

# **Working Sessions**

## **Session I: Workshop Structure and Principles**

Mr. A.K. Gulati, from the Department of Forest Farming and Conservation, opened this session. He welcomed the participants and discussed the workshop structure with them.

He said that the workshop was designed to be an interactive forum with small groups and plenary sessions. Mr. Anupam Bhatia, from ICIMOD, gave details of the workshop principles, stressing that the workshop's informal environment was designed to ensure maximum participation. The participants themselves were expected to be proactive during the workshop and identify issues for discussion. ICIMOD preferred to use its resources to bring people together, while ownership and the major responsibility for outcome were to be borne by the participants.

Mr. Gulati then invited comments from the floor. In response to a query on whether the groups would remain fixed, he said that group compositions would be changed in each session to promote interaction. He hoped that this structure would result in a substantial number of ideas and recommendations which could be consolidated and synthesised later.

The three working groups provided for informal discussions and time for personal and professional introductions. They were asked to keep to the theme of the workshop, 'Coping with and Managing Change', but also to feel free to raise other issues emerging through the process of group discussions. At the end, each group would have approximately 10 to 15 minutes for presentation in the plenary.

The procedure of informal interaction was fairly successful and the groups continued working until about seven in the evening without a formal session.

## **Session II**

Mr. Mohan Gopinath from the Centre for Organisation Development in Hyderabad and four participants from Jammu and Kashmir, who arrived a day late, were welcomed and requested to introduce themselves.

The participants from Jammu and Kashmir, all from the Department of Forests, noted that their expectations from the workshop were very high since they had travelled for 26 hours. Mr. Bhatia observed that, historically, ICIMOD had not had much interaction with Jammu and Kashmir and that he was glad they could attend and that their participation was highly valued.

Mr. Gopinath, a representative from the Centre for Organisation Development in Hyderabad, said the Centre was working on a study, part of a World Bank-aided project for the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, that aimed to make the department a proactive organisation. The final module of the study, *The Management of Change*, would be published shortly. Meanwhile, he had brought some relevant material from the study to share during the workshop.

## **Keynote Address on the Workshop Theme by Mr. M.F. Ahmed, Inspector General of Forests, Government of India**

Mr. Gulati introduced the keynote speaker, Mr. M.F. Ahmed, Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. Mr. Ahmed unfurled

a banner depicting the workshop theme and Mr. Gulati elaborated on the meaning of the diagramme.

The diagramme's three circles represented three levels of interaction in forest-related activities: personal and professional, departmental, and institutional. The innermost circle represented personal attitudes, perceptions, and professional skills, which an individual tried to apply with his/her professional acumen. Forestry professionals worked in an organisation, the forest department, which represented their immediate working environment. This was represented by the second circle. Forest departments themselves were part of the larger organisational system of the government; this was represented by the outer circle, the institutional environment. These were the three main levels that played an important role in creating an environment that enabled the development and implementation of participatory management approaches.

Currently, there was little or no interaction between personal attitudes and professional skills. Issues were diffused, distorted, deflected, and reflected at the institutional and forest department levels without affecting personal and professional levels.

The organisers hoped that the workshop would enable personal peer group sharing of approaches to evolve strategies for coping with and managing change. Mr. Gulati requested the participants to keep this theme in mind during their discussions and invited them to modify it so that a realistic vision would be available at the conclusion of the workshop.

Mr. M.F. Ahmed, Inspector General of Forests, thanked the organisers for inviting him to share his experiences and express his government's views on joint forest management (JFM). He was happy to benefit from the participants' rich experiences in this area of work. He hoped that during the workshop participants would be able to deliberate and synthesise their views to focus on the diagramme's central point.

Referring to the Himalayan mountain range in his country, he said the mountains were the origin and watershed of mighty rivers and a resource beyond imagination. This rich, varied and unique resource base nourished civilisation and provided many medicines, solace, and peace to millions of meditating sages and saints. The most important resource in the mountains was the forests, a repository of biodiversity.

Any resource was ultimately for the people and the community who interacted with the resource. The overuse of forest resources was pushing forests beyond revival. It had to be recognised that these forests could not be developed without community participation and involvement.

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***People's participation in development activities is a natural corollary to democratic traditions. Lack of community participation in forestry has resulted in resources being pillaged and recklessly ravaged. Participation and partnership must be based on genuine understanding and universal realisation of shared significance.***

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Many sages had shown the way to salvation, the goal of all human beings. The goal of the workshop was the sustainable management of forests in the Himalayan mountains. One way to carry this out was through participatory forest management; through the establishment of collaborative mechanisms with forest-dependent communities, involving them in forest protection, management, and conservation. It had dawned on all concerned that this shift in paradigm was there to stay.

People's participation in development activities was a natural corollary to democratic traditions. Lack of community participation in forestry had resulted in resources being pillaged and recklessly ravaged. Participation and partnership must be based on genuine understanding and universal realisation of shared significance.

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*At present, we find little or no interaction between personal attitudes and professional skills. The issues are diffused, deflected, and reflected at the institutional and forest department levels without affecting the personal and professional levels.*

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He noted that the forest service had seen great changes, including attitudinal changes in the officers and in extension education. He pointed out that it took time to win the confidence of the people and required much perseverance. He noted that many foresters had on their own begun seeking people's involvement in forest protection and in sharing of forest benefits. Mr. Ahmed also said that the Government of India was trying to make all states responsible for and responsive to joint forest management (JFM).

Despite being convinced that community participation in forestry was the need of the hour, there remained a lack of clarity regarding its actual implementation. He said that, it was necessary to identify precisely who the participants would be, in what manner they should be organised for development programmes, what rules and regulations should be followed, and how conflicts should be resolved. Ecology and equity were at the heart of sustainable development, he stated.

We must build up a conservation fraternity with a healthy harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. We should be preservers rather than predators of Nature and natural resources. Only time would tell us how far we could succeed in this, and it was hoped that future generations would not find us wanting. Mr. Ahmed concluded with a quotation from the *Atharva Veda*: "May the creator of earth, with milk and nectar, give his blessings to all of us."

### **Session III: Expectations from the Workshop**

The plenary session reconvened for group presentations from the three working groups.



## Group One

Dr. Gautam made the presentation, introducing Mr. Ahmed and Dr. Banskota as group leaders and Monica Manandhar as the rapporteur. This group first listed the expectations on a country-wise basis and then presented a summary of expectations and issues.

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*Some of the main issues for ICIMOD were to first question the necessity for a regional forum, how it could be made sustainable, who would support it, and what would be the direction of activities?*

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Bhutan's major goal was to learn about PFM systems on the basis of other countries' experience. They wanted information about various management options, such as working in partnership or handing over forests to community-level institutions; as well as about how to manage resources, share benefits, and develop forest-protection mechanisms. They also wanted advice on how to obtain legislative and policy support for community-based forest management in Bhutan.

Nepal's expectations included experience-sharing regarding a wide variety of issues, including appropriate approaches to and options for forest user groups and their integration with community development activities. They wanted to discuss different institutional options for community forestry project implementation, e.g., NGOs, community, laws, agreements, and resource inventories. They were also concerned with gender issues in the context of strategies for increasing the participation and involvement of women in forest management.

The Indian delegates were interested in the impact analysis of PFM approaches — cases documenting success and failures and analysing weaknesses and strengths. They wished to examine the potential for joint forestry management (JFM) and its feasibility with regard to locations and committee formation. Other issues included the acceptable scale of participation among partners and the appropriateness of *Mahila Mandal(s)* as an option to enhance the involvement of women.

Some of the main issues for ICIMOD were to first question the necessity for a regional forum, how it could be made sustainable, who would support it, and what would be the direction of activities?

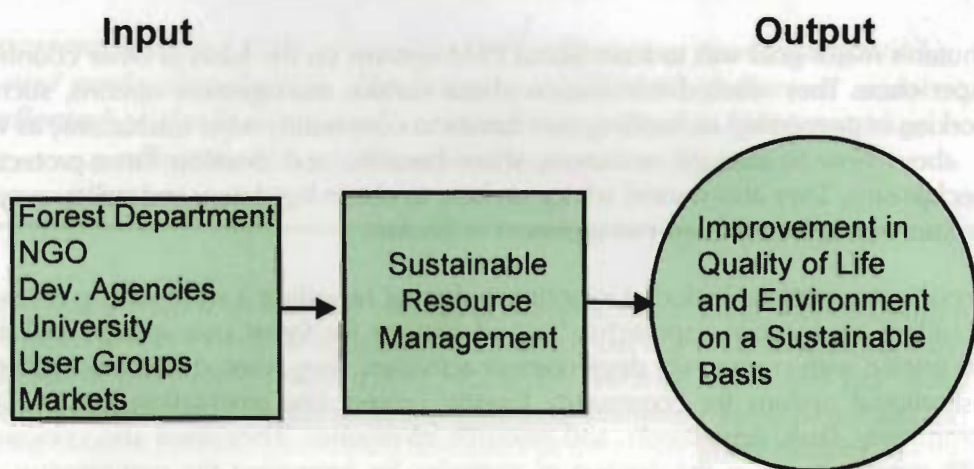
## Summary

This group's expectations included the consideration of forming a regional forum, whether such a forum was needed? how it could be supported and sustained? and what its scope should be? The group was looking for experience and information sharing on appropriate JFM/PFM strategies, including an impact analysis of JFM.

Delegates wanted to discuss suitable forest protection strategies and choice of species, as well as the need for a change in attitude and thrust areas, focussing on integrated approaches taking "people first and last." This could lead to consideration of the choice of proper locations for implementation of demonstration units. They felt a need to discuss strengthening forest extension, along with manpower relevance, reorientation, and human resource development or recruitment policies. The group saw a need for attitudinal change at all levels and for cooperation between foresters and social scientists.

This group also suggested a change in the thematic diagramme for the forum (Fig. 3).

**Figure 3: Suggested Change in Module**



Instead of focussing only on the personal and professional aspects of the working environment and the influences on these, the new module included the personal and professional aspects as inputs, leading to the desired output of environmentally sustainable improvements in the quality of life. The mediating and crucial factor was seen to be the commitment to sustainable resource management.

#### *Group Two*

Mr. G.S. Mandal, PCCF, West Bengal, made this group's presentation. After detailed discussions, the group members had unanimously agreed on the following expectations.

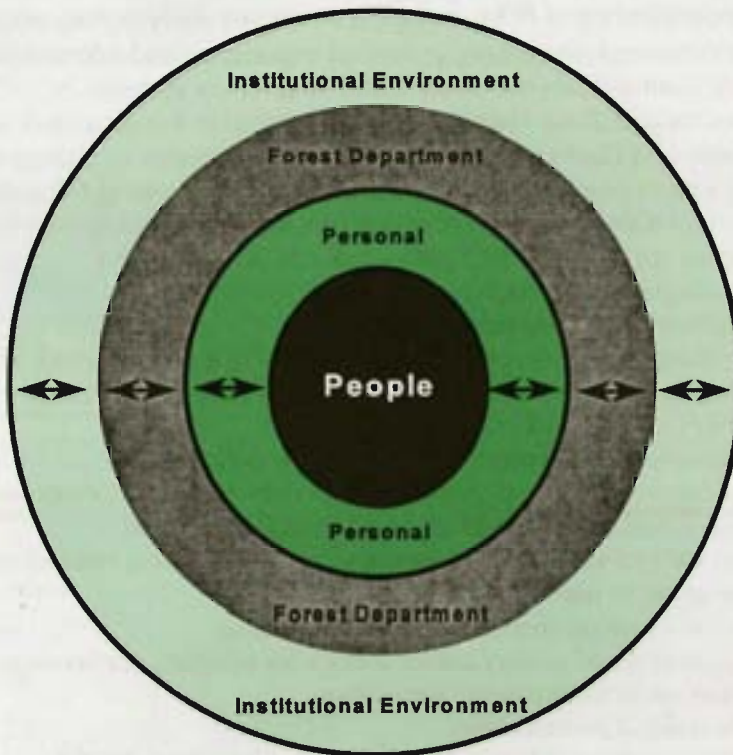
- Clear understanding of JFM/PFM/CFM
- Clarity about roles of forest department and users
- Strategies for motivating heterogeneous user groups
- Strategies for motivating the forest department staff
- Clear definition of change and what changes were to be brought about in forest department (FD) personnel and local people, what actions to take?

- How to involve women and women forestry department officials at all levels actively?
- What immediate incentives could be given to users?

### Group Three

This group also presented a modified diagramme of the workshop theme. Nalini Subba, who made this presentation, said that their group felt that the 'people' component was missing, so they had created another circle in the centre to insert 'people'. They also suggested that, as participatory forestry is a two-way process, the arrows should point in both directions, instead of only inwards (Fig. 4).

**Figure 4: Suggested Change in Module**



Ms Subba added that most of the expectations discussed by Group Three had been covered by the previous two groups, and they considered this a positive sign.

Specific issues for this group were:

- ways to move from policing to participation,
- need-based and quality planting stock to raise people's confidence in community/ social forestry,
- integrating trees with other farming systems as per site conditions,



- improving grasslands and pastures to reduce pressure on forests, and
- raising the legal awareness of people about forest policies.

Expectations from the workshop included:

- interactions on community/social forests/joint forest management systems,
- strategies for training to cope with change at different levels, and
- experiences in joint park-people management.

A consolidation of expectations from the three groups is presented in Box 1.

### **Box 1: Consolidation of Participants' Expectations**

- Clear understanding of PFM; including an impact analysis, success and failures, through enhanced interaction, as well as experience and information sharing, including institutional environment and land tenure systems
- Strategies for attitudinal change and reorientation in the areas and the community and clarity in their roles - focus on strategies to change the FD's policing role to one of participation and ways of motivating FD staff
- Strategies for training forest staff at different levels for coping with change  
Evolving an appropriate HRD policy that can promote PFM
- Holistic integrated approach by
  - strengthening forestry extension,
  - integrating trees with other farming systems, e.g., agroforestry, and
  - improving grassland and pastures to reduce pressure on forests
- Experiences in joint park-people management
- Raising people's legal awareness about forest policies
- Regional forum; continued sharing of experiences and processes, including traditional forest management and post-formation support
- Strategies for motivating heterogeneous groups, i.e., what immediate incentives could be given to users
- Appropriate forest protection strategies, including:
  - needs' based and quality planting stock for people's confidence,
  - site specificity vs. universal application,
  - mode/scale of participation,
  - choosing partners (*Mahila Mandal(s)*, ex-servicemen, NGOs)
- Strategies for involving women and women FD officials actively at all levels

Concluding the session, Mr. Gulati said he hoped that the workshop would meet the participants' expectations. He announced that the next session would be devoted to country or state-wise presentations. Guidelines for country groups were given to all participants (shown in Box 2). Nepal and Bhutan were in respective country groups, but participants from India were divided into groups from Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and West Bengal. Mr. Mohan Gopinath from Hyderabad was designated to make a presentation on Andhra Pradesh and David Black to join the Himachal Pradesh group.



Mr. Gulati said that the country presentations would provide an opportunity to share experiences from different countries and states.

### **Box 2: Suggested Guidelines for Country Working Groups**

This group process is in keeping with the objective of ensuring an idea-centred rather than a paper-centred workshop environment. While many participants came from the same country or state, we wanted to provide everyone with an opportunity for collective reflection.

Below are some indicative issues for the preparation of country presentations.

- ▶ Brief history of forest management
- ▶ Key milestones
- ▶ Emergence of participatory forest management (PFM)
- ▶ Current status of policy, laws, rules, and regulations for PFM
- ▶ Constraints and opportunities
- ▶ Institutional change
- ▶ Donors' role
- ▶ Role of policy-makers in the forest department
- ▶ How you are coping with changing roles and demands
- ▶ Others

We hope you will keep the workshop theme in mind. You can also prepare a separate slide on how you are coping with and managing change. Please try to keep your presentation within the 20-minute time period allotted.



Cricket Match on world's highest Cricket Ground

*At the conclusion of the Third Session, workshop participants were taken to the world's highest cricket pitch, which was above Chail, where a friendly match had been organised by India's champion cricketeer, Bishan Singh Bedi. The match took place between a mixed-gender team of workshop participants and boys from Bedi's summer cricket training camp. The match was exciting and was enjoyed by all, even though the participants were trounced by the better-trained youngsters.*



## Session IV: Country- and State-wise Presentations on Joint Forest Management and Community Forestry

The country and state presentations were made in the following order.

- ▶ West Bengal
- ▶ Andhra Pradesh - Centre for Organisational Development
- ▶ Bhutan
- ▶ Jammu and Kashmir
- ▶ Nepal
- ▶ Himachal Pradesh

### *West Bengal by Mr. G.S. Mandal*

In this presentation, Mr. Mandal noted that during his 35 years with the forest department he had had the experience of practising many kinds of forestry: traditional forestry, production forestry, conservation/protection forestry (as a wildlife officer), and conservation/ utilisation and sustainable development in the biosphere reserve section.

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### History of Forest Management

Forest management began with the British. Government officials were entrusted with collection of revenue from cultivated areas and from forest areas. Since the 1950s major development plans had been implemented, leading to improvement of agriculture and industry but, correspondingly, increasing the pressure on forest lands. Private forests came under government protection during the mid-1950s, bringing about a concrete change in forest resources. The forests in southern Bengal suffered severe degradation during the 1960s.

The national policy on agriculture in the 1970s permitted bank loans for the development of landlocked forest areas and led to the beginning of forest development cooperatives and infrastructural development in the Darjeeling hills and the Sundarbans. Social forestry was also introduced in southern Bengal.

Land distribution programmes provided mostly marginal lands to landless people. Two corporations were started to help these new landowners: the Wasteland Development Corporation and the Pulpwood Production Corporation. Fast-growing species were encouraged and buying back of products was guaranteed.



PFM began with recognition of the failure of traditional forestry management systems because of the absence of people's involvement in these endeavours. Now the people were fully motivated after the success of the social forestry project. Although the actual forest cover of 13.4 per cent could not be greatly increased, the green cover had grown to over 19 per cent with the farm forestry growth outside forest land. The forest department was no longer supplying people with seedlings; they were being supplied privately by individuals from their small plots of land under the Decentralised People's Nursery Scheme.

The well-known Arabari Experiment of the 1970s encouraged people to protect and maintain forest areas through silvicultural activities in return for 25 per cent of the produce or revenue of the final harvest. A coppiced forest of sal could be harvested after 10 to 15 years. This successful model had been widely replicated all over southern Bengal. As of March 1995, 2,235 Forest Protection Committees (FPCs) had been established, managing 280,000ha of forest out of a total area of 11,88,000ha of forest land.

With a very dense population of 68 million, West Bengal had no alternative but to encourage people's participation in forest protection. Currently, one-third of the forest was being protected for production, one-third was protected for wildlife, and one-third was under the control of ecodevelopment committees.

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### Constraints and Opportunities

On an average, five to 25 Forest Protection Committees (FPCs) were formed in a forest beat (the smallest unit of forest management) with only one or two officers to oversee them, despite the need for constant interaction with the people. The forest directorate was currently being restructured so that one beat officer would have no more than five or six FPCs to handle. The forest officers and staff were coming closer to the people through frequent interaction.

Each FPC in a forest area prepared microplans. Appropriate multidisciplinary approaches, incorporating animal husbandry, sericulture, agroforestry, floriculture, and so on were also being taken into consideration. Similarly, territorial, social forestry, and soil conservation activities were all part of the microplan. This represented a substantial change from the traditional forest management system. Training was given to different levels of forest department staff, as well as to FPC members and leaders. "Seeing is believing" had led to replication through inter- and intra-state trips and exposure.

## Discussion

On being asked about the kind of authority vested in the FPCs, Mr. Mandal stated that the the Beat Officer from the forest department was the FPC Secretary, and one *Panchayat* member was also on the committee. Frequent meetings were held to discuss issues and make decisions.

Regarding the benefits to the forest users' group from the timber sold, he noted that the FPC received 25 per cent of the revenue in cash. However, the timber was not harvestable unless it was marketable, and marketing was a problem, as the use of sal pole timber had largely been replaced by other materials in scaffolding and construction work. Three types of poles were distinguished for their marketability: thin poles were distributed to the people; thick poles were given to the marketing corporation for use as pit props and posts; and medium poles were sold to the medium-density fibreboard factories. This was an exception to the rule, because of the need to support JFM. Ordinarily, forestry products were used for industry. But in this way, jobs were also provided to forest protection committee members.

A general question concerning the handling of gender issues was responded to by stating that some women were employed as forest officers. Also, families of serving and retired foresters were encouraged to apply for jobs, so some women were working in the *Panchayat*(s). It was stipulated that one third of the committee members should be women, but FPC membership was by family, where husband and/or wives were members.

Highlighting the role of NGOs, Mr. Mandal said they were good for giving training but that they needed precise guidelines to improve their output. They tried to send NGOs to help less successful FPCs. On being asked if the private tree growers managed themselves or hired professional foresters, he said they sometimes hired consultants or retired professional foresters. There was a panel of retired forest officers residing in different districts and cities who provided such assistance.

The discussion concluded with a pertinent question about users and whether they paid taxes or royalties to the government. Mr. Mandal replied in the negative but said that tree cards were kept on government trees as a method of control.

*Andhra Pradesh by Mr. Mohan Gopinath*

### Forest Department Institutional Development Study

Mr. Mohan Gopinath made a presentation on the institutional development study of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (APFD) being conducted by the Centre for Organisation Development, Hyderabad, India.

The Study's objective was to evolve a strategy to transform the APFD into an organisation which was responsive to change, one that maintained a good balance between users and the outer environment. The key actors in forest management were

the wildlife conservationists and environmentalists, timber harvesters and industrialists, the rural population, and scientific foresters. The Study was based on a communications' structure strategy. It was being conducted as a set of five modules: Goals and Strategies; Structure and Systems; Culture and Values; Human Resource Development; and Management of Change.

## Background

Against the background of worldwide forest degradation, two specific challenges were of crucial importance to Indian forests. These were the prevention of excessive deforestation through conservation, protection, and management of the remaining forests and adequate planting of new trees to meet growing demands for forest products and to ensure adequate tree cover for protection of soil and water resources.

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While the Indian national forest policy envisaged that ideal forest cover should be 33 per cent of the land area, it was in fact about 22 per cent nationwide and only 17 per cent for Andhra Pradesh. Although forest protection in the state was of national significance, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, with over 12,000 personnel, had been unable to tackle the problem. Twenty-five per cent, or 6.4 million hectares, of the state's reserve forest was bare of tree cover and 35 per cent was continuously underproductive because of unsatisfactory stocking. Resource depletion was a continuing process.

## Methodology

The study sample was comprised of a stratified random sampling covering all levels of forest department staff, forest guards inclusive. Primary data collection was through questionnaires in two different forms: Form A for gazetted officers and Form B for non-gazetted officers. The participant observation method and cases on career progression were also used. Structured interviews were held with decision-makers in APFD and other organisations. Secondary sources consisted of data reports and a review of relevant literature.

Workshops to prepare draft reports for each module were held in collaboration with the forest department. This was carried out to establish ownership of the document, i.e., the findings and recommendations, and to guarantee that the department would pay attention to the suggestions made in the reports.

The study raised some issues and recommended changing the forest department from its present mode of operations into an institution that could better respond to new



situations. Many of the suggestions were for a shift from the department's current stance as a reactive body into a more proactive one. Instead of appearing helpless in the face of seemingly difficult problems, the department would then act from a position of resourcefulness in seeking creative solutions, becoming a dynamic rather than a static institution.

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In order to work more effectively with local communities, the department should abandon its adversarial stance, seeking to develop a partnership role. This would involve a shift in focus from monopolising forest products to sharing them and from a policing function to one of persuasion and education. The department would no longer be the agency that did everything, but would focus on core functions.

The endeavour of the Centre for Organisation Development's study was to contribute not only at the state level, but, in the long run, at the national level towards effective forest management. It would, concurrently, contribute to giving a more corporate form to a government department.

## ***Discussion***

Mr. Gopinath was asked when the study's recommendations could be translated into reality. He responded that certain items needed no clearance and could be adopted immediately. Those which required only state approval could be next, and those requiring national-level clearance would be handled last.

*Bhutan by Mr. D.B. Dhital*

## **Background**

Mr. Dhital began by providing an overview of Bhutan's policies and forest resources. Bhutan had an area of 40,077sq.km., 76.4 per cent of which was under various types of forest cover, 64.4 per cent being medium and high density forests, and eight per cent scrubland. The Department of Forests was established in 1952 and the first Forest Act was passed in 1969. This Act, focussing on forest protection, nationalised all forests and trees. Under a Royal decree, a social forestry programme was initiated in 1979. This mainly involved tree distribution and plantation by school children and rural communities. Despite the emphasis on people's participation, no incentives were provided to protect trees and the programme was not very successful.

## Institutional Development

National Forest Management in Bhutan started in 1980. With a forest protection and management focus, this was a more participatory approach that took people's needs and aspirations into account. The period from 1987 to 1992 saw the development of new laws for social forestry which focussed on people's participation. The main components of the interim social forestry rules from 1990 to 1993 were:

- ▶ private forestry: registration to transfer tree ownership; encouragement of tree planting on private lands and
- ▶ community forestry: transfer of traditionally utilised forest land units (TUFLU) for purposes of protection and management; two types of user groups (primary and secondary) were recognised. Primary users had usufruct and other rights; secondary users had usufruct rights only.

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*Participatory forest management is a recent phenomenon in Bhutan. After nationalisation, high and medium forest cover increased from 60 per cent to 64 per cent, according to the 1992 imaging. The Bhutanese are eager to learn more from the successes and failures of neighbouring countries.*

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In 1993 the Forest and Nature Conservation Act was introduced. The current status of forest-management is summed up below.

- ▶ Pilot social and community forestry work in selected districts
- ▶ Guidelines for implementing social and community forestry programmes have been finalised
- ▶ RRA is being used for site selection (TUFLU)
- ▶ PRA is being used for formation of user groups and preparation of operational plans

Both degraded and/or plantation forests, as well as high forests, could be handed over; the requirements for handover being the formation of user groups and an operational plan. In addition to the social and community forestry projects, the management plan for the remaining national high forest included protection, both with and without yield. Implementation and some regulatory functions were transferred from 10 territorial forest divisions to 20 District Forestry Extension Sections (DFES). Each DFES had one range officer, one forester, and two forest guards. Guidelines and technical back-stopping remained the responsibility of the Central Social Forestry and Extension Section (SFES) of the Ministry of Agriculture. The SFES became responsible for the following: social forestry, including both private forestry and community forestry; forestry extension services; afforestation; and watershed management. All these measures represented a step towards decentralisation.



Donors for forestry projects in Bhutan were the FAO/UNDP at the central level and GTZ, World Bank, and SNV at the project level. The latter three could not implement their own projects but had to rely on the DFO as implementors. Currently, the four donor-funded projects covered 12 of the 20 DFES districts, each with a social forestry component.

Participatory forest management was a recent phenomenon in Bhutan. After nationalisation, high and medium forest cover increased from 60 per cent to 64 per cent, according to the 1992 imaging. The Bhutanese were eager to learn more from the successes and failures of neighbouring countries.

### *Jammu and Kashmir by Mr. Mir Inayatullah*

The background about the state and its forests was presented by Mr. Mir Inayatullah, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. The state was divided into three distinct agroclimatic zones: Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. Forest conservation began in 1891 with the creation of the State Forest Department for conserving and managing the natural forests to meet the requirements of the people and also to generate revenue for the overall development of the state. Ever since, forests had been managed on the sustained yield principle. All forest lands were demarcated, state-owned, and covered by working plans.

According to estimates, currently seven hundred thousand hectares of forest land were degraded. Stress on maximising revenue from forests and populist measures, such as allotting forest lands to landless people to 'grow more food', had become a common tool of political patronage. The fruit industry in Kashmir Valley has prospered, increasing fruit production and thereby increasing demand for wood for packing boxes. The required wood had to come from the forests, very often through unauthorised means. Gradually, fast-growing poplars, planted on farmlands and other common lands through the social forestry programme launched in 1982, had come to meet the requirements of the fruit packing-case industry.

The social forestry project started with World Bank aid in 1982 and continued till 1987. During these five years, plantations were raised on degraded forest lands, farmlands, common lands of villages, and roadsides and canal banks. People's awareness about the need for protection of forests and plantations had been raised. There was more cooperation from the people with the social forestry programme in Kashmir as well as in Jammu.

The major factors causing degradation of forests were cited as: increasing population pressure, overgrazing, encroachment, illicit felling, and political interference in the administration. Traditionally, foresters were not open to the people, believing in the dictum "our jurisdiction starts where civilisation ends," but, in the recent past, there had been a perceptible change in their outlook. There had been increasing interaction between foresters and the people. People appreciated the role of foresters in meeting their needs for fuelwood, fodder, and so on. Jammu and Kashmir state had its own



Forest Conservation Act, 1990 and JFM Order of 1991. While there was initial resistance to raising plantations on village common lands, people were now coming forward and offering more and more lands for social forestry plantations.

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#### *Legal Aspects by Mr. P. Patnaik*

The Jammu and Kashmir order on JFM, entitled 'J and K Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests and Village Plantation Rules,' was issued in 1992. According to these Rules, village forest committees (VFC), who jointly managed the plantations, were to be formed.

If the plantations were on village common lands, the VFC received 75 per cent of the final harvest, the balance of 25 per cent going to the government. In the case of plantations on demarcated forest land, the VFC received 25 per cent of the final harvest, with the government receiving the remaining 75 per cent. All intermediate yields, such as grass, fodder, and fuelwood from loppings and thinnings, went free of cost to the VFC, which distributed them among its members.

The VFC consisted of members taken from each village household. A VFC had an executive committee of 11 members, including a minimum of two women and two persons from backward classes. There were now over 600 VFCs functioning in the state. The Member Secretary of the executive committee was usually a representative of the forest department, a forester or a forest guard, or someone of equivalent rank in the social forestry directorate. With the increasing number of VFCs, it was felt that there should be a larger cadre of junior-level social forestry workers to service the VFCs and make them more effective.

#### *Constraints and Opportunities by Mr. M.J. Sharma*

Sharing his experiences, Mr. Sharma said he had been a district forest officer when he was told to initiate the JFM process in his division. He had no idea how to begin. Local people were not interested and initially even insulted the foresters. Constant interaction and persuasion, however, had changed people's attitudes towards foresters and forestry. People still did not believe that they would get their share, but they had started taking an interest. Mr. Sharma found that forming the committees was the most difficult part, because village people were so divided by politics and family feuds that achieving a balance on the committee was extremely important. He noted that JFM was a living science and a good tool for foresters.

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*If the plantations are on village common lands, the VFC received 75 per cent of the final harvest, the balance of 25 per cent went to the government. In the case of plantations on demarcated forest land, the VFC received 25 per cent of the final harvest, with the government receiving the remaining 75 per cent. All intermediate yields.....went free of cost to the VFC which distributed them among its members.*

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#### *Accountability by Mr. A.K. Tikku*

This presentation was given by Mr. Tikku. He noted that JFM was only successful when the forests were such that they actually benefitted people. Earlier social forestry plantations provided no benefits to local communities. Beginning in 1988, degraded areas were brought under community protection. Within three years, impressive results were seen. The good regenerating capacity of sal had led to a continuous drop in the planting target of plants per hectare.

Innovative planting techniques, along with grass production to solve the fodder problem, had enhanced people's interest in forest management, even without trees. Grassland development also promoted tree growth, and the trees were then used for timber, fuelwood, and fodder. More economical methods, such as 'root-shoot' planting, water harvesting, and pasture development were now being tried. In addition, to give the programme a yearly sustained yield, collection of non-timber forest products and rope making from *bhabar* grasses were being promoted.

The presentation concluded with a film on JFM in Jammu and Kashmir followed by a discussion.

#### **Discussion**

As it was mentioned in the presentation that the cost of plantation establishment was deducted before the people's portion of the revenue was distributed, there was confusion over how this cost was calculated and over whether the people actually got something. Mr. Inayatullah noted that in sharing the returns from the final harvest (75%:25% or vice versa) the net returns were to be considered after deducting the cost of establishment, maintenance, and others. This did leave an amount of discretion to the officer who calculated these costs. This aspect had been a subject of discussion in a number of workshops. The department intended to increase transparency on this issue and was open to suggestions for improvement.

To queries on the aspect of sustainability, the group responded that the development of rural areas through the social forestry programme was bound to be sustainable. Apart from giving direct employment by way of labour, it met the people's requirements for fodder, fuelwood, and small timber on their doorsteps. Women did not have to walk



several kilometres to the nearest natural forest to meet their daily needs for fuel and fodder. Consequently, pressure on natural high forests was eased and there was an overall improvement in the ecology and environment.

Most of the participants wanted to know the cost of plantation. Mr. Inayatullah explained that on an average it came to IRs 7,000<sup>1</sup> per hectare. This was higher in the case of strip plantations or smaller patches. A major part of the cost was recovered through intermediate yields of grass, fodder, and others, much before the final harvest.

### *Nepal by Mr. N.K. Shrestha*

The Nepal presentation was made by Dr. Narayan Kazi Shrestha of the Forest, Trees, and People Programme (FTPP). Dr. Shrestha began by noting that, prior to 1950, during Nepal's feudal period, overlords controlled the forests as a method of controlling the people, since they needed forest products. When the democratic government came to power in 1950, the government, in order to remove control of the forests from the feudal rulers, nationalised all the forests. Some private forests were allowed even under nationalisation, but the people were not aware of this.

In 1960, the parliament was abrogated and control returned to the feudal families. The 1961 Forest Act established *panchayat* forests or plantation forests from which 100 per cent of the income went to the *panchayat*, and *panchayat* protected forests, i.e., standing forests, from which 75 per cent of the revenue went to the *panchayat* and 25 per cent to the government. The forest department began taking some control of forest management around this time.

The 1967 Forest Protection Act gave the forest department more power. People caught poaching could even be shot. Byelaws to implement community forestry were passed in 1978, but, until 1987, the focus was on resource creation. Several hundred user groups were formed during this time but were under the control of the elite and educated people. The operational plans were in English and the users had very poor knowledge about laws and rules and regulations.

The community forestry process began to change in 1987, with the holding of the first community forestry seminar in Nepal. Many small initiatives were presented as case studies, and the forest department realised that true participation of the people was needed for sustainable and effective community forestry. Up to this time, rangers and ward chairpersons had been on the users' committees, but their membership was now questioned since they were not users.

The Forestry Master Plan was prepared between 1986 and 1989. It clearly recognised the importance of true people's participation and that a concentration of power could have negative consequences. The section on socioeconomic growth emphasised the involvement of women, the poor, and other disadvantaged groups on the committees.

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<sup>1</sup> There are 34.50 Indian rupees to the US dollar



Following democratic changes in Nepal in 1990, actual Forest User Groups (FUGs) were recognised, as opposed to users' committees. This change was based on the understanding that without soliciting participation of all users in decision-making, community forestry would not work. A mechanism to create consensus among users was established. Under this mechanism forest department staff began to explain the rules and regulations, including people's rights, to determine whether they wanted to participate in the community forestry programme. The rules were discussed in small interest groups. The many possible management plans that resulted from these discussions were later synthesised. The FUG itself decided if a committee was needed. Such a committee, if established, could only implement rules made and approved by the general assembly.

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The New Forest Act of Nepal was passed in 1993 and the implementing byelaws in 1995. The forest department had also prepared operational guidelines for users' group formation and management plan preparation. Community forestry in Nepal was clearly a priority area; 47 per cent of the forestry budget was allocated for community forestry programmes.

### Opportunities, Constraints, and Achievements

Opportunities included the decentralisation of decision-making power and the recognition of FUGs as forest managers. This led to FUGs becoming involved in community development activities and thereby to more effective mobilisation of local resources. Properly handled, there were also opportunities for confidence-building and empowerment of poor women.

Some of the constraints identified were the lengthy process of handing over forests to communities, insufficient human and other resources, and dearth of information for planning. There was also a lack of incentives at the field level, and field personnel were inadequately equipped in social skills.

Achievements thus far had been the legal recognition of community forestry with more than 3,000 FUGs currently in operation and the 140,000ha of forest already handed over. There was an increased demand for the handing over of forests to communities. It was estimated that there were more than 7,000 potential FUGs. The FUG process had become a model for other community organising processes and FUGs were entrusted with forestry and other development activities. This had led to an attitudinal change among forest professionals.

Dr. Shrestha commented that "we realise we can't have a blueprint. We must base our work on the actual situation. This is true for all stakeholders: the department, users, and others. In a way, it is a social revolution." Initially, the scope of community forestry was limited to fulfilment of subsistence needs, but there had been a change through a policy shift to encompass more broad-based community development, including village-based enterprises. Mechanisms and processes for systematic and regular reflection on community forestry processes and activities were being developed.

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*Initially the scope of community forestry was limited to fulfilment of subsistence needs, but there has been a change through a policy shift to encompass more broad-based community development, including village-based enterprises.*

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## **Discussion**

During discussions the issue was raised that since forest management was a technical subject how did the forest user groups cope and what help did the forest department provide? Mr. Shrestha gave a clear picture. He said that the operational plan was made by forestry technicians, either from the department or elsewhere. Then it was approved by the users' group and the department. Earlier, only rangers could make a plan, but now any forester could do so. The authority of final approval rested with the district forest officer.

Talking of the impact of handing over forests on the land tenure system, the participants were curious as to how it would affect future land-use planning. Mr. Shrestha replied that certain activities, such as agriculture, construction, and so on, were not allowed in community forests. One study showed that a five per cent increase in forest cover took place after introduction of the community forestry process.

The participants also wanted to know how people's needs for forest products were met prior to the community forestry programme. Mr. Shrestha promptly replied that they had been met through government forests, traditional rights, and from private lands.

Next came the primary question of cost-sharing between the government and the FUG. Mr. Shrestha stated that different bilateral projects and also a World Bank project existed. Previously, in the World Bank project, 80 per cent of the funding had been provided by the government and 20 per cent by the community. Now it was on a 50:50 basis and, by next year, the government share would decrease further. The goal was to remove the subsidy gradually.

The discussion concluded with a query as to whether five years was sufficient time to manage a forest? Mr. Shrestha noted that five years was not the end of the management period, it was just that the operational plan charted user group activities for a five-year period.

The forests of Himachal Pradesh were important from a national, regional, and local point of view and needed to be preserved, developed, and maintained. The total land area of the state covered 55,673sq. km. and the total forest area covered 37, 591sq. km.

A time-line of key milestones in forestry management in the state was given as follows.

1948	State of Himachal Pradesh formed
1952	National Forest Policy revised
1960	Emphasis placed on the state becoming self-reliant in agriculture
1960	Extension of horticulture and its encroachment on forest lands, timber for packing cases and building houses
1974	Land given to the landless
1978	Promulgation of the Land Preservation Act for private forests
1982	Nationalisation of the timber and resin trade
1990	Government of India notification for JFM
1991	Ban on fire/spruce packing cases
1993	Himachal Pradesh's notification for JFM

Various factors contributed to the emergence of joint forest management (JFM) and participatory forest management (PFM). These included increased pressure on the forests as a result of increases in population and increases in demand for forest products, along with changing government policies and improvements in communication, commercialisation, and economic diversification. Such pressures led to the forest department undertaking a variety of often conflicting roles, such as policing, regeneration, and harvesting, in addition to the commitment to meet local demands for forest products. The following diagramme represents the situation that led to the adoption of JFM/PFM in Himachal Pradesh (Fig. 5).

The forest department attempted to resolve these conflicts through a right-holder's approach to forest settlements and forest cooperatives and through the social forestry approach, along with village-level institutions like *Panchayat(s)*, *Mahila-Mandal(s)* and *Yuvak Mandal(s)*. In addition, since 1980 there had been multidisciplinary integrated approaches through the technical cooperation programme of German Assistance (GTZ), a major thrust of which was the building of Trust and Confidence Measures (TRUCO). Additional, externally-aided projects included the World Bank Integrated Watershed Development Project, the UK-sponsored HP Forestry Project in Kullu and Mandi, and the joint Indian-Norwegian Environment Cooperation Project.

### Opportunities and Constraints

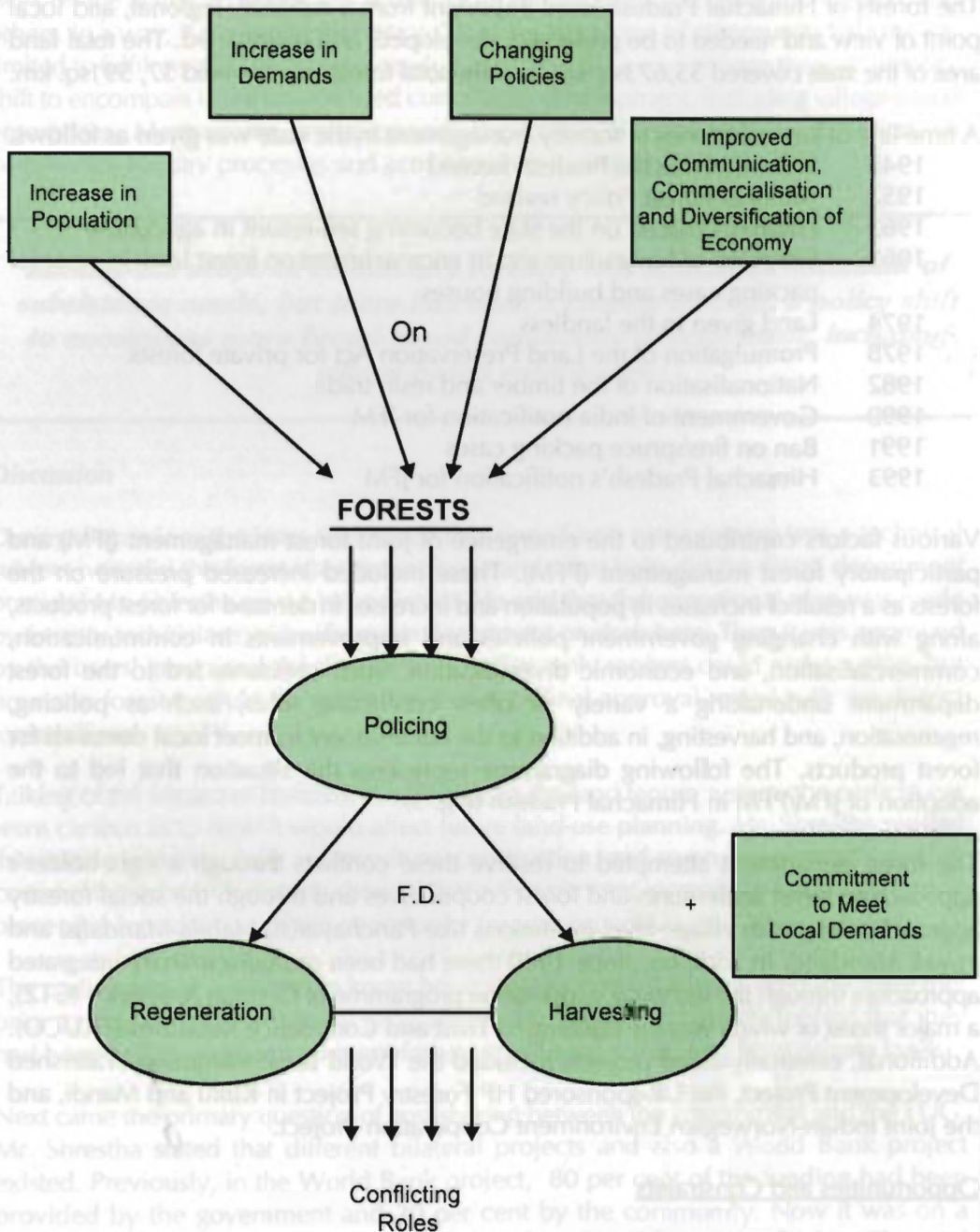
Opportunities for development included relatively high literacy and local dependence on forests and forest products. In addition, Himachal Pradesh had inherited a well-established system of forest management and a great deal of forest wealth, estimated at IRs 49,000 crore<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> One crore = 10 million rupees.



Figure 5: Emergence of JFM/PFM



Recognised constraints arose from political factors, along with the existence of already assured and/or guaranteed rights which might not be consistent with rational and ecological forest management.

## Institutional Changes

Attitudinal changes were required among both DFFC staff and local communities. Staff changes could be brought about through training, workshops, and study tours, and local people's awareness could be raised through improved extension services, workshops, and visits to areas with well-developed programmes.

With regard to the organisation, the department was passing through a transitional phase which had begun in late 1992 and involved the launching of new multidisciplinary projects, the introduction of Joint Forest Management, and a reorganisation following the culmination of the National Social Forestry Project. Among other things, the reorganisation involved a break up of department work into smaller geographic units for more intensive work. New institutions, such as Village Forest Development Committees (VFDCs), were to be constituted.

High priority was being given to five externally-aided projects to pool global resources and new technologies. These include the Indo-German Changar Project in the lower catchment areas of the Binwa River; the World Bank sponsored Integrated Watershed Development Project; the Eco-development project in the Great Himalayan National Park; the ODA India HP Forestry project in Kullu and Mandi; and the NORAD Environment Cooperation Project for improving management of natural resources in the state. This was to be achieved by increasing the capacity of government agencies, organisations, institutions, public enterprises, and NGOs to establish a framework for the formulation and implementation of environmental policies. These projects involved both participatory management and joint forest management approaches.

## Role of Policy-makers

Policies should be consistent and based on technical considerations. Changes should come slowly and gradually in order to be understood correctly in the proper perspective. Therefore, only 20 JFM pilot locations were to be introduced in three years in two districts of Kullu and Mandi under the ODA project.

Training abroad and within India, workshops, and study tours were being provided, and training schools at Chail and Sundernagar had introduced JFM into their curriculum.

## **Session V: Issue-based Group Discussions**

The original plan for the workshop had been for all participants to convene in small working groups for discussions on three different themes developed by workshop organisers from the list of participants' expectations. The unexpected length of the country presentations necessitated a change in plan, and it was decided to allot a single theme to each group rather than have all groups discuss all three themes. The themes for discussion were as follow:

- ▶ strategies for encouraging change in the role of the Forest Department,
- ▶ strategies for user group motivation, and
- ▶ strategies for participatory forest management.

Following their discussions, the groups gathered at the plenary to make their presentations.

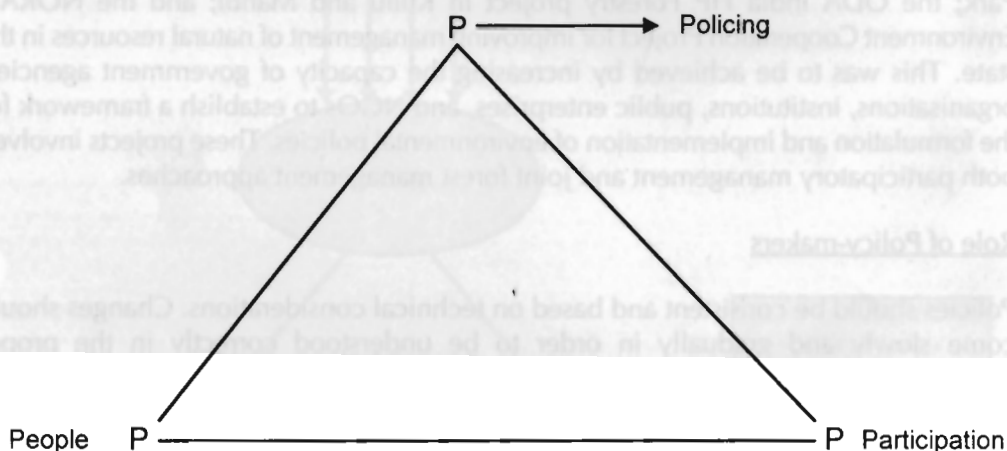
### *Group One: Strategies for Encouraging Change in the Role of the Forest Department*

#### Group members

- Toran B Karki
- Madhav Ghimire
- G.K. Pradhan
- M.J. Sharma
- Gurmit Singh
- Mohan Gopinath
- K.D. Sharma

Mr. G.K. Pradhan made the presentation for this group and identified the following issues (Fig. 6).

**Figure 6: Policing, People, and Participation**



#### Policing versus Participation

The forest department should gradually reduce its policing function and modify the protection system by handing over protection to the partners. This reduction should begin in pilot locations. Participation should gradually increase, leading to joint planning and implementation. There should be participatory planning and protection through the community.

#### Strategies for Attitudinal Change

Changes were required from top to bottom in the forest department as well as amongst community members. Constant interaction and communication between the staff and



community were required for the development of mutual understanding. Top-down support in the form of seminars, workshops, and field trips should be provided.

### Motivating Forest Department Staff

The forest department must recognise the community's skills and efforts and must provide suitable working areas. JFM work should get top priority and suitable result-based incentives must be provided.

### Training of Forest Department Staff

A training needs' analysis should be conducted in order to design a proper training programme for forestry staff. Training was required at the following levels:

- policy level,
- technical/social skill level, and
- management level.

The curriculum at all levels should reflect the needs of participatory forest management.

### Human Resource Development Policy

Special training should be designed for staff and users to cope with the changes necessitated by PFM approaches. Recruitment and career progression policies must be restructured.

### *Group Two: User Group Motivation*

Group members

- M.L. Shrestha
- N.K. Shrestha
- Hom Mani Bhandari
- P.R. Tamrakar
- Nalini Subba
- D.P. Gupta
- G.S. Mandal
- P. Patnaik

Mr. Tamrakar presented the results of the group's discussion.

### Heterogeneous Groups

Incentive and information packages should be the same for different groups of people, but delivery mechanisms should differ according to the situation. Separate interest groups should first be met individually and then in larger groups.

## Incentives and Voluntarism

Motivation came through self-realisation; community people should be allowed to make their own decisions.

## Ensuring Women's Participation

Women's involvement should be ensured at every stage. This could result from sensitising men about women's involvement for better forest management. The focus should be on women's groups rather than on individuals.

## Increasing Awareness about Community Forestry

Several methods were suggested to provide information on community forestry to community members. These included adapting information packages to local conditions and distributing printed material in local languages to prospective users. Information provided should be clear on the rights of the people and the legal provisions of participatory forestry programmes. Awareness about the programme should be raised through informal workshops, training camps, farmers' camps, and local-level home visits. Recognising local community organisations as possible venues for awareness-raising was also helpful in this regard.

## *Group Three: Strategies for Participatory Forest Management*

Group members

- K.B. Shrestha
- A.L. Karna
- D.B. Dhital
- Monica Manandhar
- Ugyen Dorji
- Savita
- Inayatullah Mir
- A.K. Tikku

The presentation was made by Savita Sharma.

## Extension

There should be an interdisciplinary four-way flow covering the following topics:

- animal husbandry,
- agriculture,
- horticulture, and
- rural development.

Extension services should be in local languages and should portray local culture and traditions. Exchange visits and workshops were required at all levels, along with central coordination, to allow feedback for regular improvement on materials.

Forest Resources: Village forest committees could assure judicious use of resources with alternatives for construction timber to be suggested. Alternative income-generating sources included:

- cultivation of mushrooms,
- beekeeping,
- poultry, and
- silkworm production.

Possible alternative energy sources were solar stoves/cookers, biogas, and improved stoves. Energy plantation could be introduced near habitations. The conservation and cultivation of non-timber forest products could be encouraged.

Site-specific Activities: Examples were land-use planning, choices of site-specific species, and assuring acceptability to the users' group.

Extent of Participation: Participation should encompass planning, implementation, monitoring, and impact evaluation.

Farming systems: Agroforestry, farm forestry, multi-story/multi-species' forestry, and silvopastoral systems should all be introduced to the communities through demonstration plots, providing access to needed materials, seeds and seedlings of their choice, and technical know-how. They would then be motivated to engage in these activities.

Grassland management: This involved encouraging rotational grazing and stall feeding, as well as motivating people to reduce the number of cattle and introduce improved varieties. Distribution of improved seed varieties and demonstration of improved techniques were also important.

Protection against Fires: Important methods included educating people about fire hazards, continuous removal of litter through community participation, and motivating people to keep the fire lines clear of inflammable materials.

### *Evening Programme*

The evening's entertainment was provided by a song and dance troupe performing the traditional music of Himachal Pradesh. Many workshop participants were inspired by the performance to sing folksongs or recite poetry from their own regions and countries.