participatory natural resource management.

N.S. Jodha
Head, Mountain Farming Systems' Division

Summary Preview

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) hosted a four-day seminar on Himalayan community forestry in the sylvan setting of Hattiban ("elephant forest") overlooking the Kathmandu Valley from June 1-4, 1992.

The meeting broke traditional seminar constraints in order to respond to the inspiring innovations taking place in community forestry in the region. Participants from Nepal, India, and donor nations gathered to exchange ideas rather than papers. Forest officials, NGO representatives, educators, social scientists, planners, and silviculturalists sat, talked, ate, sang, and walked together to exchange ideas and assess successful strategies from their respective perspectives.

The process was inspiring. Long-standing assumptions were questioned. Practical future approaches were identified. The exchange between Nepalese and Indian approaches was particularly fruitful. The liberal approach of Nepal in turning over 100 per cent of forestry benefits to local communities amazed Indian participants. The Indian experience in dealing with commercialised forest products through revenue-sharing arrangements with village committees opened up new modes of thinking to Nepalese participants. User groups were juxtaposed to Forest Protection Committees and Hill Resources' Management Societies; the roles of NGOs, forest officers, and donors were debated. The need for new specific technologies, legislation, institutional arrangements, and processes for empowering communities to manage their forests was the focus of intense working group discussions.

Some suggestions were radical: *"All foresters should wear saris"; "There is no need for outside money"; "All forests should be privatised".* Other comments predicted drastic change: *"Current NGOs will be the future DFOs"; "Current DFOs will be the future NGOs".* However, the overwhelming consensus from the diverse gathering was that there are powerful cooperative roles to be played by forestry officials, NGOs, educators, researchers, and donors in supporting local communities to revitalise their management of local forests in productive, sustainable, and equitable ways. A number of successful strategies were identified.

Specific means for establishing communications' linkages between the Joint Forestry Management network in India and community forestry practitioners in Nepal were established. Topics of intense common interest, from operational/ micro-planning to research and curriculum, were identified for future attention.

This report highlights some of the insights, conclusions, and varied viewpoints that emerged from this process within an overview of the current state of community forestry in India and Nepal. It is not a consensus report: it combines participants' comments and deliberations with a synthesis from the editors' perspective. Not everyone will agree with everything, but hopefully everyone will identify with something and find inspiration for the future.

Selected Impressions

An inspiration to see the efforts made by the Nepalese people and Government to address a crisis situation of environmental ruin with such a bold vision and yet to have the courage and honesty to admit the horrendous resistances being encountered.

A sense of disquiet at the lack of a perspective, a conceptual framework that would make sense of a society in transition and the kind of institutions needed to actualise the vision (community control over resources) was articulated.

A sense of hope and respect for the spirit that underlies international concern for the problems of another society, notwithstanding difficulties of coordination, relevance, and unequal power that is endemic to such kinds of intervention.

Overall, a sense of being fortunate at being able to expand our horizons and sense of relevance.

-- Ajay Mehta

Choice of appropriate people can make discussions fairly focussed despite the lack of a "structured" agenda.

Insights generated through anecdotal information was one of the major gains of this meeting.

-- N.S. Jodha

I was impressed by:

- the sharing of experiences between Nepal and India, especially on user group community forestry and joint forest management;
- the market-oriented forestry programme in India;
- the sharing of experiences between NGOs in both countries;
- the discussion of gender issues in forestry;
- group discussions on user group organisation, legitimacy, institution building, and forest technology; and
- individual presentations on their organisation's approach and strategy.

-- B.R. Pathak

Once upon a time there was a bandwagon to promote TCDC ("Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries"). It disappeared gradually as people found out TCDC had been meant for the procurement of less cost-effective goods and services from other developing countries.

TCDC, in its true sense, should have been conceived to promote the exchange of information and experiences of success or failure in solving crucial problems of countries belonging to similar ecological zones and, if possible, having similar socioeconomic conditions.

This seminar, as other undertakings of ICIMOD, is exactly to the point. The Second Community Forestry Seminar should expand its coverage of countries to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan, and China for wider exchange of everything as mentioned above.

-- Katsura Watanabe

Wonderful interaction between people from a more than a 100 year-old forest department in India and the younger Nepalese department.

Our group was together from the beginning to the end.

-- Madhu Sarin

The Context: Fifteen Years of Social/Community Forestry

Starting in 1977/78, both Nepal and India launched major new initiatives in forestry. Referred to as "Social Forestry" in India and "Community Forestry" in Nepal, the new approaches undertaken under these programme titles transformed traditional government forestry activities -- and attitudes. While important precedents for a local people-centered forestry are available throughout the region, these initiatives were the first to bring foresters out of their forests and into the villages and farms of the people, who are the forests' primary users, on a large and sustained scale.

These new approaches grew out of the realisations that: a) traditional government forestry efforts are inadequate for halting the loss and degradation of the subcontinent's forest resources without the active participation of local people and b) much of the population -- and particularly the poor -- depend heavily upon forest resources for subsistence, energy, and maintenance of their farming systems. The number of project and programme activities developed to address these realisations has now reached every district and block and most *panchayats* and villages in the region. With large-scale government and donor support, total investments approached US$ two billion over the last fifteen years, and over 100,000 forestry personnel are estimated to be directly engaged in carrying out field work.

The major activities have been:

- government-sponsored plantations on community-used grazing or "wastelands" with varying degrees of local participation (e.g., with local *panchayats*, village development committees, forest committees, user groups, societies, etc);
- plantations on other bare public lands under a variety of tenurial arrangements (e.g., roadsides, canal banks, degraded forest lands);
- promotion of farmer-tree planting through the establishment of nurseries and

Some Lessons from Social/ Community Forestry

Although the debate continues, there is increasing agreement on the following general conclusions regarding the first ten years of social/ community forestry.

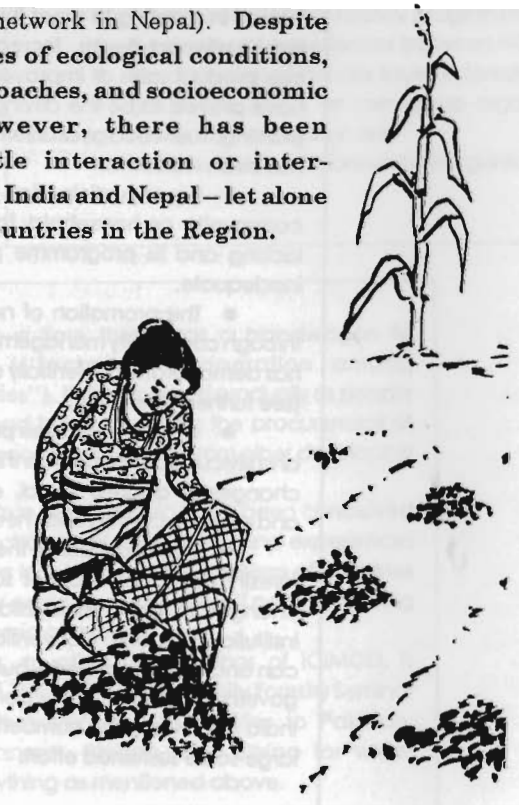
- Community plantations/woodlots established through the *panchayats* have generally failed to elicit genuine participation or effective management -- although important exceptions can be found. The cost per biomass ton produced has been high.
- Private farmer-tree planting exceeded all expectations in many areas -- sometimes resulting in market saturation nearby. Although farmers planted primarily for the commercial pole and timber market in the plains and fodder production in the Himalayas, appropriate technologies and market support have frequently been inadequate.
- Farm households have shown little or no interest in planting to meet their own subsistence level fuelwood needs. Increased incomes from tree product sales or improved dairy production have proved to be the driving force behind tree planting. Fuelwood as an intermediate by-product has been welcome.
- Equal participation of women in either community or household forestry decisions is lacking and its programme promotion is totally inadequate.
- The promotion of natural regeneration through community management of existing forests has demonstrated potentially cost-effective results (see further this report).
- Currently used tree planting technologies and silvicultural management systems need radical changes to address social, economic, and soil and moisture conservation needs more effectively.
- Institutionalising the social/community forestry approach requires substantial long-term changes in policies, legislation, training, and institutional support. Conventional forestry attitudes can and have changed -- but with almost 100,000 government-paid forestry personnel employed in India and Nepal the numbers involved require a large-scale sustained effort.

The Editors

distribution of seedlings through a variety of arrangements (e.g., forest department nurseries, school nurseries, private contract nurseries; free distribution, subsidised sales, etc);

- environmental conservation education and dissemination of wood-saving technologies (e.g., improved fuelwood stoves and crematoria);
- handing over existing degraded forests to local user groups (Nepal) or establishing joint forest management arrangements with local societies, villages, or committees (India); and
- development of microplans (India) or operational plans (Nepal) for approved management of plantation and regeneration forests together with local communities.

Fifteen years of roughly parallel experience with community/social forestry have yielded many similarities and some surprising differences -- many instructive failures and many exciting successes. The number of studies and analyses of this experience continues to multiply. Informational networks have also been established both internationally (i.e., ODI Social Forestry Network, FAO Forest Trees and People Network, ICRAF Agroforestry Networks, USAID/ Winrock's FFRED Research Network, etc) and nationally (SPWD Wasteland News Network, Joint Forest Management Groups in the Indian Forester's journal, etc in India and the *Banko Jankari* research network in Nepal). **Despite the commonalities of ecological conditions, programme approaches, and socioeconomic conditions, however, there has been surprisingly little interaction or inter-learning between India and Nepal – let alone between other countries in the Region.**



This seminar set out to redress this gap -- to take advantage of bringing together a wide variety of professionals with solid field experience behind them. But the goal was to build on this experience by looking forward, by looking at what works, and what could work better. The purpose was to identify promising new directions in India and Nepal, and indirectly the Region as a whole, by bringing them together with fellow community foresters they had not met; people who had tried different solutions to common problems in similar situations.

> "Nepal and India have much in common in terms of issues relevant to the implementation of community forestry/joint forestry management. The experiences are different, but they are mutually relevant because of the commonalities in biophysical and socioeconomic factors, and because the experiences are derived directly from field realities."
>
> ***-- Michael Nurse***

ICIMOD's regional mandate, its direct linkage to Nepal and India as well as other countries in the Hindu-Kush Himalayan Region, allows it to play a uniquely facilitative role in bringing together such a regional interplay of experience. In addition, its focus on integrating biophysical and socioeconomic factors -- the interaction and people and their environment in fragile mountain conditions -- provides a conceptual forum for struggling with solutions to overcome problems of land use, productivity, conservation, poverty, and development.

New Directions in Community Forestry Management

While the integrated nature of rural livelihood systems and forests (both with farming system linkages and market/employment linkages) and the breadth of social/community forestry programmes kept the discussions wide-ranging, the most strongly identified new directions in both countries were related to **management of existing government forests by the local community**. Called **Joint Forest Management (JFM)** in India and **Community Forestry with User Groups (CF/UG)** in Nepal, these were the topics which most interested participants -- the topics which elicited surprise, shock, confirmation of old lessons, and the most new learning.

Strictly speaking, neither JFM or CF/UG are new -- a characteristic which probably underlies their strength. Various forms of joint forest management, involving local villages and the Government, were set up in India (as well as Nepal) over sixty years ago through the establishment of *Van Panchayats* (forest villages), in the U.P. Himalayas and various tribal areas, as well as through the Himachal Pradesh **Forest Cooperatives**. These examples were by no means the first, having been preceded by many different kinds of arrangement with local rulers and landowners. Similarly, user group community forestry, where local users organised the protection and management of local forests (whether owned by them or the government), has a long history in Nepal and India. Indigenous or traditional forest management is documented throughout the Himalayan Region (and elsewhere) to extend back beyond the oldest farmer's memory to forefathers' generations.

What is new and exciting is the manner in which both India and Nepal are gearing up to support these approaches to community forestry, based on documented field successes on a large scale. **Both countries have prepared new policies and legislation, are examining new technologies and forest management options, are rethinking institutional needs and resources, engaging in social science research, and coming to new understandings of local communities and their roles in forest management in a changing economic environment.**

Yet, surprisingly, these approaches to public forest management are also very different in Nepal and India. In part, these differences reflect differences in socioeconomic conditions -- the continuing preponderance of subsistence farmers isolated from markets in roadless areas of Nepal versus the increasingly commercialised and market-driven rural economy of India. But they also reflect differences in approach and philosophy. Both the differences and commonalities are mutually instructive.

While **India provides Nepal with a window into their own future when roads and markets increase commercialisation of the economy, Nepal provides India with a window into their past where the successful ingredients of indigenous systems of forest**

Uphill and Downhill

Bal Ram Bhatta, reflecting on his many years of field experience with the Forest Department of HMG, gave the seminar an animated presentation of the Bhatta Theory of Uphill and Downhill Movement. Forests, he claims, are moving uphill as lowlands are being cleared for agriculture, making it an increasingly 'uphill' task to manage them as they become increasingly inaccessible and limited by a smaller range of climatic and soil conditions. The downhill movement refers to the direction of soil loss and the general loss of productivity resulting from forest degradation.

Bhatta stressed that community forestry programmes are being over-emphasised by donors and planners. There is room for a variety of approaches, particularly those which support private planting initiatives as well.

-- Bala Ram Bhatta, Hattiban

management can still be studied and seen and adapted to the present. Where India provides examples of a more conservative approach of incremental forest benefit-sharing with local villagers, Nepal has conducted a nation-wide, bold experiment by handing over 100 per cent of the benefits of government forests to local users.

Joint Forest Management in India

Definition of JFM

"Joint management of forest lands is the sharing of products, responsibilities, control, and decision-making authority over forest lands between forest departments and local user groups. It involves a contract specifying the distribution of authority, responsibility, and benefits between villages and State forest departments with respect to lands allocated for JM. The primary purpose of JM is to create conditions at the local level that enable improvements in forest conditions and in productivity. A second goal is to support a more equitable distribution of forest products than is currently the case in most areas.

-- Marcus Moench,* Training and Planning for Joint Forest Management, *Working Paper No. 8, Sustainable Forest Management, Ford Foundation, New Delhi (1990).

Joint forest management (JFM) in India represents a convergence of approaches developing out of new experiments, old co-management efforts, and social forestry programmes. The two most often cited recent inspirations for what is now called JFM derive from an innovative programme developed in two villages: Arabari in West Bengal and Sukhomajri in Haryana. In these two villages, separated by a thousand kilometres, creative forest officers developed strong, villager-run forest protection systems based on new revenue-sharing arrangements. These efforts provided renewed interest in earlier systems of *Van Panchayats* in the Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh and paralleled the evolution of more effective social forestry, village forest committees in Orissa, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir.

Village Forest Protection Committees in West Bengal

An innovative approach for dealing with the problem of progressively degrading natural forests was started on an experimental basis in the village of Arabari in Midnapore district in 1972. This approach involved eliciting the help of local villages in the protection of coppicing sal forests through the formation of forest protection committees (FPC) in return for free usufruct of all non-wood forest products (NWFP), first preference for employment, and promise of a 25 per cent share in the net cash benefits from sale of short rotation sal poles.

Based on the initial success of Arabari, this FPC approach gradually spread to neighbouring areas in the districts of Midnapore, Purulia, and Bankura and received increasing support from the Forest Department and NGOs. The number of FPCs in various stages of formation has grown exponentially in the last two years to a total of 1,726 FPCs covering over 237,000ha in the degraded sal forest zone of southwest West Bengal. These FPCs cover 55 per cent of the total forest area in the zone and include a total membership of 179,000 families. State Government Orders have provided administrative legitimacy to the benefit-sharing arrangements and specified norms of committee membership and registration (so far 863 FPCs are officially recognised). With support from the Ford Foundation, two regional NGOs, the Indian Institute of Biosocial Research and Development (IBRAD) and the Rama Krishna Mission (RKM), have worked with the Forest Department to conduct studies, develop staff training, and institute microplanning procedures.

In addition to further improving the relationship between forestry staff and local people, the FPC partnerships have proved extremely effective in increasing sal forest regeneration and economic returns to both the FPC participants and the government. The increased availability of non-timber forest products, which are harvested annually by FPC, members has provided a strong motivation for increased local protection of growing trees. While the degree of this protection varies by FPC, the amount of sal poles now becoming available for final harvest has increased substantially. Even after deducting the FPC's 25 per cent share, it is evident that the financial returns to the Forest Department represent a net increase over previously declining yields. Furthermore, increased canopy closure provides increased soil protection; however, extensive soil erosion and poor moisture conservation remains a major problem.

Observations Based on Sukhomajri

A State of poverty, induced by years of drought and changing weather patterns, has resulted in denudation and soil erosion in the Siwalik hills of Haryana. The experience of Sukhomajri, a 'model' approach to managing common property resources in the catchment area above Chandigarh, however, has shown how people's participation can be used to achieve forest preservation with the support of all villagers. Gupta observed that people require visible benefits to engender their participation and repeatedly commented that the bureaucracy must be tackled to obtain top-level support in addition to that of the grassroots' level. This, he noted, is more difficult to achieve. All parties involved must be aware of their rights and responsibilities related to forest conservation. The Joint Forest Management approach is for the economic benefit of the people.

-- J. R. Gupta, Hattiban

"Joint forest management is an evolving concept, still in it's early stages. At its core is the recognition that forest-dependent communities cannot be excluded from the care and control of the forests that surround them, regardless of the fact that legal ownership may rest with the government.... "[JFM] is an admission that old custodial protection systems have been generally unsuccessful in protecting the forest. It is an attempt to forge a partnership based on evolving joint management objectives in which communities share both responsibilities and proceeds.' As Poffenberger and Chhattrapati Singh state: 'joint forest management represents a process of decentralised empowerment, benefiting some of India's most disadvantaged groups.' Each State forest department and local forest protection committee is approaching the experiment in different ways. There are, however, a number of common elements which, together, form a loose pattern linking policy, training, field implementation, and research.

At the forest department level these elements include: State orders and regulations, State working groups, training programmes, forest protection committee registration procedures, management planning, monitoring and assisting committees, sharing of benefits, and research into ecological and economic issues. NGO groups are taking an active role in documentation, training, research, and community-level organisation and facilitation."

-- Jeffrey Y. Campbell,* Joint Forest Management in India: Regenerating and Managing Degraded Natural Forests in Partnership with Local Communities. *Ford Foundation, 1992.

With support from the Ford Foundation, State Working Groups have been formed in a number of States to bring together government forestry officials and NGOs that are active in training and research to develop a coordinated approach to JFM in India. In addition, bilateral and multilateral donors such as SIDA, the World Bank, GTZ, USAID, and CIDA have been providing support to the pioneering efforts of Indian foresters and social scientists. These received a strong impetus from the Government of India in the form of a GOI Resolution of June 1, 1990, strongly endorsing JFM on Reserve and Protected Forests despite lingering contradictions to earlier forestry legislation. It has been estimated that almost half of India's 75 million hectares of forest land could be managed through JFM (Campbell, Jansen, & Molnar, *Institutional and Environmental Considerations for Forest and Wasteland Development,* World Bank Background Paper, 1992). Approximately 550,000 hectares, or 1.5 per cent of the potential area, can currently be considered to be under officially sanctioned JFM -- a figure which signals both the challenge and the constraints.

Community Forestry in Nepal

"Community and Private Forestry is at present the most important aspect of forestry development in Nepal. It is supported, directly or indirectly, by the entire forest administration. Within this Programme those who control land use in reality, the local communities and farmers, are given real and legal powers to implement good and sustainable land use. In often inaccessible terrain there is no other way. People, not government administration, must take the responsibility for forest management".

-- I.S. Thapa,* The Community and Private Forestry Programme in Nepal, *Foreword, Kathmandu, Nepal; Community Forestry Development Division, Department of Forests, 1991.

Community forestry in Nepal was introduced in 1977/78 with radical legislation, permitting the transfer of management authority of government forests to local *panchayats*. Based on the pioneering efforts of Nepalese forest officers and local people in selected areas -- particularly the Sindhupalchok district supported by the Nepal-Australia Forestry Programme -- widespread programmes were launched over the breadth of Nepal with support from the World Bank, UNDP/FAO, bilateral donors (USAID, SATA/GTZ, ODA, and CIDA), and NGOs.

While these programmes initially concentrated on establishing nurseries and community plantations on government forest land, attention increasingly focussed on the management of existing community-used government forests (then called *Panchayat* Protected Forests), where legislation provided for the *panchayats* to retain 75 per cent of the forest product income. Experience showed that these existing forests provided the most cost-effective means for regenerating forests, if appropriate community management could be established. This conclusion was reinforced by an increasing body of social science research which demonstrated the widespread existence of indigenous systems of traditional forest management that continued to be developed by enterprising villages to protect their forest resources.

As a consequence of these realisations, Nepal took further steps of introducing legislation which provided for 100 per cent of the benefits from community forests, managed under an approved operational plan, to go to the community. Furthermore, the new legislation defined the community as the existing User Group rather than the *Panchayat* as whole. Thus, from a programme that was based on Government-*Panchayat* joint management, Nepal moved to a radically community-based programme with no revenue sharing.

Potentially, almost half of Nepal's existing forests (or 1.8 million hectares) is available for establishing community forests, with a similar amount available for community forest plantations. To date, approximately 100,000 hectares, or four per cent of the potential area, has been established as community forests -- a figure which causes concern to programme advocates, but which nevertheless demonstrates a measure of success.

While Nepal's radical approach to providing 100 per cent of the benefits continues to receive strong government support in the hills (Himalayan region), it's appropriateness in the plains *(terai)* --where large tracts of contiguous high-value forest remain -- is still under debate.

Lessons Learned from the Nepalese Context

(1) Handing over 100 per cent of all forest products to the user group in Nepalese community forestry - GREAT!

(2) Decreasing dependency on the Government by phasing out project financing for watchers

(3) Good research on indigenous forest systems in Nepal -- lacking in India -- may be due to less input from anthropologists

(4) Need for insurance for trees and forestry as exists in India

(5) Concept of User Group (not revenue group, village group, etc) and operational plan worth following

(6) Similarity of approaches between NGOs in both countries

(7) Low focus on gender issues in Nepal

-- *Apoorva Oza (Indian Participant)*

Community Forestry in the Hills and Terai *of Nepal*

A reasonably good and practical policy for community forestry has been established for the hills and mountains of Nepal. While the policy is still in the process of ongoing development, currently it is being successfully implemented in the field.

In the *terai,* however, the community forestry policy is not yet well defined despite attempts to follow the same policy throughout the country. Such a standardised policy is not feasible given the major differences between the situation in the *terai* and the hills.

As defined by current policies and practices, the main processes of community forestry are:

- to hand over accessible forests to the communities,
- to empower user groups,
- to implement development and utilisation works through approved operational plans, and
- to provide 100 per cent of the products and income to the user groups.

In the *terai,* this process does not work as well as in the hills, mainly because the forests of the *terai* are productive and market-oriented, villagers have settled around the forest areas fairly recently, and the foresters are reluctant to hand over these productive forests. Despite the failures in maintaining the *terai* forests as national forests, foresters prefer to manage these resources to meet national needs.

The experiences of Indian foresters suggest that some of the approaches developed there can be used in Nepal's *terai* forests with some adaptations. These could include the following components.

(1) Sharing the output of *terai* community forests between user groups and the Government on a 50:50 or 75:25 basis (in contrast to the hills where 100% goes to the users).

(2) Sharing the financial input provided by the Government between individuals and the group as a whole, e.g., if the labour cost is Rs 50, the market cost is only Rs 30, and the remaining Rs 20 could be divided so that 50 per cent goes to individual users and 50 per cent to the joint fund.

(3) Cash income could also be distributed to individual users, as in West Bengal.

(4) There must be sales' taxes, income taxes, and excise duties on the products, both finished and semi-finished.

(5) A certain percentage of the products could be kept for urban needs, as directed by the DFO, e.g., 25 per cent of harvested timber.

(6) *Terai* forestry should be supported by supplying small-scale industry, equivalent to cooperative societies, in such activities as buying tractors, building extraction roads, seasoning plants, etc.

(7) Local NGOs (e.g., clubs, small farmer credit groups, womens' organisations, etc) could be involved in extension and implementation work.

Community Management/ User Groups (Group A)

> "The Nepal group was very liberal while discussing the user group. A senior Nepalese forest officer said that even if the plan is not approved, he has been allowing the user's group to carry on with the management of the forest."
>
> **-- *J. R. Gupta, Hattiban***

It is evident from the experiences of India and Nepal that the concept and definition of "community" differs widely in the implementation of community forest management. The following list of some of the entities being supported in community/social forestry gives some idea of the diversity.

- Civil *Panchayats,* legally constituted constituents of the local government (differing in size and structure by States from a collection of villages to single village areas) (i.e., Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, U.P., and previously Nepal)
- *Van Panchayats,* legally constituted forest *panchayats* (i.e., the U.P. hills)
- Forest Protection Committees, usually informally constituted by administrative fiat -- again differing widely in size, selection, and authority (i.e., Orissa, Gujarat, West Bengal, H.P. etc)
- User Groups, assemblage of local forest users; in Nepal legally constituted, elsewhere more informally established often under the name of forest committees
- Clubs and Associations, such as the *Mahila Mandals* (Women's groups), Youth Groups, Lion's Clubs, etc (i.e., H.P., West Bengal, etc)
- Cooperatives, legally registered forest workers' cooperatives or forest product cooperatives (i.e., Gujarat, H.P., etc)
- Societies, registered under the Societies Act (i.e., Haryana Hill Resources' Management Societies)
- Family lineages and clans, with or without some form of legal land registration over the forest area (i.e., H.P. and Nepal)

The debate over the most appropriate form of community institution for forest management includes advocates for each of the institutions listed above. Some argue the necessity for using established legal entities (such as the *panchayat*) to safeguard community interest, some argue the necessity of de-politicising community forests by avoiding political bodies such as the *panchayat*, some argue for exclusive management by a subgroup of the community such as the women, others argue that the most important criterion is inclusiveness of all residents. The current weight of social science research suggests that, other factors being equal, groups composed of all actual forest users (as opposed to members of an administratively-defined area or subgroup) have the greatest chance of success. However, since all other factors are never equal, institutional diversity will, and probably should, continue.

During the Seminar, most participants in the panel were most familiar with the User Group approach initiated in Nepal. This, then, was the context for this panel's discussion. The overall debate on local institutions was not engaged in directly -- but the characteristics of successful institutions were identified.

The basis for **defining group membership** was seen as critical to the success of community forest management. Nepal used to define memberships on the basis of administrative wards -- however, this was seen to include non-users while excluding small hamlets of users from other wards. Now, Nepal attempts to allow local communities to define the user groups on the basis of settlements and by whether they are primary or secondary users. However, households are not explicitly identified in the Operation Plans. While many places in India continue to define membership on the basis of administrative boundaries, most of the new JFM approaches require the registration of individual households, sometimes to the level of both male and female household heads.

Participants recognised that this registration of individual households would become increasingly important, even in Nepal, as forest products became more commercialised and cash revenue was involved. In addition, they recognised the value of identifying different classes of users, e.g., the 'primary' and 'secondary' distinction made in Nepal.

The importance of explicitly identifying women as full members along with their husbands or other male household members was also stressed. Government forests are public property to which women have legal access equal to that of men. Providing membership on a household basis, without explicitly identifying the women as well, is providing a new form of tenure whereby women's independant rights are further eroded and their potential participation in forest management further marginalised. A proactive approach to identifying women specifically provides them with their constitutional rights as well as introducing a mechanism for promoting their voice in culturally-constrained settings.

Gender and Powerlessness

I was impressed by the all-too-brief discussion on **gender issues**, but noted that the over-arching issues are **power relationships** under which gender issues fall. The larger category of relationships include the powerless at large, e.g. the landless, the women, the poor, the lower castes, isolated ethnic groups, etc.

-- D. Messerschmidt, Hattiban

Intra-group benefit-sharing is an issue which, currently, has led to the practice of widely different policies. For both India and Nepal, most benefits to date have been in the form of in-kind subsistence products (fuelwood, small poles, fodder, leaf litter, minor forest foods, and medicinal plants). Generally, groups practise equitable distribution by households; although in some parts of India there are attempts to skew distribution to disadvantaged groups (such as the poor or the tribals). Such attempts have met with limited success, and participants agreed that community solutions which encompassed all member households tended to be most sustainable **if they were transparent to the whole community and explicitly agreed upon.**

Only India has some experience with commercialised community forest products where cash revenue is involved (e.g., *bhabbar* grass contracts, harvesting of sal or eucalyptus poles for sale, sal seeds, *tendu* leaves for *bidis*, etc). In India revenues, from both product sales and labour payment, can be both in the name of

individual members as well as in the name of the group as a whole. It was recognised that the introduction of cash vastly increases the potential for intra-group conflict and inequitable arrangements. Participants from Nepal recognised that they need to foresee the need for mechanisms to deal with cash revenue (some groups already use petty contract systems) and build on the Indian experience in this area. Suggestions included the establishment of group bank accounts, monthly open meetings during which expenditures and balances were reported, and an effective (outside?) monitoring or auditing procedure established.

The issue of **revenue-sharing with the Government or outside parties** was a constant theme throughout the workshop, given the differences in approach between Nepal's community forestry and India's JFM. In India, the arguments have tended to be whether to share revenues of major products (i.e., timber) with communities at all. In Nepal, the question posed by the seminar is whether the Government should share in some of the community forestry revenue at all. As almost all the participants were convinced of the right and necessity of communities sharing in the forest's revenue in order to meet community needs and to establish effective forest management, the primary discussion centered around whether the Government should retain **any** of the revenue (see boxes).

Relating to your starting point -- who really owns the forests? -- two cogent sets of arguments are available for and against revenue-sharing with the government. While NGOs, as representatives of the people tended to support community ownership, government foresters, as custodians of their nations' forests, mostly favoured revenue-sharing. However, both acknowledged the importance of both parties in improving community forestry management.

There was also a recognition that different policies on revenue-sharing can be called for in different circumstances. Scattered patches of inaccessible degraded forests being used for subsistence purposes, as is found in much of the hills of Nepal, may be most amenable to full community management and product ownership. Larger, more productive, and commercial forests, which produce important products for society at large, generate large cash revenues, and are difficult for village communities to protect and manage, are more suitable for joint management with revenue sharing. In this vein, the Chief of Community Forestry in Nepal suggested that Nepal's policy for the *terai* be modified to include government revenue from royalties and sales' tax. On the other side, some Indian participants called for a more liberal policy towards community revenue-sharing in the more productive forests of India.

Arguments FOR Revenue-sharing with the Government

- The Needs of Society as a Whole. Government forests are a national asset which have to serve people not living next to the forests and have to provide products needed by the wider society.
- Financial and Legal Equity. In both India and Nepal, community forest lands continue to belong to the Government even though management authority and rights to products have been transferred to communities. The Government, as landlord and national custodian, retains rights and continues to bear expenses in relationship to these resources which need to be sustained.
- Technical Expertise. While local communities have the intimate knowledge of their forests which is essential for effective management, trained government foresters can provide technical expertise and access to research, and this is difficult for most communities to manage on their own.
- Enforcement and Conflict Resolution. While local communities are the most effective institution for forest protection and local conflict resolution, they frequently need the legal back-up and stronger enforcement capabilities of the Government in dealing with inter-community conflicts and difficult repeat offenders. Intra-group factions and conflicts can also require outside intervention.
- Staff Motivation. Once the Government's revenue share is removed, the motivation for forestry staff to establish, hand over, advise, assist, and monitor community forests diminishes. The low percentages of currently established community forests in Nepal and India are evidence of this fact. For joint community forestry to work, the government staff's incentive to participate in the process cannot be eliminated without an ensuing substantial decrease in their motivation. Without revenue-sharing the Government will never hand over the high quality productive forests (i.e., the *terai* of Nepal and Doars of India; the forests of Madhya Pradesh).
- Effective Management. Traditional systems of management are decreasingly effective in the face of the changing economic and social conditions where market forces, new political structures, and new livelihood strategies are fragmenting previously sustained community institutions. Government support is needed to assist communities in restructuring, re-establishing, and protecting their local institutions.

-- The Editors

Arguments AGAINST Revenue-sharing

"The radical principle of handing over management responsibility to user groups a 100 per cent is something that everyone wants to compromise on; some in the name of revenue-sharing, others in the name of technical intervention. Management responsibility is handed over, STOP. Beyond that, TOUGH! No incentives, no revenues. LEAVE THESE PEOPLE ALONE!"

-- Anonymous, Hattiban

- Indigenous Rights. Governments have mostly assumed ownership of these forests through nationalisation from local communities, *zamindars, rajas,* etc. Communities, not the wider nation State or society, have prior rights to these forests.
- Effective Management. In many cases, local communities used to manage their community forests most effectively without government intervention through traditional management systems. Increased government intervention has been the cause of their deterioration, government withdrawal is the condition for their resurrection. Unless the community fully owns the forest, they will not be fully motivated to manage it.
- Rural Development. So far, governments have only designated poorly stocked, relatively unproductive, and degraded forests for community management. Revenue-sharing with the Government would only reduce the inadequate return local communities already receive from these forests. The community needs all of the benefits to have a reasonable chance at effective rural development.
- Bureaucracy. Despite the best intentions and guidelines, government intervention inevitably entangles communities in bureaucratic processes which undermine good management, speedy revenue-sharing, flexible management, and effective enforcement.
- Cultural Considerations. Governments frequently overlook the social and cultural considerations that local communities wish to honour -- whether they consist of ritual obligations, sacred sites and species, tribal hunting rituals, or the local power structure.

-- The Editors

Community Forestry as a Process

Harihar Acharya sees community forestry as a **process**, without end products, that should allow user groups to evolve unconstrained by the imposition of models. He pointed out that arduous efforts to gain the consensus of all users by forest extension staff may not be necessary if leader farmers can represent their communities and carry out their own extension. Although forestry initiatives must be integrated with other sectors, they can start out from single sector approaches and expand. Harihar recommends building on indigenous systems without necessarily formalising them -- which often breaks their strength.

-- Harihar Acharya, Hattiban

Ian Napier recommends what he terms 'process projects', which maintain a set of goals, but allow for flexibility in the mechanisms used to achieve those objectives. The most important resources are **time** -- he cautions against moving ahead too fast -- and **persons who themselves have changed their attitudes.** Money, he emphasised, is no panacea.

-- Ian Napier, Hattiban

Within the group input and cost-sharing appear to be characteristic of successful community forest management. Traditional indigenous systems rely on equitable sharing of protection costs through equal contribution of foodgrains to watchers or through rotational guarding. People invest in their forests. The wider the participation in cost-sharing, the more stake participants have in the outcome. While communities eagerly (usually too eagerly) accept outside inputs, these frequently endanger financial self-reliance. However, without such inputs the number of communities willing to bear the cost of forest management and protection has not proven to be very high.

Community cost-sharing with the Government or project promoters has generally been low, confined mostly to some role in protection. Labour charges tend to be paid from outside as a means of employment generation and as an incentive for forest protection. This was challenged by some participants: "Communities don't need money" said Nalini Subba of CARE/Nepal, "rather forest activities should be linked to other development activities". Participants noted that, although most programmes tried to plan in gradual phase-out of project support, the financial and managerial burden was currently too high to be sustained without greater self-reliance.

How can outside assistance be channelled to promote widespread community forestry without undermining the very self-reliance and sustainability they are seeking? This fundamental dilemma was not solved; however, the participants did identify some successful strategies. These included explicit yearly agreements on cost-sharing arrangements and a plan to phase-out support as forestry income increases. Also, financial resources could be devoted more to awareness building to facilitate local community organisation through NGOs.

Some participants were also attracted to the model of Gujarat, in which community forests are divided between self-financed and joint-financed arrangements. If a community chooses the self-financed model, they could be eligible for 100 per cent of the benefits. If the community chooses joint-financing, revenue is also shared with the outside financing agency. The **amount of investment becomes the basis for calculating returns to different investing parties** along the lines of a share-holding corporation.

The role of donors as cost-sharers also came in for limited scrutiny. Donor-driven agendas were seen as all too frequently driving national priorities and dividing up the countries into competing systems and approaches. While some advantages were identified in different States and regions experimenting with different approaches, the difficulties in coordination and reporting were also exasperating. It was felt that donors far too often looked for the cream to scoop off the top and left the government holding the bag with the more difficult and less glamorous areas and programmes. Better modalities are needed to ensure the continued exploration of innovative pilot programmes within more consistent overall frameworks in which the State and nation remained in the driver's seat -- just as communities needed to remain in the driver's seat in relationship to their governments.

Donors

An important issue arising from the seminar is the future role of donors in an environment where all responsibility is phased out to user groups. To use the jargon of the seminar, should we define donors as something that works, something that does not work, or something that should be tried?

-- Anonymous, Hattiban

There was recognition that **inter-group relationships are increasingly important and that conflicts between groups** are likely to increase as communities are awarded management authority over individual forest areas and the benefits (including revenues) from these forests increase. The distribution of forests are not equitable between village communities and user groups. Some groups will have large and productive forests and others small or unproductive forests. This inequity, combined with the differing degrees of investment each group makes in protecting and managing its forests, has already generated conflicts over access and benefits between communities with and without adequate forest areas of their own.

At the same time, community forestry groups have much to gain from potential cooperation. It was noted that study tours among groups are perhaps the most valuable form of learning, engendering greater group confidence and providing new management ideas. It was suggested that an inter-group federation could provide groups with invaluable means for increasing their bargaining power with the market and the Government. Such a federation could also provide a forum for conflict resolution and problem solving.

User Group Federations

As community-based groups are formed to manage their local natural resources, certain inter-group issues may arise. Linkages and coordination among groups is desirable to:

(1) facilitate conflict resolution;

(2) enable groups to share capital (e.g., tractors, machinery) or take advantages of the economies of scale enabled through collective activities (e.g., buyer's cooperatives); and

(3) ensure that social and environmental issues, occurring on scales larger than the user group can handle, are addressed. (e.g., ensuring watershed protection, timber supplies for generating foreign exchange)

-- Lini Wollenberg, Hattiban

In order **to cope with increasing revenues**, community forestry groups will need to develop increased **internal skills** in silviculture, management, accounting, and marketing. Many community forestry groups in India and Nepal are already attempting to market

their products in the commercial and industrial sector. Attempts to capture value-added benefits from in-house processing of such products as sal leaves, essential oils, fibre ropes, bark paper, broom-making, industrial oils, etc are beginning to appear and will be increasingly important. Internal skills could be developed by communities appointing a villager to serve as their 'village forester', on either an honorary or paid basis. This forester could receive training from forest departments and NGOs to enhance his/her skills in forest management, product processing, and marketing.

Communities will also need to develop **mechanisms for making more effective use of outside skills in the government and private sector.** More liberal and competitive government policies in forest product harvesting, transit, and marketing, combined with greater community knowledge, should allow communities to make more effective use of the much maligned, but frequently essential, private sector for marketing. Groups with sufficient revenue could begin to hire foresters as consultants to increase their productivity and advise them on forest management. Both government forest departments and NGOs will have to play a critical role in expanding their knowledge, training, and extension services in the field, e.g., management, accounting, and forest product processing and marketing. Job descriptions for forest rangers need to be rewritten to encompass these new tasks.

While subsistence products will play a big role in community forestry for some time to come, the ability to capture the benefits of commercial marketing will increasingly be the gauge for community forestry sustainability. This prognostication calls for reassessments of current legal constraints on the planting of cash inter-crops in forest areas -- or are only those species which are naturally regenerated to be allowed? It also calls for the development of credit and insurance schemes that treat community forests as the investments they are. Economic cost/benefit analyses of alternative forest investment options are desperately needed to guide communities in making wise investment choices.

To effectively promote such self-sustaining community forests, **current budgeting procedures** need rethinking. While promising new approaches are being slowly worked out through the mechanism of community forest management plans (also called microplans, operational plans, etc), both countries continue to be dominated by top-down budgeting procedures which severely constrain both outside inputs and the communities' use of their own inputs. Hectarage targets, per hectarage budget limits, planting targets, and seedling production targets all serve to pre-ordain budgets and community discretion. Within the budgets available, more flexibility and devolution of decision-making to communities are needed to facilitate adaptive and productive management, tailored to individual community forest needs and opportunities. This, in turn, will require the development of a better menu of technical options from which communities can choose (see later technical section).

The Private Sector

The relationship between the private sector and local communities is often seen as one in which private, commercial interests employ or "exploit" communities' labour and natural resources. However, as communities gain control over resources and build community savings' funds, there may come a day when communities employ the private sector for labour and technical consultation services.

-- Lini Wollenberg, Hattiban

Hypothesis No. 8

If natural forest becomes locked up, some alternative source(s) must be made available to local forest users. Protection of one forest usually leads to over-exploitation of neighbouring forest(s) and grazing land(s). (R.J. Fisher 1991, and field observation).

Hypothesis No. 11

Successful forest management is enhanced if there is good communication linkage between the committee and the community of users, about rules and regulations (formal and customary), meeting times, etc.

Hypothesis No. 13

Forest user groups are more highly motivated to manage the resource to the degree that they feel accountable for or that if they feel "ownership" over - i.e., that it is their own (*'hamro ban ho'*).

***From: Messerchmidt et al* Forest User Groups in Nepal Perspectives on What Works and Why, 1992.**

Institutional and Support Services (Group B)

As the preceding discussion has already indicated, community forestry user groups do not, and can not, operate in a vacuum. As JFM implies, the Government in the form of the forest department is a necessary, if not too often, dominant player in community forestry. In turn, forest departments do not operate in a vacuum. Associated with the government are a number of other institutions concerned with research, government forester training, allied development line agencies, and international donors -- as well as the larger political and administrative context in which forest departments must operate. However, the line of connection between the Government and the forest community generally narrows down to the ranger and his forest guards. So far, **this ranger-community relationship is the most important focal point for community forest support.**

However, few programmes and rangers have been able to adequately provide the support services really needed by community forestry groups. This is one place that **NGOs have increasingly stepped in to provide the additional services communities need** to start effectively managing their forest resources.

The participants in this panel identified the most important and effective services that rangers and NGOs provide as the following:

- immediate visible benefits,
- response to specific non-forestry needs,
- ideas and information,
- confidence and moral support,
- continued technical and managerial support,
- awareness of forest management rights and responsibilities,
- non-formal education as an entry point for forestry activities,
- farmer-to-farmer extension,
- preparation of forest operation plans,
- linkages to the outside world,
- advocacy to other line agencies and research centres,
- financial support, and
- material inputs (seedlings, fence

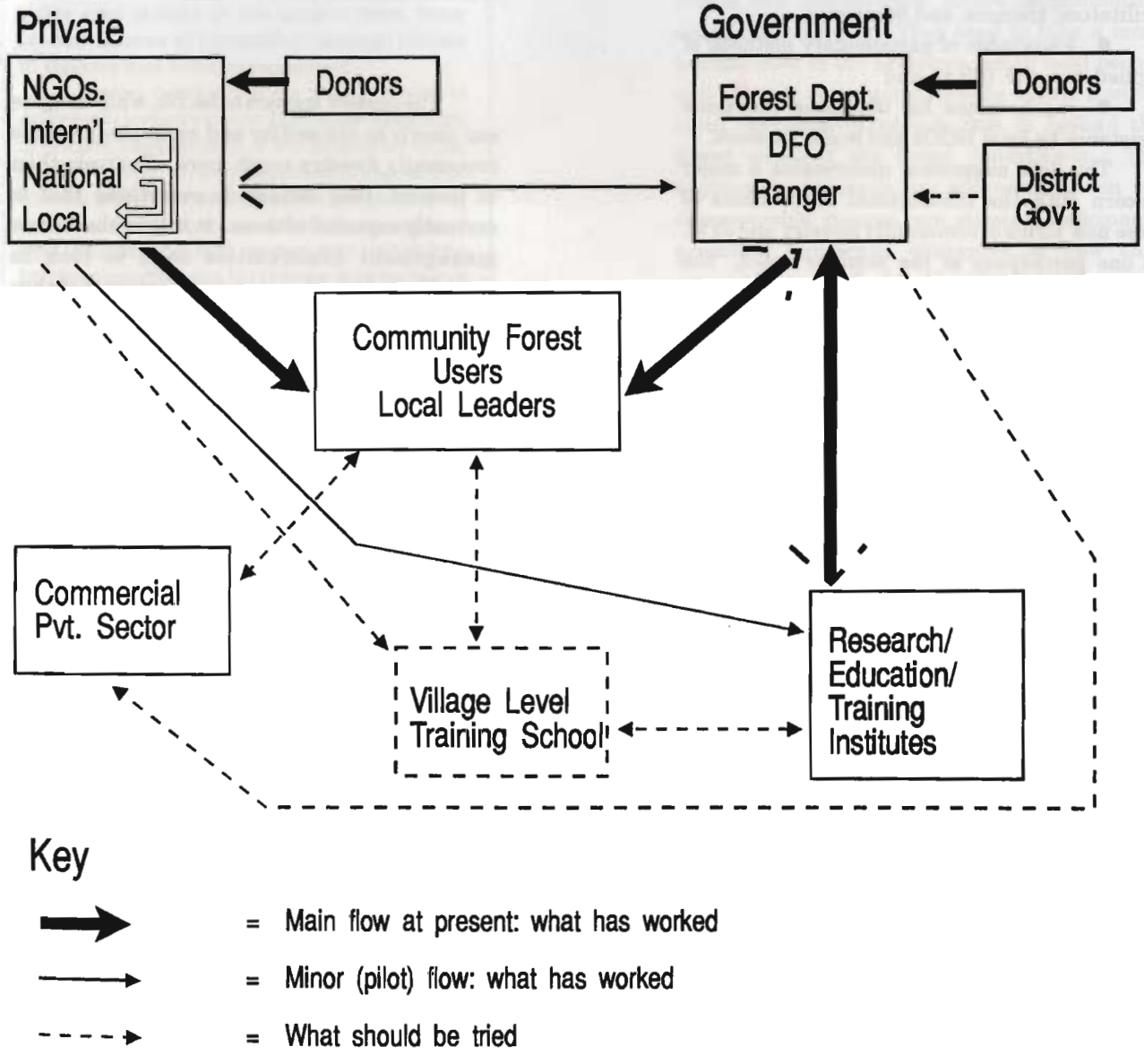
material, etc).

Many of these proven services are not currently available to communities. No programme includes all of them in the job descriptions of a ranger. Few programmes provide adequate training to rangers in carrying out these duties. NGOs have only begun to take on some of these roles in selected areas but, where they have, dramatic improvements can be found.

Despite this already heavy agenda of services, participants identified the following additional services that are now needed:

- access to research groups/communities,
- marketing help in supply inputs to private industry,
- training school for village organisations established by NGOs, involving rangers as facilitators, and
- widespread awareness of technical services and forest rights.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES



Services currently provided by NGOs and educational institutions to rangers and DFOs, that have proved effective in practice, include the following:

- training in interactive development of operational plans with local communities;
- training in communication, agriculture, and livestock;
- facilitating extension, local awareness, and the development of operational plans;
- study tours for rangers; and
- in-service technical training.

While there is ample room for strengthening and widening the scope of these services, participants also felt that a ranger's role could be strengthened further by trying the following:

- more effective re-orientation and motivational (moral) training for new roles as facilitators, trainers, and managers;
- knowledge of participatory methods of applied research (PRA); and
- mechanisms for obtaining extension assistance by local NGOs and leader farmers.

This last suggestion understates a major concern with the institutional implications of these new forms of community forestry and JFM. As one participant at the seminar noted, "the Rangers are being asked to perform the impossible".

The Foresters' Syndrome

Katz Watanabe (a forester with a donor-assisted project) described the 'Forester's Syndrome' --a common malady of foresters which results in them valuing trees over people and believing that the best trees are the tallest. Bureaucrats are the biggest enemy, creating divisions amongst sectors, donors, and other actors. Too many donors and too much coordination from the centre has led to inadequate levels of field support.

-- Katsura Watanabe, Hattiban

The herculean task being asked of rangers and the practical and cultural obstacles to effective re-orientation training of the magnitude suggested pose important questions to advocates of increased JFM and community forestry co-management. Can rangers handle this amount of work? Can rangers function in the multi-faceted roles that have been identified? Can the Government afford to hire enough rangers to cover the hundreds of thousands of communities such an approach implies?

Forestry Staff Tenure

It has been recognised that the whole programme work functions when NGOs, forest department officials, and the village community work in close cooperation. There is, therefore, a need to ensure tenure stability for staff because forestry officials are prone to frequent transfers, thereby disrupting the progress.

-- S.K. Dhar, Hattiban

The answer appears to be: No, while rangers can clearly be trained for and motivated towards community forestry much more effectively than at present, they cannot do everything that is currently expected of them. It is here that forest management communities need to look to themselves and other sources of support if they are to succeed on a wider scale than pilot projects.

Institutional Empowerment: Seva Mandir

In the *Seva Mandir* project area in Rajasthan, it was discovered that mainstream development processes are draining the rural area of its resources. What is needed is a matrix of institutions to serve as countervailing sources of empowerment, able to match the mainstream forces in strength. *Seva Mandir* began with literacy, but residents wanted development. Soon thereafter, villagers were co-opted and could not create people-based alternatives. In order to develop community-based groups with strength, an NGO needs accountability, a transfer of knowledge, a culture of internal consultation, and autonomy from donors. *Seva's* work in forestry has progressed from private tree growing to group farm forestry, to community forestry, and finally to joint forest management.

-- Ajay Mehta, Hattiban

Integrated Linkages: CARE/Nepal

CARE's approach is based on **food security**; trees are of interest to project staff only through their role in the agricultural system, and are brought into CARE's activities in an integrated manner with agriculture and soil conservation measures. In Nalini's experience with HMG/CARE Begnas *Tal*/Rupa *Tal* Integrated Watershed Management Project, she observed that extension **must be targeted at small subgroups of women, students, and occupational castes** and should be carried out through informal methods to make it effective. The **introduction of cash crops, such as cardamon and coffee, into the forests** has encouraged more farmers to participate. Project staff interact with villagers on a daily basis and have resisted pressures to prepare forest operational plans due to a certain wariness of the possible negative effects. Training and excursions of staff and farmers, to both failed and successful projects inside and outside of the project area, have created a sense of competition amongst farmers to improve their forest management.

Factors constraining the project's work in community forestry include: 1) a target orientation, 2) unclear interpretation of the policies by DFOs, and 3) too much money. Nalini recommends that forestry initiatives be linked to other project activities, that indigenous systems be recognised and assisted, and that rangers and technicians be given priority status to upgrade their technical knowledge and boost their confidence. Farmer-to-farmer extension systems can be used to supplement the inadequate number of extension workers engaged in forestry and agriculture.

-- Nalini Subba, Hattiban

Literacy & Forestry: Action Aid Nepal

Action Aid Nepal (AAN), an international NGO implementing an integrated project in Sindhupalchok district, Nepal, works through Community Development Committees to establish user groups for community forestry development. Motivated through AAN-sponsored literacy classes, the six to seven forest user groups already organised have equal representation of males and females. Ten private nurseries have been established since 1988 to provide seedlings to these groups; all other inputs, including forest watchers, are provided by the users. AAN has forged strong links with the DFO, NACFP, and other NGOs and projects to assist them in meeting the training and technical needs of the user groups.

-- Babu Ram Pathak, Hattiban

Annapurna Conservation Area Project

Chandra Gurung's experience in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) in Nepal, run by the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, has shown that there is no single prescription, and that an integrated approach is necessary. ACAP has supported the development of Forest Management Committees to promote community forestry and agroforestry. These efforts are supplemented by the work of mothers' groups, teachers, and tourist education campaigns. Alternative technologies to reduce fuelwood consumption, such as backburner water heaters, solar water heaters, and small micro-hydro plants, have formed a focus of ACAP's programme.

-- Chandra Gurung, Hattiban

NGOs are increasingly identified as one of the major sources of such additional support to forest management communities. A number of NGOs are increasingly active in promoting community forestry. They tend to take a more holistic view of the problems facing local people and promote community forestry within a wider rural development agenda that is beyond the direct scope of the forest department. The arguments for such an approach, given its demonstrable success, are strong. Participants provided numerous examples of how this approach has worked in Nepal and India, albeit on relatively small scales.

Direct partnership of larger international, national, and State level NGOs with the government, in supporting community forestry, has also been pioneered in places such as West Bengal and Gujarat. Apart from direct project activities, these NGOs have demonstrated important abilities to work as intermediary organisations to build up local NGOs. Given the uneven distribution and skills of local NGOs, this sector will require concerted long-term training and financial inputs from national and international NGOs as well as the government if they are to provide competent coverage anywhere near the level needed.

NGO support appears to have the greatest potential for widespread impact when it is targetted to provide technical and financial training and research support. Experiences with the use of untrained local NGOs as a substitute for the forest department, in developing plantations and forest management schemes, have generally met with much less success. Based on experiences to date, the following specific roles

for NGOs show the greatest promise.

- Training forest department staff and community forest leaders.
- Conducting community-level publicity and extension services.
- Developing operational/microplanning tools and serving as facilitator between the community and forest department.
- Assisting communities in developing participatory monitoring methodologies.
- Selected multi-disciplinary studies, particularly in social science areas neglected by forest departments.
- Establishing marketing information networks.
- Forming women's groups and farm forestry associations.
- Providing technical support for small-scale, non-timber forest product processing and energy alternatives.
- Providing training to NGOs in accounting, forestry, and management.

Expanding the role of private industries will also be critical in relieving the burden on rangers and developing a self-sustaining community forestry programme. This requires equipping both private industries and local communities with better access to technical and market information, relaxing constraining rules and regulations, strengthening the bargaining power of communities, and promoting fair competition. As pioneered by the Western India Match Company (WIMCO), through their contractual arrangements with farmers willing to grow poplar seedlings for match production, a large variety of arrangements between wood product industries and local communities is possible. These arrangements ensure markets for producers, increase product quality and productivity, and ensure supplies to industries. If the model of WIMCO and the private agro-industries proves more widely applicable, the private sector will follow up its purchasing arrangements with extension services.

The NGO Culture

The organisational culture of the NGO must be enhanced/maintained to ensure that NGO staff are given optimum professional incentives. Staff naturally have their own self-interest and financial matters at stake. These interests can be addressed by creating a working environment that is stable, fosters self-esteem, encourages consultation, and maintains a pluralistic membership to avoid any "consensus of self-interest". These conditions should help encourage commitment and minimise corruption.

-- Lini Wollenberg, Hattiban

Private Forestry

Ravi Pradhan (a private forest industrialist) posed a basic question: **is community forestry a good thing?** Or, is what is needed a more basic **systems'** change to encourage **private forestry and private enterprise?** How can agroforestry be promoted, on small plots of small farmers? Agroforestry can be more profitable than farming, yet there are no credit schemes to promote this. **Law-makers should maintain an openness in drafting rules related to the harvesting and use of privately-owned trees.**

-- Ravi Pradhan, Hattiban

Coordination between the government, donors, and NGOs also needs strengthening at the headquarters and district levels. Participants suggested establishing working groups at each of these levels to coordinate planning and implementation and to avoid some of the duplication and misunderstandings which currently arise.

During discussion, seminar participants noted that, perhaps, the most important task facing the institutional support agencies was to turn one-way arrows into two-way ones. "Community users give us perspective", noted N.S. Jodha. "We can learn as much as we can teach", commented Ajay Mehta. Until the teachers realise they must simultaneously be students learning from each other, inappropriate technologies, management, and supporting arrangements will continue. Listening may be the most important skill taught to both government foresters and NGO workers whose job it is to support community forestry management.

Hypothesis No. 6

The greater the external support the greater the dependency on that source and the less sufficient a community becomes.

Messerschmidt et al.
Forest User Groups in Nepal: Perspectives on What Works and Why. 1992

Technology and Forest Management (Group C)

The Need for Multi-tier Technologies

Forest plantations generally provide a uni-tier tree crop. In contrast, irrespective of climatic conditions, the natural forests are multi-tiered with canopies differentiated into grass, shrubs, herbs, and ground vegetation. When the social forestry programme was started in India, the bias for trees continued. Even short rotation silviculture meant a fairly long gestation period for the beneficiaries, and an early and regular flow of benefits to the beneficiaries that could act as incentives to involve them in protection and management hardly took place.

A uni-tier plantation vis-a-vis a multi-tier one has other drawbacks, namely, the former does not fully mitigate the reasons for degradation and does not introduce a technology that would improve site productivity. To remove the drawbacks it is necessary to: (a) grow or restore vegetation (which is also cheaper than structures); (b) establish all vegetation on contours; and (c) differentiate the vegetation into trees, shrubs, legumes, and grasses in separate tiers that will be multipurpose, satisfy local ecological practices, and provide a character akin to a natural forest.

-- Prabhir Guhathakurta, "Switch-over from Uni-tier to Multi-tier Plantations". Paper delivered at Hattiban.

Social forestry's overwhelming concern with supplying fuelwood, together with deeply ingrained forestry training, led to the use of only slightly modified traditional plantation and forest management models. Budgetary constraints, the need to show quick results, and the desire to maximise fuelwood production on relatively short rotations frequently led to monocultures of easily established species such as eucalyptus in the plains and pine in the mountains. Partly in response to NGO criticism, these monocultures were gradually reduced in favour of multipurpose tree species more responsive to perceived community needs -- although farmers continued to plant these species in response to perceived high-market returns. Technology concerns in community forestry focussed on the selection of the right tree species.

However, even the multipurpose species currently used, and the silvicultural models for natural forest management, most often advocated and continued to emphasise uni-tier tree species planted at close intervals to maximise tree product production. Although attempts were made to reduce harvesting rotations from the traditional 40 to 120 year cycles to between seven to 20 years where possible, many years of no returns are interspersed between the bounties of a cutting year. In the meantime, canopies of growing forests close and the grass and other non-timber forest products which sustain communities with annual benefits tend to decrease radically. From traditional forestry perspectives, the mean annual growth increments are being maximised; from the community's perspective the mean annual returns are being minimised. Their motivation to protect the forest is frequently low and the amount of trees ready for harvest at the end of the rotation far less than anticipated.

Concurrently, heightened scientific and public concerns with environmental impacts also lead to a questioning of current community forest management technologies. Exclusive reliance on tree production for fuelwood, poles, and fodder leaves in community forests, especially in the fragile Himalayas and also in the sloping areas of much of India, has blinded practitioners to the often heavily eroding ground underneath. A combination of people and livestock trying to collect whatever leaves and grass they can while the trees grow, and the close spacing often used, results in the loss of ground cover which is the primary cause of surface erosion and soil loss. Trees are deprived of the moisture which could have hastened their growth and the poor people are deprived of the non-timber forest products upon which they depend for up to 20 to 40 per cent of their income (N.S. Jodha, *Common Property Resources: A Missing Dimension of Development Strategy*. World Bank Discussion Paper No. 169, 1992). The biodiversity of species is reduced.

Fortunately, inspirational examples of new directions are emerging in West Bengal (see boxes) and other areas of JFM in India. It is being increasingly recognised that **technology is the social, economic, and environmental heart of community forestry; that new technologies which build on traditional forest use patterns are as necessary – and easier to introduce -- as appropriate community institutions.**

Short Rotation Sal Coppice for Community Forestry

Research on the technology for the management of short rotation coppice **sal** had been carried out and was adopted successfully. If managed with the close involvement of user communities, the coppice system holds prospects of being a very cheap and widely replicable technology that could revegetate much of India's 18 million hectares of degraded forest lands, although with **teak** more expensive artificial regeneration can be resorted to in case of the failure of the coppice system or want of denovo (natural seeding) regeneration. If right management practices are pursued, there is little chance of declining sustainability with **sal**.

-- P. Guhathakurta, "Is Management of Coppice Sal (Shorea robusta) Forests on Short Rotations Sustainable?" Paper presented at Hattiban.

Technology Alternatives for the West Bengal Forestry Project

The incorporation of social, economic, environmental, and productivity concerns into the specification of available technical treatments has resulted in some significant changes in the treatment models proposed for the project over those used during the past decade. Previous plantation models were designed to maximise timber and fuelwood production. Planting densities of 2,500 to 15,000 or more seedlings (including dense sowing) per hectare were used to increase production and to ensure some survival after inevitable human and cattle damage. Even with 50 per cent survival, such densities ensured that crown cover eliminated most grass growth within five years, and the competition between closely spaced trees has frequently retarded growth in both private and public plantations. The species selected by the Forest Department and individual farmers, primarily eucalyptus and acacia, provided no by-products except leaves. No inputs were provided to increase the production of any other annually harvestable NTFPs. As documented by the IBRAD studies and field observation, such plantations not only fail to arrest erosion effectively, but they fail to provide local people with the flow of annual benefits which encourages better protection and management.

The treatment models proposed for selection (and suitable modification), by the FPCs and farm households in the project, are designed to redress these problems by the application of the following basic changes.

- Recommended **spacing** between planted seedlings has been substantially increased (usually to 4m x 1.5m) to allow for perennial vegetative production between rows and increased plant productivity.
- The **variety of species** to be made available for local selection has been markedly increased, with greater reliance placed on indigenous multipurpose coppicing and pollarding species which increase NWFP production and reduce reinvestment costs.
- Provisions for **intercropping** of legumes, fodder grasses and shrubs, edible crops, and other income-producing perennial understory plants, by participating FPC members and individual farm households, have been made for most treatments.
- Recommended management prescriptions have been changed to favour the development of **different age FPC forest blocks** in order to promote the continuous availability of a variety of NTFPs, including those which require young plantations (e.g., grasses and legumes) and those which are produced in more mature forests (e.g., seeds and fruit).

Each of these technology changes has been checked with existing and potential future FPC members (i.e., in North Bengal). A surprising unanimity of opinion supporting these changes was found not only among local villagers but also among local range officers and forest guards who deal most closely with the local people.

The need for **intercropping treatments** and **multiple-objective forest management** providing a flow of NTFPs is greatest on forest or other public lands that are used or claimed by both the government and the local people. It is in these areas of overlapping and ambiguous tenure, or **commonly used resources**, that joint management provides the best-known method for increasing the chances of forest (including plantation) survival. Equitable benefit-sharing arrangements, which provide sustained motivation for all parties involved to protect the forest, are partly a function of the technologies selected and partly a result of policy decisions. Where tenure and use is less ambiguous and overlapping, such as on the large tracts of interior forest areas and on private lands, the social need for multi-tier forests and significant benefit sharing is less imperative. However, there may still be compelling environmental and technical reasons for encouraging this kind of treatment and the challenge to the project will be to extend such treatments into production forests managed exclusively by either the Forest Department or individual farm households.

-- J. Gabriel Campbell, "West Bengal Forestry Development Project Appraisal Report", Annex, World Bank, 1991.

Participants on the panel on technology and forest management focussed on the technology development process which can work and the changes needed to support such environmentally sound community-oriented forestry. This was developed into a matrix organised around the key issues and objectives (see matrix).

TECHNOLOGY AND FOREST MANAGEMENT MATRIX

	ISSUES	WHAT WORKS/ CAN WORK	CHANGES NEEDED
1.	Technology and management depends on people's needs and expectations.		
a.	assessment of indigenous technologies and management systems	PRA/PRA techniques, ground observations, use of secondary data, historical data	training for forest officers, field staff in methodology
b.	screening of new technologies • individual species level • multiple species mixture • silvicultural practices • area management	literature review, demonstration, analysis of packages	user orientation which is location specific, flexible, promotes diversity, and offers both early and regular benefits
2.	Rapid Research and Experimentation		development of methodology, identification of appropriate persons, field networking
3.	Incorporating economic aspects	PRA/PRA techniques, extrapolation, coefficients	studies of yield and mensurational data, cost-benefit analysis, market analyses; use of valuation technique, including environmental values
4.	Training/Education (of Forest Dept., Communities, NGOs)	workshops, cross visits, field demonstrations	upgrade curriculum, offer follow-up training, encourage integration between departments
5.	Processing and marketing of forest resources	appropriate technologies, market linkages, low levels of capital inputs based on sustainable resources	encourage marketing of non-timber products, training in local value-added processing, bank credit and infrastructural support services
6.	Forestation/Natural Forest Management	regeneration	promotion of high-value, market-oriented products grown in both vertical and horizontal strata

Since technology and management depend upon peoples' needs and expectations, a variety of methods are needed to ensure that **indigenous techniques and forest management practices are adequately assessed**. This will require developing an appropriate package of methods using new techniques of rural appraisal, together with traditional ground observation and the analysis of secondary data. A long-term training effort will be required to transfer these skills to the staff and officers who need to implement them in the field.

New technologies need to be screened at a variety of levels. In contrast to traditionally used criteria, these technologies need to be user-oriented and locale-specific. These technologies must provide diverse and flexible options with early and regular benefits. Suggested examples of such technologies for the eastern Himalayas are provided by P. Guhathakurta in the attached graphs.

The **gestation period for obtaining research results need be shortened** by developing an appropriate methodology and identifying specific personnel to carry it out. **A far greater emphasis is needed to incorporate economic considerations into technology research and evaluation.** Currently, communities, rangers, and farmers do not have adequate information, particularly economic information upon which to base wise management decisions. Mensurational studies, community forest yield data, market studies, and cost-benefit analyses are urgently needed and sadly lacking. Valuing environmental costs and benefits within the analyses -- a field which is just developing --is especially critical to sound technology choices.

Given the greater resources and time that traditional research studies consume, and the urgent need for immediate decision-making at the ground level, **participatory (or rapid) rural appraisal (PRA/RRA) techniques are becoming increasingly important as a tool for community forestry.** As recently developed and refined, this approach to rapid, participatory data collection and analysis makes use of a variety of interactive and graphic tools diagnosing problems and identifying solutions. In PRA/RRA the medium is part of the message: in the process of interactively identifying and analysing forest management issues, the group undergoes a self-learning experience which itself can engender better community management.

To widely introduce the new technologies needed, improved **training and education for forest department personnel, NGOs, local communities, and donors** will be required. So far, workshops, field demonstrations, and exchange visits have proved most useful. These need to be supplemented by upgrading curriculum, continued in-service training and follow-up activities, more feedback (two way arrows again), and integration among departments.

Increase Status of Training

There is a consensus that reorientation and training are perhaps the most essential elements in implementing the attitudinal and institutional changes necessary to support JFM over the long-term. Unfortunately, training is not accorded a high priority in the government bureaucracy, so any structural changes in status and content will need to be supported by policy revisions.

-- Betsy McGean, ed., "NGO Support Groups in Joint Forest Management: Emerging Lessons". Ford Foundation Sustainable Forest Management, Working Paper Series No. 13, New Delhi. 1991.

Technology has an important role to play in increasing the **benefits from processing and marketing of forest resources**. The appropriate technology for this task has easily established market links, low capital inputs, and increased local value-added benefits. Many of these technologies will be based on non-timber forest products. However, high quality ecological research will be required to make sure that it is based on sustainable resources.

Similarly, the plantation and natural forest management regimes to be established need to reflect the market-oriented product requirements of the community. Silviculture needs to examine the specific regeneration needs of the community forest's most important products, which, in many cases, is not the timber production for which most management systems have been developed. The multiple, vertical, and horizontal strata of multi-tier forests require new mensuration techniques and new harvesting and regeneration technologies.

MULTI-TIER MODELS

Fig. 1: Lower Mountains: (a) Eastern Himalayas/Hills

Spatial distribution %

- Trees (80)
- Shrubs (10)
- Grasses & Legumes (90)

Plantation Elements

Trees (top)	Shrubs lower	Legumes lower	Grasses
Option 1: Short rotation			
Acrocarpus fraxinifolius Albizia procera Ailanthus excelsa	Murraya koeniggi Hibiscus sabdarffa	Leucaena leucocephala Crotolaria juncea Stylosanthes scabra/hamata	Penisettum pedicellatum Cynadon dactylon Vetiveria zizanioides
Option 2: Long rotation			
Shorea robusta Schima wallichii Michelia champaca Terminalia tomentosa	Tabernaemontana coronaria Coffea bengalensis	Albizia amara Cassia occidentalis Stylosanthes scabra/hamata	Chrysopogon montanus Cenchrus ciliaris Vetiveria zizanioides

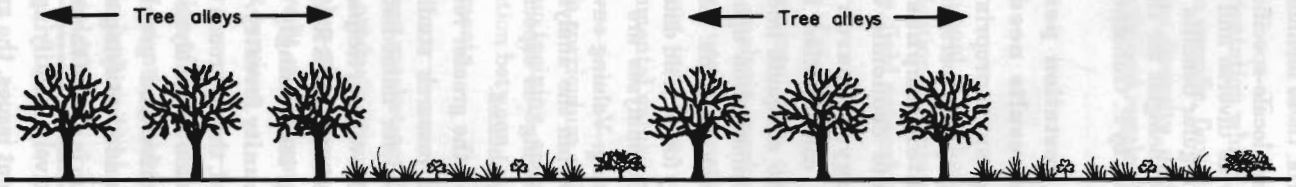
- Trees
- Shrubs as hedgerow
- Legumes
- Grasses

(b) Western Himalayas – Alternative I

- Trees (40)
- Shrubs (5)
- Grasses & Legumes (65)

Acacia catechu Albizia lebbek Grewia oppositifolia Celtis australis	Vitex negundo Dodonia viscosa	Indigofera spp Desmodium gyroides	Setaria anceps Penisetum (Napier) Vetiveria zizanioides

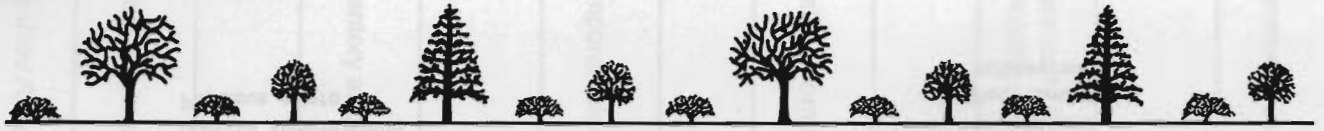
Alternative 2



- Trees (50)
- Shrubs (5)
- Grasses & Legumes (45)

Bauhinia purpurea Dalbergia sissoo	Carissa spinarum Capparis spinosa	Cassia occidentilis Sesbania bispinosa	Chloris guayana Eragrostis curvula Vetiveria zizanioides

Fig. 2: Middle Mountains: (a) Eastern Himalayas/Hills – Alternative I



Spatial distribution %

- Trees tall (25)
- Trees medium (25)
- Shrubs (50)

Plantation Elements

Trees (top)	Trees (middle)	Shrubs (lower)	Legumes (lower)	Grasses including bamboo
Symingtonia populnea	Eurya japonica	Berberis lycium		Penisettum pedicellatum
Betula cylindrostachys	Symplocos craetigioides	Rosa macrophylla		Cynadon dactylon
Cupressus		Daphne cannabina		
Cashmeriana				
Pinus kesiya				

Alternative 2

- Trees tall (25)
- Trees medium (25)
- Grasses tall (50)

Betula cylindrostachys	Ficus (the fig group)	Buddleia paniculata	Thysanolaena agrostis
Alnus nepalensis	Sauraria nepalensis	Quercus serrata	Arundo donax
Populus gamblei			

(b) Western Himalayas

- Trees (40)
- Shrubs (20)
- Grasses & Legumes (40)

Populus ciliata	Quercus incana	Trifolium	Festuca spp
Ulmus wallichiana	Rhus parviflora	Subterraneum/	Phalaris tuberosa
Robinia pseudoacacia		pratense	Lolium parenne

- Trees (broadleaved)
- Trees (conifer)
- Trees (medium broadleaved)
- Shrubs as hedgerow
- Legumes
- Grasses (tall)
- Grasses

Fig. 3: Upper Mountains: (a) Eastern Himalayas

Spatial distribution %

Trees (30)

Bamboo (70)

Plantation Elements

Trees (top)

Betula utilis
Populus ciliata
Abies/Pinus/Tsuga

Grasses including bamboo

Arundinaria maling/ falcata

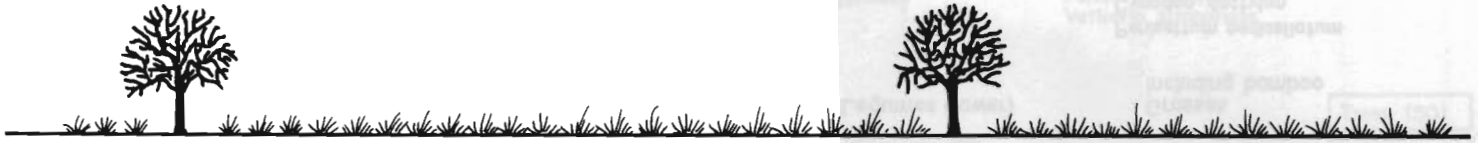
Trees (broadleaved)

Trees (conifer)

Bamboo

Grasses

(b) Western Himalayas



Trees (15)

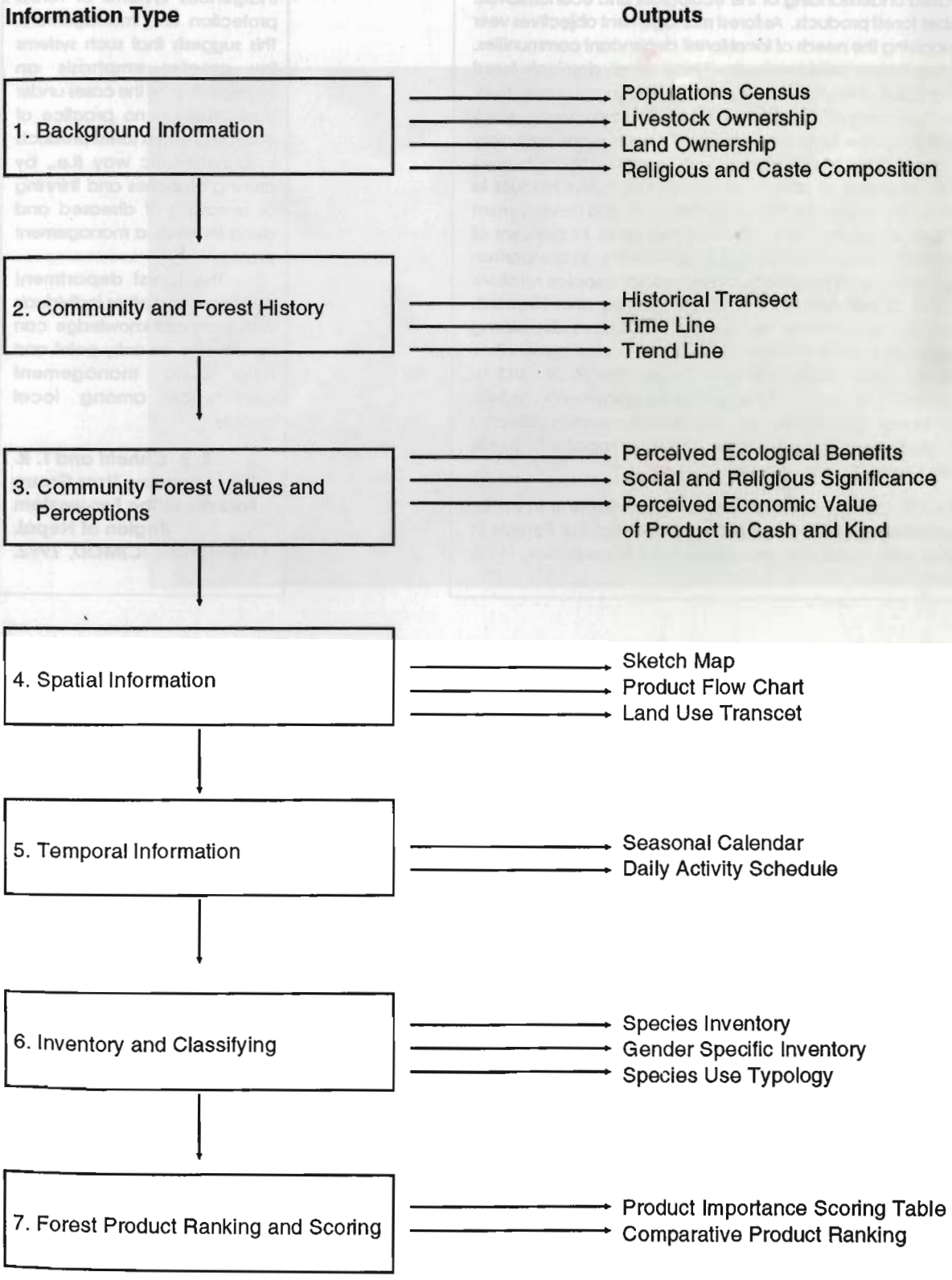
Grasses & Legumes (85)

Acer pictum/oblongom
Quercus semicarpifolia
Populous ciliata

Festuca rubra/ arundicacea
Poa compressa/ bulbosa/ampla

Source: P. Gahathakurta. Switch-over from Uni-tier to Multi-tier Plantations, New Delhi: World Bank, 1992.

PRA Steps for Profiling Community-Forest Relationships



Source: *Joint Forest Management Field Methods Manual, Vol. 1: Diagnostic Tools for Supporting JFM System. SPWD*

Non-timber Forest Products

To maximise benefits for multiple uses innovative silvicultural systems, will need to evolve with the input of traditional knowledge and increased understanding of the ecological and economic role of non-timber forest products. As forest management objectives veer towards supplying the needs of local forest dependant communities, the role of non-timber forest products will increasingly dominate forest management and silvicultural decision-making in many areas. Non-timber forest products play a vital role in meeting subsistence needs and providing income to forest-dependant communities, especially tribals. A major study of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in West Bengal (K.C. Malhotra et al. *Role of Non-timber Forest Product in Village Economy*. Institute for Bio-social Research and Development Working Paper, Calcutta, 1991) indicates that up to 17 per cent of tribal household economies were made up of NTFPs. In comparison to a share in polewood harvests from ten-year sal coppice rotations (calculated as 25 per cent of Rs 16,500 per hectare after 10 years), which works out to Rs 412 per hectare per year before discounting the annual returns from NTFPs from a forest after five year's protection, calculated at a mean value of Rs 2,700 per hectare (Rs 28 = US$ 1). Furthermore, NTFPs are seasonal; they provide employment in periods when other labour opportunities are scarce; they are often collected and marketed by women and children; and have important cultural, religious, and aesthetic values as well.

-- *Jeffrey Y. Campbell*, Joint Forest Management in India: Regenerating and Managing Degraded Natural Forests in Partnership with Local Communities. *Ford Foundation, 1992.*

Silvicultural conservativeness certainly is present in the indigenous systems of forest protection and management. This suggests that such systems lay greater emphasis on protection. In all the cases under study, there is no practice of collecting green forest products in a systematic way (i.e., by pruning branches and thinning or removing of diseased and dying trees) as a management strategy.

The forest department personnel and other individuals with technical knowledge can take this as an entry point and help build management confidence among local people.

R. B. Chhetri and T. R. Pandey*, User Group Forestry in the Far-western Region of Nepal. *Kathmandu: ICIMOD, 1992.

Hypothesis No. 18

Management of natural forest is more cost- and time-effective than plantations and is more likely to be successful from both an internal and external perspective.

Messerschimidt et al.* Forest User Groups in Nepal: Perspectives on What Works and Why. *1992

Legislation and Policies (Group D)

Selections from the Government of India, Order 1, June 1990

The National Forest Policy, 1988, envisages people's involvement in the development and protection of forests. The requirements for fuelwood, fodder, and small timber such as house-building material, by the tribals and other villagers living in and near the forests, are to be treated as first charge on forest produce. The Policy Document envisages it as one of the essentials of forest management and envisages that the forest communities should be motivated to identify themselves with the development and protection of forests from which they derive benefits.

(i) The programme should be implemented under an arrangement between the Voluntary Agency/ NGO, the village community (beneficiaries), and the State Forest Department.

(ii) No ownership or lease rights over forest land should be given to the beneficiaries or to the Voluntary Agency/NGO. Nor should the forest land be assigned in contravention of the provisions contained in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(iii) The beneficiaries should be entitled to a share in usufruct to the extent of and subject to the conditions prescribed by the State Government on their behalf. The Voluntary Agency/NGO should not be entitled to usufructuary benefits.

(iv) Access to forest land and usufructuary benefits should be only for the beneficiaries who are organised into a village institution specifically established for forest regeneration and protection. This could be the *Panchayat* or the Cooperative of the village, with no restriction on membership. It could also be a Village Forest Committee. In no case should any access or tree *pattas* be given to individuals.

(v) The beneficiaries should be given usufruct such as grasses, lops, and tops of branches, and minor forest produce. If they successfully protect the forests, they can be given a portion of the proceeds from the sale of trees when they mature. (The Government of West Bengal has issued orders to give 25% of the sale proceeds to the Village Forest Protection Committees. Similar norms may be adopted by other States.)

-- "Government of India, Order No. 6-21/89-F.P." Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Community Forestry Policy in Nepal

Nepal's current policy document is the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector approved by the Government in April 1989. The Master Plan lays out the plans, policies, and resource needs for investments to develop the forestry sector in the coming decades (1989 -2010). The focus of the Master Plan is on the basic needs of the Nepalese people and what is required to meet those needs.

The Master Plan institutionalised the Programme Approach to guide the development of forest resources and introduced six major Forestry Sector Programmes to be administered by the Department of Forests.

The largest of these is the Community and Private Forestry Programme with a central policy to

"develop and manage forest resources through the active participation of individuals and communities to meet their basic needs."

The strategy to achieve this is embodied in the statement:

"phased handing over of all accessible hill forests to the communities to the extent that they are able and willing to manage them."

-- "The Community and Private Forestry Programme in Nepal". Community Forestry Development Division, Department of Forests, Kathmandu, 1991.

Without question, Nepal has taken an extremely liberal -- some would say radical -- legislative approach to community forestry. Nepal has legally sanctioned the handing over of all biotic resources in a community forest to community identified User Groups to manage and use in perpetuity. The authority for such handing over has been delegated to the District Forest Officer. In contrast, under the Indian legislation (the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 and previous Forest Acts) the Government still retains all resource rights to Reserved and Protected Forests. However, at the administrative level, it has authorised the concessional sharing of products and by virtue of its recent GOI circular has encouraged this sharing to be carried out at a community level.

In both cases, land tenure remains with the Government and the Government retains the right to reclaim the forest resources if misused by the community. Joint or co-management remains in both cases through the instrument of an operational forest management plan which must be approved by the Forest Department prior to any community harvest. The difference lies in the fact that, in the Nepalese case, 100 per cent of the forest resources are legally transferred as a right, while in the Indian case, the rights to share the forest products partially have not been legislated but administratively granted. (Given the large variation among the States in India, and the differences in forest settlement agreements on different kinds of government forest, there are important exceptions to this generalisation -- such as the *Van Panchayats* of U.P. and the individual and group rights granted in Unclassed Forests of H.P. and elsewhere.)

Ultimately, the tenurial security of communities over forests they co-manage will depend not only on their legislative legitimacy but on the success of this management approach and the degree of political and bureaucratic support it engenders. If community management is seen to be a widespread failure, bureaucratic hurdles can easily be placed in the way of expanding community forests and legislation can even be reversed. However, to the extent that community management can develop widespread grassroots' political support and prove itself to be an effective means for managing national forest resources, even administratively established benefit sharing will provide a high degree of tenurial security. Such success will, in turn, provide the lobbying force to deal with current legislative and policy contradictions and ambiguities -- particularly through the active efforts of NGOs.

Participants in the working group on legislation and policy were particularly concerned with these interrelated issues and addressed the following concerns:

1) the need for **political consensus** on matters related to forestry and other natural resources **as a prerequisite to good policy formulation**;

2) the dichotomy between forest policy and existing legislation;

3) the means for feeding field experiences into operational rules and guidelines;

4) the appropriate location of the policing and judicial powers needed to manage community forests;

5) the recognition of the role of NGOs in the formulation of policy and legislation; and

6) the possibility of women's empowerment through legislative support, and the recognition

of the rights of women versus those of the household.

Realising that democracy is a developing institution in these countries, it was observed that policy and legislative formulation would go through a **wide consultation process with different interest groups** and more **broad-based involvement of the communities actually involved in the management of the resource**. Currently, the only mandated public review of new policy and legislation occurs when legislation is brought to parliament. Administratively determined policy and management strategies -- such as the Forest Working Plans -- are not currently subject to any public hearing. While NGOs are becoming increasingly effective in serving as the voice of local communities, these communities themselves have little access to policy level decision-making. The participants called for a more open and consultative process.

The participants also called for **clearer specification of the tenurial rights of user communities**. Both rights and responsibilities (obligations) need to be clearly spelled out by law in order to protect both the government and the community and provide a clear contractual basis for effective management.

While most forest areas in India have been legally surveyed and demarcated, it is not so true in Nepal. Given the ambiguities and contradictory claims that most of these lands are subject to, it was observed that such surveys will be necessary to clarify legal status and reduce conflicts. Realising that the process of surveying will entail a long-term effort, it was suggested that an intensive consultation with user groups and neighbouring communities should take place for specifying forest boundaries for specific user communities in the interim period.

Given overlapping tenurial claims on most community forest land, it is likely that this consultative process is the most critical for creating a feasible community forest tenure. Even in carefully surveyed community forest areas of India, changes in legislation and conflicting claims have filled the courts with cases disputing access. Even Arabari, the pilot JFM effort in West Bengal, was the subject of a court adjudicated dispute over benefit-sharing rights. Widespread community consensus over boundaries and rights is, generally, much more important than legally defined rights; although the specification of such rights can buttress community consensus.

Such community consensus is only possible if decision-making is made at the widest possible level. Participants strongly recommended that **all adults in a participating household should be responsible for vetting all major decisions in a general assembly, and that these should not just be the responsibility of a managing committee**. Experience has shown that decisions confined to a select committee are frequently ineffective unless they have been discussed, debated, and agreed upon by a full assembly of all community forestry users. Since many community forestry programmes currently rely on small committees to carry out decision-making, this conclusion has important implications for the implementation of future efforts.

Community Forest Democracy

There are (perhaps) two levels of democracy, of interest, within forestry:

- representative democracy (as in a parliament), and
- participatory democracy (involving "everybody" in a consultative process)

It seems that legislation related to natural resources needs to be build upon participatory democracy, and that representative democracy is not enough. The reason is that natural resources' management involves all people actively -- at least in a developing country.

-- Martin Bentz, Hattiban

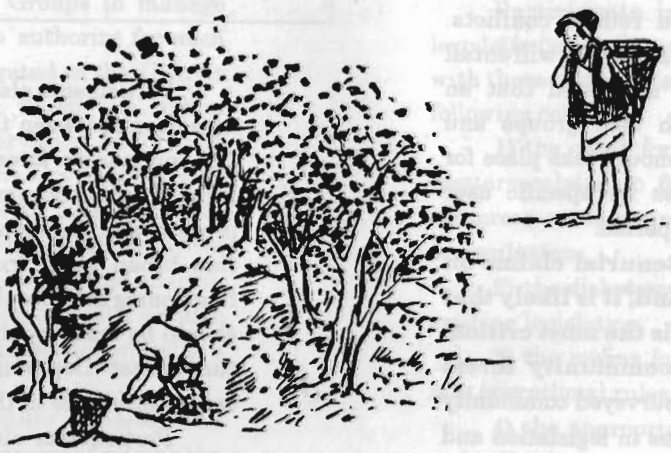
Participants also suggested that the overall agreement between the Forest Department and the community forest user group would be a legally binding document, subject to normal legal process and independant arbitration. Within this broad legal framework, the operational functioning rules for the management of the forest should be made by the User Groups -- although the Forest Department can play a positive consultative role in this process.

Participants also discussed and identified **unresolved issues**:

- how can the conflicting legal mandates of different community institutions (i.e., User Group and Village Development Committees in Nepal; *Panchayat* and Forest Protection Committees in India) be resolved?

- should there be different laws or operational guidelines for regions with different resource endowments, levels of commercialisation, and socioeconomic characteristics or is uniformity of law more important?
- if women are the primary users of the forest, should membership of community forest groups be confined to women? are specific legal provisions for protecting the rights of women needed? and
- what is the legal role of NGOs?

In addition, there are a number of associated legislative and policy issues, not addressed by the seminar, which directly relate to the success of these new initiatives in community forestry. These include legal constraints on harvesting and transport of forest products; subsidised supply of forest products to the public and industry, from both national forests and imported supplies, and its effects on pricing and demand; the role of government leaseholds in forest areas and the rights of surrounding communities; policies encouraging pasture and range development on community lands; urban energy needs and the use of high-value forests to meet fuelwood demands; the implementation of community forestry programmes through a variety of uncoordinated rural development agencies with separate policies; environmental impacts; and the need for flexible experimentation in innovative programmes.



Continuing to Grow into the Future

More Impressions

I was impressed by:

(1) the fact that Wasteland News is distributed to 1,800 DFOs in India,

(2) the Indian foresters' experience in shifting from traditional roles to new roles,

(3) the roles and results of NGOs' work in India, and

(4) the Nepalese forest department staff member's comment that donor's money is not really required --or if required, then only in tiny amounts.

-- *Ravi Pradhan, Hattiban*

Community forestry has been, and will continue to be, a learning process for everyone involved --from professional forester or NGO to the villager. This seminar has been part of that process. It focussed on differences and similarities: between the experiences of India and Nepal; between the perspectives of foresters and NGOs, planners and implementors, and social scientists and biological scientists.

Common ground was found in support for new initiatives for including local communities as partners in forest management. Learning was enhanced through listening to the differences in the approaches to these partnerships espoused by different participants. Assumptions were questioned. Enthusiasm was balanced by skepticism; radicalism by conservatism. One result is unquestionable: differences in policy and approach increase understanding. If a standardised approach had been taken throughout the region, both its forests and communities would be impoverished by the lessons not learned and the insights not gleaned.

As one more step in this learning process, this seminar and this report have not attempted to cover all the issues related to community forestry. Many more issues are important. And the issues addressed need to be continually re-examined in different contextual iterations. But the discussion has provided inspirations -- and cautions -- for a future in which communities take greater charge of managing and benefiting from the forests that are a part of their heritage and their livelihoods.

Such inspirations impose obligations to share and deepen the learning. Participants agreed that the future learning process could be encouraged through a variety of means.

- Improved information exchange using the existing networks developed in India (i.e., JFM working groups, SPWD newsletter, and forestry journals and associations), Nepal (forestry journal), and elsewhere (ODI Social Forestry Network in London, Forests, Trees, and People Network of FAO and SIDA, etc); strengthening ICIMOD's regional role.
- Study tours and exchanges between communities, projects, and countries on a number of levels.
- Topic-specific workshops and training sessions (e.g., curriculum training and community forestry syllabus, role of NGOs, operational/micro-plans, technology options, extension

Issues Needing More Attention

The issues listed below received much less attention than deserved.

(1) Long-term perspectives -- when subsistence-oriented community forestry acquires a commercial orientation (i.e., its implications, preparatory steps, etc).

(2) Community forestry - private forestry complementarities.

(3) Community forestry as an integral part of overall farming systems or village-level biomass production/cycling system.

-- *N.S. Jodha, Hattiban*

methodologies, user group methodologies) and follow-up seminars.

- Case studies and applied research, particularly research that integrates socioeconomic approaches with forest management concerns.
- Short briefing seminars for decision-makers, donors, and the personnel of the Ministry of Finance.

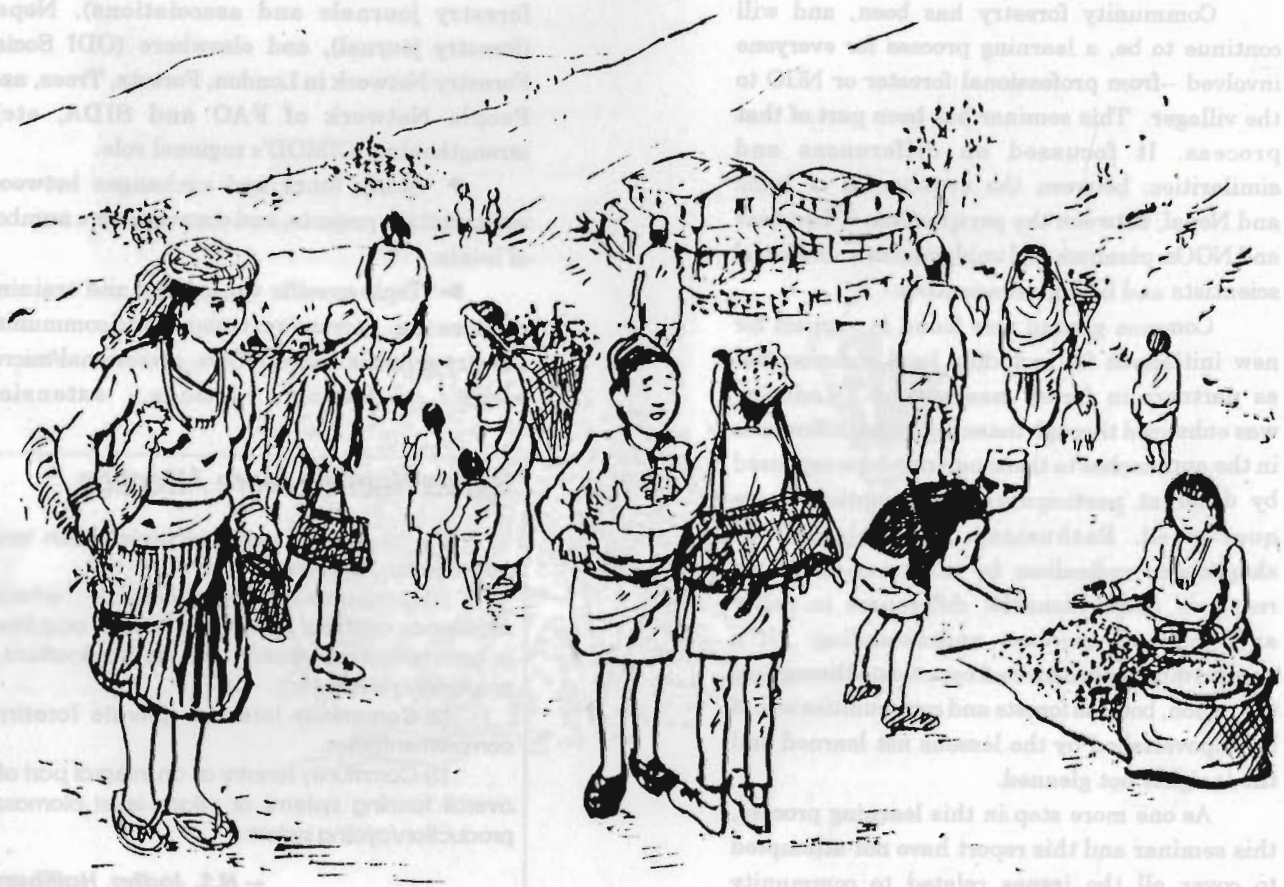
It was also agreed that ICIMOD, as a regionally established centre, had an important role to play in maintaining and broadening the learning process to other countries in the region. The current lack of any other inter-country forum for accelerating mutual exchange of knowledge in community forestry places a special obligation on ICIMOD to increase its role in this respect.

This, rather familiar, list of follow-up activities comes with an admonition. The inspirations of already existing and growing community forest management in the region leave little excuse for postponing their careful widespread expansion. Enough is known now to know that genuine partnerships between governments and local communities -- particularly with the assistance of able NGOs -- can and do work. While greater understanding will always await us, there is no excuse not to act in the meantime. We hope this seminar and report will contribute to that goal.

Hypothesis No. 20

User group self-confidence and motivation is enhanced by the existence of quick incentives (in forest and forest-related products) derived from internal and external inputs

***Messerschmidt et al.* Forest User Groups in Nepal: Perspectives on What Works and Why, 1992.**



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ICIMOD SEMINAR ON HIMALAYAN COMMUNITY FORESTRY (SCHEDULE)
JUNE 1 - 4, 1992
Hatti Ban, Pharphing, Nepal

June 1, 1992

9:00a.m.	Meet at ICIMOD	
9:15a.m.	Depart for Hatti Ban	
10:00a.m.	Registration and Tea	
11:30a.m.	Welcome and orientation	- N. S. Jodha - J. Denholm
12:00p.m.	**Session 2:** Nepal Experiences Indigenous Forest Management Studies in Nepal	- Chair:
	Introduction	- M. Banskota
	Case Study from West Nepal	- Ram Chetri
12:40p.m.	Implementation of operational plans: Equity and self-reliance in Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project	- M. Nurse
1:00p.m.	Lunch	
2:00p.m.	Evaluation of Community Forestry Programme of the Koshi Hills Development Programme from a Community Development Perspective	- M. Tyson-Taylor
2:20p.m.	Perspectives on "What Works": Study of Forest User Groups across Nepal	- D. Messerschmidt - K. Shrestha - C. Richards
2:40p.m.	Discussion	
3:10p.m.	Tea Break	
	Session 3: India Experiences	- Chair:
3:30p.m.	Joint Forest Management Programme	- A. Khare - J. Campbell
4:00p.m	Gender Issues in User Groups	- M. Sarin
4:20p.m.	Role of NGOs in JFM	-
4:40p.m.	Technology Issues in JFM	- P. Guhathakurta
5:00p.m.	Discussion	
5:30p.m.	Closing Remarks	- G. Conway
6:00p.m.	Reception by ICIMOD	Host: E. F. Tacke Director General (ICIMOD)
7:30p.m.	Dinner	

June 2, 1992

	Session 4: Short Presentations	- Chair:
9:00a.m.	Inspirations form India and Nepal	- G. Campbell
9:15a.m.	Individual Presentations (5-10 min)	
10:45a.m.	Tea Break & Group Sign-Up	
11:00a.m.	Individual Presentations Continued	
1:00p.m.	Lunch	
	Session 5: Working Groups	
2:00p.m.	Group Formation	- J. Denholm
3:45p.m.	Tea Break	
	(Group Report Preparation)	
7:30p.m.	Dinner	

June 3, 1002

	Session 6: Working Groups	
9:00a.m.	Group Re-formation	
10:45a.m.	Tea Break	
12:00p.m.	Group report preparation	
1:00p.m.	Lunch	
	Session 7: Conclusions	
2:00p.m.	Working Group Presentations (10 min. each)	
3:30p.m.	Tea Break	
3:45p.m.	Discussion	Chair: G. Campbell
4:45p.m.	Concluding Comments	
5:15p.m.	Closing	- E. F. Tacke
7:30p.m.	Dinner	

June 4, 1992

6:00a.m.	Breakfast
7:00a.m.	Depart for Field Trip to Kabrepalanchok District
	Box Lunch
2:00p.m.	Return to ICIMOD

SUGGESTED READINGS

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Founding of ICIMOD

The fundamental motivations for the founding of this first International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development were widespread recognition of the alarming environmental degradation of mountain habitats and the consequent increasing impoverishment of mountain communities. A coordinated and systematic effort on an international scale was deemed essential to design and implement more effective development responses to promote the sustained well-being of mountain communities.

The establishment of the Centre is based upon an agreement between His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) signed in 1981. The Centre was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Nepal in December, 1983, and began its professional activities in September, 1984.

The Centre, located in Kathmandu, the capital of the Kingdom of Nepal enjoys the status of an autonomous international organisation.

Participating Countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- China
- India
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Pakistan

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