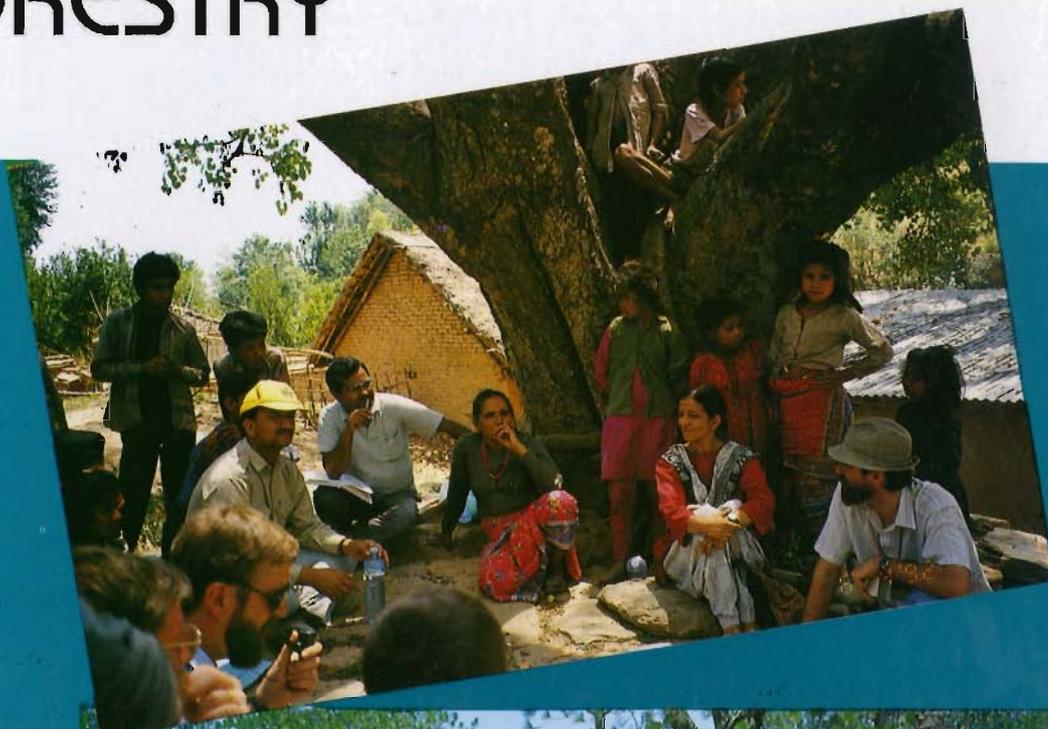


INSPIRATIONS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY



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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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
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Report of the
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Cover photograph

Top: *Journalist and villagers during the field trip*

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In the preparation of this report, an attempt has been made to reflect the views and opinions of the participants at the workshop. These views and interpretations are not attributable to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and do not imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country, city, or area of its boundaries, or concerning the jurisdiction of any government.

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. Messerschmidt) 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

The meeting was particularly helpful in terms of Nepal in terms of the role of forestry in the local communities and local governance. The meeting was a starting point for a series of local projects through revenue sharing arrangements with village committees opened up the issue of thinking to Nepalese participants. User groups were juxtaposed to Forest Protection Committees and Hill Resources' Management, the role of NGOs, forest officers, and donors were debated. The need for new specific technologies, institutional arrangements, or procedures for improving natural resource management to manage their forests was the focus of intense working group discussions.

Some judgments were radical. "All farmers should own land." There is no need for outside money. "All forests should be protected." Other comments predicted dramatic change. "Current NGOs will be the future IFGs." "Current IFGs will be the future NGOs." However, the overall consensus from the diverse gathering was that there are powerful cooperative roles to be played by forestry officials, NGOs, scholars, researchers, and donors in supporting local communities to enhance 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, confusions, and varied responses 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 evokes participants' comments and deliberations with a systems view of the subject. Not everyone will agree with everything, but hopefully everyone will identify with something and find inspiration for the future.