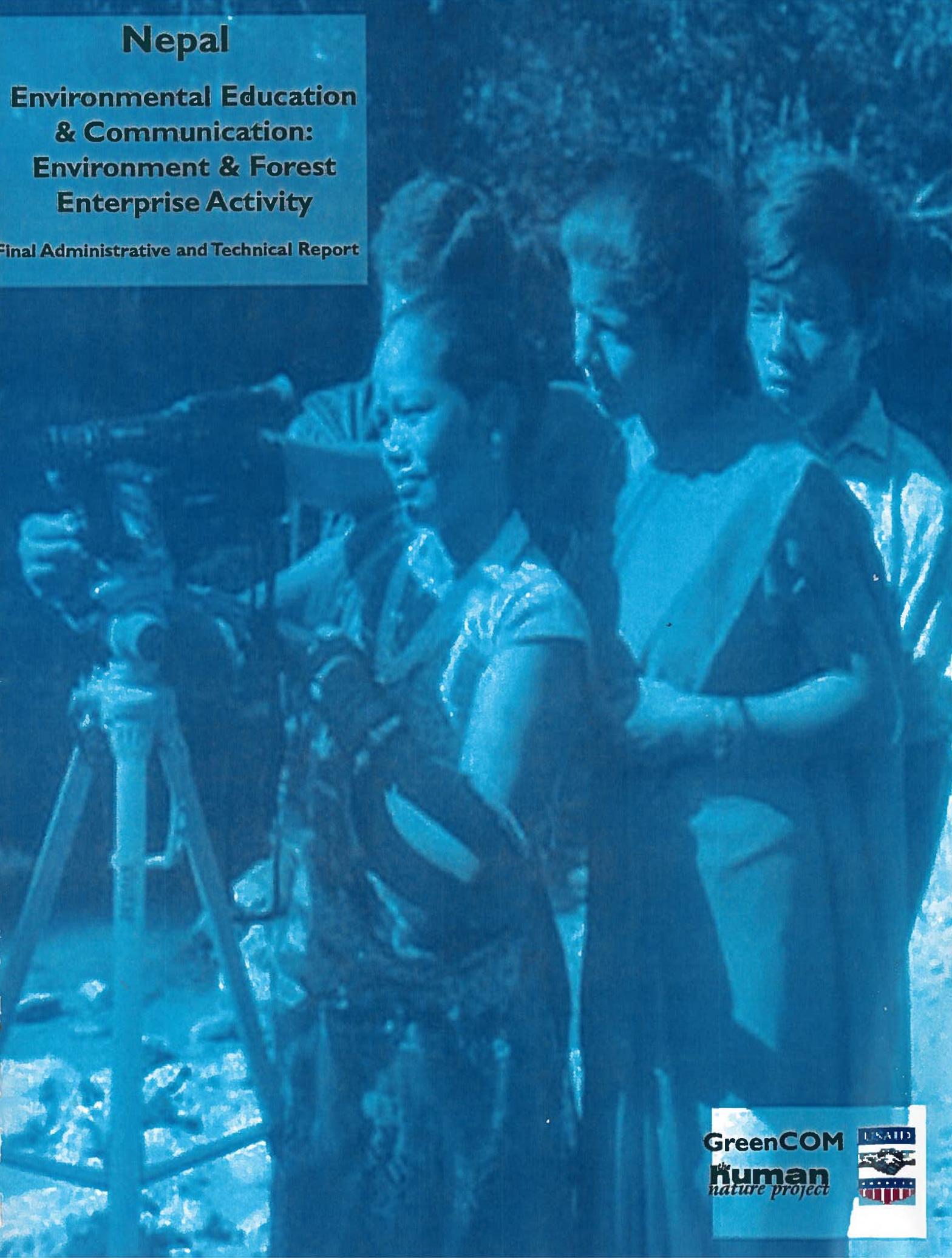


# Nepal

## Environmental Education & Communication: Environment & Forest Enterprise Activity

Final Administrative and Technical Report



**GreenCOM**  
*the human  
nature project*



PII-ACD-990

99160

## **Nepal**

# **Environmental Education and Communication— Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity (EFEA)**

## **GreenCOM Final Report**

November  
1998

**GreenCOM  
Environmental Education and Communication Project  
U S Agency for International Development  
Contract No PCE-Q-00-93-00069-00  
Delivery Order/Task Order No 18**

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# GreenCOM Summary Report

## Nepal Delivery Order

PCE-Q-00-93-00069-00 (Task order #18)  
Submitted November 2, 1998

**1 Type of activity** Support to policy dialogue between community forestry user groups and officials of the Nepalese environmental sector

Geographical area Nepal, Midwest Region

Dates of activity November 7, 1996 to Sept 28, 1998

Team composition    Technical Team Leader Dr Andrew Manzardo  
                                  Country Coordinator -- Krishna Gautam  
                                  Video Specialist -- Kedar Sharma  
                                  Home Office Backstop -- Mary Sebold

**2 Objective of the activity** The objective of this delivery order is to provide communication support to the Environmental and Forest Enterprise Activity (EFEA) by developing materials for community forestry and facilitating a program that connects policy makers with community representatives

See the overall Scope of Work, included here as Attachment 1

### **3 Activities performed**

#### **1 Program Deliverables**

- 1    Support Implementation of Forest Policy
- 1 1    Annual Community Forestry Fora
- 1 1 1    Annual Community Forestry Fora (2)

GreenCOM Nepal organized Annual Community Forestry Forum on Friday the 13th March 1998. The Forum was attended by the three ministers (a) Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, (b) State Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation and (c) Minister for Law and Justice along with 21 CFUG representatives of whom 7 were women. Other participants of the Forum include secretaries to the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Ministry of Law and Justice, and the Ministry of Population and Environment.

The forestry forum was a success. The Minister of State for forests and soil conservation, the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and several other HMG Senior officials indicated that this forum was very special in that it involved a face-to-face communication between farmers and policy makers in one place. Actually, the Secretary said that this was the first such meeting in which he has participated. The fact that the Ministers and the senior officials from the Ministry and its Departments were ready to listen to the voice of the people in a public meeting in itself meant a lot. The representatives from the field shared the achievements of EFEA projects as well as constraints to the implementation of Forest Act and By-Laws.

The Minister and the State Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation and the Minister of Law and Justice and the Secretaries answered the issues raised in the video letter. This was a very important aspect of the forum where the policy makers responded to the concerns of the grassroots level people.

The concerned His Majesty's Government (HMG) officials as well as Ministers expressed that they will try to do something about the key policy issues that were raised at the forum.

The presentations of achievements and issues/problems by the participants from districts were very enlightening.

The small group discussion in the afternoon on the issues/problems raised in the morning session was very productive and meaningful. The discussions led to finding out what actions need to be taken within what time frame. The presentations based on the small group discussion were also very interesting. One issue that came out very loud and clear was that the local people are not aware of the provisions in the Forest Act and By-laws. It seems that they do not have easy access to these documents.

Given the success of the forum, it would be very meaningful to follow-up on the issues raised at this forum.

Both the Nepali and English daily news papers gave extensive coverage of news on the Forum as was done by the Nepal Television and Nepal Radio.

The second Forum was canceled due to lack of time under the GreenCOM delivery order, it may be held in 1999 through another mechanism.

#### 1 1 2 Video letters (2)

With the help of Technical Team Leader Dr Andrew Manzardo, a video letter from one of the Community Forest of EFEA project area was completed and submitted to USAID as a deliverable. Community Video Specialist Mr Kedar Sharma was responsible for this production with technical assistance from the Himalaya Films

#### 1 1 3 Computerized Video Presentations (CVP) (2)

Again with the help of Technical Team Leader, the GreenCOM Nepal finalized the production of a Computerized Video Presentation (CVP) in March. The CVP gives short history of Forest Management in Nepal, raises issues or major concerns of the sector and briefly describes activities of agencies involved in this sector including that of Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity Program (EFEA) and the inputs of GreenCOM in EFEA.

#### 1 1 4 Assist CFUG members with presentations for each forum

This has been done, as noted above. The presence and presentation of the village people at the Forum were perhaps the biggest impact upon officials there. Some of the top ministry officials had never heard directly from rural people about the situation of their forests. See above.

#### 1 1 5 MOFSC staff trained in forum development and implementation process

MOFSC involvement with the Forum was substantial, and their ability to participate in the next Forum, whenever that may be, is now greatly enhanced.

#### 1 1 6 Footage of forum to present to CFUGS

The forum was recorded in video form through the services of Himalaya Films, a local subcontractor. This video is now available for viewing in the project area – though currently civil unrest in that area has curtailed project activity.

#### 1 2 Forest Sector Coordinating Committee (FSCC) Meeting

GreenCOM Nepal supported a one day Forest Sector Coordination Committee (FSCC) meeting on 15th February. The meeting attended by more than 100 representatives of Government and non-government agencies working in the forest sector of Nepal was inaugurated by the State Minister for the ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. The main objective of the meeting was to bring about coordination and uniformity in the implementation of forest development and management programs in Nepal. Organized by GreenCOM Nepal, the meeting was successful in attaining its objectives. The proceedings of the FSCC meeting have been prepared.

## 1 2 2 Preparation of computerized presentations for two FSCC meetings

The draft version was finalized during Dr Manzardo's visit of 22 Feb to 6 March 1998

## 1 2 3 Formative research to help identify necessary data for USAID/EFEA presentation

This research was carried out by NewERA, a local subcontractor The final report submitted to USAID

## 1 3 Action (Formative) Research

### 1 3 1 A research plan of action

This work was carried out by GreenCOM staff member Nancy Diamond and NewERA

### 1 3 2 A formative research final report

This was done by NewERA and GreenCOM staff member Orlando Hernandez, and the final report submitted to USAID

## 1 4 Use of Video as an Animation Tool

### 1 4 1 Delivery of video cameras, playback equipment, and generators or solar equipment

On time, completed in July 1997 GreenCOM was asked by USAID to provide portable solar-powered video systems to rural villages for the presentation of environmental programs of likely interest to the villagers So great was the interest in these presentations that literally hundreds of people sought to crowd around these small (13" diagonal) screens After discussions with USAID, GreenCOM researched and provided large, video projection systems that would offer these shows at central points but in a viewable fashion to the large number of interested persons In contrast to the earlier the 13-inch screens, these systems could produce a clear image of 200' diagonal!

### 1 4 2 Video equipment maintenance manuals in Nepali

Completed draft was finalized during Dr Manzardo's visit of 22 Feb to 6 March 1998

### 1 4 3 Guidelines for community video extension

Completed draft was finalized during Dr Manzardo's visit of 22nd Feb to 6 March 1998

### 1 4 4 Footage for video letters

The first video letter was completed and presented to the Forum, as described above

## 2 Developing and Validating a System for Participatory Methodologies

### 2 1 Facilitating the establishment of a mobile video system

#### 2 1 1 Four portable video presentation systems

Completed on time, as indicated above. Subsequently, larger projection devices were provided to meet the demand for participation in these presentations

#### 2 1 2 Four INGO and four HMG extension workers trained in operation and maintenance of system

This was carried out by Mr Gautam and Mr Sharma in the period 13-18 Sept 1997

## 3 Production of Select Subject-Specific Materials

### 3 1 Inventory of existing videos and materials

#### 3 1 1 A Final Report with recommendations

Attached

#### 3 2 Production of instructional videos

##### 3 2 1 Twenty copies of one 15-minute instructional video

Completed by Himalaya Films and Mr Sharma

##### 3 2 2 Twenty copies of one 15-minute informative drama video

Completed by Himalaya Films and Mr Sharma

### 3 3 Production of Educational Print Materials

#### 3 3 1 One materials development workshop resulting in development of prototypes

Due Date(s) 1/98                      Who Responsible                      PACT

Status/Progress Indicators

Contract signed with PACT in February 1998 Canceled due to nonperformance Materials not done

3 3 2 Two materials development workshops producing additional prototypes in the field

Due Date(s) 11/97 and 2/98 Who Responsible PACT

Status/Progress Indicators

Contract signed with PACT in Feb 1998 Canceled due to nonperformance Workshops not held

3 4 Production of Audio Tapes

3 4 1 One or two 30-minute audio tapes of 500 copies

Due Date(s) 12/97 & 2/98??? Who Responsible GreenCOM/DC and PACT/Audio Production Firm

Status/Progress Indicators

Contract signed with PACT in Feb 1998 Canceled due to nonperformance Tapes not produced

PCE-5839-Q-18-3069-00  
Nepal

Budget Status 10/31/98

|                    |         | Budget           | Vouchered        | Estimated<br>Accrued | Estimated<br>To Date | Estimated<br>Remaining |
|--------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| LOE                | Days    | 1,273            | 1,133            | 135                  | 1,268                | 5                      |
| Labor Days Ordered | Dollars | \$267,035        | \$224,172        | \$42,000             | \$266,172            | \$863                  |
| Other Direct Costs | Dollars | <u>\$193,832</u> | <u>\$164,180</u> | <u>\$28,000</u>      | <u>\$192,180</u>     | <u>\$1,652</u>         |
| Total              | Dollars | \$460,867        | \$388,352        | \$70,000             | \$458,352            | \$2,515                |

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**FINAL REPORT**  
**The Environmental Education and Communication Project**  
**(GreenCOM)**  
**in the Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity**  
**(EFEA)**  
**in Nepal**

**Submitted to USAID/Nepal**  
**September 1998**

## **The Environmental Education and Communication Project (GreenCOM) in the Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity (EFEA) in Nepal**

### **1 Introduction**

The Environmental Education and Communication Project (GreenCOM) is a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Project which is jointly funded and managed by the Center for Environment, by the Center for Human Capacity Development, and by the Office for Women in Development of the Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research (Contracts PCE-5839-C-00 and 5839-Q-00-3069-00) and by USAID missions in collaborating sites. The project is designed to operate for a five-year period from September 29, 1993 to September 28, 1998. USAID may extend this period for an additional two years. USAID has contracted the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to manage the project. AED subcontractors include Chemonics International, Global Vision Inc., and the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). Additional subcontractors include The Futures Group, Porter/Novelli, PRC Environmental Management, Inc. and The World Resources Institute.

GreenCOM's expertise and technical assistance include the following:

- Operations support in formal and nonformal education and environmental communication,
- Applied research, including the identification of target-audience characteristics, pretesting, monitoring, comparison studies, program impact assessment, and behavioral and gender studies,
- Information exchange including an Information Exchange Center based in Washington, DC, periodic bulletins, and international conferences, and
- Synthesis and dissemination through a case-study methods handbook, instructional videos, IE&C training programs, and published papers.

There are two parts of the contract between USAID and AED. A "Core" contract provides required personnel, facilities, and basic field resources for GreenCOM/Washington. A "Requirements" contract includes individual delivery orders, or "buy-in" agreements. Delivery orders provide the vehicle for most GreenCOM field activities.

In November 1996, USAID/Nepal signed a delivery order agreement ( IQC # PCE-5839-Q-00-3069-00, Delivery Order #18) with GreenCOM to provide specific technical assistance to the Nepalese Environment and Forestry Enterprise Activity (EFEA). The delivery order was to be

completed by September 30, 1998

The Technical Team Leader arrived in Nepal on November 22, 1996 and made necessary additional trips to Nepal in the project period. On November 11, 1996, a local-hire Country Coordinator was contracted for 401.5 days to provide continuity and in-country liaison. This work plan includes the objectives, outputs, activities, deliverables and time line of the GreenCOM/Nepal Delivery Order.

Dr. Andrew E. Manzardo, the Technical Team Leader, arrived on November 22, 1996 and made eight additional trips to Nepal, from January 12-February 10, 1997, from March 26-April 13, 1997, June 18-July 9, 1997, December 5-16, 1997, February 22-March 7, 1998, May 28-June 16, 1998, July 22-August 4, 1998 and September 12-26, 1998. Each of these trips involved redesign of project elements, contracting and program development, training and supervision. In addition to the Technical Team Leader, Dr. Nancy Diamond, an expatriate Research Advisor, arrived between January 12-February 10, 1997 to support the development of the GreenCOM research program. On November 11, 1996, Mr. Krishna M. Gautam, a local-hire Country Coordinator, was contracted to provide continuity and in-country liaison. All of these were provided under AED contracts. In addition, on June 5, 1997, Mr. Kedar Sharma, a local-hire Community Video Contractor, was hired under a Global Vision, Inc. contract to supervise the Community Video Program and provide additional support to the other video elements of the GreenCOM project. New ERA was also contracted to provide research services to the project in February 1997, and supplied a team headed by Dr. Laya Uprety to carry out the first phase of the GreenCOM research program between February and June, 1997. The contract was terminated before its completion through mutual agreement as New ERA was unable to supply researchers to satisfactorily complete research support to Forum activities and media process documentation. These activities were taken up by Mr. Kedar Sharma. Ms. Carina Frantz was hired in August and September, 1998 through an AED contract and through an earlier contract with Global Vision, Inc. to work with Mr. Sharma to help complete work on research activities left incomplete through the termination of the New ERA contract. Ms. Pamela Brooke, an Expatriate Community Video Specialist, was provided under a Global Vision, Inc. contract in July 1997 to work with the local Community Video specialist to undertake preliminary work on that program. Himalaya Films was contracted in August 1997 to work with GreenCOM to produce videos and computerized educational presentations for EFEA.

## **2 GreenCOM Objectives in Nepal**

The objectives of GreenCOM/Nepal were to provide direct support to USAID/Nepal Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity (EFEA) in order to accomplish the following:

- To enhance community understanding of the new forest policy legislation and the community role in it,

- To stimulate the progress of social discourse on the opportunities created by the new policy, primarily between and within user groups and policy makers, with a view to refining the policy and making it easier to implement, and
- To support the forestry/conservation extension work of the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation (MOFSC), Department of Forests (DOF), Department of Soil Conservation (DSCO), National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and EFEA INGOs/NGOs by developing a portable community video presentation system and by training INGOs/NGOs to use the system for showing a variety of educational and entertaining videos to EFEA customers in community forestry user groups and conservation committees

GreenCOM/Nepal activities were meant to bolster USAID/Nepal's Strategic Objective 1 To increase sales of high-value agricultural and forestry products, specifically supporting Strategic Objective 1/Intermediate Result 2 (SO1/IR2), the sustainable management of the productive resource base and the EFEA purpose, to facilitate local control and management of natural resources in the Mid-West Development Region (MWDR) in order to improve forest productivity and environmental sustainability

The following five EFEA activities contribute toward fulfilling the objectives

- accelerating local control and management of natural resources,
- strengthening user groups (CFUGs) and increasing women's participation,
- developing natural resource-based micro-enterprise,
- "bottom-up" planning and policy reform, and
- applied research

GreenCOM's work was meant to promote collaboration among MOFSC staff at the local and national levels, among national-level non-governmental organizations, among partner agencies in the EFEA Project (CARE, the Biodiversity Support Program [BSP] and the World Wildlife Fund [WWF]), among the CFUGs and Conservation Committees and among other USAID/EFEA stakeholders in Mid-West Nepal

GreenCOM focused on the "Bottom-up Planning and Policy Reform," but its activities, in coordination with CARE, the Biodiversity Support Program and the World Wildlife Fund, also contributed to three other EFEA interventions, namely

- Expediting local control and management of natural resources,
- Strengthening user groups (CFUGs) and increasing women's participation, and
- Developing natural resource-based micro-enterprise

### **3 Synergy between Partners**

GreenCOM did not act alone within the framework of the EFEA project In fact, it was not even a major player GreenCOM supplied communications support and training to promote dialog and collaborative efforts within and between sites in the larger project, provided a Forum for

dialog between users and policy makers and between donors and the Government and a video and print record of that dialog, a community-produced "video letter"- a locally produced video- and a computerized presentation, a documentary video and a docu-drama. In each of these activities, GreenCOM acted in concert with at least one of its partners as well as with the Government and the CFUGs

GreenCOM has only a limited field presence in EFEA, namely a part-time staff members working closely with field extension staff employed by the GON, CARE and, to a lesser extent, BSP to work on aspects of the community video program as well as on the Forum. GreenCOM provided technical assistance and field trainers to train extension workers and supervision of video presentations to communities, as well as the equipment to make such presentations in remote villages as well as in areas close to the road. In addition, GreenCOM has relied on GON agencies to help select field sites for initial research activities and media activities, as well as to identify participants for the Forum with policy makers. In return, GreenCOM has furnished tools to its partners to help them accelerate the community development process. Dialog between project partners will create synergy between EFEA partners long after GreenCOM has gone

#### **4 GreenCOM Outputs and Activities**

While contributing to the implementation of other EFEA interventions (e.g. accelerating local control and management of natural resources, strengthening user groups, increasing women's participation, and developing natural resource-based micro-enterprises), GreenCOM worked on the following three outputs at several distinct sites that are representative of the bio-cultural variation within the total EFEA area. In coordination with HMG and the partner agencies, GreenCOM

- Worked to support implementation of the new forest policy and legislation
- Developed and validated a participatory pilot system utilizing media that extended through EFEA partner agencies to EFEA user groups to facilitate systematic dialog between communities and policy makers
- Generated and improved a mobile, human-portable video presentation system that utilized existing forestry videos and new EFEA media to enhance policy awareness and to increase technology transfer to EFEA user groups. GreenCOM also trained INGO teams to effectively utilize media in extension activities with various user groups
- Worked on pilot efforts to enhance community understanding of the new forest policy legislation and the community role in it,
- Worked toward stimulating the progress of social discourse on the opportunities created by the new policy, primarily between and within user groups and policy makers, with a view to refining the policy and making it easier to implement, and

- Supported the forestry/conservation extension work of the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation (MOFSC), Department of Forests (DOF), Department of Soil Conservation (DSCO), National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and EFEA INGOs/NGOs by developing a portable community video presentation system and by training INGOs/NGOs to use the system for showing a variety of educational and entertaining videos to EFEA customers in community forestry user groups and conservation committees

## **A Output #1 Support to the Implementation of Forest Policy**

Through annual community forest fora (CFF) and video, GreenCOM worked with relevant USAID project personnel, national policy makers, national and district level counterparts, certain members of pilot user groups, the national press and other donors to foster dialog and active collaboration on the implementation of Forest Policy. The strategy worked toward ensuring that lessons learned would be more adequately monitored and call the attention of all to problems of implementation to help enable others to apply these lessons to future extension activities in Nepal. Specific strategies in both research and media supported this objective.

### **2 Activities**

#### **A Annual Community Forest Forum**

##### **1 Description**

GreenCOM organized and conducted a single Community Forest Forum (CFF) in March, 1998. The Forum was held in Kathmandu, rather than in the EFEA area, because of the difficulty in getting all the high-level policy makers to be able to travel together to the field at the same time. GreenCOM and the MOFSC originally scheduled the first CFF for January 1998 to coincide with the Annual Program Planning Workshop of EFEA also to be held in January in Tulsipur. The Project Coordination Committee meeting was to be held immediately after the Forum. That proved to be optimistic for the national planning process made it difficult to find a period where participants could all meet together and caused the CFF to be delayed and frequently rescheduled. In the end, such delays delayed the first Forum so much that it didn't seem feasible to call a second Forum before the close of the project. It is for this reason that a second Forum was not held during the project period.

The purpose of the CFF was to establish dialog and policy discussion between and within Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) and between CFUGs and policy makers. Such a dialog was to inform policy makers and EFEA activity managers about customers' perspectives on ways to implement forest policy. Policy makers were felt to then be in a better position to determine the necessity for additional policy reform or implementation. The Forum was to also permit EFEA managers to assess customer satisfaction and field level implementation more effectively.

The Forum from that point of view was highly successful. The dialog was begun through presentations by selected CFUG representatives through "video letters," short productions by the communities edited, according to their wishes, by GreenCOM subcontractors and direct discussion. This was followed by responses by the policy makers, who were well represented by Ministers, Secretaries and others in the appropriate sectors. The dialog was recorded and a transcription published in both Nepali, as well as an English translation (cf Proceedings of the Annual Community Forestry Forum, GreenCOM, March, 1998). The report has been well received and has been distributed to all area District Forest Offices by an enthusiastic EFEA Project Director. The Forum was also appropriately packaged for return to the villages and perhaps for the national media in the form of a short video documentary. Thus, the communication cycle was completed.

There was close interaction among three partners in the development and implementation of the Forum. GreenCOM asked CARE and WWF to help select the appropriate CFUG representatives and they covered part of their travel and per diem costs for a period preceding the actual meeting. As GreenCOM no longer had the financial burden of transporting and supporting the policy makers in the field, it offered to take on the cost of transporting the village participants to the meeting site and supporting them while they were in Kathmandu. The representatives arrived early enough to enable GreenCOM to hold a short workshop to help them develop their presentations to help them better present their ideas effectively at the national Forum. It would have been better to have had more time for this workshop, but again confusion over dates and the need for a long lead time to bring villagers in from remote locations caused this time to be cut short. This is the result of a difference in time perception and utilization between government officers and villagers. Villagers need a longer time where the date can be fixed—government officers are used to frequent adjustments in time to meet short term changes in schedule. The two are very difficult to mesh. The Forum was forced to compromise and in spite of this did quite well.

GreenCOM's Country Coordinator and Community Video Specialist were responsible for arranging travel and organizing logistics as well as carrying out the Forum itself. All worked closely with the MOFSC Planning Division, the EFEA activity coordination staff and other USAID, INGO and CFUG representatives in the development of the agenda and setting up the program. While GreenCOM staff were responsible for the facilitation of the Forum as well, representatives of Ban Udyam and CARE participated as facilitators in the breakdown sessions held in the afternoon, made up of CFUG members and senior policy-makers working together to present a joint report.

The editing of community "video letter" (A Letter from Uchanimbu) was also completed in time for it to be shown at the Forum, providing a voice for CFUG representatives, women and groups not able to attend the meeting.

While the CFF proved to be highly successful in generated discussion and interaction, as well as producing several useful plans for action, it was found that once the activity was over the communication established was not maintained. There was no way to provide CFUG participants continuing interaction with policy makers. While intentions were good, on going government duties rapidly lead to a change of focus for policy makers and other duties prevented them from carrying out their well-intentioned plans. More, a change of government occurred.

soon after the Forum and so a new set of policy-makers came in who were not familiarized with the issues brought up by the CFUG members in the Forum. While useful, the Forum is not sufficient in and of itself to engender the kind of change that was envisaged. Additional activities must be brought in to supplement this activity and help facilitate more on-going interaction.

Oddly, the solution is somewhat counterintuitive. Rather than not hold a forum, it is felt that the more such fora ought to be held, as many as four per year. In spite of the difficulties getting the necessary participants together, holding more frequent meetings would better focus the attention of the policy makers and be more likely to get them to carry out their promises being faced with a new meeting of constituents in no more than three months asking how their progress is doing. Second, any change in government would not mean an unfruitful end to a prior meeting. New policy makers would quickly be shown what it is the forum is about and be more useful in recruiting them to such an approach. Given that these meetings are relatively low cost, it would be a sound investment in policy evolution to invest in increasing their frequency. Such fora also provide an excellent venue for showcasing media productions and community letters, which themselves should be increased in number.

## 2 Progress toward Deliverables

The first CFF was held in Kathmandu in March 1998. A list of participant villages was prepared and a final selection was made in coordination with the EFEA Project Manager, the local DFOs and CARE field staff. A one day training session preceded the forum where participants discussed relevant issues, decided upon and gave shape to their presentations. The actual Forum consisted of several parts: welcoming ceremonies, presentations of the CFUG participants, discussion by policy makers, showing of the community video letter (CVL), breakdown into issues groups each consisting of CFUG members and policy-makers and facilitated by one of the EFEA partners, presentations by the breakdown groups proposing solutions to the issues raised in the first part of the Forum. A good portion of the meeting was video taped and a documentary video was made retaining many of the speeches in their entirety, for later showing to non-participant CFUGs via the GreenCOM mobile video system. A transcript of the entire session was produced in Nepali and in English translation. These were distributed to concerned participants and to DFOs via the EFEA Project Directors Office. Once the Forum was complete, two GreenCOM researchers interviewed a relevant sample of participants to try to determine what they felt was learned through the Forum. This information can be found in Frantz Carina, Impact Assessment Of the Community Forestry Forum, September 1998

The CVL was shown at the Forum as well. This was begun during the visit of the Expatriate Community Video Specialist (June 18-July 9, 1997) who worked together with the local Community Video Specialist to begin the preparation for the design of the Community Video Letters (CVLs). A manual explaining the process of making a CVL was prepared in July and field tested during November-December 1997 (cf Brooke, Pamela and Sharma, K. General Guideline for Using Community Video in Community Forest User Group Social Mobilization, July 1997)

All necessary equipment for making CVLs is still available in country

The local -hire Community Video Specialist began work in the first participant village (Uchanimbu) in November, 1997 and completed activities in the first village in time to produce the first video letter for the Forum in January, 1998. No additional CVLs were produced because of the uncertain security situation in the field during the period where the second letter had been scheduled. The Community Video Specialist was not able to train a WWF team working within the EFEA program in communities near Shey-Phuksundo National Park to facilitate the creation of CVLs. It was hoped that communities working with this Dolpa-based team to produce a video letter, but again that proved to be too ambitious for GreenCOM's small staff.

Himalaya Films Pvt was hired in August 1997. A computerized video presentation was produced and completed in time for the first FSCC meeting (see below). It was decided that the product was not really adequate for the requirements of either the FSCC meeting or the Forum. The concept was too difficult to be grasped the first time, although much progress was made in developing this new technological approach—further training and conceptualization would have to be done before this could be successfully carried out.

## **B Forest Sector Coordinating Committee (FSCC) Annual Meeting**

### **1 Description**

The Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation (MOFSC) Planning Division chairs the FSCC Committee which is comprised of representatives of major donors working in community forestry in Nepal. The purpose of the annual meeting is to discuss forestry policy, review donor activities and facilitate dialog and discussion on future activities. GreenCOM was required to sponsor two such meetings. To carry this out, the GreenCOM Country Coordinator provided overall coordination for the annual meeting of January, 1998. The Technical Team Leader attended the January 1997 meeting as an observer to see how the FSCC meeting was structured and to look for ways in which it could be improved. Agendas for the FSCC meeting arose from the GreenCOM formative research and interviews with other EFEA participants and donors, but there were pressing political and administrative issues which also had to be addressed. These were generated by committees made up of government officers and resident donor representatives. Thus in many ways the GreenCOM role was to act as a conduit for a much larger meeting and series of events. A second meeting was organized for late July, 1998, but this was canceled at the last moment at the request of the Government of Nepal. As the meetings were generated according to Government requirements, GreenCOM could only take a limited role in encouraging meetings to take within the confines of our Work Plan (GreenCOM Work Plan, revised March, 1997) and no second meeting could be scheduled before the PACD.

### **2 Progress toward Deliverables**

The Technical Team Leader attended the FSCC meeting in January, 1997 to see the structure of the present meetings and to assess the need for change to make the meeting more responsive to the needs of the forest development community.

The July FSCC meeting had been postponed by mutual agreement of all parties until December, 1997. The meeting was successfully held in January of 1998.

A second meeting was scheduled for July, 1998, but was canceled at the government's request. No subsequent meeting could be scheduled.

## C Formative Research

### 1 Description

GreenCOM secured an agreement with New ERA in February 1997. New ERA developed research design and implementation plan, with support from the GreenCOM Research Specialist and the Technical Team Leader. The first report was produced by New ERA in both a full and summary form (Forest Management by Nepali Communities: a Study of Twenty Four Communities, May, 1997). This study was meant to be formative research generating the issues which were most crucial to CFUGs and their communities in the project area. These issues became the basis for generating agendas for meetings carried out under the GreenCOM project (the CFF and the FSCC meetings to some degree) and for generating the topics for media products under GreenCOM.

The second two activities were not completed under the original plan. The subcontractor appeared to be overextended and could not identify researchers to carry out the second and third research activities, namely: process documentation of two forms of video production (community controlled videos: those where the product was actually produced by participants and community supported videos: those where it was produced by professional video makers with local participation) and a report comparing the two, as well as a second set of research, namely: series of interviews to see how opinion of policy makers and CFUG members was effected by the Community Forest Forum. Instead of working with the subcontractor, GreenCOM Nepal itself identified and fielded researchers to carry out these two activities.

The researchers produced three process documentation reports to describe the entire process and compare the results.

Sharma, Kedar and Frantz, Carina, Large Group Intervention in Forest Policy in Nepal: Process Documentation and Analysis of Video Making Activities for Community Controlled and Community Consultation Videos (Part I: Community Video Letter), January 1998.

Sharma, Kedar and Frantz, Carina, Large Group Intervention in Forest Policy in Nepal: Process Documentation and Analysis of Video Making Activities for Community Controlled and Community Consultation Videos (Part II: Community Consultation Video), September 1998.

Sharma, Kedar and Frantz, Carina, A Comparison Between the Community Controlled (Community Video Letter) and Community Consultation Video Projects (Part III), September 1998.

### 2 Progress toward Deliverables

The development of the GreenCOM research program took place in conjunction with the visits of the Technical Team Leader and the Research Specialist between January 15 and February 15, 1997. Further guidance was given toward strengthening the program during a second visit of the Technical Team Leader between April and May, 1997. The strong showing of New ERA in carrying out data collection and their apparent understanding of the local social context caused GreenCOM to decide New ERA would be able to carry out the analysis for the first study on their own, without the anticipated visit of the Research Specialist, but continuous contact and guidance was to be provided to New ERA from GreenCOM Washington via e-mail as needed. This turned out to be not a favorable way of operating, for New ERA's initial strong showing was not followed through. More support was needed and had to be given both locally and by GreenCOM Washington in order to successfully complete the report.

New ERA was unable to identify researchers to carry out TO2 (the process documentation) and TO3 (the post-Forum interviews). Two researchers (an expatriate anthropologist and the local Community Video Specialist) were directly hired by GreenCOM to carry out first process documentation (of the CVL), as both were already out in the field doing other work. Although this was not an ideal solution, but it was done to avoid further delays in carrying out the CVL production or the loss of the process documentation for that activity. They did such a good job on this first activity, that they were asked to subsequently carry out process documentation on the docu-drama and carry out the post-meeting interviews of Forum participants. The pre-Forum interviews could not be held because of the delays in New ERA's inability to identify researchers. It may have come to the point that many research organizations are overextended, and since they all draw from the same talent pool, it may be necessary to find more creative ways of getting research work done. Picking up two individuals not normally part of this research pool was successful for GreenCOM.

## **D Use of Video as an Animation Tool**

### **1 Description**

GreenCOM has used video as an animation tool in one community in a pilot activity, to mobilize CFUG members and their communities and to enhance HMG and NGO extension activities. Community video is a process that can assist community members in increasing their knowledge and understanding of forestry and conservation practices, as well as a wide range of community development issues. It is also a motivational tool that increases participation in CFUG/CC development. Video has been shown to enhance dialog within the community and to spread information among communities. GreenCOM/Nepal used video to pass information from communities to policy makers to improve forest policy and spur its development.

Community video under GreenCOM directly involved CFUGs/CCs in advocacy and sharing of forest management-related problems and practices with policy makers and neighboring CFUGs/CCs. While video itself is of great interest to many, GreenCOM's emphasis was on the use of that tool in promoting communication, skills acquisition, community development and environmental education.

GreenCOM secured the services of Himalaya Films to do the following

- To produce two fifteen-minute videos for community members described in Output # 3
- To edit a community video letters for airing at the annual forestry Forum and to other user groups

GreenCOM's Community Video Specialist (Local) supervised much of this production as well as instructing members of a CFUG in shooting their own footage. The community video letter was developed to show policy makers and other user groups. Such a letter expressed, in the communities' terms, some of the barriers to policy implementation at the field level, but more than this it was a means of generating social action within the community. The production group brought together members of the community which might not normally interact (members of different political parties, social classes and castes and men and women) and got them to generate a single coherent view of what they wanted to present. They produced a view of their problems and then were supported in their attempt to express it together. The high prestige of working with television overcame many of the normal social barriers to expression. The result was both exciting and dramatic. GreenCOM produced a manual for those who are interested in further experimenting with this approach (cf. Brooke, Pam and Sharma, Kedar, General Guidelines for Using Community Video in Community Forest User Group Social Mobilization, July, 1997, see also Large Group Intervention in Forest Policy in Nepal: Process Documentation and Analysis of Video Making Activities for Community Controlled and Community Consultation Videos (Part I Community Video Letter), January, 1998).

The GreenCOM Nepal team also developed a manual for operating and maintaining mobile video equipment provided under the GreenCOM contract (cf. Sharma, Kedar, The Mobile Video Program Manual, October, 1997 [in Nepali]) and provided a six day training program to eight extension workers of CARE-Nepal, WWF and DFOs of Salyan, Dang & Bardiya district on the mobile video system and its use during 13-18 September at Tulsipur (cf. Gautam, K M and Sharma, Kedar, Three Reports on Mobile Video, October, 1997). GreenCOM also provided a set of videos selected from the best available Nepali materials on forest and environmental issues from many sources (a complete listing of the videos provided can be found in Part Three of the Three Reports on Mobile Video), as well as an original documentary video and a docu-drama aimed specifically at rural audiences.

## 2 Progress toward Deliverables

Video cameras and playback equipment were all been purchased and received by GreenCOM Nepal. Solar batteries, charging equipment and carrying cases for all equipment have now been manufactured by Lotus Energy. All of these were delivered to the agreed upon places in the field area. A manual for operating and maintaining this equipment was provided with six days training to eight extension workers of CARE-Nepal, WWF and DFOs of Salyan, Dang & Bardiya district on the mobile video system. Video projectors have also been delivered to Nepal. A manual, training and distribution for this equipment has yet to be provided, as the equipment just arrived before the GreenCOM PACD.

The problem of equipment has yet not been solved. GreenCOM had to choose between fuel run

generators, which were heavy and hard to transport. They also required that a constant supply of fuel be supplied and transported. Such fuel always leaks out of jerry cans and is corrosive to human skin, thus porters are unwilling to transport it. The other choice-selected by GreenCOM after much back and forth discussion-was solar cells. This has not proven successful either as the systems are delicate (two are already reported to be not functioning) and are tricky to charge. Show times, barely adequate, required the use of fairly small video systems, with monitors too small to accommodate the large audiences which the shows have attracted. Civil unrest in the hills caused many of the shows to be curtailed. Using the free time, it was decided to experiment with video projectors. These could accommodate large audiences, but had too high a wattage requirement to enable them to be used with the solar systems. Solar systems of increased size could be developed, but these would in all likelihood be too large to easily transport into the hills. Instead it was decided that they would be used in the Terai to support the new EFEA push into that area. In many Terai regions, electricity can be obtained through village systems or with generators transported by vehicles. The mobile video system has been proven to be a successful and popular means of passing information, but there remains some technical development yet to be done.

A Community Video Letter has been produced and shown at the CFF, as well as to USAID and the partner agencies. A subtitled version was produced to enable non Nepali speakers to understand the issues presented. In addition, a "reverse video letter", one where Forum participants answer CFUG member concerns and which presents the events at the Forum was also produced and is ready for distribution. A docu-drama was produced in the EFEA area. Professional film makers sat with villagers and together they decided on what would be shown, wrote much of the script together, participated in the acting and helped make many of the other production decisions necessary for the film. The result is a drama, a soap opera, which talks about the need for women to be able to read and how certain related problems effect the ability of a village to form a CFUG. A documentary video has also been produced by GreenCOM which talks about income generating activities under EFEA and its Ban Udyam component. All were field tested with reference to the issues brought up under the GreenCOM formative research. A collection of videos from other sources was also made by GreenCOM, using a cooperative agreement with the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists and other producers. It is felt that these videos should be made available to other projects on an exchange basis, wherever possible, to increase the range of videos available for EFEA participants.

## **Output #2 Developing and Validating a System for Participatory Methodologies**

### **1 General Description**

GreenCOM has developed a system for participatory methodologies to support existing MOSFC local forest conservation and extension programs. It also supported the EFEA INGOs and NGOs in extension support of community user groups through the provision of video instruction capabilities for remote village areas. In effect, GreenCOM and USAID began an experiment with a potentially useful supplement to current extension methodologies, one that is highly participatory and has the potential to improve communication across social lines, lines that currently hinder the diffusion of information and the rate at which implementation of new forest practices occurs. In addition, GreenCOM developed video presentation units.

for Nepal, to show videos produced by the MOFSC, NEFEJ and other agencies. Low literacy rates necessitate oral media, such as television or radio. In the past, facilitators and extension workers have relied on person-to-person communications, but travel difficulties make visits by such skilled workers infrequent. Experimental dramatic presentations have often been too short and more appropriate for less remote areas, such as the Terai. Video technology will allow unskilled individuals to deliver sophisticated messages throughout the hills. Selecting equipment, devising maintenance systems, and choosing culturally-suitable topics remain problematic. GreenCOM has attempted to be a trailblazer in the use of video for extension work in Nepal.

## 2 Activities

### A **Facilitating the establishment of a mobile video system**

#### 1 Description

In coordination with system suppliers both locally and in the U.S., GreenCOM has assembled four portable video presentation systems powered by solar energy. These systems were meant for Salyan, Dang & Bardiya districts. One such set was also provided to WWF-EFEA partner extension teams. They have been trained in the transport, use and maintenance of these systems in September, 1997. It was decided that the screens on the monitors initially provided were too small for certain uses, especially in cases where the video shows attracted audiences that were too large to be accommodated. It was mutually decided that video projectors would be provided under the existing contract, in the beginning, for use in areas where there is electricity, as their high wattage requirements somewhat limits their use. The use of video projectors would then be further developed. These are now in Nepal, but it is too late to begin to implement this development. Manual production, training and distribution will therefore have to wait for the successor project to be developed.

#### 2 Progress towards Deliverables

Manuals for maintenance of equipment and presentation of videos prepared for CARE, GON and WWF extensionists have been tested and are being finalized. Training for four mobile video teams was carried out between September 13-18. Three teams of extensionists were trained: one from Salyan, one from Bardiya and one from Dang. Each team consisted of a government Ranger and a CARE extensionist. In addition, a pair of extensionists was trained from the Dolpa-based WWF team. Manuals were revised on the basis of the experience in training and were completed. Modifications and improvements were also made on the equipment. Tapes were provided of the various videos. The video projectors were purchased and transported to Nepal for later use.

### B **Output #3 Production of Select Subject-Specific Materials**

#### 1 General Description

GreenCOM produced new video materials and survey existing videos for show on the mobile-

video presentation systems

2 Activities

A **Inventory of existing videos and materials**

1 Description

Many of the government and non-government agencies in Nepal have developed audio-visuals related to forest and environment. Therefore, it was felt necessary to survey them in view of their relevance to EFEA objectives and the need of EFEA target population. This information base was necessary not only to make use of the existing materials but also to identify the gap which needs to be fulfilled by the production of new audio-visuals in the future.

2 Progress toward Deliverables

The Community Video Specialist visited the following institutions and obtained information about the audio visuals that they have on environment, forestry, sustainable development and agriculture.

- 1 Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
  - Department of Planning and Training
  - Department of Soil Conservation
  - Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
  - Department of Forestry
- 2 Ministry of Agriculture
- 3 Nepal Television
- 4 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- 5 International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- 6 World View Nepal
- 7 Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
- 8 Water-borne Diseases Control Project

After going through the list of materials available with each of the above institutions, 130 video films, docu-drama, documentaries, skits, reports were selected for further review. This list was further brought down to 44 after viewing them for their merits and prioritization. A final set of 22 films and television production segments were selected and duplicated in sets of nine tapes for

use by the mobile video teams. Details of this process and the final selection of films can be found in Three Reports on Mobile Video Part 3, Report of the Selection of Video Materials for Community Viewing

## **B Production of instructional videos**

### **1 Description**

GreenCOM's Country Coordinator and the Video Specialist will identify gaps in CFUGs' knowledge and practices based on existing data, on-going research, and information generated from NGO/HMG extensionists. Based on these gaps, a local Video Production Firm will produce two subject-specific videos that will be entertaining, interactive and informative. The completed videos will be presented to forest user groups, especially in remote areas, to raise awareness of forestry problems and rural development. Production will include concept development, story boarding, pretesting of the story board, production, post-production testing, revisions and 20 copies. Video topics may include the following

- A 15-minute instructional video explaining new economic opportunities created by forest policy which would open discussions between extension workers and communities. The video focuses on pre-identified gaps in knowledge.
- A 15-minute, informative drama that would illustrate not only the problems in developing democratic forest user groups but also the solutions. The video may be designed to be stopped at certain points to generate discussion.

### **2 Progress towards Deliverables**

GreenCOM's Country Coordinator and the Video Specialist in discussion with the Government, USAID and the EFEA partner agencies identified gaps in CFUGs' knowledge and practices. This decision to make a video based on the work being done by Ban Udyam was made based on existing data, on-going research, and information generated from NGO/HMG extensionists. It was felt that the Ban Udyam program could benefit from some publicity, as the approach was a new one and its program pushing sustainable forest enterprises is a new approach. Ban Udyam's program also seemed a good subject at this time because their work could be filmed in an area where there was minimal civil unrest. Based on these factors, Himalaya Films (a local Video Production Firm) produced a documentary aimed at the village level which was entertaining, interactive and informative. This video will be presented to forest user groups, especially in remote areas, to raise their awareness of this program.

In addition, Himalaya films also send a team out into the project area where they met with Government officers both within and outside of the project, as well as with members of local CFUGs and other residents. Through these meetings, the film producers and the local participants worked together to select the topic for the film and make a general outline of the script, as well as participate in the story boarding and pre- and post- production testing. The actual activity is described in Sharma, Kedar and Frantz, Carina, Large Group Intervention in Forest Policy in Nepal: Process Documentation and Analysis of Video Making Activities for Community Controlled and Community Consultation Videos (Part II Community Consultation

Video), September 1998

## **C Production of Educational Print Materials**

### 1 Description

Based on discussions with Government officers, USAID and various partner agencies, there

appears to be a great demand for the development of educational print materials to support EFEA activities. Because one of GreenCOM's aims is to further synergy among the various EFEA partners and because educational materials development is an integral part of the GreenCOM program, GreenCOM/Nepal has reevaluated its focus and now wishes to help develop prototype educational materials.

### 2 Progress towards Deliverables

GreenCOM entered into negotiations with PACT, but the entire contracting process proved too cumbersome. First discussion began with a meeting between PACT representatives in May 1997. The final contract was not approved until the end of June 1998. By the time the contract was approved, PACT Nepal had already received another contract and were not able to free themselves for GreenCOM until nearly August. PACT was operating under the assumption that GreenCOM would continue until February 1999. By that time it was decided that GreenCOM in its present form would be terminated according to its original scheduled PACD. The PACT contract was canceled as it no longer seemed possible to complete anything useful within that short remaining time. This activity has a tremendous potential in supporting the work of the other EFEA partners and should be considered for implementation at a later time.

## **D Production of Audio Tapes**

### 1 Description

GreenCOM wishes to maximize the number of people it reaches in Nepal, a marginally literate country and primarily still an oral society. Video is quite experimental and expensive, whereas audiotape is a much cheaper and may be found to be as effective or more effective than video technology for a mountainous country such as Nepal.

### 2 Progress toward Deliverables

The audio contract was unfortunately tied to the PACT contract. By the time the PACT contract was signed, the audio contractor had already begun other activities and the remaining time was too short to identify a new sub-contractor. At which point the PACT contract was terminated. This activity has a tremendous potential in supporting the work of the other EFEA partners and should be considered for implementation at a later time.

**Process Documentation  
Of  
Video Making Activities  
For  
Community-Controlled and Community Consultation Videos**

[Task Order No 2 of the Environmental Education and Communication (GreenCOM)  
Project]

Project No PCE 5838-Q-00-3069-18

Part 1

(Process Documentation of Community-Controlled Video Making)

November 1997 - January 1998

Prepared by

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Subject Matter Specialist,

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## 1 **Background**

A Community Video Letter (CVL) is a communication tool used to help people express themselves in a video format. As a letter, it can be written (prepared) by a person or group or a community. In particular, in the context of development communication, the CVL has proved to be an effective medium to bring out issues related to distant and isolated communities to the attention of concerned central or regional authorities. CVLs have both picture and sound, making for vivid presentations and suitable even for illiterates. In Nepal, considering the high rate of illiteracy among the rural population, the CVL is expected to be one of the most effective means of communications between the target populations of development programs and the people who develop and implement such programs.

GreenCOM is providing technical assistance to the Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity (EFEA) project in the fields of communication and policy dialogue. Specifically, GreenCOM is supporting EFEA in preparing two CVLs in rural villages, a minimum level considering that CVLs are new both to the project and to the villages.

In the preparation of CVLs, the community takes the lead role in deciding on selection of subject, its treatment, and the camera work. They are trained in using equipment and facilitated in final editing. The role of the subject matter specialist – an outsider – is limited to that of facilitator.

Though proven effective in other countries, CVLs needed to be well tested in the Nepali context in a limited area, before CVLs could be considered for broader application in a wider range of development activities in Nepal. To understand this trial run, GreenCOM included a provision for the support of a detailed process documentation of CVL preparation activities. This report is the result.

We first give details of the process followed in the preparation of a community-controlled CVL, and then in the second part of this report document the process of making a video by professionals, in close consultation with the community members.

## 2 **Objectives**

The process documentation was carried out with these objectives:

- (a) To keep track of how the two types of video-making processes impact upon group processes such as decision making, management of forests, and the mutual roles of men and women.

- (b) To provide a detailed report about all activities involved in the process making of a CVL in the community, so that the lessons learned from this initial experience could be used for future development of audio or video materials with similar community involvement

### 3 **Methodology**

This report is a detailed description of the activities related to the CVL process from the beginning to end. The following methods were used to document the process

- a) A detailed diary was kept by the outside Community Video Specialist, Kedar Sharma
- b) Still photographs were taken of every significant moment and the participants
- c) Interviews and short bio-data of every participant were recorded
- d) Each of the participant's views about the process were recorded
- e) A video logbook was used to keep track of the CVL production process

### 4 **Selection of Community Forestry Users Groups (CFUGs) for CVL**

#### 4.1 Initial Discussions and Criteria Development

The process of CFUG selection started in September 1997. The GreenCOM team (Krishna M. Gautam, Country Program Coordinator, and Kedar Sharma, Community Video Specialist) met with EFEA Coordinator Mr. Ram Paudel and the district forestry officers (DFOs) from all eight EFEA area districts that came to participate in EFEA's Annual Progress Review and Program Implementation Workshop in Tulsipur. Among the eight, Salyan and Dang were found to be the most suitable districts for CVL preparation for these four reasons

- a) Dang and Salyan are the districts with the most CFUGs and the longest experience with CFUGs in the whole Mid-Western Development Region. Therefore, CVL prepared in these districts could cover a wide range of issues concerning CFUGs at different stages of their development
- b) Those two districts were also recipients of GreenCOM mobile video systems, which would be essential to the CVL process to supply electric power, put on video shows and review locally shot video footage
- c) Community Forestry is a process that has been very successful in hills, with good potential for the Terai as well. Salyan and Dang are two districts that could represent CFUG issues in the hills and in the Terai, respectively

- d) Since some of the districts in the Mid-Western Development Region are experiencing political unrest and since all the USAID-related projects have been alerted not to risk working in those districts, GreenCOM had to select trouble-free districts. Dang and Salyan were not among the areas of unrest.

Therefore, following that September 1997 meeting, GreenCOM Nepal wrote a letter to the EFEA Project Coordinator, requesting him to select CFUGs for the CVL preparation. A copy of this letter (annex I) was given to the respective DFOs and other relevant officials. GreenCOM suggested these criteria for the selection of CFUGs for the Community Video Letters:

- a Oldest CFUG in the district (the one that has gone through the full series of activities, with a wide range of experience and a lengthy process of learning)
- b A CFUG where some tangible benefits have been realized by the CFUG members
- c A CFUG that has received a wide range of technical inputs in activities such as soil conservation training, non-formal education, income-generating activities, the empowerment of women and so on
- d A CFUG with representatives able to articulate their needs and state their case with arguments based in experience
- e A CFUG with diverse ethnic groups

Responding to GreenCOM's letter in November, the EFEA coordinator and the DFOs from Dang and Salyan suggested some CFUGs by name. On the basis of these suggestions, the GreenCOM Community Video Specialist (CVS) visited some of these CFUGs for final selection in November 1997.

#### 4.2 Final Selection

Following the advice of the District Forest Officers, I visited seven CFUGs in Dang and four in Salyan. Specifically these were:

##### **Dang**

- 1 Baghar CFUG
- 2 Mahalaxmi CFUG
- 3 Saraswati Women CFUG
- 4 Gadawa CFUG
- 5 Chetansil Women CFUG
- 6 Uchanambu CFUG
- 7 Nimbu Khuti CFUG

### **Salyan**

- 1 Barakhoriya CFUG
- 2 Tribeni Women's CFUG
- 3 Sairakamda CFUG
- 4 Chandrapala CFUG

During the final selection process, two considerations came into play

- 1 Since the process was going to take place in December-January, long cloud-free days for solar equipment was essential. The Deokhuri Valley, where Dang is located, had better weather at that time of the year.
- 2 People would need to have both interest in, and free time for, participating in a six-week process that offered no financial compensation or training allowances for their involvement.

After visiting all of the above-mentioned CFUGs, I judged that Uchanimbu CFUG of Dang was most suitable for the first CVL. His recommendation was then discussed with EFEA Coordinator Mr. Ram Paudel, Planning Officer Mr. Resham Dang, BSP-NewERA Team Leader Mr. R. B. Rawal, Acting DFO of Dang District Mr. P. N. Kanel and CARE/Nepal Field Coordinator Mr. S. S. Hamal, consensus was reached to select Uchanimbu CFUG as the site for the first Community Video Letter. Accordingly, CVS Kedar Sharma went to Uchanimbu on 27 November 1997 to start the process of CVL preparation.

### **5 Brief Introduction of Uchanimbu CFUG**

Uchanimbu CFUG lies in Satabariya Village Development Committee (VDC) in Deokhuri Valley. This forest belongs to the people of ward no. 3 of the VDC. Total number of user households was 133 when this forest was first registered as a CFUG in 1991, and that number has grown to 157 today. The forest area itself, 53 hectares in the beginning, was increased to approximately 400 hectares after the district forest office added a huge area of the degraded Siwalik forest in the Uchanimbu CFUG's area upon the request of the CFUG. However, the CFUG members do not know yet how much of the Siwalik forest area has actually been added because they have not received the new action plan with the formal declaration of the CFUG area and the map.

Uchanimbu is nine kilometers west from Lamahi, the closest market town. The east-west national highway runs through Lamahi. Uchanimbu is bordered on the South by the Rapti River, on the East by the Kari River, on the North by the Siwalik Hills, and on the West by the Tengnaha River.

Thirty years ago, the village was surrounded by rich natural forest, but when construction began on the national highway, forest started to be cleared rapidly. One of the most valuable trees of the region, Khayar, came close to extinction, this tree was in high demand from the Kattha industries, owned by some influential people. In addition to the Kattha industries, rapid population growth due to heavy migration from the hills was another of the reasons for the degradation of the forest in that area.

In 1980, the forest of Uchanimbu was registered as *Panchayat Ban*, the prototype of present-day community forest but owned by the village government. In 1991, after the present community forestry legislation was enacted, this forest was registered as a community forest and the local people were given the rights to, and responsibility for, the forest. It was then that people started to protect their forest with a very high degree of commitment. They proposed to the DFO that they wanted to take out the stumps of Khayar trees as an income-generating activity, and after approval of their action plan, they sold many of the useless stumps and earned a good income for the CFUG. With that money, they constructed a community house and two bus-stop shelters, and contributed RS 30,001 for the establishment of a Local School.

The majority of the local residents in this particular area are Tharus, the indigenous Inner Terai people. Among the immigrants, in descending order of their number, there are Brahmins, Chhetri, Yogis, Magars and low-caste people.

Except in a certain part of the forest which was declared "protected area" from the beginning, there is a heavy grazing problem in the Uchanimbu forest. Local farmers need many oxen to work the land, and since these animals could not be fed in their stalls easily, grazing land is a critical need for the local farmers.

Although the village is surrounded by the Rapti, Kari and Tenghniha Rivers and numerous smaller streams, there is now a problem of irrigation. Until a few years ago, there was an irrigation system that provided adequate water supply in the village, but floodwaters broke that system, and villagers lack resources to repair it by themselves. Because the present Home Minister comes from an adjacent village, the people of Uchanimbu have a feeling that, instead of receiving any help, they are somehow being exploited by the influence of the Minister, his villagers and relatives. They cite the example of Kari Sota stream, which is completely used by the people from Minister's village. Similarly, the electric line passes through their village to the Minister's village – but without lighting Uchanimbu houses.

## 6 Settling down in the village

I arrived in the village on 27 November 1997 accompanied by Ms Carina Frantz, a Ph D (Cultural Anthropology) candidate from the University of Michigan, U S A On the basis of our previous discussion and the message I had sent them after finalizing Uchanimbu's selection, CFUG executive committee members were expecting us They had planned to board us in the CFUG meeting house right on the highway, but we did not find that appropriate, mainly because of the highway noise So we chose an ashram, a house owned by a religious organization, which was vacant and set apart on a large common ground, and were authorized to stay there by its guard

That first evening, we held a small, informal meeting with the CFUG representatives There I explained more about CVLs, especially for those who were hearing about CVLs for the first time We also discussed how we might select participants for the CVL and drew up a tentative plan for the coming weeks That evening we scheduled a formal meeting of entire CFUG for the next day

At the appointed time, CFUG members gathered in front of the CFUG meeting house The Ranger, CARE/Nepal's Community Forest Extentionist (CFE), the ward chairperson, local teachers, CFUG executive members and the community forest users of both sexes were there Out of 31 participants, there were eight women

After a brief introduction about EFEA and GreenCOM, Carina Frantz and I explained what a Community Video Letter is, and requested them to participate voluntarily in the production of a CVL for their CFUG Generally, it is rare in the Nepali villages for people to volunteer for a new project, and this proved to be no exception However, the CFUG committee members discussed among themselves for some time, and, finally, the CFUG chairperson came out with a list of 15 "volunteer" participants consisting of eight woman and seven men for CVL

Trying to keep to our democratic norms, I asked "volunteers" to withdraw their names if they wanted to But the CFUG chairperson intervened "No, we have already discussed this matter with them and this list of participants has been prepared with their consent However, if you ask them, many people, especially those participating in such activities for the first time, might take their names back " He also assured me that they had selected a very good team, including fair proportions of indigenous people, the ethnic communities, high castes, low castes, and women He also explained that if some of the participants were found to be not interested or if someone from outside the team was interested in the process, we could always modify the team Given the context, I found his arguments practical The roster of the CVL team is given in Table 1

**Table 1**      **Composition of CVL Team**

| No | Name                   | Sex | Caste            |
|----|------------------------|-----|------------------|
| 1  | Laxmi Chaudhari        | F   | Tharu            |
| 2  | Man Kumari Chaudhari   | F   | Tharu            |
| 3  | Devi Chaudhari         | F   | Tharu            |
| 4  | Hari Chaudhari         | M   | Tharu            |
| 5  | Farharu Chaudhari      | M   | Tharu            |
| 6  | Jagat Prasad Chaudhari | M   | Tharu            |
| 7  | Radha K C              | F   | Chhetri          |
| 8  | Sabitra Gharti         | F   | Magar            |
| 9  | Laxmi Yogi             | F   | Yogi             |
| 10 | Kaushyalya Bhattarai   | F   | Brahmin          |
| 11 | Bishnu Pokhrel         | F   | Brahmin          |
| 12 | Man Bahadur Batha      | M   | Magar (Landless) |
| 13 | Khageshwar Sharma      | M   | Brahmin          |
| 14 | Liladhar Nepali        | M   | Low caste        |
| 15 | Sharad Pokhrel         | M   | Brahmin          |

## 7      **Introducing Villagers to Video**

On the same day that we formed this CVL team, we started mobile-video shows in the village. About 300 people came and watched a telefilm, *Chetana*, and then a volume of the *Ankhyhyal* video magazine with material on stall-feeding.

I tried to use this opportunity of the mobile-video show to explain CVL to the larger audience. I emphasized on why we were there and how the video letter was different from the video materials produced in conventional ways. I explained that the CFUG participants themselves would be operating the camera, deciding about which issues to address, and articulating the way issues were addressed. I also made clear that my role would be limited, that I was only a facilitator for the process. My role would be limited to helping them on the use of camera and techniques for telling their story.

However, I immediately realized that a crowd of 300 people who had turned out to watch a video show – not to hear a speech – was not an appropriate place to describe the video letter.

On the next day, November 29th, we had to go to Gadhawa to join a picnic organized by the Chetansheel women's CFUG of a nearby village. It was

Saturday, the weekly firewood-collection day of the village. For of these reasons, I did not set any formal program related to CVL for that day, though in the evening, another mobile-video show was organized.

After we attended the Gadhawa picnic, people in our CFUG developed an interest in organizing a picnic themselves. Some influential male members of our CFUG wanted to organize men's only picnic. My response to that was, if they would organize a picnic excluding women members of the community, I would not participate in that. Carina happily supported my opinion.

**November 30th** was the first day with the CVL group. To develop an informal and open relationship with the participants, I began by introducing myself and told a few things about my family. Carina also gave a few words about herself and her family. This exercise broke the ice, and helped participants to introduce themselves in detail.

After these introductions, I explained more about CVLs. I tried to make that idea clear, comparing a video letter to a conventional video, parallel to the example of a letter written personally and a story about that same person but told by someone else. Then we did short exercise on letter writing. At the end of this exercise, I was confident that the participants were much clearer about what they were going to do in the couple of next weeks.

Letter writing was followed by a hands-on camera session. The participants looked through the viewfinder and practiced holding camera properly. I recorded some of the participants speaking and then asked them to speak on camera about anything they would like.

Then we recorded our first video productions, Public Service Announcement (PSA) for polio vaccination day, by two of the participants, Radha K C and Kaushalya Bhattarai, in Tharu and Nepali languages respectively.

The hands-on exercises – looking through the viewfinder and holding the camera properly – went together with story telling. Participants told many stories related to the forest, which in one hand helped them to open up and on the other hand gave me a good chance to understand their forestry-related issues. As we concluded the session, I showed them the photographs from my previous visit to their village. We had all of the eight women and three out of seven men were present in the meeting.

In evening, we had a mobile-video show with some local footage, including the local Public Service Announcements we had just made.

### **December 1st**

We started this day with a personal story-telling session. Many participants told very personal stories about their family and life, and one more participant joined the group.

I realized that the group was too big to work all together and brought this up with the participants. With the group's consensus, we divided the participants into three sub-groups. While dividing the group, I tried to maintain gender balance and group the participants in a way so they would feel comfortable to work and deal with each other. (See *Understanding the Group Dynamics*, annex II)

### **December 2nd and 3rd**

So we started working with three separate groups. Each of the groups was given approximately two hours of time. Over these two days, the groups practiced the basics of camera technique and shot different activities of their own. Encouraged by previous experience, Radha did another PSA on the importance of toilet construction and use, and about the 'Best Toilet Award', established by Carina and me.

All of the participants are familiar with still cameras, with the result that they automatically become very formal and stiff whenever they are in front of the camera. Some of them even came in special clothing, which they generally do not wear in the village!

On 3rd December, one of the groups tried to prepare a short skit, but I advised them to concentrate more on real stories, since we were preparing a video letter to the policy makers and they would take the real stories more seriously.

Soon, however, all of us realized that to work with all three groups everyday was not very practical, due to the work load and time division. Therefore, we decided that there would be only one group per day starting from the next day.

We were going through the process of CVL making in a very informal way. There was group division, but it was always very flexible and anyone could join another group if their own group's schedule was not convenient for them. Since we were not providing any compensation, I could not ask them to give up any of their household chores to give priority to the CVL. However, we found that this informal approach and flexible timing did in fact make it easier for the team members to participate effectively in the process.

### **December 4th - 9th**

Over these six days, all groups met separately and had more practice in basic camera techniques and in speaking into the camera practice. Since, at first, the participants were not very comfortable with the camera, I decided to try to make them

comfortable to speak with the camera, and so we started to have one session every day of story-telling to the camera. They were good story-tellers when the camera was off, and even when they were practicing. So this aspect of the CVL needed attention.

On December 6th, one of the participants, Hari Chaudhari, left the group because he got a job as a taxi driver in the nearby town. Since there were still 13 participants and the possibility that someone might drop out had been considered from the beginning, it was not that important to have someone to replace him. However, I had noticed a man, Khushiram Chaudhari, for some days who was not in our group but just following us almost every day, while we were having camera practice or story-telling sessions. So I proposed that he join the group and he happily agreed.

Beginning on December 7th, we started to film in sequence. I explained to the participants how a film is prepared, how different shots of different sizes are taken, and how they are assembled into a meaningful sequence. Participants first filmed a sequence of Polio Vaccination activities. The next day, another group went to the river and filmed a sequence about the broken irrigation system. I followed them, assisting with the camera work and with how to explain the issue in detail. This exercise was continued next day with another group. The next group filmed sequences on potato harvesting and on children with grazing cattle. And after that, a group filmed a sequence on paddy harvesting.

December 9th was a cloudy and cold day, so we did not go out for filming. Instead, we started to review the footage. All of the participants came to our place at the ashram. I prepared tea for them and served it when all of them were together. In doing so, I had an ulterior motive. I wanted to see the response of the majority upper-caste participants towards Lila, who was from the lower, or untouchable, caste – the upper cast people were not supposed to drink or eat with him. To my great surprise, no one objected, no one refused to drink or showed any uncomfortable gesture. Later, I asked Faraharu whether they (the Tharu people) eat with the lower castes or not, he answered that they generally do not invite them inside their homes or eat with them, but do drink with them on occasion.

### **December 10th, 11th, and 12th**

December 10th was also a rainy day. So we postponed filming again, and spent the day with home visits and chats. I started finding participants getting more and more interested in the issues of community forestry. Even those participants, who were just showing their interest in fire wood and fodder issues, also started to talk serious forestry issues. Since Carina and I had to go to Kathmandu for about a week, I thought I would like them a task to focus

more on the issues to be raised in the video letter. Therefore, I asked them to discuss more and more on forestry and related issues and gave them notebooks and pens to write anything they wanted to deal with on these subjects.

They followed this suggestion that same day before we left. I noticed that, in the discussion, each speaker was speaking as if addressing me, using the language that would recognize my presence as an outsider. Therefore I urged them to be confident in doing things on their own, in their own language as they discuss matters among themselves.

We left for Kathmandu on December 12th due to urgent work in Kathmandu, and then returned to the village on December 21st and continued the process.

December 22nd was our first day after the long gap. I was worried if the participants had been meeting with each other and discussing the issues in my absence. If the process had become discontinued, it would be very difficult for me to rebuild the whole thing. I visited every participant at home and offered them the *Prasad* (holly flowers, threads and sweets) from Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu. They told me that except for one day they did not meet each other regarding video letter. However, I was convinced that the momentum was not broken.

Altogether, seven participants were present that day even though they all were very busy in their agricultural work. That day we first went to the community house. One of our participants, Laxmi Yogi, is a volunteer in the family-planning clinic. She has to work with a health worker from the neighboring town, Lamahi, who was referred as "Doctor" in the whole area. When we were there at the clinic doing our exercise, I stayed outside as always, so as not to interfere with what they were doing. One participant came out and reported to me that the health assistant was annoyed with the participants even though they had not disturbed anyone at all. So after they finished, I went inside to apologize for the trouble we made and to thank him for giving us a chance to film on his premises. He responded with a nice smile and said 'no problem'.

Participants were discussing many things regarding forest resources. Laxmi Chaudhari came up with the idea that the forest should be divided into different blocks and the users should use the blocks in rotation, an original and interesting idea. But when I asked her to tell that to the camera, she did not wish to do that. However that particular idea was liked by other participants and came to be included in the video letter.

On the 23th, one of the participants, Man Bahadur, said that there was a big problem of encroachment onto public land in the village. Even some of the members of our team had encroached onto public land and pasture. We visited one of the accused participant's house and asked about the encroachment issue – without mentioning the previous discussion. Radha, one of the accused persons, was excited about this

particular issue. She affirmed that it was a problem of the community but she insisted that she was not one to cause it.

Most of the participants wanted to 'write' something in the video letter about the problem of encroachment onto public land and about the landless people. I suggested that they do so without offending any of the group members. So that day, when we were ready to go filming, one of the participants, Khushiram, said that a farmer family in the nearby village was putting up fence on the public land to encroach there. All of the group agreed to film this event and so we went there. The man who was working on the fence was interviewed and his work was filmed. After some time, a group of forest guards came and destroyed the fence. They told us that the ranger sent them to see us and help us if needed.

The wife of one of the participants, Faraharu Chaudhari, wife was sick at this time. I went to visit them and advised them to take her to the health center in Lamahi.

One of the influential persons of the neighboring village, Dikpal Yogi, said that the members from other CFUGs had learned about the CVL and were very interested in meeting our group, to tell their problems to the camera so that their message might reach Kathmandu. He added that he himself liked the idea and so had invited all the CFUG representatives from that area to his CFUG office – because that was near to the CFUG we were working. Even though that was not in our program, we welcomed the idea because this would also give us an opportunity to meet other CFUG members and understand their situation.

On December 24th, we left the group with the camera and went to Lamahi to phone the Kathmandu office. In Lamahi, we were told that the local 'Doctor' (who had been there in the family-planning clinic during our filming exercise) wanted to meet us, so we went to see him. We found that his main interest was to see the pictures of his health post that the CVL group took during the exercise. Video was very important for everyone and so were we!

In Lamahi, we heard the very sad news that the wife of one of our participants, Liladhar Nepali, had died suddenly while she was going to see the doctor for a minor headache. We went back to the village, where no one was working because of the death in the village. We went to Lila's house to console him, though there was nothing to be said in words.

### **December 25th**

We were trying to pull together the forestry issues from last week but they were not very clear to me as yet. There were so many issues and they were so closely linked with each other. Therefore, it was difficult to finalize a list of issues to "write" on the CVL.

To help us think more clearly in this situation, we consulted the "Making Village Maps" section of the Community Video Guidelines. Since I was not experienced in exercises like map-making, I asked for the help of a forest officer, who was very experienced in the exercises like Participatory Rural Appraisal. He had promised to come and assist me in that particular exercise. I waited few days for him, but when I realized that it was already getting late to do that exercise, I decided to facilitate that process by myself, closely following the manual.

First, I explained to the participants what a map is and how a map helps to discuss the issues and to draw conclusions. Fairly promptly, the participants drew the border lines of the village, then plotted all the major land marks like rivers, highway, roads, fields, and forests. In short order, the map was completed by the CVL group.

After that, we resumed discussion about the issues, the area by area, using the map. At the end of this exercise, the map was transcribed onto a large sheet of cardboard. All of the issues discussed and the names of respective agencies were noted down on another paper. When everything was prepared, most of the participants said that the exercise helped them to understand the issues more clearly than ever.

At the end of this exercise, I realized that the Map-Making should have been done earlier so that the participants and I could have had a clear understanding of the situation from the very beginning.

#### **December 26th**

A CFUG general meeting was called for the 26th in the community house. The whole meeting was dominated by the male members. Women were seated to one side and not addressed properly by the leaders. Only one woman, Radha K C, who is our participant too, participated in the meeting by asking some questions.

One of our most regular participants, Man Bahadur Batha Magar, was absent from the group for a few days.

#### **December 27th**

This day was set aside for the meeting of all CFUG representatives of the VDC, as per Dikpal Yogi's invitation. Representatives from almost all the CFUGs were present there. When the CVL participants told them that they were going to interview them on different issues like resource management and border disputes, one of the CFUG chairpersons showed his reluctance to being interviewed. I left the meeting place before they started interviewing people, again so as not to influence the process. Later the participants reported me that this particular CFUG chairperson in fact became interested in speaking a few words to the camera when he saw others expressing their views this way.

The same day we went to another meeting, of the local agriculture-development committee. There was only one woman present, Kaushalya – again, one of our CVL participants.

This was another firewood-collection day. The villagers do not take any cutting tools to the forest. One of our participants, Khushiram Chaudhari, was breaking wood with his wife. Unfortunately, his wife was injured very badly, she was immediately taken to the health post in Lamahi.

That morning, I went to see Man Bahadur, who had not joined the group for few days, and found more bad news. Man Bahadur had a fever and bad cough and was very worried that his tuberculosis might have come back again.

There were some more home visits on this day.

A group of young villagers came together to organize a traditional dance and started their rehearsal. Though not expressed very explicitly, the main driving force behind this initiative by these young villagers was their strong desire to be in the video.

#### **December 28th**

This day was scheduled for a review of the CVL work completed so far. We watched the footage and narrowed down the issues. Radha K C said that the exercise was interesting, but it will be meaningful only if the issues included in the CVL are able to draw a response from policy-makers.

Participants were coming up with more new ideas, views and experiences. The illiterate member Laxmi Chaudhari dictated her ideas to her son who wrote them down, a small but invaluable account of one woman's needs and aspirations.

Following the review, participants decided to re-do some of the footage. These were mainly the interviews disturbed by noise from a nearby highway.

That evening, a forest guard came and said that many trees had been cut in the forest. CFUG users talked and decided that a small group of CFUG executive members should go to the forest to observe the loss and take necessary action. I was interested to see the inner parts of the forest and the decision making process in this type of critical situation, and asked to go along.

#### **December 29th**

Khushiram came to wake me up early in the morning. I followed him to the community house where Padam Yogi and Tara Sharma were already waiting for us. A forest guard accompanied us. CVL participants had decided to film the loss of trees and the process of decision making against the person responsible. On this occasion, Khushiram handled the camera entirely by himself. First, the group went to a suspect's house in the nearby village. That person was also a forest guard from

another CFUG. There they checked the newly cut logs, they asked the person where he brought them from and, when he could not answer to their satisfaction, the team members ordered him to be present at the community house at 4pm. We then went to the forest to see the actual damage. There we found more fallen branches and stumps of stolen trees. We could not even guess about the larger parts of the loss.

It was already 10:30 when we came back from the forest. I hurriedly had my breakfast and went to the meeting place. There I was told that most of the female participants would not be coming because they had been invited by a women's group from a neighboring village, Hasanapur, to attend the inauguration of a bus stop constructed by the community. I proposed that we all go there, and all agreed. Everyone in Hasanapur there was very happy to see the 'video group' there. Our participants filmed some of the scenes there and interviewed women who had worked to construct that small but very important structure. In the inauguration ceremony, one of our participants was asked to express her views. Another participant, Laxmi Yogi, arrived there a little late. However, she also wanted to express her views and register her name as one of the speakers. Most of the speakers expressed their views about the role of women and how that could be improved. I also was asked to speak a few words and used the opportunity to explain CVLs and our work in Uchanimbu.

After that, the participants had to return to the CFUG office for the meeting to discuss the wood stealing of the night before. As we were already late and there was no vehicle available there, I asked the police officer, who was also invited there, to provide his car to drop some of the participants and the CFUG chairperson (with the camera) at our community house. They filmed the interesting process and interviewed the persons who were punished. That was very interesting footage indeed.

At the end of the day, they filmed some scenes of a local Puja.

#### **December 30th and 31st**

These two days, participants filmed different footage as per the list they had prepared. They also interviewed some of the local people and watched the footage.

#### **January 1st**

We celebrated the New Year's Day with a picnic, an open picnic, not restricted to men or women only. The CVL facilitator team also contributed to the cost of the picnic. Among CVL participants, Kaushalya could not come because she got an invitation for an emergency meeting from a nearby village. Khageshwor told us that one of his relatives had died recently so he should not join an entertaining program. Lila did not come because of his wife's death and Devi Chaudhari and Man Bahadur were also sick. But the rest of the participants and many other villagers joined the picnic, and it was a very good social event.

The picnic was almost over when suddenly a group of about 16 people from another village appeared in the community forest with head loads of Bankas [loads of twisted straw], one of the very important Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP). People from our CFUG caught and punished them mildly for not asking permission before harvesting the Bankas. In fact, those people had been the traditional users of that forest and were now excluded even as secondary users of the forest. Therefore, it was natural that they also got angry with the people from our village. Next day when some of our villagers went to their village for fishing, they reciprocated by confiscating our villagers' nets.

### **January 2nd**

Today a group of CVL participants went to Fachakpur to meet one of the oldest Tharu men. The old man had also been selected as a CVL participant but in fact he never joined the group. So I asked him why he agreed to be in the group and why he quit the group, not even coming for a single day. He told me that the cold made it very difficult for him to go out, therefore he could not come to join the group. Participants interviewed him and did some more filming and re-do of the two interviews.

### **January 3rd**

Saturday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> was another day for firewood collection. We did not have any footage of wood collection so far, so we decided to go to the forest and get lots of footage of the firewood collection. Most of the participants had to do so many things that day. Therefore, Khageshwar was the only member to join me in the beginning. After a while, Sabitra and Faraharu joined us. We met Laxmi Yogi in the forest. Faraharu and Sabitra did a brief interview with her. When we finished filming, Faraharu wanted to take his firewood home, so we left him in the forest and Sabitra, Khageshwar, and I started to walk towards the village.

For more than an hour we could not find a track leading to village and were lost in the forest. Finally I saw a stream that I had seen during an earlier forest visit to see the damages done by poachers. We followed that track and came out of the forest.

After brunch, participants interviewed CFUG executive committee members and others on different issues. Most part of that day's interviews and footage was used in the video letter.

Laxmi and Mankumari Chaudhari, who were shy and hesitant to speak in front of the camera because of what they felt were their poor Nepali language skills, told me that they would in fact like to tell their message through the camera – but not in front of everyone. They were given the camera and later we found that they spoke very well, and their views were included in the video letter as well.

Devi sent a message to her husband who works and lives in a nearby village school, but he did not come to see her. She was having tremendous pain and wanted to go

to the hospital She asked me for some money and to take her to the hospital Kaushalya has also got sick because of the cold, a sore throat

#### **January 4th**

The VDC chairperson and a women's leader from the neighboring village came to talk on camera We were hopeful to get some interesting quotes from the VDC chairperson about local issues The women's leader had delivered an interesting speech in Hasanapur at the bus-stop inauguration ceremony The participants interviewed both of them, but they did not use the footage during editing

#### **January 5th**

We went to the top of the hills to see other side of the forest, which was being misused by the people of Masyaut Khola village That was a very long walk, but was very informative and entertaining because of the sightseeing, forest fruits, and potluck lunch

#### **January 6th, 7th, 8th**

These were days for reviewing the footage, logging, and additional shooting if needed I advised the participants to speak to the camera if they thought that was necessary Most of them spoke on their own priority issues

#### **January 9th**

During the CVL process in the village, we realized that the authorities needed to be questioned about several things – like why the action plan was not approved on time, what could be done by the DFO regarding public land encroachment, and so on We sent a message to DFO that we would like to meet and talk to him on January 9th Accordingly, we went to Ghorahi and met him there I only introduced the participants and explained about the process we were conducting Participants interviewed the DFO and we went to interview the ranger who was at that time participating in a training When both of them were interviewed, we went to Tulsipur, had lunch and returned to the village

With that, we had completed the production process of Community Video Letter

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#### **Post production**

During my trip to Kathmandu in mid-December, I had a discussion with the GreenCOM Country Coordinator and the Technical Team Leader about bringing participants to Kathmandu for the editing process When I went back to the village, I told the participants to select two representatives to go to Kathmandu I set criteria, one of them should be man and one a woman, and one should be from the Tharu community and one from the hill community According to that, they selected Laxmi Yogi, a woman from the hill community, and Khushiram Chaudhari from the Tharu community Laxmi Yogi, Khushi Ram Chaudhary, Carina Frantz and I came back to Kathmandu on January 10th

First, Laxmi Yogi and Khushi Ram Chaudhary prepared the tentative script. I assisted them in selecting places to insert the interviews. After that, they recorded narration, and then we started editing at Himalaya Films on January 12th.

January 14<sup>th</sup> was the biggest festival for Tharus, and also important for non-Tharus. We celebrated that festival in my home and continued with the process of editing. We completed narration recording and interview insertion accordingly. The content part of the CVL was completed on January 16th.

During the post-production process, we realized that we need some more pictures to complete the film, and I needed to go back to Tulsipur for other official work. Participants also needed to go back to their homes. So we went back to Dang together. I gave them the camera and asked them to take necessary shots. Before returning to Kathmandu, I took the camera and the new footage from them.

***-THE END-***

## UNDERSTANDING VILLAGE GROUP DYNAMICS

This process starts immediately after you settle down in the village and goes throughout the process. Most of the villages in Nepal are the blend of different caste and ethnic groups, rich and poor, landlords and landless, men and women, influential and non-influential people. The nature of each individual's relationship within a group and with other groups varies.

First you try to understand the different types of relationships that exist among groups and individuals in the village. This process involves some subtle information-gathering skills for learning about people. Some of the things to do for this purpose are the following:

- 1 Home visits. Generally people are happy if you visit them. You can informally drop in on people at home either for morning tea or evening chat. People automatically start to tell their stories. Some of the villagers are more informed and talkative than others. You may prefer to be with the informed and talkative people. But keep this activity mostly personal and informal.
- 2 Story telling. Story telling is one of the most effective ways of giving to or generating information from people. Your simple story about yourself generally encourages people to tell their stories to you.
- 3 Observation and Verification. You should be aware that some of the stories that you hear may have some elements of exaggeration or imagination. You should carefully observe how people behave, as against the stories that they tell you. As an outsider, you may be told only nice things or the things that they would like you to believe. Keep your eyes and ears open to see relationships between what you are told and

what you observe Of course, you take up this activity only for information that you think is valuable in making the CVL

Anecdotes

*(The names used here are real, they will be changed later )*

- 1 *Radha and Kaushalya were two candidates for the women's quota in the VDC ward committee election Kaushalya won the election After the election, they stopped talking to each other There are many election winners in the village, but, since they were not direct opponents, they do not have any personal grievances against each other Therefore, the quota for women members in the VDC executive committee actually created a rift between two women whereas this provision was supposed to enable women to help each other When these leading women do not talk with each other, some of their female supporters also got divided in favor of one to the other*
- 2 *Khageshwor and Tara have disputes over a piece of land Almost all villagers think that Khageshwor is not a nice person as he always involved in some disputes and takes these village disputes to the government court In the entire village, it is only Radha's family that is friendly with Khageshwor One of the reasons for this tie is that Radha lost an election against Tara's wife Kaushalya Thus an enemy of an enemy becomes a friend of Khageshwor*
- 3 *Khageshwor's daughter -in-law Bishnu lives in a separate house with her two young daughters Her husband works 175 kilometers away from home and visits the village only once in a while Bishnu complains that her parents-in-law have not stopped harassing her even after she moved into this separate house When she joined the Community Video Letter group, her mother-in-law visited her, and yelled at her for wearing bright clothes, "having make up like a prostitute," and ordered her to leave the group But she continued to be an active CVL group member after the CVL facilitator encouraged her to continue and promised to talk to her husband if needed*

*Their parents are more unhappy with them because they are friends of Tara with whom the parents have sour relation*

- 4 *Padam Yogi, a local teacher, is one of the most influential villagers. On a land dispute between Khageshwor and Tara, he had been the witness against Khageshwor in the court. He is one of the advisors of the CFUG committee and plays a key role in the functioning of the CFUG. During the election of new executive members of CFUG, he supported a new candidate, Narayan. In the VDC election he supported Kaushalya who is an enemy of Radha. Therefore, Radha, Khageshwor and the ex-chairman Lilamani are not happy with Padam Yogi. His wife, Laxmi, is one of the active CVL participants.*
- 5 *Beju Chaudhari is a local faith healer from a neighboring village, but he has strong influence in the Uchanambu village as well. To make use of this influence, he fought for the position of Ward Chairperson of Uchanambu in the election. Villagers of Uchanambu came together and defeated him in the election. Thus angered, Beju started creating unnecessary problems and disputes in Uchanambu with the help of his friends in Uchanambu. Because of his social and religious influence, very rarely would people dare to confront his ideas and opinion on matters related to the residents of Uchanambu, though Mr. Beju himself is a non-resident of the village.*
- 6 *Dikpal Yogi is the chairperson from the neighboring CFUG. He is from the most influential family of his village. He and his family want to have their influence on the way the CVL is prepared. They try to be very close friends of the facilitator by inviting him for dinner and extending other such personal favors. One of the hidden agendas that he had was to request the CVL team to film a song by his brother and an interview of his father. One of the lessons to be learned from this case is that the people who may try to influence the process of CVL preparation may also come from the neighboring villages.*

7 *Lilamani Sharma is the ex-chairman of the CFUG. He has very good reputation in the District Forest Office. He started living in a nearby village because some of his family members were there. As he was not able to contribute much time as the CFUG chairperson, villagers asked him to resign from the post. He complied and a new committee was formed.*

*But Lilamani also holds the position of a CFUG secretary of a nearby village that he is not resident of. Therefore, and also because he is leader of a religious group in the district, he still is an influential person in the villages around. Because he was forced to resign from the position of a Chairperson, his attitude toward the new CFUG is not very positive. However, he is not very explicit in expressing this dissatisfaction. The new CFUG members know his feelings towards them and are very cautious to avoid any confrontation with him. Whenever there is some negative ideas expressed against the existing CFUG, generally people guess that it may be due to the influence of Lilamani. Thus some personalities continue to influence village life even if they are neither resident nor hold any formal position in village organization.*

8 *Uchanimbu CFUG has the rule to pay allowances for the officers and rangers when they are officially invited to visit the CFUG. Most of the users in the CFUG do not like this and accuse the foresters for considering the CFUG as an extra source of income. They say that the ex-chairman of the CFUG established this rule as a way to get a permanent support for himself from the foresters.*

**SCRIPT OF THE COMMUNITY VIDEO LETTER  
FROM THE COMMUNITY FOREST USER GROUP  
OF UCHANIMBU VILLAGE, DANG  
(JAN 1998)**

**Video Letter from Uchanimbu village of Dang district**

- 1 Honorable Ministers, Secretaries, high officials , Namaste from residents of Uchanimbu Village of Dang
- 2 We are very happy for this opportunity to express ourselves through this Video Letter Through this letter, we feel all we villagers are now in front you
- 3 Our village is in Deukhuri of Dang district, south of the Churia Hills and north of the Rapti river Uchanimbu village is in ward # 3 of Satpariya Village Development Committee The four small villages (Uchanimbu, Fachakpur, Janakpur, and Kaptan Gunj) of this VDC have one Community Forest The majority of the population is Tharu Only few are migrants from the hills Though we have diverse cultural backgrounds and practices, we are living as a single community in harmony
- 4 In the beginning, our forest area was 53 hectares Some additional area has been added to it, but the official papers about this additional land have not reached us yet So, officially we do not know exactly how big our forest area is
- 5 Our forest has different species of fodder and timber trees and many shrub plants
- 6 From our forest we collect fodder and bedding materials for our animals, construction, roofing and fencing materials for our houses, fuelwood, herbs, and fruits We also use our forest as pasture for our animals
- 7 Our forest was very dense in the beginning The forest degradation started about 20 years back when Mahendra Highway was constructed and kilns were set up to extract "khayer" Realizing the problem, the area was declared "Panchayat Forest" and trees were planted This became our "Community Forest" in 1990
- 8 Since we assumed responsibility for this community forest, it has become easier for us to get timber, fuelwood, fodder and bedding materials, and other things for our basic needs We also have more water in natural springs

- 9 We have a very good forest. We all are together in its conservation and management. But we have many problems. Today we would like to inform you of our main problems, so that you could take appropriate actions to resolve them.
- 10 This is general map of our village. This is settlement area. This is forest area.
- 11 In the south, there is a severe wash-out problem from the Rapti River. The river damaged the intake of our irrigation canal. We have not had irrigation for the last twelve years.
- 12 In the absence of irrigation, we are forced to grow low-value crops in the fields that used to give us a bumper crop of high-value paddy.
- 13 If we could get some government assistance, we could mobilize our labor and local construction materials to repair the canal. If there is irrigation, we can cultivate paddy. We could also get paddy straw which can be used as bedding material, fodder and even for mats and mattresses. This would make easier to raise animals and the grazing hours will be reduced.
- 14 The Rapti River has not only destroyed our irrigation canal, it also washed away our land.
- 15 The following is a message Mr. Jokhan Chaudhary has for you. Most of the time, our land is washed away by the river. It even enters our houses. When such things happen, our crops rot and our belongings are destroyed.
- 16 Now, let us move from the river to the subject of forests.
- 17 The first thing is that the boundary of our forest has not been decided yet. We have disputes with the Ghusari Community Forest in the east and the Sivashakti Community Forest in the west, regarding the forest boundary.
- 18 We discussed this issue together with our CFUG chairman, Mr. Narayan Majganiya, and the Chairman of Ghusari CFUG, Mr. Chuda Mani Khatri.
- Q Mr. Chairman of Ward # 3, is there a serious problem of dispute over the boundary?
- A Yes, there is.
- Q How do you think the dispute can be resolved?

A If users on both sides come together, there might be a scene which could create resentment between the groups. Therefore, if a concerned agency comes and delineates the boundary, both sides will agree to that and the problem can be easily resolved. Otherwise, fighting among the villagers will get more serious. In this situation, we social workers fall into a very odd position.

Q Mr. Chairman of ward #2, do you also believe that somebody from the agency should come and fix the problem? What about if all of us villagers and CFUG members come together and resolve the dispute by ourselves?

A If we all sit together, there will only be more of tug-of-war between the villagers. Therefore, the concerned higher authority should come and delineate the boundary.

19 Once the forest officer came and delineated our forest boundary. But the map he had was not authoritative. So, we could not agree. Now, we request you to help us in resolving this problem.

Our friend Ms. Sabitra Gharti sends following message to you.

20 We have planted trees in ward #3. We also have some natural forest. But our forest is too thick and dense. We have no knowledge and means of doing proper thinning and pruning. We could get enough fuelwood with proper thinning and pruning. This would also make it easier for new plants to grow fast. Dangerous animals would not hide in the forest and our life would be easier.

21 We also had a talk with the District Forest Officer (DFO) about thinning and pruning.

DFO It is better to start thinning and pruning from the month of November. But it is not too late yet. So, please take your approved Operation Plan and start the work as soon as possible.

22 The officer talked about the Operation Plan. But our plan has not yet been approved. We asked Janjuru Chaudhary, who was the CFUG chairman last year, why approval was delayed.

JC The Ranger prepared the Operation Plan here. He gave the plan to me and asked to get it typed and then submit it to him. Then, the CFUG chairman of our adjoining CFUG said "I am going to the office for my own work. I can take your plan, get it typed and then give to the officer. You may not need to go." I gave him the work plan and Rs. 1000. After some days, I went to the District Forest Office and asked after our management plan. They said, "The typing is not finished yet." I came back. Some days passed by and the

Ranger asked me to go with him to take the operation plan. The typing was not finished yet. Then the Ranger said, "You just sign here and I will bring the operation plan of your forest." Then again I went to get the paper on auditing. I got the letter of auditing. But on the operational plan, I was told, "Your operation plan is not here and may be lost." When I told this to the Ranger, he advised me to give him more money (in addition to the Rs 1000 I had given in the beginning).

23 Then we asked the Ranger

Ranger You had given the plan to Janjeru Chaudary, the vice Chairman. Janjeru is too busy on his farm and he also does not come when he is called.

Ans But he always comes when called.

Ranger I called so many times, but he does not come on time. In the general meeting I asked him where the operational plan was. Why was it not brought to me? They described the situation. Then, I myself tried to get it. I went to District Forest Office. Then this Ah, Ah, happened and that Ah, Ah happened. They told me that it is misplaced. So, it was given to print again.

24 Then we asked to the District Forest Officer

Q Sir, why so much delay in giving the approved operational plan?

Ans It is so that Ah, we approved last year's operational plan last July. It is delayed because your people do not have time to come and collect it.

Q If it was approved last July, you could send it to us. This would have benefitted us and also the forest.

Ans It is so that Ah, rainy season, it is so that Ah, there are plans of many CFUGs, it is so that Ah, people are supposed to come and take their plan, it is so that Ah, it is delayed because you people did not come on time.

25 There is a contradiction in their statements. Whoever is at fault, there is delay in getting the approved operational plan and we are at a loss. We request you to consider this problem of ours.

26 If we get some training and assistance, we can get substantial benefits from our forest We could benefit if

- plots could be set aside for rotational grazing,
- we could get training and assistance in the cultivation of herbs and medicinal plants,
- we could get training and assistance in profitable enterprise like beekeeping,
- we could get training in making handicrafts and assistance for their marketing

27 We can substantially increase our income if could get training in livestock farming, piggery, goat raising, and other such income-generating activities If our income is increased, our dependence on the forest will be decreased

28 Some of our other villagers have the following messages for you

Laxmi Chaudhary

Namskar !

I do not have any problem Please give me a training in pig raising If I get training, I will raise pigs and increase my income

Debi Chaudhary

I request assistance in goat farming If I get training and assistance, I can increase my income by raising goats

Mankumari Chaudhary

I do not have any farm animals Farming will become easy if I have animals too I could put farmyard manure in the field and increase my income

Bishnu Pokhrel

Our forest has many types of medicinal plants But we do not know their method of cultivation and propagation To benefit from such plants, we need training With their proper use we could have a good income for all of us in the village

29 Now we will tell you some of our other grievances

In our village, people are encroaching on the public land. Pasture lands are being fenced in and cultivated as private fields. We also spoke with the DFO on this subject.

DFO: If people encroach on public land in the village, then the villagers should take some initiative to control it. If they fail themselves, only then should they go to the DFO, the Ranger's Office, or the Ilaka Office. But such things should be reported to our office.

30 Usually, no one will go to report that a neighbor has encroached on public land. If this thing continues as it is, no public land will be left in two to four years. In Kaptan Gunj, there are landless people.

They must stay somewhere.

Man Bahadur Batha Magar

We have been living on this land for many years. By now, the Government should have decided whether we should be allowed to continue living on this land, or should we be shifted to some other place, or should we be declared as non-citizens and be thrown out. But if we are the citizens of this country, government should do some management for us too.

Because a survey has not been done on time, people are continuing to expand their land to include public property. We often hear on the radio that the problem of landless people will be solved soon. But in our village the problem is as it has been for last thirty-five years.

Today, we told you our main problems. But we have many other problems too.

Man Kumari and Laxmi Chaudhary

We cannot speak Nepali language. I would like to speak the Nepali language very much and I try too. Therefore, we request you to give us a night school. We want to be able to write our own name. We also want to be able to speak to others without being shy.

Laxmi Yogi

If we have night school, people can continue to practice what they learn in the literacy classes. They will not forget their letters. Similarly, we feel that audio/video materials for the illiterate and reading materials for the literate should be provided.

- 31 The number of women in high positions in our CFUGs is minimal. Women are kept in Committees as decorations or as a formality only. Instead of that, a few women should be given some responsible positions such as Chairperson or Secretary. If so happens, then both the women and men can work together for the development of the village and the nation.
- 32 We have put many problems of our village through this video letter to you. With the hope that you will carefully listen to our problems and try to resolve them, we would like to end this letter here.

**Large Group Intervention in Forest Policy in Nepal  
Process Documentation and Analysis in Video Making Activities for  
Community Controlled and Community Consultation Video  
(Part II Community Consultation Video)**

**Kedar Sharma and Carina Frantz**

**GreenCOM**

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## Process Documentation for Video Production Activities for "Community-Controlled" and "Community-Consultation" Videos

### 1 Background

GreenCOM provides technical support to the environment and communication component of the USAID supported Environment and Forests Enterprises Activity project being implemented in eight districts of the mid-west development region of Nepal. As part of its scope of work, GreenCOM was required to prepare two Community Video Letters as well as a professionally produced video (a Docudrama production). The topics of the videos were to come out of consultations with the GON, USAID and the EFEA partners as well as out of the research carried out by GreenCOM in its first task order. This was a formative research activity meant to reveal problems inherent in the present Forest Policy and in forming user groups under the present policy environment. This video production by design was produced in consultation with communities having CFLGs in the EFEA project area. This video production is thus called community consult video (CCV) in this publication.

Two approaches to video production were developed to increase people's participation in the production of video materials. GreenCom felt that increasing people's role in these materials would lead to products which would be more easily understood, and thus enhance their degree of communication. As this people-centered approach to video production is still largely experimental in Nepal, two methods were utilized for the sake of comparison. These were, (i) community controlled video making, and (ii) community consulted video making. We have called the process of community controlled video making the Community Video Letter (CVL). A study of this approach was produced as the first part of the current Task Order 2 (TO-2) and was presented as a process documentation with analysis report in March 1998. This current report provides a record of a more professional video making process for Docudrama production, but one, which was carried out in consultation with the community. It is meant to provide the second part of Task Order 2. A third study, a comparison between the two approaches composes part three.

All three of these reports together are expected to provide insights on the comparative advantages of the two approaches for developing video as a communication tool in the context of EFEA and for productions elsewhere in Nepal. A comparative study of these production processes, their outcomes and effects on the target populations will provide a basis for improving the approach to audio-visual production in the future.

The CVL can help people express their ideas and views in a video format. CVLs can be written or prepared by a person or group or a community. When done as a group, however, it has been found to help villagers to join together, focus their ideas and concerns, and often can be used to enable people with diverse backgrounds and political

views to work together. The high prestige of participating in the video production often motivates such people to join into a group and work as a team. In the context of the GreenCOM project, the CVL, through the Community Forestry Forum, has proved to be an effective medium for bringing ideas and concerns of project stakeholders to senior level policy makers. The CVL is entirely produced by community members with some training and limited help from a facilitator. This approach is more concerned with the process of community participation and the creation of a village-level point-of-view than it is with the professional quality of the product itself.

In Community Consultation Video (CCV) production, the community is brought in to help identify the issue to be covered by the video and to help streamline and clarify the production once it is under way. In this case, professional production teams are brought in to maintain a high technical quality for the product. The purpose of making videos in this way is to ensure that they focus on local issues in a way that is easily understood by the target audience. Such videos are meant for a rural audience through the Mobile Video Systems (MVS) network established in the EFEA area, as well as through other means. As video producers are largely drawn from urban populations, producing videos in this way gives them a better chance at reaching an audience, which may not be familiar to them. The audience thus becomes a partner in production to improve the chances for good communication to be achieved.

Himalaya Films, a Kathmandu based video production firm, was hired by GreenCOM to provide its professional services for the production of these two CCVs: a docu-drama and a documentary. Forest officials and concerned development workers in the EFEA area, as well as the communities, were consulted throughout the process of production.

## 2 Objectives

In the context of the above, process documentation was carried out to fulfill the following objectives:

- (a) To record how this approach to video production influenced the identification and prioritization of issues covered in the videos and document how group decisions were made, including the role of gender in such decision-making. This record also helps us judge the degree to which the people were actually involved in the video production and the degree to which this involvement actually affected the outcome of the work.
- (b) To keep a detailed report of all activities and trace the process of making a CCV so that the lessons learned from it can be used for the further development of audio-video in the future.

### **3 Methodology**

This process documentation is a detailed description of all activities related to CCV production. The following methods were used in the process documentation:

The Subject Matter Specialist maintained a detailed diary of all events and activities of the process.

Informal interviews were conducted with the community members and officials who were involved in the process.

The director, technicians, and the CEO of Himalaya Films were interviewed.

Relevant still-photo documentation was conducted.

### **4 Selection of Subject, Site and Story Line development**

#### **4.1 Initial Discussions and Criteria Development**

The process of subject and site selection for the CCVs was started in January 1998. The GreenCOM team (Krishna M. Gautam, Country Program Coordinator and Kedar Sharma, Community Video Specialist) together with the Himalaya Films crew (Amar Simha and Prakash K. C.) had a meeting with the EFEA team (Coordinator, Mr. Ram Paudel, DFOs, and DSCOs from all the EFEA districts) which came to participate in the EFEA Annual Planning Workshop in Tulsipur on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from USAID and the INGOs involved in forestry development programs in the mid-western development region were also present.

In the meeting, the participants were briefed on the concept of the CCV and several sets of issues were discussed, namely those relating to hill community forests, those relating to Terai community forests, and those common to both. All participants, especially the DFOs and DSCOs, took active part in the discussions of these issues in the hopes of identifying key issues to be included in the videos.

Many of the issues that they identified were related to forest policy, rules, regulations, and government administration. Later, the discussants were asked to focus on the target audience for the videos and concentrate on the issues they felt were most directly relevant to forest users and their groups and to help locate sites within the EFEA area that best exemplified these issues. The discussion which followed led to the selection of Bardia for a docu-drama focused on issues related to CFUGs in the Terai and Panchthar for a documentary on issues relating to non-timber forest products (NTFP).

These subject and districts were selected for the following reasons:

It was desirable to expand the GreenCOM activities to new EFEA districts.

The number of possible new districts was limited. Political unrest in parts of the EFEA area made it impossible to work in some EFEA districts. All USAID-related agencies had been alerted not to take risks working there. Pyuthan and Bardiya were both possible from a security point of view.

The meeting then decided that GreenCOM should identify the specific topics for both the documentary and the docu-drama after having discussions with users in the respective districts.

After the meeting, members of the Himalaya Film team left for Pyuthan to visit some of the NTFP producer CFUGs to help identify issues through discussions with CFUG members and to begin script development (See Annex 1a). Mr. Binod Kharel from Himalaya Films visited Bardiya from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March to develop the story line for the docu-drama. The GreenCOM Community Video Specialist, Kedar Sharma, joined him and helped initiate discussion with forestry staff and the community members.

#### **4.2 Site Selection and Story Line Development**

I, Kedar Sharma, left Kathmandu for Dang, Banke and Bardiya on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March to participate in an orientation meeting to be held in Tulsipur. It was planned that Binod Kharel, the Himalaya Films scriptwriter and docu-drama director, would arrive in Nepalgunj on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March. We would both then go to Bardiya for the final selection of the production site and to work on story line development together. The orientation meeting in Tulsipur was a good opportunity to talk to various authorities about the docu-drama and documentary. In order to identify the relevant and important issues, I met with Lal Narayan Yadav, the recently transferred DFO from Bardiya, Ram Preet Mourya, the new DFO of Bardiya, and Shyam Paudel, Planning Officer at EFEA Project Coordinator Office (PCO). After the orientation meeting, I then went to Bardiya through Nepalgunj where Binod Kharel was waiting.

We both then went to Gulariya, headquarters of Bardiya district, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, where I met with the DFO, Mr. Mourya, CARE District Coordinator (DC), Ms. Kanta Khanal, and ranger Bashistha Narayan Mishra. Here the purpose, duration and target audience of the CCV were explained. Himalaya Films was briefed on the hierarchy of the district forestry office, common terminology in the forestry sector, and about community forestry.

The authorities requested to help the GreenCOM and Himalaya Films team to visit one or two community forests that day. Incidentally, CARE Nepal had organized a range post level networking meeting on the same day. The venue of the meeting was about a kilometer from the district headquarters, so the group went there and met with a group of women representing different ethnic, caste and economic groups. Sita Khatri, a CARE motivator, was conducting the meeting.

At the time of our arrival, the networking meeting was about to conclude. After a brief introduction with the meeting participants, we went for a short visit to a neighboring

CFUG When we came back we started discussing different issues with the participants (See Annex III for a list of people in attendance at the meeting)

Following is the list of issues raised by the participants They are here listed in order of the participants level of priority – from high to low

- 1 Alcoholism among the men folks,
- 2 The landless and new migrants being denied access to forests
- 3 Poor sanitation in the villages,
- 4 Superficial signs of progress (fashionable clothing and false notions of modernity)
- 5 The lower rates of literacy among women,
- 6 The high risk of snake bites in the rainy season
- 7 The heavy levels of mosquito infestation

The participants seemed most concerned about the problem of alcoholism among men They described how women and children are being victimized and how it has become difficult to run adult literacy classes at night in some villages The participants told many anecdotes related to the problem and unanimously urged Himalaya Films to highlight this particular issue in their video

After the meeting the participants were requested to bring the group to a nearby community forest Most of the women and a large group of local men and women went along There are many community forests in this area of Bardia Forests are owned by nearby communities The forests of these different communities often border each other and through this feature large forest areas are created in which many communities each own a part The GreenCOM- Himalaya Films team went to Bhrikuti and Santoshi CFUGs and held informal discussions with their users on different aspects of their forest management We were shown growing trees, saplings, inter-cropping of different legumes inside the growing plantation areas, etc The team was still trying to find technical forestry issues to feature in our video as we were still not convinced that alcoholism should be the main subject of the production owing to the fact that the EFEA agenda orients itself specifically toward environmental issues

Our team reached a riverbank where the villagers showed them how new plantation protects the land from the river We saw that not all the land near the river was planted and covered with trees The team saw a large barren piece of land and asked why there was no plantation there According to the villagers that land was left for community use as pasture and a cremation ground I asked why it was necessary to leave a patch of land barren for that purpose Perhaps they could plant in that particular land and graze their cattle in a grown forest on a rotational basis? It was pointed out that if the land were left as it was the river might erode the land and undercut their whole effort

To this comment a woman from Namki Khavar Bhatti answered that she wanted to own that land and plant trees there, but the members of the Bhrikuti CFUG would not allow her to do so. They wanted to keep that land strictly for pasture and cremation. I asked the Bhrikuti members to explain how they acquired the rights to a piece of public land to keep it barren. They responded that they gave some land to a neighboring CFUG as compensation to have the right to use that particular land. The team saw it as evidence of the weak local administration and the high handedness of strong local social groups' use of public property. I felt that this could be a good subject for the video. Land allocation, user identification and social dynamics have been important issues in community forestry, especially in the Terai. Recently, the government developed a map of potential community forest areas. The DFOs, especially from the Terai however, have been complaining that the land allocated is not adequate to the demand. The team also discussed this as a possible topic. Land allocation seemed to be an important issue.

The team then talked more with the participants about the idea of picking land allocation as the main story with alcoholism as a side story. All of them agreed on the condition that the video not use the real names of the people and villages of the CFUGs involved.

The team and village participants further discussed how we could help people raise these issues. A solution came from the users themselves. The video should show how such problems could be solved within the community. They said that if the video idealized the government offices and showed people going to the DFO or ranger to solve their problems that would not be of any help. The video should recognize the community's role in solving its own problems. They said that there are certainly problems in communities but the communities themselves could solve most of these and this is the way they would like to be shown.

Later we discussed this with the DFO district coordinator of CARE (CARE/DC) and the rangers. They liked the story line that was being developed and agreed to appear in the video in their real roles. We realized that the government officials would be more rigid than the development workers from the non-governmental sectors (CARE) on some issues. The DFO and rangers for example argue that the users should not be paid from the fund raised by a CFUG if they leave the community. The District Coordinator of CARE DC argues on the other hand that if the government gives rights to the community then they should be given the freedom to exercise all of the privileges of those rights including the right to decide how to settle accounts with a departing CFUG member. The only area where the government should intervene is to ensure that such decisions are made as per democratic norms.

That evening two women from the neighboring village came to meet us at the DFO office on their way back home from their own office a local NGO. These workers were very interested in sharing their ideas and showed interest in helping develop the video. The team discussed our findings with them and asked for their comments. They suggested we include two additional things in the video alternatives to grazing and an answer to the question - "after conservation of the forest, then what?"

That day, the team also met some men from neighboring communities and exchanged ideas and comments. The team asked them about their views on the issue of alcoholism. They accepted that there was a problem to some extent, but said that if a man gets support and recognition from his community, he might stop the drinking as well as prevent other anti-social behavior. We took note of all their ideas.

Since the team was preparing a docu-drama, we also needed to look for several non-professional actors who could participate from the local communities. Most people showed interest in appearing in the video, but all of the women said that they would not be ready to play the part of being somebody else's wife. They suggested to us that the team bring the "hero" and "heroine" from Kathmandu.

That night Binod wrote a rough outline of the story which is summarized in annex (6) below. The next morning we saw some potential locations for the docudrama and left Bardia for Nepalgunj. Following is a brief description of the location.

## **5 Brief Introduction of the Area**

Bardia district is located in the southwestern part of Nepal. Administratively, it lies in the NWDR of Nepal and is one of the eight districts of EFEA project area. Out of its 2025 sq km (202 500 ha) total area, 47411 ha or 23.41% land is cultivated and 124 800 ha or 61.62% is covered by the forests (Statistical Yearbook Nepal, 1997 HMG/Central Bureau of Statistics). The district has one of the most important national parks of Nepal, the Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP) which is spread over 968,000 ha. The Royal Bardia National Park is famous for being an ideal habitat for endangered species such as the tiger, rhinoceros, black buck, and wild elephant.

Tharus are an indigenous ethnic group of people in this area. They are supposed to be naturally malaria resistant. After the eradication of malaria that started in the 1950s, people from the hills of Nepal and from India started to migrate to the fertile land of Bardia. Today out of its 290 313 population, 149 865 or 51.62% is Tharus (ibid).

Most of the district population is engaged in agriculture. Those living near the district headquarters and other commercial centers are engaged in various commercial and government service occupations. Most of the agricultural work is done by the Tharus as tenant or as low paid agriculture labor.

The area we selected for the docudrama lies inside Gularia municipality. The area was selected for its representativeness, proximity to the district headquarters and the access to physical facilities like electricity and easier accommodation for the video crew. All of the CFLGs in the area operate plantation forests.

## 6 Story Development

Binod started writing the story after returning to Kathmandu. In his first draft, he established the main character Dhannu, a local Tharu male character. Dhannu is a poor man who has not been included in any CFLG yet. He just lost his job at one of the local rice mills. He starts drinking out of frustration and disturbs the ongoing adult literacy classes for women. Later, other community members understand his problem and help him to solve it by arranging for the allocation of a piece of land for him to organize into a community forest. He gives up drinking and starts to work in the community.

After reviewing the draft, the writer suggested that various other elements of the community be included in the story to better represent its ethnic composition. The problems of illiteracy, the effect of disruptive alcoholic behavior on adult literacy programs, sharing of resources among the villagers, and people's participation in community forestry activities would all be brought in.

There were many things that the team could not develop in detail during this stage, so they decided to finalize the rest of the problems during the planned storyboard testing process.

## 7 Comments on the Script

After the story line was prepared, I discussed it with Dr. Andrew Manzardo, the Technical Team Leader of Green COM, by e-mail. Mr. A. L. Joshi, Chief Planning Officer of the MOFSC, was shown a brief outline of the video story. Joshi generally liked the idea but did not make any specific comments. Comments from Dr. Mona Grieser of GreenCOM were also received. Mr. Fred Pollock, the Environmental Officer of USAID, was also shown an outline. He suggested the script not over-emphasize the issue of alcoholism, encourage conservation and tree plantation, and he suggested that the team consult a specialist before saying that tree plantation can protect land from river damage. He also asked for a detailed shooting script when it became available.

These comments were conveyed to Himalaya Films and they were asked to prepare a detailed translation of the script to pass on to Washington and USAID/Nepal, together with a shooting schedule.

## 8 Making Shooting Arrangements

The team was trying to involve as many local people and development workers in the docu-drama as possible. The video was discussed with CFUG members, the DFO, and CARE in Bardia. They were also keen to act in the video. To provide some gender balance, the team wanted to involve a female CARE staff member and a male ranger from the forest office. We requested that the CARE field office send one female field extension worker to Bardia for the purpose of participating in the video. Mr. S. S.

Deputy Team Leader helped us enthusiastically and designated Shreedhar Pandey a CFE from Dang

The team reached Bardiva on 5<sup>th</sup> of April in time for a nationwide strike called by the "Maoists" on the next day. The team was still able to conduct a storyboard test and arrange the logistics for shooting, completing the schedule as planned.

## **9 Testing of Concepts and Details**

### **9.1 Methodology**

The original Project Plan designed for the production of the docudrama emphasized a high level of interaction with local residents and prescribed the use of storyboarding to test comprehension in the field. However, since most of the video and filmmakers do not do storyboarding in Nepal, it became very difficult for Himalaya Films to find a person with the experience required. Finally, Amar Balak, a graphic artist from Nepal Television, was solicited to assist Himalaya with his limited experience of storyboarding. At last, we (GreenCOM and Himalaya Films) came to a conclusion to do what could be termed a story-telling session instead of the original storyboarding. This involved verbally communicating the ideas and messages that were in the script and reading the script over to groups of local residents and government officials. It then also included the testing of major visual components such as the accuracy of village setting, costumes, etc., through the use of drawn images.

By achieving a high level of authenticity and accuracy in our depiction of village life, we felt that the video we produced would gain two strengths. The story depiction might carry more legitimacy with village audiences, thereby drawing their attention into the story more effectively. This in turn might allow a greater possibility that the messages in the video would be comprehended and discussed.

### **9.2 Practice**

Two groups were tested. On the 6<sup>th</sup> April, the team first met with the DFO, CARE/DC, two CARE CFEs (including the one from Dang) and a ranger and discussed various issues raised in the script. The team told them the story and Mr. Amar Balak, the storyboard artist, showed the group some illustrations. We found Mr. Mishra, the ranger, very enthusiastic about the video.

There were some disagreements amongst the foresters themselves. One of the disagreements was whether or not the community should have the right to compensate departing CFUG members for their contributions made while they were members. The team decided to include this debate and an affirmative answer to it in the video itself.

After these group discussions, decisions were also reached on shooting arrangements with the aid of the illustrations. Mr. Balak drew what the team felt would be a typical physical

layout of an office and a meeting, and it was settled how people would be shown when in discussion at the DFO or when meeting with the ranger or CFE in the field. It was also decided how the DFO would be shown responding to their demands. The appearance of the inside of the literacy class was also decided on. CARE/DC also suggested including the topic of alternative energy resources such as agriculture byproducts and biogas in the video.

After the discussion was finished, the CARE/DC asked to meet separately with her staff and us. They suggested that we not follow all the advice given by the ranger as government officials tend to be very conservative and want to curtail the community's rights. She also asked us to balance the role of the ranger and CARE/CFE in the docu-drama. The team agreed to consider the suggestion while shooting.

Another meeting was then held with the users of the adjoining CFUGs. This meeting was organized in the front yard of the DFO. After a brief description of EFEA and GreenCOM, the purpose of a community consultation video was explained. Then Binod read the entire script at a slow speed, answering questions and heeding discussion along the way. The CFUG members actively participated in the discussion and made comments on many aspects of the script.

Local residents sat in one large group, but divided into a women's side and a men's side. A series of drawings was then shown to the group and comments solicited. The artist drew the image and then held it up first to either the men's side or the women's side, alternately. In all approximately thirty drawings were shown focusing on the accuracy of major visual features such as housing, costumes, jewelry, working habits, tree planting, seating arrangements in literacy classes. The intent was to attain as much accuracy and authenticity in the visual representations as possible.

### 9.3 Results

I noticed that in the men's group a more prominent group of well-dressed men, sitting in the front responded most often. Among the women's group, while they did not as a whole offer as many comments, I did not notice nearly as much internal stratification. The Tharu women offered responses as readily as did the Pahadi women, while this was not the case with the men.

In general participants suggested that the part dealing with the right of the community to compensate its outgoing members not be omitted. They also suggested that the villagers not go to Dhannu's house at the end of the story, but instead he should be called to a meeting. The women suggested the costumes and ornaments for each of the characters and showed their interest in helping the crew arrange them.

Binod Kahrel, the director, identified local people to act in the docu-drama. All of the proposed people agreed to take parts. Then there was a discussion about names for the characters. First they asked the team to change the name of the main female character to

Fulrani instead of Fulawa. That was done because Fulawa was not a common name in the area. They also discussed whether they should use their own names in the video or use new names. One of the women, Prisma Tharu, asked to be given a new name.

They also made many comments on the settings. They did not like the houses we had chosen for the characters Dhannu and Raghu's families. They brought us to the village after the meeting to show us different houses and settings. Binod liked some of them and requested some minor changes like adding some properties.

That afternoon while we were coming back from the field, two women stopped me and expressed their dissatisfaction with our work. Both of them had been present during the storyboard test meeting. They were unhappy not because their own problems or issues had been underrepresented or misinterpreted, but because their village had not been selected as the shooting sight. They were proud of their forest and eager to see it on television. I promised to come another time to collect some real (not dramatized) material from their village. However, they did not seem to be satisfied.

## **10 Shooting**

Shooting of docudrama started on 7<sup>th</sup> of April. That day Amar Simha and I went to Pyuthan for documentary storyboard testing. Binod gave me the following shooting report.

### **7th April**

At 7:30 in the morning they went to the Chautara (common meeting place for the villagers) with the technical crew, artists from Kathmandu, non-artist actors from the offices, and the community members. They started shooting at 8:00 am and completed five scenes by lunchtime.

They went back to the shooting spot after lunch and completed four more scenes. There was a very big gathering of about 500-700 people from different villages. Despite the big crowd, they did not have to face any significant difficulty. Local people were extremely helpful and they found that almost everyone was interested to appear in the video. They tried their best to give this opportunity to a maximum number of people. The shooting went up until 8:00 PM.

### **8th April**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> they concentrated on indoor shooting. After some time there was a power failure which was followed by long hours of low voltage power supply?

9<sup>th</sup> April

Amar Simha and I came back to Bardiva on the 9<sup>th</sup> from Pyuthan. We directly went to the shooting sight. The crewmembers were packing up after shooting. Binod had already left the spot to make some logistical arrangements to send the crew back. I checked to see that some shots of alternative energy resources had been taken. At the same time, Shreedhar told me that Kanta wanted to talk to me as soon as possible.

I immediately contacted Kanta. She said that Shreedhar, the CARE worker who had participated in the video, was not happy with the shooting as she felt she had been put behind the ranger. In her opinion, she was not given a proper role in the video, although the CARE staff is much more active in the field than the rangers.

I checked with Binod about the roles of the CARE field staff and the government rangers. Binod thought that firstly, the roles were already balanced. Secondly, the ranger had been working in the local situation for years and he was very active. Thirdly, Shreedhar started arguing about the issue of compensation during the shooting which he found quite inappropriate and embarrassing.

I met Shreedhar also. She expressed her dissatisfaction. It was an unpleasant situation for me. To appease her, I took the technical crew to the field and did some pickup shots with Shreedhar in focus, although I had no idea how to put those shots in the video. I also arranged a training session to highlight Mr. Adhikari's role according to Kanta's advice.

## 11 Conclusion

Aside from the quest for visual authenticity, a number of other important developments came out of the 'storytelling' session and out of the participatory orientation which guided the crew into the field to consult with local people on the details of the storyline. One such development was a discussion which was generated surrounding the issue of plant purchasing for community planting. During the foresters' script reading meeting, the foresters objected to portions of the script which alluded to local residents purchasing their own plants and so charging a fee to new members as a contribution. The foresters insisted that the community itself does not purchase plants but that they are provided to them by the DFO. This led the script crew to consult with the local villagers on the issue. They insisted that they certainly do buy their own plants, as those provided by the DFO proved to be insufficient to meet their needs. CARE workers then corroborated this, and the DFO was informed of its error.

The significance of this anecdote lies in the role that the film crew played in generating discussion within the community and in facilitating a dialogue about it between the villagers and the local government representatives. Such an instance points to the value of this kind of participatory consultation in not only enhancing the accuracy of its information base but in the benefits attained through the very process of data collection and the catalyst that a fieldworker may provide to facilitate productive discussion if

he/she is aware and attuned to this possibility.

The director of the docudrama, Binod Kharel, commented to me that he had never before done this kind of research for the production of a video. In the past, he said, the storyline had always come from the donor and he was amazed at how much insight he had gained for his script by going to the field and investigating the issues first hand.

Because we went into the field before beginning to write the script, we became aware of a number of issues we might have otherwise overlooked. Our time in the field alerted us to the issues of alcohol abuse, land allotment and user identification, and compensation for outgoing members. Each of these themes came to form the core of our storyline and provided what could now truly be termed the 'docu' portion to our drama.

Annex I Short interviews with Amar Simha and Binod Kharel

INTERVIEW WITH BINOD KHAREL

Q Did you have any different experience doing this Docudrama?

A Yes the whole working style was different in this Docudrama. I have done some docudramas in different development subjects. Generally, I was elaborating the subject provided by the client in other productions. For this particular Docudrama, we were not given any story line. We had to go to the field and develop the story on our own. We received all the research and production support by the client GreenCOM. However, their involvement was like a coworker rather than a client. They did not impose anything. Community consultation was the main idea behind this production and we did that. This is first time I had to do the field research and story-development sessions with all level of stakeholders.

Q Did you have any difficulties during the process do you think any thing should be improved in the future productions of this type?

A We decided to use non-actor artists as much as possible. It was natural to have some difficulties to make them act. Especially for proper dialogue delivery. They usually tend to improvise the dialogue. In addition, it was some times little difficult to track them on. However, I personally learnt and enjoyed a lot from that experience.

Another problem was created by the opinion dispute between the ranger and the CARE CFE on a certain issue that was settled beforehand. We conducted story discussion session and storyboard test to solve such differences beforehand. That difference did not take much time to be solved but I felt bad.

Regarding the future productions, it will always be better to decide the length of the film according to the issues. I think, if we were allowed to make a longer production, we could manage other important issues as well.

Q Do you think you will apply this procedure for other productions in future?

A I liked this process very much. The main thing in it is it does not allow outsiders to assume local issues. It is totally participatory and the main thing, this process is very useful to develop a sense of belonging to the local people. I hope the community forest users, not only from this particular village but also from elsewhere will find a

strong sense of closeness because of many non actor artists on the screen and the issues which is has been treated from the local perspective I will certainly apply this process in my independent programs However, I can not say about the sponsored programs, there, all these things depend upon the client

#### INTERVIEW WITH AMAR SIMHA

Q Did you feel any difference doing this docudrama?

A The whole process of this docudrama was started in the field and most of the work was done there We have done the proper research for this production, which we were not doing for other products In this product, I am surer of the content and the output

Q Do you want to comment on the storyboard test process that was conducted in the field?

A Since we don't have a practice of storyboard testing here, it was little difficult to conduct it Finally, we briefly conducted a storyboard testing and conducted a detailed story discussion session with different level of concerned people

Q Did you have any difficulties during the process?

A Generally the whole process was done in a very comfortable and cooperative circumstance The local community forest users were very cooperative and we got their help in every part of the process Only one problem we had to face was related to the irregular electricity supply in the shooting location

#### Annex II Treatment of Docudrama

##### SCENE NO 1

Artist Channu, Phulwa  
Villager

Location Channu House

There is a village in Bardia district, where Tharu Brahman and Chhetri people live People are busy in their daily works Phulwa is making cow dung cakes in the yard, then later she starts cleaning the yard As Phulwa's husband Channu Chaudhary is about to go out on a cycle, some people from the same village arrive there Villagers are going to forest department, because people from other places have got the land

and forest from the forest dept and are meeting their needs by establishing community forest. On the other hand, they are also protecting the forests as well. Therefore, they request Chhannu to come along with them but he refuses because he has to work in the mill. He says if he doesn't go there, the mill will be closed down and he'll have to look for another job. So he is not interested in joining the community and rides away on a bicycle while the villagers go the other way.

#### SECEN NO 2

Artist Phulwa, Heraloo

Location Forest

Phulwa is eating sugarcane, while her cattle are grazing around. Suddenly one of her cow grazes into the no-entry community forest which has just been planted. In the meantime a shepherd comes and says that the forest has been protected by villagers and cattle are prohibited from grazing. She questioned, where should she take the cattle. She hits the cow and takes it away.

#### SCENE NO 3

Artist Phulwa, Asha, Prisma

Location Road

Phulwa is returning home, thinking on the way and she meets Prisma and Asha. Phulwa told them about the grazing problem and then Prisma and Asha explained about community forest and advised her to go the forest dept. Phulwa talks about being illiterate and she does not know anything about community forest. Prisma and Asha told her about adult literacy class and invited her to attend the adult literacy class in the evening.

#### SCENE NO 4

Artist Channu, Phulwa,  
Raghu, Parbha

Location Channu House

Channu and Phulwa are discussing about their forest at home. Two neighbors Raghu and Parbha enter the house. Raghu and Channu advocates that Phulwa doesn't need to study, because she doesn't have to work anywhere and she knows how to sing. However, all the four have same idea on community forest. They agree to go to forest office to put their problems there, the next day.

## SCENE NO 5

Artist Channu, Raght, Prabha,  
Ranger, Phulwa, Ramesh,  
Misra, Asha, DFO & Villagers

Location Forest Dept

Ranger Ramesh and Misra are being informed about the problems at the premises of the forest dept In the mean time D F O enters and assures the villagers give instructions to the rangers One villager asks for empty space (land) in the jungle but Ramesh says that place is being used for grazing and graveyards He tells that it would be better if they could discuss it with other community people, and it would be favorable to work together with the community forest To get this work done Rangers and Asha decided to go further

## SCENE NO 6

Artist Asha, Subhadra,  
Ranger Ramesh, Misra,  
Prisma, Channu, Raghu,  
Villagers, Phulwa, Prabha

Location Ground

Discussion on Janaki Community forest is on progress in the field, where Asha (N G O) is present The agenda of the meeting is what to do with the family who is leaving the place The meeting decides to provide some money for their labors and contribution But when ranger Ramesh objects this is not a good tradition and the problems might arise in the future Others do not agree with him and follow the meeting's decision

In the meantime the chairman of Sonapatti Community forest and a volunteer arrives

Ranger Ramesh requests to the people of Sonapatti and Janaki communities to mix rest families with them and talks about co-operation

The Chairman of Sonapatti tells that it has been already two years when the forest was established and if anyone wants to join, each has to pay one thousand rupees every year

The chairman of Janaki gives examples of labor, investment the money spent for buying plants and he too asks for some money

But Channu and Raghu says they are unable to do so due to their poverty

However, ranger assures, it would be all right within some time

SCENE NO 7

Artist Channu, Raghu,  
Shauni

Location A Local Hotel

Channu and Raghu went to a tea shop for a cup of tea but later, they decide to drink alcohol. After sometime both get drunk and begin to argue heatedly.

SCENE NO 8

Artist Phulwa, Pragha,  
Prisma, Subhadra

Location Channu House

Some women from Janaki and Sonapatti community forest, arrive and give assurances to Phulwa and Prabha, that they should not worry, they will help them. They can pay in installments for the materials they use. The women also argue with them to join adult literacy.

SCENE NO 9

Artist Channu, Raghu

Location Channu House

When Channu and Raghu enter. Their wives are not at home.

SCENE NO 10

Artist Channu, Raghu,  
Rama, Phulwa,  
Prabha, villagers

Location Class Room

Rama is teaching in one of the adult literacy classes. Raghu and Channu fetch their wives and take them back home. Other women suggest for day adult literacy class due to the similar problem. Rama convinces that it is quite common to find drunkards, but they also have to take precaution.

SCENE NO 11

Artist Channu, Phulwa

Location Channu House

Channu stares at the cycle and takes out a piece of cloth to clean the cycle. In addition, throws away the cloth. Phulwa is watching his activities. Phulwa asks what happened. Channu says, the mill has been shut down since

Yesterday Now there is no source of income So the cycle is useless

#### SCENE NO 12

Artist Raghu, Misra, Channu, Location The Ground  
Phulwa, Prabha, Aasha,  
Subhadra, Prisma, Hari  
And Villagers

Rangers, Channu, Raghu, Asha, Prabha, Phulwa and the people from Janaki Sahyog and Sonapatti are present for discussion The open space for grazing and grave yard and to make the place available for the needy are on the agenda

Rangers request to live together in cooperation It's every one's right and if some one gets the place it would be far so this place is convenient

Community people insist on providing other places without disturbing grazing field and graveyard

People who do not have any place express discontent

Ranger warns that if any plantation is not carried out on the open land the near by river will wash away slowly

One volunteer points out that those who came first got a big piece of land while those who came later got smaller piece of land So this problem must be solved in time

Rangers say they will consider this problem

There community people decide on the empty land

#### SCENE NO 13

Artist Phulwa Location Channu House

Phulwa receives a letter at home but due to her illiteracy she throws it in the corner

#### SCENE NO 14

Artist Channu, Raghu, Phulwa, Location The ground  
Asha, Prabha, and Villagers

Suddenly, Channu and Raghu enter the classroom drunk while the class is going on and blame that people from other communities do not cooperate People from other community look at each other and decide to come to a conclusion Then, Channu and Raghu take their wives home roughly

SCENE NO 15

Artist Ranger

Location Class room

Three communities groups discuss but can not come to a conclusion

SCENE NO 16

Artist Ranger

Location Classroom

Ranger enters the Adult literacy class and discuss on solving the problem

SCENE NO 17

Artist All

Location Channu House

At home Channu misbehaves and asks for food, so his wife burns the wood to cook. At that time, he sees the letter and reads it. It says he gets a new job and has to contact by Sunday. But today is Monday and he feels guilty that if Phulwa could have been literate

of the docudrama CCV

### Annex III List of Attendants at Meetings

The following people attended the CARE range post-level networking meeting

|                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ramkumari Chaudhari | Balapur CFUG                    |
| Sulochana Panthi    | Bhrikuti CFUG (School Teacher)  |
| Laxmi Ghumire       | Kharapur CFUG (Rep for FECOFUN) |
| Parbatu Bastola     | Santoshu CFUG                   |
| Laxmi Thapa Chettri | Laxmipur CFUG                   |
| Dhanmava Sunar      | Laxmipur CFUG                   |
| Radha Gyawali       | Bhrikuti CFUG                   |
| Champa Yogi         | Tappar CFUG                     |
| Laxmi Ghumire       | Ramkrishna CFUG                 |
| Mayalu Chaudhari    | Kothiya Mahila CFUG             |
| Fulkumari Chaudhari | Kothiya Mahila CFUG             |
| Maheswari Lamsal    | Bhrikuti CFUG                   |
| Laxmi Baral         | Ramkrishna CFUG                 |

The following people attended the 'story telling' meeting

#### Female Participants

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Khuma Kumari Pokhrel | Tappar CFUG                    |
| Sabitri Giri,        | Tappar CFUG                    |
| Sita Khatri ,        | Women Motivator, CARE          |
| Amrit Kumari Thakuri | Laxmipur Phata CFUG            |
| Kamala Ghumire       | Radha Krishna CFUG             |
| Prem Kala Ghumire    | Radha Krishna CFUG             |
| Shanta Gvawali       | Bhrikuti CFUG                  |
| Gita Adhikari        | Bhrikuti CFUG                  |
| Kamala Bhurju        | Marju CFUG                     |
| Bhawani Khattri      | Bindhya Basini CFUG            |
| Kamala K C           | Radha Krishna CFUG             |
| Kalpana Gvawali      | Santoshu CFUG                  |
| Parbatu Bastola      | Santoshu CFUG                  |
| Sushila Bhattra      | Santoshu CFUG                  |
| Ram Kishnu Chaudhari | Namki Khayar Bhatti CFUG       |
| Ram Kumari Chaudhari | Tharu Women CFUG               |
| Mayalu Chaudhari     | Kothiya Women CFUG             |
| Radha Sharma         | Women Skill Development center |
| Sabitri Gautam       | Bhrikuti CFUG                  |
| Prisma Singh Tharu   | Namki Khayar Bhatti CFUG       |

Male Participants

Bhupendra Prakash Giri  
Thamman Giri  
Brijlal Chaudhari  
Duryodha Yadav  
Manoharlal Tharu  
Dhruvaraj Gyawali  
Gangaram Adhikari  
Rishram Paudel  
Shyam B Thakuri  
Kali P Chaudhari

Gulariya 5,  
Santoshi CFUG  
Suhelawa 6,  
Sari CFUG  
Tharu welfare CFUG  
Bhrikuti CFUG  
Bhrikuti CFUG  
Radha Krishna CFUG  
Laxmpur Phanta CFUG  
Balapu Tharu CFUG

Comparison Between Community Controlled (Community Video Letter)  
and Community Consultation Video Projects  
(Part III)

Carina Frantz

GreenCOM

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## **I Introduction**

Over the past decade, the value of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has become recognized to be a more and more useful tool in rural development. It represents a move here

away from extractive survey questionnaires and toward new approaches and methods for participatory appraisal and analysis in which more of the activities previously appropriated by outsiders are instead carried out by local rural or urban people themselves (Chambers)

GreenCOM Nepal, an environmental education organization, has recently designed an innovative project utilizing video in a participatory methodology. The project has two components, a community produced "video letter", and a community consulted docu-drama production for later use with educational mobile video units. Video's simple technology, its visual rather than written base and its public/mass qualities make it a powerful and accessible participatory tool. This report will discuss each of GreenCOM's video projects as instances of PRA methodology, their relative achievements and shortcomings, as well as the ways the use of video can enhance and extend the power of a basic participatory orientation.

### **Basic Principles of PRA**

According to a series of articles by Richard Chambers (1994) on PRA methodology, this approach marks a fundamental change in orientation toward development project fieldwork. Influenced by disciplines such as applied anthropology and activist participatory research, it is characterized by attempts to transfer the base of authority in a number of different ways. It assumes first and foremost, that local residents actively "experiment, discuss, analyze and plan" their lives and work (Chambers 1994a: 953) and as such much must be learned from the knowledge of local residents before constructive approaches to change can be prescribed. It understands that it is counterproductive for a fieldworker to approach situations with knowledge and attitudes shaped primarily by his/her own categories, and should seek instead an understanding of how the social and economic fabric of life operates locally. It thus involves a significant shift in the attitude and demeanor adopted by the fieldworker. The fieldworker's role becomes one of a listener, not a lecturer, someone who is unimposing instead of self-important and someone who focuses on good rapport as the predecessor to effective interaction. The facilitator functions ideally as a "catalyst", then, creating a situation in which opportunities for change may be produced and taken up by participants themselves. The end-goal is to have participants "do things" on their own, enabling them to "undertake and share their own investigations and analysis" and to extend these practices toward the promotion of personal and institutional change (Chambers, 1994b: 1254).

With this movement toward an ideal of self-generated projects, a different set of practices and methods is necessitated. Methods focus more on informal interviews, focus groups, and detailed recordings of interactions and discussions. These activities are facilitated by

the fieldworker, but carried out by locals themselves, within their own community. Thus a central reorientation and emphasis is the establishment of a sense of ownership of plans and projects among local people, promoting a sense of pride and purpose which fosters motivation.

PRA particularly emphasizes visual methods for drawing people out and promoting discussion. A shift is marked, then, from individual sources of information (e.g. surveys) to group activities through the generation of shared visual representations such as social maps, irrigation maps, forest and boundary maps, etc. Such maps may be drawn on the ground, utilizing found objects, or produced on paper, but they are to be a collective endeavor. Chambers maintains that this kind of ability to visually map and represent is nearly universal and beyond alphabetical literacy. It therefore provides participants with a means to access knowledge they already possess and to express it in a useful and organized fashion, as well as bridging significant gaps and potential misunderstandings between the facilitator and local informants.

Visual mapping is also a public production.

All who are present can see, point to, discuss, manipulate and alter physical objects or representations. Learning is progressive. Information is visible, semi-permanent and public: checked, verified, amended, added to, and owned by the participants. Everyone can see what is being said because it is being 'shown' (ibid. 1257).

Through this public quality, the production of maps can provide those who rarely participate with a medium through which they may feel encouraged to contribute freely. PRA seeks particularly to learn from the marginalized and less privileged community members' situations and problems and enable their participation. By creating an activity, which is non-confrontational and collective, an arena is produced in which women, for instance, may express preferences and ideas in a physical, rather than verbal, form which does not entail personal confrontation.

Further, Chambers points out that visualizations break down the distinction between data and analysis. Because they are produced collectively, continually corrected and analyzed as they are produced, data production and analysis happen simultaneously in a mutually modifying process.

### **The GreenCOM Projects**

Taking its cues from these fundamental orientations established through the PRA methodology, USAID contracted GreenCOM Nepal to design a project aimed at extending these principles into an even more visual realm, using video as an empowering communication device within village communities in Nepal.

GreenCOM provides technical support to the environment and communication component of the USAID supported Environment and Forests Enterprises Activity (EFEA) project being implemented in eight districts of the mid-west development region of Nepal. As part of its scope of work, GreenCOM was required to prepare a Community

Video Letter as well as a professionally produced video, a docu-drama. The topics of the videos were to come out of consultations with the GON, USAID, and the EFEA partners as well as out of the research carried out by GreenCOM through community consultation.

The intent of the project was to reveal problems inherent in the present Forestry Policy on the formation of the Community Forest User Group system in Nepal, by gauging problems faced locally and extending this information into the realm of policy reform. The success of these CFUG handover schemes is widely seen to be dependent upon 1) the ability of groups to work together in decision making and conflict resolution 2) adequate knowledge of technical skills in forest/ wasteland management and enterprise 3) knowledge of MOFSC policies, rules and regulations so that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as well as those of MOFSC (Research Memorandum of Understanding 5). The GreenCOM project was designed, then, to gauge the existence of these criteria among village communities, as well as to further enable their progress through the development of a participatory communication process and the production of educational materials targeted at rural audiences.

As this people-centered approach to video is still largely experimental in Nepal, two methods of participatory production were utilized for the sake of comparison: 1) a community-controlled but facilitated process where the community makes final decisions about themes, style, messages and self-organization, and 2) community consultation by a video production firm. In the latter process, the video production firm will make final decisions but will be using community-level formative research, community consultation and community pre-testing of storyboards and community actors. The first of these projects came to be termed the "community video letter" (CVL), while the second the "community consulted video" (CCV) (GreenCOM Task Order 2).

### **Video as PRA**

Each of these utilizations of the communicative potential of video involves a similar orientation as that described in PRA and makes use of a number of the same methods. GreenCOM's approach assumes that local residents know their needs and problems far better than the fieldworkers do, and will have something critical to contribute to the effectiveness of messages produced, both those targeting policy reform and those targeting other rural audiences. Although specific methodologies vary between the two projects, both attempt a transfer in the base of authority. In the CVL project, the entire burden of producing the letter is turned over to the community. In the docu-drama project, while the filmmakers retain actual production control, discussions with locals are initiated before script writing and the accuracy and effectiveness of the story devices tested with audiences throughout the process. The GreenCOM project also places an emphasis on finding ways to elicit the participation and knowledge of minority populations within the communities, recognizing that PRA is a powerful means for doing this.

Clearly, this experimental use of video also shares with PRA an understanding of the power of visuality. The production of a short video, particularly in the CVL project,

allows for a collective exercise in which the final product is generated out of ongoing discussion, dissent, and compromise. This kind of activity intends just the kinds of community negotiated public production that Chambers' mapping exercises promote. Further, video bridges alphabetical literacy, allowing every community member to participate. In addition, it allows people to *show* information instead of tell it, enabling less bold, confrontational individuals to use it with great effect.

However, video as a technology carries a number of features which make its use critically different than other visual exercises. Even more than other modes of representation, such as writing, or map-making, video has a power of immediacy, testimony and truth (however fallacious) which other representational systems do not command, and this inherent potential for manipulation and objectification needs to be negotiated in every context of its application. Thus issues of authority become very complex. Nevertheless, it is these same qualities which make video such a powerful educational and communicative tool. It was therefore GreenCOM's aim to attempt to use video in a manner that enhanced its best qualities and countered its lesser qualities by involving those about whom the videos are to be made in the most direct possible ways.

Video also carries an authority that is socially ascribed. As a new technology in Nepal and a symbol of modernity, a video camera bestows a higher status on those who control it. In addition, while video is certainly a mass/public medium, it is simultaneously a potentially very private, intimate medium, allowing instances in which people may speak to the camera in ways they could never speak directly. Each of these features, authority in representation, authority in modernity and public/private qualities, will be expanded upon within this paper to demonstrate the ways video can expand even further the effectiveness of PRA.

## **II Community Video Letter Production**

The concerns of the Community Video Project fall along two fronts. First, the production of a community generated letter, which can be sent to policy makers in Kathmandu, is designed to enable the identification of the extent to which users at the village level understand the rules and regulations of the new forestry policy. It is, therefore, further intended to help identify impediments to the effective implementation of the new policy and to aid the production of more relevant policy through direct communication with those whom the policy most directly affects. Thus, the CVL is meant to enhance the democratic process through direct communication between forest users and those who represent their interests in the national. Second, the structured activity of 'letter' production is intended to generate an interactive social context within the targeted community which necessitates participatory cooperation and collective decision making through the process of video production. Thus further ideals of the project are to enhance dialogue within the community, to enhance communication across social lines currently hindering the diffusion of information (particularly gendered social lines), to assist in the acquisition of problem solving skills, and to bridge barriers of alphabetical literacy through the use of a visual medium.

A general description of the procedure is as follows. A community site is selected at which to conduct the CVL project. A representative group of participants from within this community is selected and trained in the use of basic video equipment, a short video "letter" is compiled based on the collective choices of the group of participants supervised by the facilitator, representative members of the community are accompanied to Kathmandu where they assist in the editing process to ensure control of the final representations, this "letter" is shown to a forum of relevant ministers from the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation, the Ministry of Law and Justice, and the Ministry of Population and Environment, feedback is taken back to the CVL community.

This section of the report will evaluate the production of the Community Video Letter as a Participatory Rural Appraisal activity. PRA methods used in the project will be examined first, followed by a discussion of the specific ways that video enables additional types of participatory behavior.

### **Brief Introduction of Uchanimbu CFUG**

Uchanimbu CFUG lies in Satabariva VDC in Deokhuri Valley. This forest belongs to the people of Ward no. 3 of the VDC. The total number of users' households was 133 when this forest was first registered as a CFUG in 1991. That number has grown to 157 today. The forest area, which was 53 hectares in the beginning, has increased to approximately 400 hectares after the district forest office added a huge area of degraded Siwalik forest in Uchanimbu CFUG's area upon the request of the CFUG. However, the CFUG members do not know yet how much of the forest area has actually been added because they have not yet received the new Action Plan with the formal declaration of area and the map.

Uchanimbu is 9 Km west from Lamahi, the closest market town. The east-west national highway traverses through this village. The river Rapti in the South, Siwalik Hills in the North, Kari, and Tengniha Streams in the East and the West border the ward respectively.

Until 30 years ago, the village was surrounded by rich natural forest. When the main national highway construction began, the forest started to be cleared rapidly. One of the most valuable trees of the region, Khayar, was close to extinction because of the Kattha industries owned by some influential people. In addition to the Kattha industry, rapid population growth due to migration from the hills was another reason for forest degradation in that area.

In 1980, the forest of Uchanimbu was registered as *Panchayat Ban*, the prototype of the present-day community forest but owned by the village government. In 1991, after the present community forestry legislation was launched, this forest was registered as a community forest and the local people were given the rights and responsibility of the forest. People started to protect their forest with the highest degree of commitment. They proposed to the DFO that they wanted to take out the stumps of Khayar trees as an income-generating activity. After approval of their action plan, they sold many useless stumps and earned a good income for the CFUG. With that money, they constructed a

community house and two bus stop shades. They also contributed RS 30 001 for the establishment of a local school although this project never came to fruition.

The majority of the local residents in this area are Tharus, the indigenous Inner Terai people. Among the immigrants, there are Brahmins, Chhetri, Yogis, Magars and low caste people, in descending order in number.

Except in the particular part of the forest, which was declared "protected area" from the beginning, there is a heavy grazing problem in the forest. Local farmers require many oxen for agricultural purposes and since they cannot be fed in their stalls easily, grazing is an unavoidable necessity for the local farmers.

The Rapti, Kari and Tengnaha River and rivulets surround the village, but nevertheless there is a problem with irrigation. Until a few years ago there was an irrigation system that provided adequate water supply to the village. Now the system has been broken due to flooding and the villagers lack resources to repair it by himself or herself. The present day Home Minister comes from the adjacent village. Many of the people in Uchanimbu feel that they have been exploited by the influence of the Minister who favors his villagers and relatives instead of providing broader based benefits or help. An example of this is the water of the Kari Sota rivulet which is used exclusively by the people from the Minister's village. Similarly the electric power lines that pass through their land to the Minister's village provide no electricity to Uchanimbu houses.

#### **Process Documentation**

The CVL process itself was supplemented by another sub-methodology that of "process documentation". This was adopted as a means to assess the CVL methodology as it was being developed. A social scientific tool first adopted for development application in the Philippines, it was used here at the pilot phase to gauge the effectiveness of the process to identify weaknesses and to recommend adjustments to the method.

As with other PRA approaches the research design team must first adopt a 'learning approach' to project development. This orientation assumes that the field team is not entirely certain how best to implement the new intervention strategy being designed. Therefore, pilot projects are set up at one or two sites for detailed study. The end-goal of data collected in the procedure described below is not to pronounce the intervention a success or failure but to provide recommendations for the improvement of the next pilot excursion as effective field methods are slowly elaborated.

Through detailed daily documentation a descriptive picture of the various activities of the project participants, the concerns of personnel, and a narrative of the problems and issues that emerge from the activities is generated. These records should be based on concepts and issues which are defined *a priori* and which will determine the kinds of data to be noted and recorded. *A priori* issues and questions are to be based on existing social scientific knowledge of effective examples of CVL production and on the objectives and policies laid down in regard to it (in this case those outlined in the Action Plan the first

draft of the Manual, the Task Order, etc ) Other concerns are to be "forced by the data and translated into recommendations for the improvement of the next pilot field excursion Thus from recorded activities, sets of problems and issues arise which are then observed for how they are resolved within the context of the project In this way structural modifications necessary for the next site are isolated

### **PRA Methods Used in Fieldwork**

A number of the methods Chambers recommends were used in the initial stages of the community video project key informants, transect walks, semi-structured interviews stories/ portraits/ case studies, participatory mapping focus on group activities the self-production of projects and a new role for the facilitator,

#### **Key informants**

Participants for the project were selected through consultation with the Uchanimbu CFUG executive committee We requested that they provide for us a list of interested community members from which we could select a small group (15 in total) Our criteria were that no CFUG officers be included, fifty percent of the group be women a proportionate number of different ethnic/ economic/ caste groups be represented and that an older member of the community, a *sukumbasi* (landless) person and a former member of the CFUG be included The group was largely settled by the time we arrived with the majority of our criteria met as the facilitator, Kedar Sharma, had visited the community a month prior This group became our key informants as well as the CFUG officers and a few other community members who showed interest during our stay there

#### **Transect walks**

Transect walks were the first of a number of PRA methods used At the beginning of our stay we would take the CVL participants out on informal walks to the parts of the forest they found most interesting This method achieved a number of things It helped us to begin building rapport with the members of the group and to gather information about the community and their forest Kedar would ask them questions without offering advice about the varieties of species that existed in the forest, potentials for non-timber forest products relations with other CFUGs medicinal plants, predator problems, water and grazing land availability fodder and firewood collection, etc Kedar also shared stories about his own village in Ilam and the use of forests there This non-authoritative approach by the project leader was very effective As the members got over the strangeness of our presence and their own shyness, and realized our honest interest to learn from them they talked very freely Holding the informal talks in a forest setting also facilitated relaxed and open discussions

### **Semi-structured interviews, stories/ portraits/ case studies**

Over the course of the project we recorded conversations brainstorming sessions arguments and stories through the daily notetaking required for process documentation. We also compiled a short biography of each participant and conducted semi-structured interviews with him or her at the close of the project. Kedar also gave each of them a notebook and pen, encouraging them to write things down which they thought of outside of our discussions or to compile poems or short paragraphs on issues they wanted to express. For those who could not write (only two of our participants Tharu women) their children assisted them in composing some comments. Kedar also used a storytelling strategy to draw the participants out in group discussions. He would select a topic for the group (family history the forest daily work etc ), and then ask each to tell some short personal story about it. Through these methods, we began to recognize which issues interested and concerned the participants most and which themes would be most appropriate for the CVL.

We also became attuned very quickly to certain aspects of village politics that the presence of our project drew out ranging from political party to personal rivalry between members of the group. Some of the participants acknowledged that this was the first time this particular mixture of people was put into a context in which they had to work together. The results of this were both positive and tension producing. It is an interesting effect of events that come from the outside, as development projects usually do that a kind of disruption of daily routines is introduced into a community. Such interruptions often throw into relief existing social divisions as well as accentuate inter-personal conflicts that on a day to day basis are evaded. Such moments are opportunities for problems to be addressed, or new perspectives on old situations to be found provided they are attended to.

As an example one interesting case which arose was that of Bishnu Pokhrel. Bishnu is the daughter-in-law of Khageshwar Sharma who was also a participant in the CVL. She and her husband have not had good relations with his parents for quite sometime and reside in a separate house in the village that is unusual for rural Nepal. Her husband works in another district so Bishnu lives most of the time by herself. When she was selected to participate in the CVL her in-laws became very angry, reducing her to tears with their scolding on a number of occasions. Although this situation was difficult for her and her husband was not there to defend her, Bishnu insisted upon participating in the group. Interventions like this can often create difficult choices for individuals around issues which they normally find ways to circumvent. Bishnu's choice was to stand up to her in-laws thereby turning the situation into an opportunity to make a point about her independence from them. In a way, this was her sole contribution to the project, a personal and social struggle to overcome barriers simply to attend.

### **Group activities participatory mapping**

To help organize the issues surrounding the effective functioning of the CFUG we initiated a village map making session. First Kedar explained to the participants why

maps are powerful and how it would help to organize the issues and reach conclusions. To begin with the participants drew borderlines of the village in the dirt of the open central compound. Then all the major land marks like rivers, highway, roads, fields and forests were plotted, and the map was completed using found objects and red mud for accents. After this, we started a discussion about the issues, progressing area by area. The issues which arose included the need for an irrigation canal system, problems with water diversion and land encroachment, border disputes with neighboring CFUGs, landlessness for some members of the community, tree stump clearing and new planting, forest fires, training for improved cattle, goat and pig raising, flooding and landslides, women's income generation, lack of cooperation from the DFO, herb cultivation, and the lack of electricity. We then went through this list and grouped topics according to priority and into categories: which issues they could improve on their own, which issues they needed outside help to initiate but to which they could contribute their own cash and labor, which issues they needed support for but could facilitate themselves, and which issues they were dependent upon the DFO to address. At the end of the exercise the map was transcribed onto a large piece of cardboard.

The production of the map was definitely a collective endeavor. Boundaries and river markers were discussed, erased and drawn again, each member brought an object to mark his/her house, groups went off to collect red mud for drawing, etc. When the map was complete the specialized representation triggered in nearly every participant's mind a different issue as they could situate their own homes and daily concerns within a larger relational context. Many of them commented that they were amazed by how many issues they were able to pin down all at once by making and then consulting ('interviewing' as Chambers would say) the map. They also found this exercise to be more fun than simply talking or walking and their interactions with one another more direct.

Through exercises such as these in which the fieldworker merely facilitates situations that enhance participants' already existing knowledge, it became apparent just how well our participants knew their forest, knew what training they lack and knew the rules and regulations of the CFUG. Our project as an exploration in communication was precisely about discovering what was already known locally and identifying areas on which the villagers required more knowledge. The education was to be that of the ministers. This reversal is what makes this project so unique and powerful, that it is about learning from the villagers, not telling them what they need. A number of them commented that this was the first time they had actually sat down to discuss forestry issues. In addition, through these simple dialogs and the necessity to later represent their thoughts concisely to the camera, they learned very much from one other, surprising themselves in their realization of how much they already collectively knew.

#### **Self-Production: The Community Video Letter**

The construction of the Community Video Letter formed the core of our project. By having villagers construct their own video, rather than assist peripherally in one mediated by outsiders, the power to tell their own stories, as well as the burden of critical decision making, is put in the hands of the villagers themselves. In this way participants come to

gain a sense of ownership of the product, ideally imparting a sense of achievement which promotes motivation and self-confidence. At the same time emphasis is not entirely focused on the quality of the end product but on the process, through which discussions are generated, priorities are set, material is organized and a consensus is reached.

Kedar began the early training sessions with a very basic camera pass-along exercise. The participants practiced looking through the viewfinder and holding the camera properly. Kedar recorded some of the participants speaking, asked them to record one another and played back the results. After a few more days of basic technical review the group was split into three smaller groups, which then met on alternate days. To practice feeling comfortable in front of the camera, a storytelling session was held and taped in the forest. After this, the group began to experiment with sequencing exercises first at the Polio Vaccination Day activities, then at a family planning clinic. They later practiced interviewing techniques by approaching some of their CFUG committee members. After these basic exercises, the group began planning what was to go into the CVL and Kedar encouraged them to take the camera anywhere they chose, interview who they liked, and to do everything independently. In addition they each practiced speaking in front of the camera and each person filmed a short, personal statement toward the end of the project period. Following this fieldwork, two of the participants traveled to Kathmandu to assist with the editing.

#### **The role of the facilitator**

Throughout this process participants were encouraged to make all their own decisions, the goal being a self-constructed representation of their village. Nevertheless throughout this progression of events one can recognize the pivotal role of the facilitator. As stated previously, the ideal of PRA is to have the fieldworker function not as an instructor, but as a catalyst. In Unchanambu, the project's presence, and Kedar's good rapport triggered enthusiasm on a number of levels. The group became very enamored with interviewing controversial figures such as a land encroacher, a looter, neighboring CFUG members with whom they had border disputes, and even the District Forest Officer in an investigative journalism style prompted by Kedar, who is himself a journalist. They became very eager to ask direct questions and address controversy in a seemingly new spirit of democratic access to information. This spirit became the dominant undertone of the entire CVL. It read essentially as a demand for information (their Action Plan, training programs) which would allow them to improve their community through their own efforts. As one administrator on the project pointed out, what makes this video really different from many produced through development is that it only starts out as a "begging" video: "this is our poor village, our poor lives, we have these problems", which is a much more common approach. However, by the end, the perspective takes an outward twist and concisely identifies the basis of their problems. They take the bureaucrats and policy makers to task for problems of corruption that prevent information from coming into the village. It does not ask for handouts, it indicates that villagers are quite capable and willing to work for what they need, if the system would only function in the ways it promises.

Near the end of our stay, we were told that the villagers had now established a "communications sub-committee" in the Uchanumbu CFUG. All of the CVL participants are automatically included, and its intent is to produce a team of reporters who will work together to gather information and produce a small publication on local events and issues. This is not to say that the villagers did not before have a sense of the importance of working collectively, they certainly did, as the village *panchayat* system is a traditional component of village life. Nevertheless, the CVL seemed to provide them with a renewed sense of their own efficacy, new orientation on what to work together for and what avenues might be most effective.

In these ways the facilitator most certainly acted as a catalyst. But it must also be acknowledged that the role of the facilitator is still very powerful, and it can certainly have an impact not only on what kind of CVL is produced but on how productive the inner community process of making the video will be to those involved. As hard as the facilitator may try to be a neutral figure, his/her impact must not be denied in order for this influence to be adequately contained and used beneficially. As Chambers notes, one of the features of PRA's shift in orientation is that the facilitator relies less on pre-formulated manuals or guides and more on his/her own sense of personal accountability. Thus, it is crucial that the team in charge be aware of the subtle, but powerful, impacts that their seeming neutrality may still have and be properly trained to take responsibility for the outcomes.

Many of the participants also stated on different occasions that they had benefited from an increased ability to interact and negotiate with outsiders, that is, with Kedar and me. This was most emphasized by the women and in particular the Tharu women. As in many ways we represented figures of authority to them, gaining an ease with us may carry over to an ability to interact with other authority figures as well (e.g. at the DFO's office, journalists, rangers, etc.).

#### **Analysis of difference: gender**

One fundamental principle of social science is that gender roles are a product of culture, and not a factor of biology. Likewise, who holds power in a community is a factor of a particular localized history which has enabled a certain sector of the population to attain positions of influence. It follows therefore that these categories and positions can change as cultures, community concerns, and people change. Thus looking at views which are counter to the dominant ones held by elites, highlights the contours of social divisions which a community's history has produced. Noting exclusions allows us to see what is taken for granted as 'natural' as well as help identify potential areas for change. This shift in focus to an analysis of difference, to "learning from exceptions, oddities, dissenters" (Chambers 1994b: 1254) is a fundamental orientation of PRA. Further, the role of the outsider is often effective in bringing to the surface and into the realm of discussion these various centers of contestation. Attention to these issues is some of the fundamental strengths of the CVL project at the level of social interaction and learning.

In the early stages of the project we witnessed a number of maneuvers to make women's participation in the project difficult or more minimal. These include the attempted exclusion of women from the New Year's picnic and the rather amusing reaction of the men to our exclusive filming of women at the bus stand inauguration. The response of Bishnu's in-laws is also noteworthy here because had she been a man her participation would not have been questioned. Devi's husband was also very jealous of her participation in the group and made it difficult for her to attend often. The language in which these objections were raised was also very gendered. Bishnu was accused of "having make-up like a prostitute" and Devi of wanting to "go about with that man from outside" thus attempting to discredit their participation by making it a question of their morals and respectability. Fortunately it was very clear to the majority of the village that our project was legitimate and these tactics did not prevent the women from participating.

In the first week of our stay in Uchanimbu the Ward chairman also made a comment regarding the women's participation in the CVL. He told Kedar that he noticed there were many women in the group but women he said only knew about childbirth. Therefore if the women did not know anything helpful for the CVL he told Kedar we should come to him for information.

In truth it is the women of Uchanimbu who use and know the forest most extensively as they do all the collecting. Kaushvalva Man Kumari and Laxmi Chaudhari each commented that the new forestry laws have created much more work for women. Before Kaushvalva kept many buffaloes so her family had more milk products. After the community forestry system started they had less grazing land, so they are unable to keep as many buffaloes and she had to begin gathering fodder to feed them. The new forestry legislation also restricted the areas in which materials could be collected so women now have to go much further to find fodder and carry it a greater distance back.

Another primary focus of the project is an identification of the benefits generated by and for women through their participation. The case of Laxmi Yogi is probably the most telling in our experiences with the CVL. Laxmi said to us very early on in our stay that there had been many times in which she had wanted to raise the issue of women's exclusion in the CFUG meetings but she was afraid of people's reactions particularly that of her husband. Nevertheless her participation in the CVL process and the realization that we were very interested to hear about and represent the interests of women gave her a new courage and confidence to speak out. She wrote a short statement, which she gave to the facilitator on her concerns about women's exclusion in decision-making and the token positions they were given in the CFUG. When this was read to the group the other women agreed and the statement was therefore also included briefly in the final CVL.

However it is not only through her words that we can see the effect participation in the CVL had on Laxmi. On the day that we attended a neighboring women's CFUG bus stand inauguration many people were asked to speak publicly offering their comments and support. Radha K. C. from our CFUG was invited by the other women to address the gathering as she has had much experience in public address. Laxmi had never before

spoken in public but that day she actively volunteered and put her name on the list of speakers. Her comments were brief and one could see her nervousness but this was a very big step for her largely inspired by a growing confidence gained through conducting interviews and practice speaking in front of the camera. In fact Laxmi became one of our strongest interviewers asking questions succinctly and intelligently and guided a large portion of the filming and interviewing we did at the CFUG meeting, a context in which she had previously felt timid. She also participated more eagerly than many of the other participants and actively discussed the forestry issues which were included in the CVL. For this, she was chosen to represent the group in Kathmandu for the editing session. During the post-production we were very impressed with her business-like attitude toward the process, providing translations and voice-over material to make the letter as effective as possible. In her closing interview she told us that she had been given an invitation for the first time to attend a VDC meeting about which she was very excited. She contributed this invitation to her active stance in the CVL process and the public recognition that came from it.

The context of the CVL process was also one of the first times that Tharu women and Pahadi women had a chance to interact in any extended capacity. Man Kumari and Laxmi liked the opportunity very much because they often felt excluded from this circle. The Tharu women's occasional drinking sometimes upset the Pahadi women but a few of them felt the opportunity to mix was beneficial and they even had a chance to share some of the traditional Tharu foods. However, it is hard to say how superficial these interactions were and whether any longer term changes in the attitudes between them will occur.

## **How Video Complicates Things**

### **Authority**

In addition to its use as a basic tool for group activities video as a medium contains a number of features that complicate its use in a participatory context. As a medium with inherently objectifying qualities and as a "modern" technology with socially attributed prestige value issues of authority become quite complex. In PRA methodology the ideal is a shift in authority from the facilitator to the participants. With video the camera itself possesses an authority which it stubbornly retains.

Sabitra Gharti told us at the end of our stay, that when we first arrived she was very suspicious of us. She knew that we had come to her village to take photographs and she interpreted this purpose as an intent to "steal images" of her community and "sell them in foreign places." She had seen foreigners in the village before. They had photographed inexhaustibly and then left. Her suspicions speak to the inherent objectifying ability of film an authority that makes people into things and takes control of the representation of others. Through specific uses of video however, these same qualities can be turned around such that villagers may represent themselves. Sabitra's concerns were resolved without our even being aware of them. As it became clear that our intentions were

honest and that we were focused only on the community's self-production of the CVL the community slowly came to trust us

As a visual mode of representation and therefore one of intense immediacy video can be very damaging to those it is turned upon. However as such it can have remarkable communicative force which is why it was chosen as the medium to carry villagers' messages back to policy makers. Thus the CLV project tries to shift the authority inherent in the video medium into the control of the community to enable them to produce and to own the means of their own representation. Such control can in many ways be a more profound moment of ownership than that of a more tangible institution.

Video carries another kind of authority as well which is a factor of the social status it is given as a modern technology. Here is an example. It was near the end of our fieldwork stay and we were screening some of the footage collected for the CVL. The footage contained a number of interviews the participants had done with people caught stealing wood and with officials at the DFO's office. During the footage of the looters I realized how rare it was for an individual to refuse to be interviewed. I asked them about this and asked if it was because of the presence of the camera. Sharad and Radha responded that even without the camera these men would have answered their questions if they had gone to them and asked. But the critical point they emphasized was that they never would have gone there without the camera. This acknowledged authority of the camera, an authority they possessed when it was in their hands, acted as a catalyst to motivate them to act. During the footage at the DFO's office I asked them if it would have been possible for them to conduct these interviews without the presence of this video project. No, they said, without this project they would have been ignored, not even allowed to ask questions. So what happens when we leave, I asked? Well, now we have some practice in demanding information and we will go with pen and paper if we have to and ask these questions anyway. I can recall similar statements being made all through the CVL process and they allude to what I believe to be the most important outcome of this project.

This CVL project has very much to do with teaching basic democratic principles which means at the same time it has very much to do with issues of authority, who carries it, who is denied it, and which channels it is accessed by. The presence of both the cameras as a professional recording device and official development workers from Kathmandu gave the CVL participants an authority which they had never before possessed. Having access to this authority made them more aware of their fundamental right to information. It is this realization, I believe, which gives the CVL they produced the insistent tone it carries. Nevertheless, while working together has definitely imparted to them a certain confidence in their abilities to collect information and understand their current problems and given them a confidence to insist upon their right to information, the question remains from what basis they will find the authority to do so when our camera is gone.

Thus the social authority which is imparted to the camera as a symbol of modernity limits the possibility of a total shift in authority. As long as we bring the means to self-representation from outside, so we retain the control to withdraw it. The moment of self-

representation is bestowed, then as a gift, and as such loses its authenticity. A limitation in this project is its dependence upon a medium which carries its authority in its scarcity and thus can never be fully accessible to communities in which all resources are scarce. In order to leave the community with something concrete, I would like to recommend that a communications training program be arranged for the project community after the conclusion of the CVL process. This will nurture the interests and skills fostered by the process, and may also help fill the "authority gap" left after the removal of the camera and the facilitator from the community. One such program is conducted by *Deurali Newsletter*, which teaches people how to ask questions, access information, and write short articles for presentation in the newsletter.

Another perspective on the authority, which this project imparts, is the public and mass qualities of the video medium. To be filmed/ interviewed and to be shown to the entire community at a public screening most certainly functioned as a form of local prestige. Thus, many people sought us out to be filmed, from the CFUG leaders of nearby communities, to local religious organizations staging traditional dances. To be filmed and shown was to be recognized, thus in a way we created a team of roving reporters, whose filming marked what was deemed important in the community and worthy of being broadcast on the evening "news." Thus, while it was important to keep these kinds of requests contained, it was a very necessary part of the project and a means to involve as many members of the community as possible, making them feel included in the process and providing them with learning experiences as well. Further, through these ongoing, solicited interviews and the public screenings, the aspect of video which emphasizes its potential as an investigative device over a narrative one became accentuated for our participants.

#### **Public/ Private**

Video is simultaneously a focusing and diffusing medium. By recording stories and ideas on tape, individuals are forced to become aware of their presentation of self, the conciseness and persuasiveness of their opinions, and to generally reflect on what they know about an issue or what knowledge they lack. Video is essentially a form of public address. They are therefore also forced to consider how others will interpret what they say, how information travels, and who will be their intended audience. Video's interview format potential also demands that people focus on the construction of a set of representations and insists that they listen attentively to those with whom they are interacting. Thus, it forces people to listen to one another, and to concentrate that attention around sets of issues rather than informal dialog. On the other hand, video's indirect nature (the gap between recording and viewing contexts) also allows individuals to speak about issues they might otherwise feel uncomfortable saying directly to their peers. It provides a mode of expression which draws people out, and invites the broaching of subjects which might otherwise remain unspoken. Thus, in addition to the direct solutions which the ministers may be able to address, the lasting impact of the communication skills attained through participation is another benefit of the project.

Chambers proposes that one of the strengths of emphasizing visual participatory exercises is their public nature, and as noted above, video is definitely a public medium.

However, it is simultaneously a private medium, and it is this quality which gives it interesting potentials. Video can bridge a gap between public and private domains by providing non-threatening opportunities to be verbal. Many of the women in the group said that this video exercise had given them a new confidence to speak out as well as an opportunity to practice speaking and expressing themselves through the camera. Radha K.C. emphasized how helpful the medium had been not only to the younger women who were just beginning to learn to speak publicly, but how it had also helped her learn to speak more concisely and to organize her thoughts. It is interesting to note the emphasis placed on the ability to speak forcefully in public as a means to claiming authority. Women perceive it necessary therefore to join this public sphere, one largely dominated by men, in order to share in this access to authority. This is not to say that women gain the same degree of authority by these abilities as men, but such activities are one of the few areas which get acknowledged by men, allowing a woman to be unique among her peers. Thus, the CVL gave them certain legitimacy on two grounds. First, in acknowledging the importance of women's issues within the community generally, and second, in acknowledging their ability to speak well and in a public domain.

Another quality of video is that even in private it assumes a potential public group, the subsequent audience. Laxmi and Mankumari Chaudhari took the camera by themselves one day to record what they were too shy to say directly to the group. By speaking to a seemingly innocuous mechanical object, they were able to speak freely and to bypass a more threatening moment of public interaction. Again, we see a bridge between the private and the public but in a different way. Through this different use of the camera, the video image itself extends Laxmi and Mankumari into virtual public exposure.

Through this detailed examination of the production of a Community Video Letter as a participatory methodology, we can see the significant ways in which video can contribute to the basic aims of PRA.

### III Docudrama Production

In Community Consultation Video (CCV) production, the community is brought in to help identify the issues to be covered by the video and to help streamline and clarify the production once it is under way. In this case, professional production teams are brought in to maintain a high technical quality for the product. The purpose of making videos in this way is to ensure that they focus on local issues in a way that is easily understood by the target audience. Such videos are meant for a rural audience through the Mobile Video Systems (MVS) network established in the EFEA area, as well as through other means. Ane Haaland, in a study on visual literacy in Nepal, notes that

People need to be able to identify themselves with a situation, and the kind of people that are portrayed in that situation. If they recognize the situation, but not the kind of people (who may be from a different nation or ethnic group), they may disregard the proposed solution. Dress, style of houses, kind of draught animals used, these are aspects people will look for in identifying themselves with the situation. The other related aspect which is even more important- is the relevance of the *problem* to the audience. If people see that the subject/ problem and the situation is relevant to them there will be greater interest in learning more about how to solve the problem (Haaland 1984: 17)

Thus by attempting a high level of ethnographic accuracy in the ways locally identified issues are treated as well as testing for comprehension of the chosen depiction the educational effectiveness of the productions should be enhanced. As video producers are largely drawn from urban populations producing videos in this way gives them a better chance at reaching an audience which may not be familiar to them. The audience thus becomes a partner in production to improve the chances for good communication to be achieved.

Further the participation of local officials and residents in the production was to be seen as a process with an end in itself much like the CVL production process. As participatory methods show us as people are drawn to work together in new contexts and in new combinations of people communication is facilitated within and during the creative process. Thus the process of production was to be seen as a learning experience for both urban filmmakers and among local residents themselves.

Himalaya Films a Kathmandu based video production firm was hired by GreenCOM to provide its professional services for the production of the CCV a docu-drama. Forest officials and concerned development workers in the EFEA area, as well as the communities were consulted throughout the process of production.

#### Brief Introduction of the Area

Bardija district is located in the southwestern part of Nepal. Administratively, it lies in the MWDR of Nepal and is one of the eight districts of EFEA project area. Out of its 2025 sq km (202 500 ha) total area 47411 ha or 23.41% land is cultivated and 124 800 ha or 61.62% is covered by the forests (Statistical Yearbook Nepal 1997 HMG Central Bureau of Statistics). The district has one of the most important national parks of Nepal.

the Royal Bardiya National Park (RBNP), which is spread over 968 000 ha. The Royal Bardiya National Park is famous for being an ideal habitat for endangered species such as the tiger, rhinoceros, black buck, and wild elephant.

Tharus are an indigenous ethnic group of people in this area. They are supposed to be naturally malaria resistant. After the eradication of malaria that started in the 1950s, people from the hills of Nepal and from India started to migrate to the fertile land of Bardiya. Today out of its 290,313 population, 149,865, or 51.62% is Tharus (ibid).

Most of the district population is engaged in agriculture. Those living near the district headquarters and other commercial centers are engaged in various commercial and government service occupations. Most of the agricultural work is done by the Tharus as tenant or as low paid agriculture labor.

The area we selected for the docudrama lies inside Gularia municipality. The area was selected for its representativeness, proximity to the district headquarters and the access to physical facilities like electricity and easier accommodation for the video crew. All of the CFUGs in the area operate plantation forests.

### **Methodology**

To enable the goals of this kind of consultation process-- accuracy, educational effectiveness, and community participation-- a set of methods was designated. The first of these was a pre-production visit to the field site to consult with both local officials and with local residents to help provide the core ideas which would be developed within the script. In general, the goal was to involve as many local people and development workers in the docudrama as possible in varying capacities. The second was a storyboard testing session intended to gauge the nuances of visual literacy among locals, pertaining to the images and sequences that had been developed in the script in order to revise the script for more effective educational communication. The third method was process documentation intended to record how this approach to video production succeeded in the identification and prioritization of issues covered in the videos, and document how group decisions were made including the role of gender in such decision-making. This record also helps us judge the degree to which the people were actually involved in the video production and the degree to which this involvement actually affected the outcome of the work. The next method involved interviews with the director, technicians and the CEO of Himalaya films in order to gather insights they gained in their first experience with this approach to docudrama production and to identify those points they found most valuable in such a method. The last method (still to be executed), will be post-testing, whereby the completed docu-drama will be tested in a rural community with focus groups to gauge its educational effectiveness before sending it for use in the Mobile Video Units. This will also serve as a means of determining the success of this kind of participatory production process. Within each of these methods can be identified a number of the PRA methods identified by Chambers: transect walks, semi-structured interviews and brainstorming, visual participatory methods and the role of the fieldworker as catalyst.

### **Pre-production field visit with examples**

The GreenCOM community video specialist, Kedar Sharma, and the script writer director, Binod Kharel, made an excursion to the Bardiya area to finalize the location for the video as well as develop the story line of the script

**Transect walks** As in the CVL process, community led field walks provided an informal quality to interactions, drew people out, and helped diffuse authority. It also provided people with visual memory cues to help them raise some of the more important issues in the area. Early in their visit, the GreenCOM team requested that they be brought to a nearby community forest to talk with users there on different aspects of forest management. It was through these forest tours that the team came to learn of the issue relating to lands which were being reserved along the river for cremation and grazing, and so restricted from being allocated for CFs. As not enough land was available to meet the requests for protected forests, some villagers were having their livelihoods destroyed due to the closing of forest land for general use. If these lands could be planted by residents and transferred into community forest, land erosion could be prevented and the problem of land shortage for CFUG allocation might be slightly alleviated. This issue became a central theme in the docudrama plot.

**Semi-structured interviews through group meetings and brainstorming** Two groups were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured format. Upon arrival in the area the team interviewed government officials from the DFO in Bardiya, the Planning officer at the EFEA Project Coordinator Office, the CARE District Coordinator, and government rangers for the area. Next they met with local villagers, taking advantage of existing group organizations. On the day of their arrival in Gulariya, the headquarters of Bardiya district, they encountered a CARE-Nepal range post level networking meeting, which had already been scheduled. They took advantage of the gathering to explain the project and discuss different issues with the participants. The primary concern which came out of this meeting, was that of alcoholism among the men of the community.

They also discussed with villagers the best way to represent issues within the storyline of the docudrama. The villagers requested that the video demonstrate how problems could be solved within the community itself. They felt that if the video idealized the government offices and showed people going to the DFO or the rangers to solve all their problems, it would be unrealistic and of very little help. The video, they felt, should recognize the community's role and ability in solving its own problems.

It is clear that the storyline for the docudrama emerged out of this pre-production visit, and that the core topics in the film would not have been identified without the field research. The issue of alcohol came out of the women's group for CARE Nepal and became a sideline in the story. Land allocation, user identification and social dynamics became the core after a transect walk through a number of communities with village guides. The issue of compensation for a member leaving a CFUG was also included in the video. The DFO and the Rangers argue that they should not be given compensation but the CARE staff feels the community should be allowed to make this decision on their

own. The community argues that since members paid to join and will have to pay to join another CFUG, it is only fair to compensate them and it does not set up situations in which people are restricted from making choices to move when it becomes necessary. Each of these themes-- alcohol abuse, land allotment/ user identification and compensation-- became central to the storyline, providing what could now truly be termed the "docu" portion of the drama.

### **Visual participatory methods storyboarding**

Storyboarding is intended to test whether the devices used in a script have been conceived and executed adequately to achieve the communication of the messages they intend. But critical to this process is the acknowledgment that the communicative success of a "text" is not solely based upon its own internal structure but is directly contingent upon the particular audience which "reads" it. Thus storyboarding is designed to target particular audiences for the comprehension and significance of a set of visual messages. As the CCV was to be designed for rural audiences, it was important to understand the nuances of visual perception among the target group of viewers. As Haaland notes, "reading pictures has to be learnt, and 'we cannot assume that people understand' pictures. In Nepal a majority of the people interviewed all over the country in a study on visual perception (Communicating with Pictures in Nepal) saw pictures as a medium to represent an object, not as a teaching medium. In Bangladesh they found that it takes people a year of regular television viewing to get used to the medium and be prepared for education through TV" (Haaland, 1984: 15).

Further, storyboarding aims at testing whether or not visual sequencing and plot sequence are adequately comprehensible to the target audience. "People [with little video viewing exposure] interpret pictures very literally and do not connect them with anything' beyond their immediate knowledge of them (ibid). If they perceive, say, a change of setting as too much of a jump cut or in the dialogue sequencing it is not clear who is speaking to whom the message will be lost. As such the testing is meant to determine not only the plausibility and relevance of the story line to the audience, but also the effectiveness of the visual means through which it is being depicted.

Thus, the original Project Plan for the production of the docudrama emphasized the importance of storyboarding in the development of the script. Due to an unfamiliarity with storyboarding techniques at Himalaya Films, what finally resulted was what could be termed a "story telling" session. This involved verbally communicating the ideas and messages that were in the script and reading the script aloud to local residents and government officials. It also included the testing of various visual components for accuracy such as village settings, costumes, office layouts, etc. There is merit in this kind of feedback, as gaining a high level of authenticity and accuracy in the depiction of village life might ensure that the video, carrying more legitimacy with local audiences, would draw their attention to the story more effectively, thereby increasing the chances of comprehension and ensuing discussion.

The storyboarding session was also not adequately organized into focus groups but instead drew the entire community together en masse. Haaland again signals the importance of social context to people's comprehension: "People's social situation will determine the way they look at and interpret pictures and also how they react to outsiders coming into their community to test pictures". In addition, "most people with low visual literacy have limited attention spans - i.e. their concentration will gradually decrease. A ten picture limit may be a useful rule of thumb when pretesting" (ibid). It is important to maximize the ease and therefore the ability of each participant to respond fully. The group the field crew tested was far too large as well as not divided by gender, social status, etc.

The production of the docudrama did not, then, benefit by the important insights that might have been gained through proper storyboarding. Consequently, it is difficult to gauge just how successful this type of production could have been. Gaining information regarding real local problems as a base for the storyline is only one component in producing effective videos for rural audiences and the importance of testing for visual literacy was eschewed. In addition, following the pre-production field visit and the first drafting of the script, feedback which was received from executive members of the donor agency cast some doubt as to the narrative effectiveness of the storyline and character development. Unfortunately, very little of this feedback was incorporated into rewrites of the script. It is clear that such a project needs to incorporate as scriptwriting workshop as well as a storyboard preparation and focus group testing workshop.

#### **Process documentation: fieldwork as catalyst**

edar Sharma, the GreenCOM staff member who accompanied the film crew into the field in the capacity of "process documentor", took detailed notes on the social interaction of crew and local residents. From his notes some very interesting examples can be cited of the way the presence of the crew and the social process of video production itself uncovered/-triggered controversies:

"I immediately contacted Kanta. She said that Shreedhan, the CARE worker who had participated in the video, was not happy with the shooting as she felt she had been neglected in favor of the ranger. In her opinion, she was not given a proper role in the video although the CARE staff is much more active in the field than the rangers. I checked with Binod [the director] about the roles of the CARE field staff and the government rangers. Binod thought that firstly, the roles were already balanced. Secondly, the ranger had been working in the local situation for years and he was very active. Thirdly, Shreedhan started arguing about the issue of compensation during the shooting which he found quite inappropriate and embarrassing."

Two points are significant here. First, the female CARE worker's role was, in fact, very small, while the ranger was given a prominent role. How then, could their parts be perceived as balanced? Second, Binod's discomfort with the way controversy was being raised within the process of the video production points to a weakness in this kind of firm-led video production as a participatory method. He openly resisted any hindrances to the smooth shooting of the film and interpreted this process of dissension, debate and local politics as being 'embarrassing', an attitude entirely inappropriate to a

PRA fieldworker, and one that only served to suppress and truncate any possible fruitful negotiations. Nevertheless, Binod commented that he had never before done this kind of research for the production of a video. In the past he said the storyline had always come from the donor, and he was amazed at how much insight he had gained for his script by going to the field and investigating the issues first hand.

Aside from the quest for visual authenticity, a number of other important developments came out of the "storytelling" session and out of the participatory orientation which guided the crew into the field to consult with local people on the details of the storyline. One such development was a discussion which was generated surrounding the issue of plant purchasing for community planting. During the foresters' script reading meeting the foresters objected to portions of the script, which alluded to local residents purchasing their own plants and so charging a fee to new members as a contribution. The foresters insisted that the community itself does not purchase plants, but that they are provided to them by the DFO. This led the script crew to consult with the local villagers on the issue. They insisted that they certainly do buy their own plants, as those provided by the DFO proved to be insufficient to meet their needs. CARE workers then corroborated this and the DFO was informed of its error.

The significance of this anecdote lies in the role that the film crew played in generating discussion within the community, and in facilitating a dialogue about it between the villagers and the local government representatives. Such an instance points to the value of this kind of participatory consultation in not only enhancing the accuracy of its information base but in the benefits attained through the very process of data collection and the catalyst that a fieldworker may provide to facilitate productive discussion if he/she is aware and attuned to this possibility.

As a PRA methodology the firm-led docudrama production does not go significantly far in achieving participatory benefits to local communities. Further reasons for this will be discussed in the following section.

#### IV Comparison

One of the goals of GreenCOM's two community video projects was to gauge which method of community interaction, the CVL or the CCV, was more effective as a participatory communication device. Task order two states: The literature from participatory development in general suggests that the community-led participatory intervention will have a greater impact on the community and group processes than the intervention in which there is only consultation with the community at strategic points during the intervention. Through process documentation, GreenCOM will investigate the following hypotheses:

- 1) More group members will become more knowledgeable about the community forestry/ soil conservation policies, etc. in the community than in the CCV community.
- 2) More group members will express more positive attitudes about the active participation of women and lower castes in group activities, particularly community forestry/ soil conservation, in the CVL community than in the CCV community.
- 3) More group members will become involved in group decision-making, particularly related to community forestry/ soil conservation in the CVL community than the CCV community.
- 4) More women and lower caste group members will become more involved in group decision-making, particularly related to community forestry/ soil conservation in the CVL community than the CCV community.
- 5) The CVL community will increase the frequency of its discussion of issues/ concerns for women and lower caste group members more than in the CCV community.
- 6) More women and lower caste group members will become more active group members in the CVL community than in the CCV community.

While specific examples could be addressed to each of these hypotheses, the overwhelming superiority in the scale of participation, discussion, and knowledge gained of the CVL process as opposed to the CCV makes minute examination of each statement unfruitful. It can be unequivocally stated that more knowledge, more participation by women and minorities, more active group members, and increased frequency of discussion on minority issues were all prominent features in the CVL more than the CCV. Therefore, in order to take this analysis slightly further, I would like to invoke Chambers' distinction between Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) as a means to understanding in what ways the CCV methodology was less effective. If we understand the CCV approach to be an instance of RRA rather than PRA, a number of methodological shortcomings become apparent immediately.

RRA and PRA compared

| <u>RRA</u>               | <u>PRA</u>                                      |
|--------------------------|---|
| Local people's knowledge | local people's analytical capabilities          |
| methods: team management | behavior: experiential training, social process |

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| elicitive, extractive        | facilitating, participatory                    |
| learning by outsiders        | empowerment of local people sense of ownership |
| plans, projects publications | sustainable local action and institutions      |

The CCV project was clearly interested in gaining local people's knowledge. As previously stated, the intent was to gain as much local accuracy in representation as possible and to draw the themes for the video from the actual problems villagers faced in local CFUG operation. However, in the CVL, presenting them with a problem that they themselves were asked to solve drew out local people's own analytic abilities. Thus it allowed them to exercise these abilities through direct application and experimentation.

In the CCV project, a team of professional video producers conducted various techniques such as storyboard testing. The control of the production and the final project remained ultimately in the team's hands, and interaction with the community members remained only at consultant level. In the CVL production, participants were encouraged to learn their own lessons and insights through personal experience. The emphasis was placed on creative decision making through the importance of the social process itself rather than the end quality of a product. Thus, the CVL was more interested in personal behavior change and insights within the community than was the CCV.

In the CCV, the function of the fieldteam was elicitive and extractive. Direct questions were asked and answered; information was drawn out and applied at the discretion of the fieldteam. In the CVL process the role of the fieldteam was as facilitator only of the communicative participatory efforts. The team leader was to act as a catalyst, igniting participants to produce their own questions, answer them, and use the information in the ways they found most appropriate to convey their intended message.

Thus, in the CCV the central concern became the education of the fieldteam on issues concerning the community for inclusion in their video. In the CVL the facilitator learned along with the participants, and the educational benefits were to be focused on the community through decision making, discussions that helped uncover already held knowledge and the production of a video which reflected the learning process which participants had experienced. In this way, the production of the video was intended to give the producers a sense of ownership and achievement as well, marking a critical shift in the base of authority between the CCV and the CVL.

Further, the goal of the CCV was to produce a professional quality video, a "document", to be taken away by the filmmakers. In the CVL members of the community delivered the video produced the producers themselves, to Kathmandu to be presented to its target audience. Unfortunately the CVL program did fall short of generating sustainable local institutions as has been discussed in the earlier CVL section, and as such does not fully attain a shift in authority and full ownership. Nevertheless, it was still far more effective in this realm than was the CCV.

Another significant difference between the CCV and CVL programs comes in the degree to which donor agencies are able to monitor the quality of execution for each project. The CVL team consisted of GreenCOM's own staff, while the CCV was contracted out

to a professional production firm. As can be seen in the discussion of the CCV, this posed a problem on two fronts. First, certain aspects of the methodology were not executed properly (the storyboarding session) and adequate consideration was not taken of feedback on the script and storyline development. Secondly, because the crew was product oriented, they were not as sensitive to the benefits to be gained for locals through the video production as a social process itself.

This said, the CCV program couldn't be entirely disparaged as a participatory methodology. The production of educational materials based on solid field research and devices meant to increase communicative ability for later mobile video viewing contexts is most valuable in its own right, being designed with different end-goals and different target audiences. It is the subsequent *uses* and responses to the CCV in village communities, which will ultimately reveal its merit as a participatory endeavor.

### **Conclusion**

Community Video Letter production as a participatory methodology has been successful in a number of ways. It involves diverse members of the community in group activities; it imparts a sense of ownership to the community; it emphasizes local knowledge and analysis all in productive ways. Its video component introduces a further element of authority, which enables community members to gain initiative and confidence, but at the same time is limited by the camera's only temporary availability. Further, video allows a unique form of participatory appraisal, allowing users to develop personal communication skills even as it draws out issues on community forest user groups.

As a participatory methodology, the firm-led docudrama production allows for important information to be effectively gathered for uses in educational video production through pre-production field research. The potential for participatory activity was high in the storyboarding exercise as a means to gain visual accuracy and to measure visual literacy. The production of the video as a social process also held potential for participatory learning. Unfortunately, due to lack of preparation on the part of the video firm, much of this potential fell short. Overall, as detailed in earlier sections of this report, the CVL project as a participatory methodology had far more to offer than did the firm-led CCV.

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REPORT  
ON THE  
**GreenCOM / Nepal**  
**MEDIA**  
**PRODUCTIONS**

Himalaya Films Pvt Ltd.

DATE 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1998

This report is on the GreenCom / Nepal Media Productions mentioned in the contract # PCE Q-00-93-00069-00 between the Academy for Educational Development and Himalaya Films P Ltd. The report consists of not only the lessons learned on each individual component but also suggestions on how the whole project should have gone. The report is divided into sections for clarity.

- 1 Pre-Contract
- 2 Research & Planning
- 3 Shooting Period
  - Docu-drama
  - Documentary
  - Community Forestry Fora
- 4 Editing Period
  - Docudrama
  - Documentary
  - Computer Video Presentation
  - Video Letter
  - One Community Forestry Fora
- 5 Selection of Video Materials for Community Viewing
  - Methodology
  - Criteria for Selection
  - Programs Selection
- 6 Conclusion

## 1 Pre-Contract

After the selection process of choosing the right person or company to handle the project the contract specifications should be sorted-out before it is actually signed. If there is a change in component and the scope of work in the contract from the actual bid-terms of reference then those changes should be incorporated in the contract, rather than asking the contractor to review and quote again and again. This actually becomes a nuisance due to the fact that production houses like ours will be busy working on 'paper' details which we are not catered for rather than on starting the shooting process. The exchange of letters and budget formats for this contract (before signing) was actually bogging us down with unnecessary bureaucratic paper work. Furthermore, it is also better to have a completely sorted out agenda for such contracts rather than what actually happened - i.e. amendments. This way one would be able to see the contract as a whole and bid a more competitive price.

## **2 Research and planning**

During research and planning, the GreenCom/Nepal office extended their fullest co-operation. Pin-pointing the areas within the EFEA area for research and story boarding was essential. We went not only for story-board testing but also for discussion with the locals about how the stories should evolve and what they expected from the documentary and docu-drama. The process of evaluating what they wanted and putting it in a story-board format was essentially worthwhile. However, due to the every low level of visual literacy there were times when the story-board concept was mis-interpreted or not quite understood.

The various theory and concepts that one can use during such exercises is vast. The fact that during our shooting period of the docu-drama, we received a lengthy fax from AED regarding the theory of docu-drama in the field itself! We felt that it not only undermined our shooting process but was left too late to tell us what it should be like. This exchange of view points regarding the scripts, concepts and messages that are to be said should have been known way before the actual shooting takes place and not while it is taking place. The time consuming part was also getting approval of the scripts due to the fact that many people from many different organisations had to be satisfied for each one of them had their own idea about what should be included and what should not be. It is always difficult for people like us to come to a definite idea for the script as we do not have the technical subject background. This was especially true during the computer video presentation script & the process. This way the creativity goes out the window if one has to satisfy everybody.

In overall, the process of story-board and meeting the actual audience before the programme is shot is a very good and definite way of making films for one can be sure the message will 'hit home'.

#### 4. Editing Period

- **Docu-drama**

The editing of a docu-drama was pretty straight forward as it was a situation that was created and shot accordingly. Except for some places where disturbances in the sound track by the crowd that were there during the shooting, dubbing was necessary. However that did not destroy the natural sound effects. These type of media does become more powerful and more recognizable by the audience - hence more effective to send the message home.

- **Documentary**

Due to the nature of the media and the fact that we had difficulty shooting at the places of choice we had to sort of re-write and make some changes to the script before the narration took place without actually losing the main gist and points of the documentary. This also meant that we had to sort of rely on some stock footage to make it more effective. One of the disappointing factor of the trouble during the shooting which was beyond our means was the fact that we could not get the shots of NTFP being harvested. We had lined-up such shots in Pyuthan, but could not reach the place due to security problems. Overall I think usage of stock footage at relevant places have been effective especially of interviews gives by locals.

- **Computer Video Presentation**

The compilation of this component of the contract was the most troublesome. In our opinion there are three reasons why these came about. One is that we could not, neither could GreenCom/Nepal figure out what this CVP meant - was it to be like a

Power-point presentation or was it to be computer and video presentation. The fact that the TOR mentioned power-point and that the contract changed it to CVP was in itself mis-leading. On top of it, we had the capability of doing the Power-Point type of presentation but not the computer video presentation - hence, the request for the Miro video-card. We were not sure whether we had to rely on stock footage or shoot fresh footage. The time and effort spent on this would have made two new very effective documentaries. The frequent change of ideas by the customer and not having a correct directive from the beginning led to umpteen changes and re-edits. In the end, no one was happy with it.

Again it is necessary to stress that the initial brief has to be definite and precise so that the contractor knows what should be done. Otherwise, there are over-run of costs and tension created among the working partners unnecessarily.

- **Video letter**

The editing of the video letter was simple on our part. The Community video specialist from GreenCom was the main person who used the facilities to complete this component. Except for the time consuming aspects of finding the raw material to be edited specially on Video 8 format, the CFUG people did a great job of making the letter. The Video letter has been the most accepted and effective output of this exercise.

### 3. Shooting Period

- **Docu-Drama**

The shooting of the docu-drama went smoothly as there were lots of components within which could be managed and planned in a more organized way. However, one of the problems that rose was the amount of exposure one aid-worker got and why another aid-worker from a different organization did not get. There were discussions at times during the shooting which meant either compromises or out-right rejection of such pointers.

The shooting period for the docu-drama went well and without a hitch except for a bomb that went off next to our lodge in Guleriya, Bardia on one of the nights.

- **Documentary**

However, the shooting for the documentary was a different story. The area of Dang & Pyuthan that were selected for the shooting were out of bounds due to Maoist insurgency. At the time, their activities were increasing and the area became totally out of bounds after the killing of one of the USAID workers. We were left with half completed documentary and had to find other alternatives. This meant that we had to get to the field more times than we had budgeted for. At the end, the shooting went satisfactorily with the alternative locations and usage of some stock footage. Identifying suitable interviewees was difficult due to the fact that people would talk to you with conviction and really say the relevant points, but once the camera was in front of them they would be camera-shy. We had to coax them to say what they had said a minute ago. The zeal and conviction for their statements were lost somewhat during the interviews.

- **Community Forestry Fora**

The shooting for the forum at Kathmandu was basically straight forward with recording the situation (training) before the event and then the actual event. One of the technical problems we faced was shooting and recording most of the dialogue exchanged between the "officials" and the "Local user groups". This was due to the length of tape that fits in the camera and the batteries needed to run it.

- **Community Forestry Fora**

The editing of this component faced quite a few problems due to the fact that we did not know that we had to cover - the whole forum i.e. all what was said. Since this was logistically not possible, we had to revert to audio taken during the forum. The audio tapes had recorded 95% of the proceedings. Laying the audio track first, then inserting the video on top of it was time consuming to match them.

Again the brief has to be specific about what is needed - in this instance the full proceedings of the forum or the gist of the forum. The brief mentions one type and the country office here suggests another type. However, the audience here actually appreciated the outcome and this too was one of the more effective ones even though by the time we finished there were 3 changes in the relevant ministers within 2 months!

## 5 Selection of Video Materials for Community Viewing

Many of the government and non-government agencies in Nepal had already developed videos and other audio-visual materials related to Nepal's forests and environment. Therefore it was felt necessary to first survey what had already been done to see which existing materials were relevant to EFEA's objectives and the needs of its target populations. This information base was necessary not only to make use of the existing materials but also to identify the gap which needs to be fulfilled by the production of new materials by GreenCOM in the future.

- **Methodology**

The Community Video Specialist visited following institutions to information about existing videos and other materials on environment, forestry sustainable development agriculture and so on. The places visited were

- a Ministry of Forest and Soil conservation
  - Department of Planning and Training
  - Department of Soil Conservation
  - Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation
  - Department of Forestry
- b Ministry of Agriculture
- c Nepal Television
- d International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- e International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- f World View Nepal
- g Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
- h Water-borne Diseases Control Project

After going through the list of materials available with each of the above institutions 130 video films docudrama, documentaries video-skits and reports were selected for review This list was then brought down to 44 items after an initial viewing evaluating them for their merits

- **Criteria for Selection**

- a Relevance of the subject matter
- b Clarity of message and language
- c Representation of the geographical and ethnic diversity of the EFEA area
- d Motivational message for people to contribute towards conservation of forest resources
- e Programs that are not directly related to forest but would have significant implication on forest management for example programs on agro-forestry and Community Decision Making Process for the use of forest resources

- **Programme Selected**

Thus selected materials were compiled in three volumes/VHS tapes Following is a brief description of the content of each tape

Volume 1

- a Forest conserved by villagers in Dhading (3 min 15 sec)
- b Shreeantu Flourishes (18 min 20 sec)
- c Federation of Forest Users (5 min 30 sec)
- d Deforestation of Community Forests (9 min)
- e The Model Village Golmatar (18 min 4 sec)

## Volume 2

- a Justice of Gorkha (4min 50 sec)
- b Bamboo Cultivation 915 min 50 sec)
- c Himalayan Forest (13 min)
- d Community Forest in Kathmandu (12 min 10 sec)
- e Khoriya Kheti (18 min 50 sec)

## Volume 3

- a Nature, the Base of Life (3 min 35 sec)
- b Dairy Farm (17 min 20 sec)
- c Conservation Message (4 min0)
- d Buffer Zone Legislations (5 min 55 sec)
- e Plight of Forest User Group (13 min)
- f Korak Ko Karamat (Wonderful Works in Korak, 7 min 4 sec)

## Telefilms

- Ban Pale (Forest Guard 60 min)
- Maserni Nani (Lady Teacher 58 min)
- Affnailagi (For Your Own Shake 58 min)

## Docudrama

- Chetana (Awareness, 35 min)

Documentary

- Forest Manager of Hindukush Himalaya (39 min)
- Call from the Hills (28 min)

These selected materials were put in nine VHS tapes as shown below

- magazine (No of topics - 16)
- telefilms
- docudrama
- documentaries
- 

Total volumes 9

This complete set of nine tapes were then copied five times one set for each of four viewing units and one for the GreenCOM/Nepal Office. A set is kept in the office to be able to replace the tapes that may get destroyed in the field. Thus a total of 45 VHS tapes were used.

## 5 Conclusion

The good experience we had working with this project was that each of the components were different and had to be approached differently. Whether the components will be effective or not is yet to be seen. Again, we would like to stress that the components and briefs have to be sorted-out precisely even before the bids are called in. Once the bids are settled and if starts changing the terms and scope of work, then the contractor will always be bogged down on in paper work especially in the multi-media field. We do realise that changes will take place especially in a long term projects like this. But changes frequently create lot of problems for the contractor especially if he has given considerable consideration to the package of the project as a whole. One of the things about his project was that there was no one authority who could decide. This meant that the process of decision took longer than necessary.

Without the help of the GreenCOM/Office here and our organizational back-up the project would not have been completed on time. GreenCOM/Nepal was especially good in assisting to identify the issues in forestry as it is such a vast area. They also assisted by giving suggestions as to how to put the issues forward. Without their assistance it would have been difficult to complete the components of the project. The future of video letters and docu-drama are there especially in a society where the literacy rate is low. In video, docu-drama seems to be more effective way of disseminating information unless it is a more straight forward kind of instructional video. With the help of non-linear facilities (i.e. computer based video editing) and the new digital video (Dvcam) formats, the productions will become more effective and logistically possible to produce things that were not possible. Any future such project should have these new media in mind to enhance the effectiveness.

Proceedings of  
8<sup>th</sup>  
**FOREST SECTOR  
COORDINATION  
COMMITTEE  
MEETING**

13<sup>TH</sup> February 1998, Kathmandu



**MINISTRY OF FORESTS AND  
SOIL CONSERVATION**



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 8th  
FOREST SECTOR COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
(13 FEBRUARY 1998)**

**MINISTRY OF FORESTS AND SOIL CONSERVATION  
ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST ENTERPRISE ACTIVITY (EFEA)  
*With Support From*  
GreenCOM - Nepal  
Kathmandu**

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## **EIGHTH FOREST SECTOR COORDINATION COMMITTEE (FSCC) MEETING**

### **1 Introduction**

This document records in details proceedings of the 8th FSCC meeting held at Hotel De la Annapurna, Kathmandu on 13th February 1998. The meeting was called by Mr. Amrit Lal Joshi, Member Secretary of FSCC, Chief Planning Officer of the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. GreenCOM - Nepal provided technical and financial support to organise the meeting as per the minister's letter dated 6 November 1998 (Annex 1).

### **2 Agenda**

The meeting had the following main agenda:

- a) Overall review of the Forestry Sector
- b) Review of the 7th FSCC meeting minutes followed by group discussion
- c) Presentation of report and recommendations of Training Working Group followed by discussion
- d) Presentation of report and recommendations of the Implementation and Extension Working Group followed by discussion
- e) Presentation of report and recommendations of the Financial and Planning Working Group followed by discussion
- f) Open discussion on other issues
- g) Wrap-up discussion

### **3 Program for the Day**

The meeting started at 9 am and closed at 17:30 pm. The meeting was followed by a cock-tail dinner hosted by the Secretary to the MFSC, Mr. Narayan Raj Tiwari. Details of the program is given in Annex 2.

### **4 Invitees**

All senior officers at the ministry and Divisional Chief, Departmental Heads, Chief of major Projects/Units under the ministry were invited. Senior officials from the related government and non-government agencies were also invited. Representatives of embassies and diplomatic missions of countries involved in the forest sector of Nepal were also invited. A detailed list of invitees and participants is given in Annex 3.

### **5 Inaugural Session**

This first session of FSCC meeting was chaired by Mr. Narayan Raj Tiwari, Secretary of MFSC.

The first speaker, Mr. A. L. Joshi, Chief Planning Officer of MFSC and Member Secretary of FSCC, welcomed the distinguished guests and the participants. Mr. Joshi stressed the importance of this meeting and mentioned particularly that the coordination among the partners in the Forestry Sector was good but the intersectoral coordination was poor. He stressed that the development of forest sector should not be viewed as a matter concerning only trees but the integrated development of land in the rural areas and the improvement of living standard of the rural populace. The welcome speech delivered is given in Annex 4.

The second speaker Dr Ramesh Anand Vaidya, Honourable Member of National Planning Commission, addressed the inaugural session on the three main issues

- The role of Nepal's forests in the watershed of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghana
- The relationships between forests, energy and infrastructure in Nepal
- Policy issues important to be addressed in the forest sector of Nepal

Dr Vaidya highlighted the importance of Nepal's land use pattern in relation to the major river basins in the region, particularly the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghana basins. Nepal occupies 10% of the area, but 20% of the forest with dense canopy. Nepal's role in this region is thus much bigger than its relative size.

Dr Vaidya explained that the energy supply, particularly firewood in the rural areas, depends for its largest part on the forests, and that a large fuelwood deficit exists, which could only be alleviated through efficient management of the forests.

Dr Vaidya opined that the large infrastructure component of the Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP) would greatly influence the environment in general and the forests in particular. It was therefore important to manage development activities in a way that the achievements of one sector do not add to the cost of the another. Dr Vaidya also mentioned that water resources are of vital importance for the prosperity in the Region, and that the forest plays a crucial role in relation to both the quality and the quantity of the water.

Dr Vaidya raised the four key issues that the forest sector has to address:

- The balance between development and the environment in the forest development
- Consistency in the legislation and regulation for the various sub-sectors, for example buffer zone legislation and the forest act
- Property rights to the resources in the sector and private sector involvement in the development processes
- Economic rent

Dr Vaidya reiterated the importance of the forests of Nepal in the Region and urged the parties in the development of the forest sector to monitor the development and current changes adjusted to circumstances in the sector. He noted that the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector in many ways was outdated, as it was prepared with reference to the Panchayat system.

The third speaker, Mr Bhakta Bahadur Rokava, Honourable State Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, delivered the inaugural address. Full text of the speech is given in Annex 3a (Nepali) and 3b (English).

The Hon. State Minister of Forests and Soil Conservation, Mr Bhakta Bahadur Rokava, expressed his well wishes and said that the FSCC should be able to provide an important contribution to the forest development in Nepal. He also said that the forest resources in the Terai should be managed as production forest and community forests, and that operational forest management plans prepared for the Terai districts should be implemented soon. He also highlighted the need to integrate forest management plans with the income generating programs for the affected population.

Mr Narayan Raj Tiwari secretary to MFSC was the last speaker of the inaugural session that he chaired. The full text of his speech is given in Annex 6. The Chairman thanked the forest technicians, experts and the donor agencies for their contribution to the forestry sector in Nepal. Although Nepal can show many success-stories, the Chairman expressed his concern about the decline in forest cover in the country as a whole. The Chairman called upon all concerned parties for their continued support and assured the gathering of the full support and commitment of the ministry and that of his own for the development of the sector.

The inaugural session was followed by a brief tea break.

## 6 Overview of the Forest Sector of Nepal

The second session of FSCC meeting was chaired by Mr Narayan Raj Tiwari, Secretary of MFSC.

The second session started with the presentation of "Overview of the Forest Sector" by Mr Amrit Lal Joshi, Chief Planning Officer of MFSC. He presented basic figures on forest of Nepal and pointed out the difference between the normally quoted official figures for the forest area of Nepal which is 37.7% and preliminary estimates of FRIS which shows the area to be only 30% (Annex 7).

Mr Joshi also briefly reviewed the status of Community Forestry in Nepal (Annex 8) and the organisation chart of MFSC (Annex 9).

Mr Joshi presented Organisation Functions and Operating Guidelines of FSCC and its Working Groups (Annex 10). In the light of this information, he moderated discussions in relation to the issues raised in the Seventh FSCC meeting that was held on 24 January 1996. The chart used to steer the discussion is given in Annex 11.

## 7 Presentations by FSCC Working Groups

Under the Chairmanship of Mr Narayan Raj Tiwari, each of the three Working Groups was called upon to present their reports.

### 7.1 Training Working Group

Mr Mohan Wagle, Chairman of the Training Working Group called upon Mr Nick Roche to present the report of the Working Group. Mr Wagle highlighted the relationships between this report and the report of the Financial Planning Working group.

Mr Nick Roche, Member Secretary of the Training Working Group presented the report of the Group (Annex 12). After the presentation, the Session Chairman called participants for their response to the issues raised in the report. The responses are recorded below.

Mr F. Ohler, FAO, asked if the figures given in Table 1 of the report regarding norms for Training Daily Allowances (TDA) should also be applicable for the Ministry and Department staff.

Mr Pratap M. Shrestha, Programme Officer, FAO, questioned the sustainability of the attendance fees for beneficiaries. Mr Shrestha asked if the training norms were to be applied uniformly throughout the sector. If not, Mr Shrestha felt that no progress was achieved since the last meeting.

Mr Wagley replied to Mr Ohler that the figures given in Table 1 should be applicable to MFSC staff and not to the department staff as mentioned in the paper. In reply to Mr Shrestha, he said that uniformity would be preferable but it would be difficult to achieve.

Mr A L Joshi, Chief Planning Officer, MFSC, said that the training programmes for HMG and the donor supported projects and programmes were vital to the Community Forestry Programme. He repeated that uniformity in applying these norms for TDA was desirable but flexibility should be allowed as projects were implemented in different ways and are at various stages of progress requiring different approaches to this issue.

Mr Shrestha suggested that the norms should be considered as a maximum not to be exceeded.

Mr Wagley reiterated that some flexibility should be allowed in applying the TDA norms and acknowledged Mr Shrestha's concern.

Mr N K Shrestha, FTTP/WATCH, noted that FECOFUN had not been invited and that users were not represented at the meeting.

Mr Joshi replied that FECOFUN actually had been invited but he did not know positively if the invitation had reached them.

Mr J K Tamrakar, Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project, said that Rs120 per day in allowance for study tours was insufficient and that it therefore was not necessary to invite anyone from this project on study tours.

Mr Wagley noted this and said that the matter would be considered.

Mr P V Chained, Management Officer, DOF, noted that no field staff and beneficiaries were represented in the Working Groups.

Mr Joshi replied that this was a good suggestion and recommended in line with Mr Chand that this should happen in the future.

It was also mentioned that the TDA norms should be applied to all sectors, not only to the Forestry Sector.

Mr Wagley promised that the Working Group would address this issue.

Mr Anupam Bhatia, ICIMOD, asked if there was any quality control of the training and norms for the methods to be used in training. He also saw the need for institutionalisation of assembly and dissemination of information on best practices regarding training without necessarily imposing standards. He suggested that the Training Working group should address a wider range of issues than TDA only.

Mr Wagley said that the Training Working group would consider this.

Mr Joshi rounded up the discussion with the following recommendations:

- Field oriented organisations such as FECOFUN and NGO field staff should be included in the FSCC Working Groups.
- TDA norms used in other sectors should be examined in view of creating uniformity for all activities involving the communities.
- The Training Working Group should address issues other than norms for TDA.
- The Working group should address quality of training.
- The TDA norms as recommended by the Training Working Group should be approved by the FSCC and forwarded to the MFSC for final approval.

Mr Shrestha, FAO asked which NGOs to include in the further work on training issues

Mr Waglev suggested that the following people should be included in a sub-group of the Training Working Group

Mr Steve Hunt, Team Leader Nepal Australia Community Resource Project  
Mr P M Shrestha, Programme Officer FAO  
Mr N K Shrestha, FTTP/WATCH  
Mr Anupam Bhatia, ICIMOD

Mr Bo Schultz, Chief Adviser Community Forestry Training Project asked whether the nominees should be members of the Working Group or the sub-group and if the norms could be used for indirect funding once they were passed by HMG

Mr Waglev replied that the nominees should be members of a sub-group which was to meet shortly after the FSCC meeting to follow up on the recommendations. He also replied that it would be difficult to get approval for TDA for the beneficiaries

Mr Nick Roche in his capacity as Team leader for the NUK CFP explained that the norms had been in use in the Project for some 6-8 months and had gained acceptance of the field staff. The rates were a compromise among many interests and had reduced artificial incentives for conducting and attending training

Mr Karl Schuler, Team Leader Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project informed the meeting that this Project used indirect funding and used HMG norms. He complained about the lack of clarity of the HMG norms and said that the DFOs often interpreted the norms to their own advantage. Mr Schuler found the norms for TDA as presented was a good starting point and that they should be approved as norms for TDA by HMG. He suggested that other sectors should not be involved before the new norms had been tested in the MFSC

Mr Ohler complained that proposals on such an important issue should have been brought to the attention of the members well before the Meeting and not distributed only during the session

Mr Roche answered that back in 1997 this proposal had been circulated to the departments and the projects in the sector. He therefore assumed that the people concerned would be familiar with the issue

Mr A L Joshi then called for and got the FSCC approval of the TDA rates as proposed in the Training Working Group Report by the Meeting. It was agreed with applause that the rates should be brought to HMG for approval as norms

## 72 Implementation Working Group

Mr Indra Singh Karki Chairman and Mr Steve Hunt, Secretary, made presentation of the Implementation Working Group Report. Mr Hunt explained that only the main report was distributed (Annex 13). The annexes to the main report were available on request. After the presentation of the Working Group Report, Dr U R Sharma, DG DNPWC presented a report on the bufferzone act and regulations. Mr Karki requested the participants to address the issues as they appeared in the report.

Mr N K Shrestha complained about the unavailability of the annexes. On the issue of the Community Forestry Seminar, he enquired whether there will be three regional seminars as preparation for the national seminar or four including a special seminar for the Terai.

Mr Karki replied that there will be three seminars as the same legislation was applicable in the Terai and the Hills.

Mr N K Shrestha answered that the issues in the Terai were very different from the issues in the Hills although the legislation was the same and repeated his request for a special Terai workshop.

Dr Sharma was of the opinion that only three seminars were necessary. Due to the frequent transfer of staff it was not appropriate to have a specific Terai seminar. Mr R B Joshi, Executive Director, FORESC supported the need for Terai seminar.

Dr S H Achet, DDG, DSC suggested that two panels should be made at each seminar, one to deal with the issues in the hill and the other to deal with the issues in the Terai.

Mr A L Joshi proposed that a committee chaired by the Chief, CPFD to be established for the preparation of the Seminar.

Mr K B Shrestha, Chief, CPFD suggested that the DG/DOF be the Chairman and the Chief/CPFD be the Member Secretary.

Mr A L Joshi then called for nominations to the Committee. The following nominations were brought forward:

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Chairman         | DG/DOF             |
| Member Secretary | Chief/CPFD         |
| Members          | DG/DNPWC           |
|                  | DG/DSC             |
|                  | MFSC               |
|                  | WATCH              |
|                  | FECOFUN            |
|                  | Danida/CFTP        |
|                  | Fred Pollack/USAID |
|                  | CARE               |
|                  | NUK, CFP           |
|                  | NACFP              |
|                  | NSCFP              |

Mr N K Shrestha was still not clear how many seminars were to be held

Mr K B Shrestha made the clarification that all of the following topics were to be discussed at three regional seminars and one national seminar

- gender and equity issue
- linkages between FUGs and VDCs
- the role of different stake-holders in community forestry
- community forestry implementation in the Terai
- income generating activities in relation to community forestry

Mr Fred Pollack, USAID urged the participants to focus on goal oriented subjects so that the outputs from the seminars be actions and not discussions for another meeting

Mr K B Shrestha further explained that the regional seminars would be organised by the Regional Directors supported by  
Eastern region NUK CFP CFTP  
Central/Western regions NSCFP NACFRP CPFD NUK CFP CFTP  
Mid-western/Western regions ActionAid/Nepal Care/Nepal EFEA

There were no comments from the floor on the item on subsidies for forest nurseries plantation development natural regeneration forest rehabilitation and research

On formation of user groups in national parks and buffer-zones participant from Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity (EFEA) project asked two questions

- Should the FUGs in the buffer zones relate to the Warden or to the DFO ?
- Are royalty payables on NTFP from the community forest and from private land as well?

Dr U R Sharma firstly informed the Meeting that buffer-zone boundaries were being defined and demarcated He then replied to the questions that in most buffer zones the machinery was not fully in place to take care of the development work with the communities He urged the projects to continue establishing and working with FUGs which later could be changed to Buffer-Zone User Committees in the areas ones the buffer zone is formally declared

Mr Karki explained that according to the by-laws no royalty is to be charged to privately grown NTFP He mentioned that the confusion in some places was due to the lack of information or wrong information conveyed by mediators to the communities

Participant from EFEA continued that EFEA run into many practical problems until the buffer zones are formalised

Mr A L Joshi mentioned that all development is managed through the communities and that no one therefore needs to worry about by-laws and area descriptions However we should be able to anticipate what is going to happen to the already existing FUGs once the buffer zones have been formally established

Dr Sharma replied that according to the buffer-zone by-laws FUGs would be transformed into User Committees at that stage

Mr Warwick Thomson, Chief Adviser Nepal-Denmark Watershed Management Project asked, if that also applied to other user groups than FUGs and expressed his concern that all this could develop into a bureaucratic nightmare having negative effect on the development of the communities. The Forest Act, the Buffer-zone Act and the Soil Conservation Act often are applied at the same piece of land. He warned against drowning people in donor money and called for close co-ordination of all developmental activities ongoing in a community.

Dr Sharma replied that in buffer zones the buffer-zone regulations take precedence over other regulations. He also stressed that community based programmes should take precedence over bureaucratic approaches. He closed the discussion by suggesting interested parties to take up separate discussions with him personally.

Dr Achet however wanted to follow up on this discussion by proposing integrated sectoral legislation to take care of the problem.

Mr Karki replied that the matter would be considered in the Implementation Working Group.

On the issue of co-ordination within the MFSC Mr Karki mentioned that the necessary co-ordination took place at the fortnightly meetings in the Ministry.

Mr A.L. Joshi said that the Working Groups of the FSCC should continue in order to maintain co-ordination in the sector.

Dr Achet asked if donor co-ordination was a Ministry issue or a departmental issue.

In reply Mr Karki said that this would be dealt with at ministerial level.

Mr A.L. Joshi said that the issue of co-ordination becomes more and more complex as the number of projects and programmes increases and the scope is widened. This issue will need careful consideration in the future.

Mr P.M. Shrestha added that the involvement of NGOs also needs co-ordination.

On the issue of co-ordination of watershed management projects the Meeting endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group.

Mr Karki mentioned that the Working Group had deleted the word 'extension' from its name and was now called the Implementation Working Group. No comments from the floor.

Mr A.L. Joshi produced an overhead to show the members of the steering committee for the National Seminar on Community Forestry. Mr K.B. Shrestha expressed the need to include all bilateral donors on the committee. It was discussed whether the committee should be a Steering Committee or a Task Force. It was decided that the national committee should be a Steering Committee and that Task Forces should take care of the practical arrangement in relation to the seminars. The proposal is given in Annex 14.

It was also recommended that MFSC should be responsible for co-ordination of community based resource management.

### 7.3 Financial Planning Working Group

At the opening of this presentation, Mr A L Joshi mentioned that only few issues were outstanding within this field. What remained was the issue on the 90 days limit on DSA for HMG staff and more technical matters as getting funds released in time for the programmes.

Mr L A Hansen, Member Secretary, then made his presentation of the Working Group Report attached here as Annex 15.

Mr Karki opened the discussion by asking Mr H P Regmi, Minister of Finance, Vice Chairman of the Working Group on how the 90-day rule could be changed.

Mr Regmi recognised the problem and urged the members to provide strong arguments for easing of the rule to the Minister of Finance.

A discussion followed on whether to provide the beneficiaries with TDA.

Mr Khanal, Planning Officer, DOF suggested to provide food and shelter only for the beneficiaries. Mr Regmi supported this.

Mr Karki proposed that the whole HMG norm system should be reviewed. Mr A L Joshi agreed and mentioned that the TDA rates were the first step and should be followed up in other fields.

On the issue of the Project database, Mr Ohler suggested that the database should be maintained by the MFSC. He also asked why the LRMP paper was distributed.

Mr A L Joshi agreed that the database should be maintained by the MFSC. Regarding the LRMP paper, he replied that the issues about the LRMP and the Biodiversity Trust Fund had been raised at a Working Group Meeting.

Dr Achet suggested that the Biodiversity Trust Fund should include the whole sector and be called the Forestry Sector Trust Fund.

Mr A L Joshi said he would deal with this issue later and then presented the recommendations arising from the discussion.

- The FSCC approves the TDA presented by the Training Working Group including the beneficiaries.
- The Working group will have to address the issue regarding review of HMG norms in general.

Mr Ohler proposed to include the term 'mid-level technicians' equivalent to forest rangers to make the norms universal in the Ministry.

Mr Warwick Thomson suggested that the rates for TDA for beneficiaries should be applied at the discretion of each project. At the moment NEP-DK WMP does not pay TDA for beneficiaries without experiencing any problems. Mr Schuler suggested that these rates should be maximum rates not to be exceeded. Mr A L Joshi mentioned that the allowances could be paid in cash as well as kind.

The Meeting hereafter confirmed the proposed rates to be adopted and forwarded to the MFSC for approval as norms.

8 **Other Issues**

After the above three presentations, The Chairman of the Meeting then opened the floor for discussion on Other Issues

Mr A L Joshi made a presentation of the objectives of the Forest Sector Master Plan (Annex 16 and 17) in relation to the strategy taken in the 9<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan under preparation and mentioned that the objectives were still valid. He also presented papers on the LRMP (Annex 18) and the Trust Fund (Annex 19). On the LRMP Mr Joshi informed that a team was preparing a draft proposal for consideration of the World Bank for financing. On the Biodiversity Trust Fund Mr Joshi said that The Mountain Institute had assisted in the organisation of a workshop to take place on 2nd March 1998. Mr Joshi also presented list of donor supported projects under the ministry with their duration and costs. The Chairman pointed out some errors in the presentation and corrections were made (Annex 20).

On the Trust Fund Mr Karu questioned the cost efficiency of such an arrangement. Mr Joshi replied that this would be thoroughly discussed at the workshop on 2 March.

Mr P M Shrestha requested Dr Achet to release information on the forestry sector with regard to the Ninth Plan. Dr Achet said that he would circulate an unofficial English version within a week.

Dr Achet further mentioned that Trust Funds were already in use in other sectors and also in the KMTF. The funds would be used for financing activities in fields where prior experience exists.

Mr Regmi said that the Ministry of Finance would be very cautious about the establishment of trust funds and stressed the need for clear objectives to be established.

The Chairman explained that the fund would be based on an act of Parliament and referred to the workshop for further discussion.

Mr M Bista, DG DPR briefed the meeting on the programmes of his department. The two most important programmes were the Flora of Nepal with a budget of US\$ 4.2 million to be implemented over ten years and the Plant Resources Development Programme financed by HMG.

Mr R.B Joshi, Executive Director FORESC briefed the Meeting on the Programmes of this institution. Mr Joshi said that FORESC does not need core support, but requested donors to assign research work to the institution.

9 **Round-up Discussion**

The Chairman requested Mr A L Joshi to lead the round-up discussion

Mr Joshi presented the Recommendations of the Training Working Group for final discussion

Mr Karki suggested that the composition of the working groups should be reviewed

Mr Joshi replied that the Chairman of the FSCC and the Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of the working groups would address this matter

Dr Achet proposed that the Natural Resource Conservation Commission should be reviewed

Mr Joshi presented the recommendations from the Implementation Working Group and the Financial Planning Working Group for final discussion No further comments were made

A L Joshi then highlighted the days discussions and brought up the following conclusions

- Mr Joshi expressed his appreciation of Hon Member of National Planning Commission Dr Ramesh Ananda Vaidya's address urging the forest sector to apply a regional perspective and not to make the success of one sector at the cost of another
- The Hon Minister of State stressed the importance of the NTFP and the Minister of Forest wished an integrated approach to the development of the sector and equal focus on the Terai and the Hills
- It had been decided that the working groups should include field staff to have the viewpoints from the field properly represented
- The Meeting had identified the need for addressing the problems related to the different approaches regarding community forestry development soil conservation and buffer-zone development
- The Meeting had noted that the Ministry of Finance was not in a position to relax the rule about max 90 days field allowance for the field staff
- The database on projects would be updated and based in the MFSC

Mr Joshi mentioned that over and above the Nepali expertise approximately 50 expatriates and 30 volunteers worked in the sector Mr Joshi expressed his confidence that with the combined effort of these human resources it would be possible to carry out the programmes necessary for further development of the sector

Mr Ohler expressed his concern about the lack of co-ordination between the road development in the districts and soil conservation He requested this to be taken up with the World Bank for consideration The Chairman supported this

Mr Regmi suggested that particularly donors supporting Soil Conservation as well as road construction should ensure proper co-ordination of these activities Mr Regmi also requested the Meeting to consider the matters related to the use of INGOs in implementation of project on behalf of the donors The Ministry of Finance had experienced some problems in this regard

Mr A L Joshi requested support to the award programme for community forestry from the donors

## 10 Closing Remarks

In his closing remarks the Chairman stressed that the first and foremost objective of His Majesty's Government is to alleviate poverty. He mentioned the important role of the forests in the development of water resources and in tourism. The Community forestry programme is leading in the world, and strong interest is shown internationally for the community forestry programme in Nepal. There is a need for development of medicinal plants and herbs which has not received sufficient attention in the past. He also emphasised the need to develop commercial forestry in the Terai which has been lagging behind due to the lack of adequate proper support from the donors.

The Chairman read expression of apology from the Hon. Minister of Forests who was not able to attend the Meeting due to his other commitments and closed the session by thanking all the participants for taking active part in the discussions.

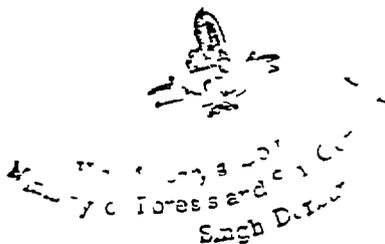
Secretary to MFSC and the Chairman of FSCC hosted a reception dinner in honour of all FSCC participants.



His Majesty's Government  
**MINISTRY OF FORESTS AND SOIL CONSERVATION**

Annex 1

Ph 224891  
221936  
223862  
227167  
224819



Singh Darbar  
Kathmandu, Nepal

Date..

Nov 6, 1997

Mr K M Gautam  
Country Program Coordinator  
Greencom  
CMS House, Lazimpat  
G P O Box - 10872  
Fax - 997-1- 415886

**Sub - Eighth FSCC Meeting**

Mr Gautam,

I am pleased to inform you that the eighth FSCC meeting is scheduled to be held on Feb 13, 1998 as per the decision of His Majesty's Government of Nepal. As Greencom is going to organise the forthcoming FSCC meetings it is requested to make necessary arrangements in this regard. Please do contact MFSC Planning Division in case of any inconvenience.

Thanking you

Sincerely yours,

(Harihar Sigdel)  
Planning Officer

Planning Officer

**MINISTRY OF FORESTS AND SOIL CONSERVATION (MFSC)  
FOREST SECTOR COORDINATION MEETING  
February 13, 1998 at Annapurna Hotel**

| <b>Friday</b> |  | <u>Program</u>  |
|---------------|--|---|
|               | 9 00 - 10 00 REGISTRATION  |   |
|               | 10 00 - 11 00  | INAUGURATION PROGRAM  |
|               | Welcome Address  | Amrit Lal Joshi<br>Chief Planning Division<br>(Member Secretary FSCC) |
|               | Statement  | Hon Dr R Baidya<br>Member NPC   |
|               | Inauguration and<br>Inauguration Address<br>by the Chief Guest   | Hon Bhakta Bahadur Rokaya<br>Minister of State MFSC                   |
|               | Opening Remarks  | Narayan Raj Tiwari<br>Secretary MFSC<br>(Chairman FSCC)               |
|               | 11 00 - 11 30 TEA BREAK  |   |
|               | 11 30 - 12 00 Overview of the Forestry Sector  | Amrit Lal Joshi<br>Member Secretary<br>(FSCC)                         |
|               | Review of 7th FSCC Minute<br>Followed by Discussion  |   |
|               | 12 00 - 12 45 Report of the Training<br>Working Group<br>Recommendations followed<br>by Discussion                     | N Roche<br>Member Secretary<br>(Working Group)                        |
|               | 12 45 - 13 45 LUNCH  |   |
|               | 13 45 - 14 30 Report of the Implementation and<br>Extension Working Group<br>Recommendations followed<br>by Discussion | S N Hunt<br>Member Secretary<br>(Working Group)                       |
|               | 14 30 - 15 15 Report of the Financial<br>Planning Working Group<br>Recommendations<br>Followed by Discussion           | L A Hansen<br>Member Secretary<br>(Working Group)                     |
|               | 15 15 - 16 15 Other Issues/Open Discussion   |   |
|               | 16 15 - 17 15 Round-up Discussion  | Amrit Lal Joshi<br>CPO MFSC   |
|               | 17 15 - 17 30 Closing Remarks  | Narayan Raj Tiwari<br>Chairman  |
|               | 18 00 - 20 00 RECEPTION CUM DINNER   |   |

## List of Invitees for 8th FSCC Meeting February 13, 1998

- 1 His Excellency Mr Brendan Doran  
Ambassador  
The Australian Embassy
- 2 Mr Esa Hurtig  
Charge d'affaires  
Embassy of Finland  
P O Box 2126 Kathmandu
- 3 His Excellency Mr Lloyd B Smith  
Ambassador  
The British Embassy
- 4 His Excellency  
Ambassador  
American Embassy
- 5 His Excellency  
Ambassador  
Japanese Embassy
- 6 His Excellency  
Ambassador  
German Embassy
- 7 His Excellency  
Ambassador  
Denmark Embassy
- 8 Mr G Mulier  
Resident Representative  
EU Baluwatar
- 9 Mr Philippe Drouel  
Team Leader  
CBED CECI
- 10 Ms Carroll Long  
Resident Representative  
UNDP
- 11 Mr Felix Van Surv  
Director  
SDC
- 12 Mr Richard T Wurster  
FAO Representative in Nepal

- 13 Mr P M Shrestha  
Program Officer  
FAO
- 14 Hanf M Rothenbuhler  
Resident Representative  
The World Bank  
Kathmandu
- 15 Mr Raju Tuladhar  
Program Officer  
Asian Development Bank
- 16 Mr Frederck Machmer  
Director  
USAID
- 17 Mr David Johnston  
Team Leader  
USAID
- 18 Mr Fred Pollach  
Environment Officer  
USAID
- 19 Mr Wattanabe  
Resident Representative  
JICA
- 20 Ms Wendy King  
BSP
- 21 Mr R.B Rawal  
BSP
- 22 Mr M L Javaswal  
BSP
- 23 Mr E Pelinck  
Director  
ICIMOD
- 24 Mr Anupam Bhatia  
ICIMOD
- 25 Mr B R. Bhatta  
ICIMOD
- 26 Mr Scott Fava  
CARE Nepal

- 27 Dr Ambika Prasad Adhikari  
Country Representative  
IUCN
- 28 Mr Erkki Heinonen  
Country Representative  
UNHCR
- 29 Mr Mingma Norbu Sherpa  
Country Representative  
WWF
- 30 Dr N K Shrestha  
FTPP/Watch

**Project and Program Advisers**

- 31 Mr S N Hunt  
Team Leader  
Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project
- 32 Mr Bo Schultz  
Chief Adviser  
Community Forestry Training Project
- 33 Mr Karl Schuler  
Chief Adviser  
Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project
- 34 Mr Laurits A Hansen  
Coordinator/DANIDA
- 35 Mr D Van Blitterswijk  
SNV
- 36 Mr Arjen Sterk  
Chief Technical Adviser  
Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project
- 37 Mr J K Tamrakar  
Project Coordinator  
Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project
- 38 Team Leader  
Greenery Promotion Project  
JICA
- 39 Team Leader  
Parbat Kaski Project  
JICA
- 40 Mr Esa Harkonen  
Team Leader  
FRISP

- 41 Mr Frits Ohler  
Chief Technical Adviser  
PUCD/ Shuvapuri Watershed Project/FAO
- 42 Mr K M Gautam  
GreenCOM Nepal
- 43 Mr Kedar Sharma  
GreenCOM Nepal
- 44 Per Hilbert  
TIP Chief Adviser
- 45 Dr P Yonzon  
Team Leader  
NBAP
- 46 W Thompson  
Chief Adviser - NDWMP
- 47 Mr Nick Roche  
Project Coordinator  
Nepal UK Community Forestry Project

**Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation**

- 48 Mr N R Tiwari  
Secretary  
MFSC
- 49 Mr S Bhattarai  
Joint Secretary (Tech )  
MFSC
- 50 Mr A L Joshi  
Chief Planning Officer  
MFSC
- 51 Mr S N Khanal  
Chief Monitoring and Evaluation Officer MFSC  
Chairman, NFA
- 51 Mr D Dhakal  
Joint Secretary
- 52 Dr Keshav Kanel  
Under Secretary  
MFSC
- 53 Mr S G Jha  
Under Secretary  
MFSC

54 Mr H S Shrestha  
Under Secretary (Tech )  
MFSC

**Planning Division, MFSC**

55 Mr H Sigdel - Planning Officer  
56 Mr R B Mallia - Assistant Planning Officer  
57 Mr K P Pokharel- Assistant Planning Officer  
58 Mr L N Pathak - Assistant Planning Officer

**Department of Forests**

59 Mr I S Karki - Director General  
60 Mr K B Shrestha - DDG CPFD  
61 Mr B K Khanal DDG Planning  
62 Mr S H Bhattarai - DDG  
63 Mr S C Karmacharya - Joint Secretary (Tech )  
64 Mr M P Dhungel Training Chief DOF  
65 Mr G B Mathema CPFD  
66 Mr P B Chandra NFD  
67 Mr S P Joshi NFD  
68 Mr K R Shrestha Chief TIP  
69 Mr D B Joshi CPFD  
70 Mr R Acharya DFO Lalitpur  
71 Mr A Dhungana DFO Kathmandu  
72 Mr M H Acharya DFO Bhaktapur  
73 Ms Madhuri Karki - Assistant Planning Officer DOF

**Department of Soil Conservation**

74 Mr Mohan Wagle Director General  
75 Dr Shiva Hari Achet, DDG  
76 Mr R Bogati Planning Officer

77 Mr B P Pudashami PM NDWMP

78 Mr K. Shrestha DSCO Lalitpur

79 Mr S L Singh DSCO Kathmandu

**Department of National Parks and Wildlife**

80 Dr U R Sharma - Director General

81 Mr L Manandhar - Planning Officer

**Department of Plant Resources**

82 Mr M Bista - Director General

83 Mr Y Vaidya - DDG

84 Dr Kedar Pd Ranjitkar - DDG

**FORESC**

85 Mr R B Joshi - Executive Director

86 Mr S M Amatya Director Survey

87 Mr A V Parajuli - Director Forest Research

**Regional Directors**

88 Mr C M Shakya RD Central Region

89 Mr N S Thapa - RD Western Region

90 Mr R B Pardon - RD Far-western Region

**Parastatals**

91 Mr R P Ojha Project Manager FPDB

92 Mr B Pradhan Nepalgunj Forest Development Project

93 Mr D R Bhattarai General Manager HPPCL

94 Mr B D Upadhaya Shivapuri Watershed Management and Wildlife Cons Project

95 Mr Nahakul Acharya Nepal Rosin and Turpentine Ltd

**Other Representatives**

96 Dr Ramesh Ananda Vaidya Hon Member NPC

97 Ms Laxmi Maskey Joint Secretary NPC

98 Mr Madhav Ghumire Joint Secretary Ministry of Finance

99 Mr Narayan P Dhakal KMNTC

100 Mr H P Regmi MOF

101 Dr M P Ghumire Ministry of Population and Environment

102 Mr B Peniston TMI

103 Mr H Gurung - Norad

104 Mr Dilip Dharewa, Chairman KDB

105 Mr Rajendra Mahato Chairman Resin & Turpentine

106 Dr Ramesh Khadka - Action Aid

107 Mr Madhup Dhungana - ANSAB

-

108 Mr J Adhikari

109 Mr Prem Karki (Under Secretary- Account-MFSC)

110 Mr I K Chougengly (Under Secretary - Law- MFSC)

111 Mr D D Shrestha

112 Dr C K Raunivar - DPR

113 Mr B Niraula

114 Mr K N Bastakoti

115 Mr S P Neptune

116 Mr R Uproot

117 Mr Y Candle

118 Mr S L Karna

119 Mr S Ghumire

120 Mr Ramesh Dhakal - PA

121 Mr Rajendra Sharma - (PA)

122 Mr Chaulangam - (PA)

123 Ms Munni Gautam

124 Mr S Tiwari

125 Ms Bindu Mishra

126 Mr R B Thakur

127 Mr G P Pant - Account - DOSC

128 Mr L M Gurung - Account - DOF

129 Mr Shyam Shrestha - Account - DOF

130 Mr Gopal Sharma - Account - DNPWC

131 Mr Lekh Nath Thapa - Account - DPR

132 Ms Radha Shrestha - NPC

133 Mr K P Arval - DOSC

134 Mr R P Saiju

135 Mr P Tiwari

136 Mrs Manju Ravamajhi

137 Mr Saroj Tiwari

Welcome Note By A. L. Joshi  
Chief Planning Officer  
MFSC

8<sup>th</sup> FSCC  
13 Feb 1998

Chairman Mr. Secretary  
Chief guest/Honorable Minister for State  
Honorable member of National Planning Commission  
Your Excellencies Ambassadors  
Directors of Donor Communities  
Residential Representatives of International and UN Organizations  
Team Leaders and Advisors of the Projects  
National and International Experts  
Journalists, Guests, Participants and Friends

To day we all are here to participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> Forestry Sector Coordination Committee meeting

I am grateful to receive you all in this meeting. I welcome you all on behalf of the committee and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.

Nepal is very rich in Natural Resources and Bio diversity. It is recorded that there are more than 5000 species of flowering plants which is two and half times greater than that of Britain. More than 1000 plants are known to possess medicinal values. There are about 175 species of mammals and 850 species of birds which makes Nepal richer than USA and Europe.

How can we say that Nepal is a poor country? If the country is rich the people of the country also can not be poor. But we could not manage the natural resources we have. We destroyed valuable timber species, we burn them, we grazed them and we cleared them for settlements without any plan. The results are deforestation, landslides, flood and loss of productivity and desertification. The result is that we became poor.

This is now the past brief history of Nepalese hill forestry. However, this is still true in the terai.

The hill forests are green now. Land slides are disappearing, forest fire is rare, open grazing is not common, illegal cutting is stopped, topsoil loss is minimized and many water sources are conserved.

Department of forests is now 54 years old, however the change could occur only for last 20 years. This happened because the management strategy had been diverted from traditional role to extension, facilitation and coordination. Acts and rules were designed and enacted accordingly. As the result the participatory Forest Management Programs and Community oriented Forest Legislation of Nepal have become now successful and popular in the World.

More than 6000 Forest User Groups of 600,000 households are managing more than 400,000 ha of Forests. This is not a joke. This is not an easy job. We made the communities capable to manage them by giving flexible legislation and playing supportive role. The indigenous practices were recognized. To achieve this change the policy makers, bureaucrats and the foresters had played vital role by changing perception, attitudes and behavior.

The donor communities are playing equally major role to achieve this progress. There are many big and small bilateral and multilateral donors who have contributed to bring the progress to this stage. Despite the financial supports, the donor communities have also played vital roles in legislative and policy changes as per need, with shared field experiences.

These changes became more effective because of the coordination mechanism developed with the initiation of the Forestry Sector Coordination Committee which started in 1990

The donors who are here to support the Forestry Sector Development Programs are proved quite helpful. All of them had played vital role equally. The donor-supported projects are implemented in program approach. The National Actors were given the leading roles and the donors had supported the programs according to the National Policy the Master Plan for Forestry Sector published in 1989

The Forestry Sector Coordination Committee has proved that there is an excellent coordination mechanism between donors and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. FSCC also proved that donors and HMG coordination is vital to make the programs success

Forests can not be managed in isolation for the National Development. It has great linkages with many other sectors such as agriculture, water resources, rural development and tourism. However, the coordination among the concerning agencies is still very weak. I hope that the FSCC can play vital role to improve inter sector coordination too.

I should say that the coordination among forestry sector influenced to establish participatory approaches in watershed management and protected area conservation. Now a days we do not talk about trees but we talk about integrated community development in holistic approach which has direct link with the natural resource management programs. Similarly, we have given major priority to training and extension programs which has become very effective to change the vision of the field staff as well as communities. The massive training programs have uplifted the participation of women and disadvantaged groups of the communities.

The coordination between communities, field staff and experts has also improved due to regular decentralized planning practices. We just finished our planning exercise for 1998/99 in all five regions. Although we could not get budget ceiling and approved program from District Development Committee in some districts, we could establish good coordination among all actors to make programs as per need of the communities.

This afternoon we will discuss on the issues raised by all three Working Groups of the FSCC based on findings and recommendations of many sub-working groups. I hope that this meeting will help to give valuable recommendations to implement the Forestry Sector Programs more smoothly.

Once again, I would like to welcome and thank Honorable State Minister, Honorable National Planning Commission Member, Excellencies, Chief of Donor Organizations and all of you to participate in this 8th FSCC meeting. This meeting will lead us to development forestry sector for national development.

Thank you



पनि भण्का हुडा नामुदायिक वन र राष्ट्रिय वन त्प नगराग नगरागन न गन अत नगराग उ ।  
अन नराइका जिल्लाहरूमा नयाँ भण्का म्यानजमन्त नानहरू य गा त्प नान्वयन नन अतराग रण्ड

मित्रहरू

हामील गारवान्वित हुनु पन कुरा क उ नन गम्ना नान र नान नान मगाग्रा आफना  
सम्पूण समस्याहरूका वावजुत ३७ प्रतिशत नूभागगाट ननरा रुपमा जागाणका उ । जमरा नामील गम्ना  
वनको विकासका लागि विदशी मित्र राष्ट्रहरूवाट ननराग पाणका उ नन गरी नामील पान नन-व  
वानावरण सरक्षणमा यागदान पुरयाइ रहका छ । ननका अत्र नपावन्त ननका नात्र ग्रामीण  
नपालीहरूमा जान्छ, जसल आफना पसिनाल वनगाट जागाणका उन ।

वन जैविक विविधता जलाधार र वानावरणानत नम्यानन नान्वयन प्रातानाग्नर प्रषापज  
प्रशासक र सञ्चारकमी मित्रहरूका सामु मग त्यन गरका यी प्रचारर मरा ननजा विचार मात्र  
होइनन् । म जहिल पान गाउमा जादा दुगम नूभागगा विपन्न जावन नानन गरि रहका मानिसहरूका  
घर देलोमा पुगको छु ती सबल मसग यन्त कुरा गरका छन । त्यनग यी कुराहरूवाइ मरा विचार र  
निदेशन भन्दा एउटा जनप्रतिनिधिल आफुनम्म न्याट पुश्याणका जनताका गवाज ठान त्यनमा मनन  
गरि दिन अनुराध छ । त्यन गरी प्रशन्न राजश्व तन सकन अमना भण्का नराइका राष्ट्रिय वनलाइ  
अव क्षय हुनवाट राकी व्यवस्थापन तुरुन्त सुरु गन पन अनुराग गन चाहन्त । त्यनमा वन समस्याहरूल  
पनि सहयोग पुरयाउन आशा लिएका छु ।

अन्तमा वन क्षेत्रमा सलग्न विषापजहरू र वन समस्याहरूका नन नगावाट नेपालका वन अत्र  
विकासमा महत्वपूर्ण यागदान पुरयाउन सकान भन्त शुभकामना त्यन गन यस नगाका सफलताका  
कामना गदछु ।

न्यवाट ।

**Speech of Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation on the  
8th Forest Sector Coordination Committee meeting 13th Feb 1998**

Chairperson of this Session Your Excellency Ambassadors Representatives of Donor Agencies  
Forestry Experts Media Representatives and Friends

It is my pleasure to have this opportunity to inaugurate the Eighth Forest Sector Coordination  
Committee Meeting and I am happy to share some of my thoughts and experience with the national and  
expatriate friends working for the development of the forest sector in Nepal

Since last few years we are witnessing positive results of the participatory approach to forest  
development and management However there are still challenges to face problems to solve and much  
to be done

I need not remind you on the importance of things like valuable medicinal plants variety of animals  
and the wide-ranging bio-diversity that exists in our country In my opinion we need to understand how  
the hills that were so barren about a decade ago have now turned green and move ahead with the  
extensive application of such achievements I think one of the main reasons for such achievements is  
the involvement or the participation people in the development and management of forests

The achievements that Nepal has made in practicing the participatory approach to forest development  
and management has gained international reputation This has been possible because the government  
came up with policies that enabled people to assume responsibilities for the management of resources  
like forest that is of so vital importance for their livelihood

The participatory approach to forest development and management may look so easy a concept but its  
technical social political and administrative aspects are not so easy to handle Now the main thrust of  
community forestry is shifting conservation to the optimum use through better management As a  
result people have already started realizing financial gain from their forest This situation calls for  
officials to work more closely with people in assisting them to realize greater benefits on a sustainable  
basis Similarly in high mountains I see greater need for programs that focus on better management  
and sustainable use of forest for medicinal plants fodder and fuel wood Medicinal plants are the main  
source of income for people living in the remote high hills In these areas species of valuable medicinal  
plants are moving towards extinction in lack of their proper management and use When sources of  
income dwindle poverty overtakes people migrate and unnecessary political tensions develop  
Therefore it is my argument that programs for the high mountains should focus on medicinal plants  
and other income generating activities

The positive impacts of community forestry in hills are already in front of us However we still do not  
have comprehensive program to take those lessons from hills and apply in the management of forests in  
Terai Because of this the problems of deforestation landless people and their apathy to forest  
resources are becoming common in Terai Therefore on this occasion I urge you all to extend the  
application of community forestry concept which has proved so successful in the hills also in the terai  
But most of our national forest is in terai Therefore the expansion of community forestry in terai has  
to be done giving due consideration to the management needs of our national forests In this context I  
see it urgent to start implementation of Forest Management Plans that have been prepared for the terai  
districts

14/9

Dear Friends

We have a reason to be proud for the fact that we have been able to keep 37 percent of our land under the forest cover despite all our problems of being a small and developing nation. By this we are contributing to the conservation of global environment as we are getting support from many bilateral and international agencies. The credit for our achievements goes to all of you and to the hard working people in rural communities.

These ideas that I just shared with the representatives of institutions related with environment and bio diversity administrators and the communicators presents here are not my personal opinions only. Whenever I visit rural communities living hard life in the remote areas they tell me the similar things. Therefore I urge you to take these ideas not as my personal instructions but the voice of people that is brought to you by a political worker. In addition I take this opportunity to re-iterate the need to start implementation of programs that would put an end to the degradation of national forest in terai that has potential of generating huge national revenue.

Finally I wish this meeting of professionals from institutions involved in forestry would successfully achieve its objectives.

**Address by Secretary MFSC in 8th Forestry Sector Co-ordination  
Committee Meeting**

Honorable State Minister Excellencies Representatives of Donor Agencies Forests Technicians and distinguish participants!

It is my pleasure to address this august gathering in relation to the Co-ordination of all our efforts in managing the forests of Nepal

The wide range of bio-diversity and ecosystems found within a width of approximately 200 KM between north and south borders that make Nepal an important place from the national and international perspective This situation makes the work of our forests technicians and experts more important and challenging too Realizing this I take this opportunity to thank all donor agencies that have been actively contributing to support our endeavors in the management of forest in Nepal

While we are so proud of this gift of nature we are equally concerned that only about 37 percent of our land is covered by forests We wish it were more and thanks to the forestry professionals who are working hard in this country that we are finding some positive trend in increasing forest cover although the visibility of such gain is still limited to small pockets districts or the project areas Nevertheless let me assure you we are making progress and thank you all for co-operating us to make this happen

We are dedicated to improve forest management because in the context of Nepal the quality of life in rural area is directly related with the quality of forest that they have access to It is this human perspective on forests that to be few years back I do not see this as a problem rather an opportunity for all national and international capabilities to come together to set an example for the region as we have in practicing the concept of community forestry

Last year also we had a gathering like this where many issues were raised and solutions were recommended I hope those recommendations were implemented by all the concerned agencies

Not taking much of the valuable time of Honorable State Minister Excellencies and all friends of forests here I wish success to you all in coming up with the well formulated process and guidelines for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency and managing forest resources of Nepal

Thank you all

FORESTRY FACTS OF NEPAL

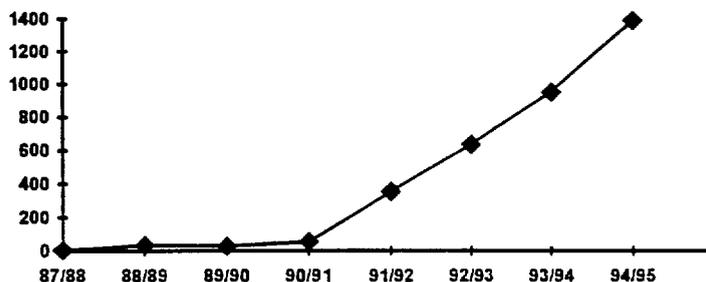
|                      |   |                                      |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Land Area            | - | 14.7 million ha                      |
| Forest Area          | - | 5.52 million ha (37%)                |
| Protected Area       | - | 2.06 million ha (14%) - Kanchanpur   |
| Terai Forest Area    | - | 0.47 million ha (3%)                 |
|                      | - | 0.66 million ha (FORESC)             |
| Potential C F        | - | 3.36 million ha (61% of Forest Area) |
| Handed over so far   | - | 0.40 million ha (19 Districts)       |
|                      | - | (0.50 million ha)                    |
| Forest User Groups   | - | 6022 (19 Districts)<br>(FUG 7000)    |
| House Holds involved | - | 0.64 million (19 Districts)          |
|                      | - | (0.70 million)                       |

**Table Year-wise Forest handed over by May 1996**

| <u>Year</u>      | <u>Handed over number</u> | <u>area (ha)*</u> | <u>Household (No.)</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1987/88          | 3                         | 79.8              | 798                    |
| 1988/89          | 34                        | 518.84            | 2722                   |
| 1989/90          | 29                        | 1916.48           | 5556                   |
| 1990/91          | 54                        | 1949.99           | 5189                   |
| 1991/92          | 354                       | 1991.89           | 37506                  |
| 1992/93          | 634                       | 3592.14           | 72303                  |
| 1993/94          | 950                       | 63308.43          | 99249                  |
| 1994/95          | 1390                      | *98530.91         | 141159                 |
| 1995/ (May 1996) | (325)                     | 26983.28          | 39255                  |
| Not Mentioned    | (1583)                    | 116446.99         | 181531                 |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>5,356</b>              | <b>362 551.5</b>  | <b>585 658</b>         |

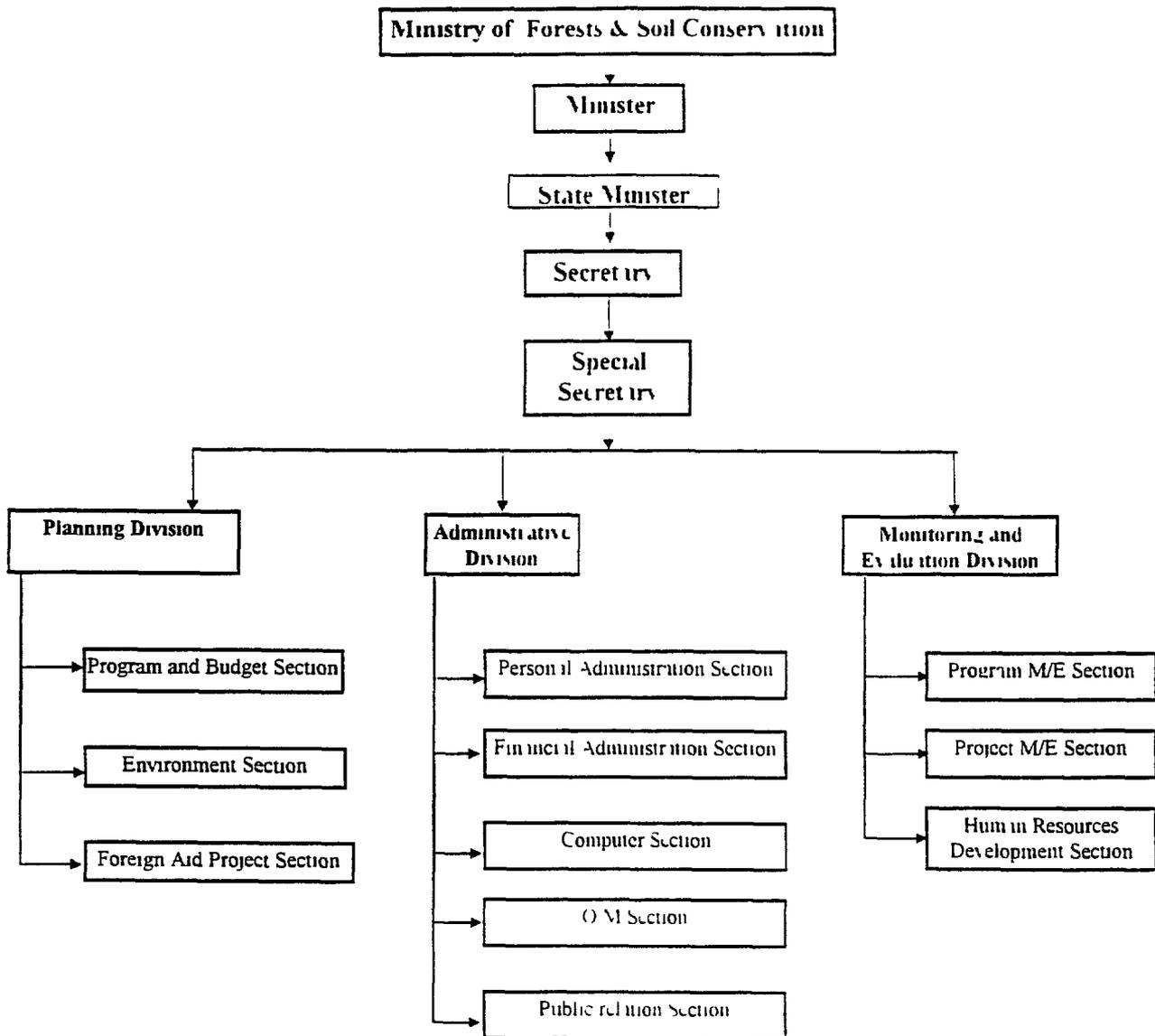
- \* Total Forest area of Nepal = 333 m ha  
 Potential CF area = 335 m ha (61%)  
 Percent of Potential CF already handed over = 11% (362 551.5 ha)

It will take 20-30 years to hand over all potential CF

**Fig 1 Year Vs C F Handed over****Table 4 FUGs in Terai and Hills (by May 1996)**

|              | <u>FUG (no)</u> | <u>Area (ha)</u>  | <u>Household (no)</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Terai        | 270             | 31 596.34         | 64 293                |
| Hill         | 5086            | 330955.16         | 521 365               |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>5356</b>     | <b>362 551.50</b> | <b>585 658</b>        |

Organization Chart of The Ministry of Forests & Soil Conservation



## Operating Guidelines

Forestry Sector Co-ordination Committee  
Working Group  
Organization Functions and Operating Guidelines  
Organization

Chairperson  
Co-Chairperson  
Member Secretary  
Members

### Functions

- To provide a forum for discussion of issues and inter-change of ideas relating to the Working Group
- To promote co-operation and co-ordination in the forestry sector in general and in relation to Working Group in particular
- To identify constraints to and opportunities for promoting the development of the forestry sector related to Working Group issues
- To bring relevant issues to the attention of the FSCC
- To provide timely and relevant recommendations to the FSCC
- To consider the following issues
  - planning
  - implementing
  - incentives
  - monitoring and evaluation
  - relevant sectoral guidelines (preparation & implementation)
  - policies/legislation

## Operating Guidelines

- 1 To carry out the functions of the Working Group the group may create as many sub-group as it deems necessary to carry out its functions. Each sub-group will be headed by a Chairperson and have a member-secretary appointed by the Working Group Chairperson. The Working Group member shall designate representatives to the sub-group and they may co-opt members from elsewhere if required. The Working Group member secretary shall oversee the sub-group activities to ensure timely accomplishment of tasks. Sub groups will present issues and make recommendations in a concise manner at the Working Group meeting.
- 2 The Working Group shall acquire necessary support from the Planning Division, MFSC and donor agencies as required for the smooth operation of the Working Group.
- 3 The Working Group shall meet at least once every six months usually for up to one working day. The Working Group Chairperson of the Working Group may authorize the Group to convene additional meetings, workshops or seminars on topics related to Working Group. The Working Group meetings may not be used as a forum to discuss specific project proposals.
- 4 The Chairperson shall decide the venue of the Working Group.
- 5 The member secretary in consultation with the Chairperson shall schedule Working Group meetings and notify each member accordingly.
- 6 The Working Group Chairperson shall preside over all Working Group meetings. In his absence the Co-Chairperson shall preside over the Group meeting or the Chairperson may delegate to member secretary or nominate any other member.
- 7 Specific recommendations agreed to by the Working Group members will be communicated to the FSCC member secretary by the Working Group Secretary.
- 8 The Working Group may as it deems necessary create or appoint ad hoc committees to study specific issues related to the Group. The terms of reference for tasks to be carried out by such ad hoc committees shall be drawn up by the member-secretary or other member of the Working Group. The member-secretary shall ensure that specific recommendations are referred to appropriate sub-groups or ad hoc committees for consideration. The ad hoc committee shall be automatically dissolved upon completion of their assigned tasks or as otherwise determined by the Working Group Chairperson.
- 9 The members of the Working Group may attend FSCC meetings.
- 10 The Working Group may invite selected organizations, individuals and other non members to attend Working Group meetings as observer at the discretion of the Chairperson or Co-Chairperson.
- 11 Any one wishing to communicate with the Working Group shall contact the FSCC Secretary.

**Forestry Sector Co-ordination committee  
Working Groups**

|                                     | <b>Chairperson</b> | <b>Co-chairperson</b> | <b>Member Secretary</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Training</b>                     | Mr D Dhikri        | Mr MP Walek           | Mr N Roche              |
| <b>Financial Planning</b>           | Mr A L Joshi       | Mr H Ream             | Mr L Hinson             |
| <b>Implementation and Extension</b> | Mr IS Kirki        | Dr UR Sharma          | Mr S Hunt               |

## Eighth Forest Sector Co-ordination Committee Meeting Follow-up from Last Meeting

The following issues were raised at the Seventh FSCC Meeting for follow-up

| Item | Review of Issue  | Action  | Status   | Future |
|------|--|---|--|--------|
| 1    | Buffer-zone Regulations                                  | enacted   |  |        |
| 2    | Training Programmes to be Uniform                        |   |  |        |
| 3    | Soil Conservation activities sub-group to be formed      | A sub-group is formed under the Implementation and Extension Working Group<br>Discussions in progress | - update of legislation<br>- preparation of guidelines |        |
| 4    | Uniformity in Community Forestry Implementation          | Meeting, reported   | Progressing  |        |
| 5    | Third Community Forestry Seminar                         | Meeting regularly plans are prepared  | date not fixed   |        |
| 6    | Nursery, plantation and research issues                  | Meeting regularly reported  | Progressing  |        |
| 7    | Extension to be attached to Implementation Working Group | Done  | Done   |        |
| 8    | Uniform Guidelines for training                          | Discussions in progress   |  |        |
| 9    | Guidelines for income sharing in buffer zones            | Discussions in progress   |  |        |
| 10   | Guidelines for use of FUG funds                          | Discussed   | not progressed   |        |

**FOREST SECTOR COORDINATION COMMITTEE**  
**Report to the Committee by the Training Working Group**

- 1 The Working Group last reported to the 7th FSCC meeting on 24 January 1997
- 2 In the intervening period a sub-group was formed to work on a proposal to unify training norms
- 3 Interested members of the Working Group have met again prior to the Committee meeting and are reporting to the Committee on the following issues

- **Linkages Between Training Organisations Within the Forestry Sector**

- Background

- That the Working Group wishes to recommend to the Committee that a mandate be given to the Group to form a sub-group to contribute to the strengthening of linkages between the various training organisations within the Forestry Sector. The proposal is that Committee members be drawn from the Ministry, from the departmental training divisions from the CFTP, CPFD and from other forestry projects with strong training components to consider linkages and coordination potential.

- Recommendations

- The recommendation would be that the sub-group would be constituted and would first meet shortly after this Committee meeting.

- **Unified Training Norms for the Forestry Sector**

- The Working Group has deliberated long on the proposal developed by the sub-group on unifying training norms. The proposal in its full form is contained in the attached Annex. The financial implications are being presented by the Financial Planning Working Group. In summary the following are the key points.

- Background

- The sub-group began by discussing the problem of the community forestry projects each having different district level training norms. A system was developed to unify the community forestry projects and was proposed to the Working Group. The Working Group identified the value of the system for the wider forestry sector and requested that comments be solicited from the sector. The proposal was adjusted to accommodate the various different perspectives and re-submitted to the Working Group. Several projects have already begun to implement their training programmes using the norms set out in the proposal.

- The Principles

- *To unify training norms for district level training events*

- *To promote an improvement in the quality of training management' - planning, delivery and follow up*

- *To institutionalise village level training - taking the training away from the district centre and out of the classroom where possible*

- *To reduce dependency on training allowances as the motivating force behind training*

- *To minimise the payment of allowances to people attending training ('beneficiaries') relying instead on the intrinsic usefulness of the training to motivate attendees*

- The Recommendations

- The system has been developed with the primary aim of unifying training allowances to Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation field staff. The Working Group now wishes to

recommend to the FSCC that the proposal as it concerns Ministry staff be adopted by the forestry sector

However the Working Group recommends that the issue of payments to beneficiaries of district level training be discussed in the open forum of the Committee. It is generally recognised that the principle should be to support only training which is required and requested by the attendees and should therefore be conducted without paying the beneficiary allowance. This has to be offset against the difficulty in some situations of conducting events in the village, at times having to go out of the village area or even the district.

4 The full membership of the Working Group is unclear but various meetings have included the following

PD Dhakal Joint Secretary MoFSC - *Chairman Working Group*  
MP Wagie, DG, DoSC - *Joint Chairman Working Group* \*  
AL Joshi Chief Planning Officer, MoFSC  
SN Khanal, Chief Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, MoFSC  
IS Karki DG DoF  
Dr UR Sharma, DG DPNW  
RB Joshi Executive Director FORESC  
KB Shrestha DDG, CPFD  
BK Khanal DDG Planning and Training Division DoF\*  
R Bogati Planning Officer DoSC\*  
Bo Schultz, Chief Adviser, CFTP\*  
Steve Hunt, Team Leader NACRMP\*  
Karl Schuler, Team Leader, NSCFP\*  
MP Dhungel Chief Training and Extension Officer, DoF\*  
NH Roche Coordinator NUKCFP - *Member Secretary Working Group* \*  
Warwick Thompson, Chief Adviser, DNWMP\*  
A Sterk CTA Leasehold Forestry, FAO\*  
Laurits Hansen Programme Coordinator NRMSAP

\* indicates a regular attendance of discussions by the individual or a representative of the organisation concerned

## Proposal for District-level Norms for Training / Workshops / Seminars and Study Tours

### Introduction

Over some months a sub-group of the Training and Extension Working Group of the FSCC has sat to discuss norms for seminars workshops training and study tours. The main objective of the discussions has been to harmonise the norms for these events which have become integrated components of the district annual programmes in the forestry sector.

The norms covered in these discussions include

- 1 Daily allowances for trainers and beneficiaries
- 2 Fees to trainers coordinators and resource people
- 3 Various other costs in connection with the training activities

The starting point has been the existing norms in the various community forestry projects and the Report of the Working Group on DSA Rates submitted at the FSCC Meeting on 24 January 1997. The participants of the sub-group have discussed Daily Allowances and other norms for **district level training activities**.

The proposals are summarised as follows

### **1 Training Daily Allowance (TDA) For Training, Seminars, Workshops and Study Tours**

The following **general principles** have been adopted with regard to Training Daily Allowance (TDA) rates for training seminars, workshops and study tours

- There should be unified norms across the forestry sector where possible
- The TDA structure should be as simple and as equitable as possible
- Training seminars workshops and study tours should be well planned and managed. All events should be planned beforehand and proposals submitted to financing body to gain approval - whether from district office or project
- In general and where appropriate district level training, seminars workshops and study tours should be conducted out of district centres. User group events should as a rule be held at village venues
- TDA should cover the necessary expenditure for trainees and trainers for food and lodging and should be regarded as a compensation for expenditure incurred due to participation in the activity
- In principle the rates paid should not themselves attract participants to training workshops seminars and study tours and should not themselves attract the district government staff to prioritise these activities over other field work. In principle TDA should not be provided to beneficiaries asking for a specific training where the beneficiaries are able to support the training themselves
- When TDA is provided to trainees and trainers they are not entitled to TA/DA from their parent organisations or other sources

#### **1.1 Training Daily Allowance (TDA) for Trainers and Beneficiaries**

*Definition* **Training Daily Allowance (TDA) is defined as a lumpsum paid to a trainee or trainer as a compensation to cover the expenditure for lodging and fooding for training days and actual travel days**

- a Identical norms will apply for training events workshops seminars and study tours
- b Identical TDA rates will apply for trainees and trainers respectively (table 1)
- c There are three categories of location
  - i Within duty station / village area
  - ii Inside / outside district low rate\*
  - iii Inside / outside district high rate\*

\* In principle high rate area will be exceptional and are considered to be Kathmandu valley Pokhara major urban centres on the *terai* and expensive tourist trekking routes  
 If necessary Projects or the responsible agencies will investigate the need for exceptions through the medium of market surveys  
 The decision as to whether a venue will be high or low rate will be made where standardised reasonable costs exceed the low rate for Forest Guards  
 Once the decision is made the locations will be communicated to all concerned in the area and other projects around the country

If food and / or lodging is provided in the activity the TDA shall be broken down as follows  
 Lunch 25% dinner 30% lodging 30% and contingencies 15% (snack not included)

For training within duty station / village area a maximum of 40% (lunch 25% and contingencies 15%) of TDA is allowed for trainers and beneficiaries but shall in principle not be provided beneficiaries

For study tours each travel day should be specified according to table 1

In a field based training TDA can be provided for one helper (peon) for the whole training period

The Training Daily Allowance (TDA) with effect from 15 July 1997 for different locations is proposed as follows

Table 1 Training Daily Allowance

| Level*                | Within Duty Station / village area | Inside & outside district** |           |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
|                       |                                    | Low rate                    | High rate |
| Officers              | Max 40% of TDA                     | 175                         | 300       |
| Rangers               | Max 40% of TDA                     | 150                         | 250       |
| Forest Guards         | Max 40% of TDA                     | 125                         | 225       |
| Users / beneficiaries | Max 40% of TDA                     | up to 120                   | up to 200 |

TDA for special target groups (teachers politicians leaders) will apply according to their level Normally users rate shall be followed  
 Only when overnight stay away from home (village) is required

The recommended TDA rates will be applied from 16th July 1997 (beginning of the new Fiscal Year)  
 It should thereafter be reviewed annually

## 2 Training Fees for training, seminar, workshop and study tour

Training fees to trainers and resource people are currently being paid. The modalities and the norms vary greatly among the Projects.

It is reasonable and appropriate to pay fees to resource people who have relevant knowledge and skills to share with the participants in a particular departmental activity.

Considering the importance of the activities it is appropriate to motivate the staff in the district offices for an additional effort in connection with the preparation and implementation of training seminars, workshops and study tours. It is, however, the understanding that those activities are part of the normal work in the district offices and the training allowances should be regarded as a contribution to create an outstanding activity rather than a compensation for additional work.

Similarly, in principle, it is assumed that other district-level government servants working for the upliftment of the poor through rural development, irrespective of eventual allowances, will have an interest in contributing inputs to the various activities from their respective fields.

In order to overcome the differences in the systems applied by the Projects, it was found necessary to devise a new structure for the above fees.

### 2.1 Training Fees (TF) for training coordinators, trainers and resource persons

- Identical rates will apply for district-level training, workshops, seminars and study tours.
- Payment of fees to coordinators, resource persons and trainers does not exclude them from receiving TDA for those days in which they are involved in the activity provided they are eligible according to para 1.1.
- Handout and session fees are no longer applicable for district-level training; they will, however, remain in place for the Training Section in Kathmandu.

The maximum of training fees in one day is Rs 600 (Rs 800 with an external trainer / resource person). It can be disbursed as per table 2.

Table 2 Training Fees

| Per-day* / Category | Department staff | External trainer / resource person |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Coordinator**       | 200              | n/a                                |
| Trainer***          | 200              | up to 600                          |
| Resource person     | 200              |                                    |

It is not possible to claim both coordination and trainer / resource person fees.

\*\* The training coordinators can claim training fee for 1 day preparation and 1

training days The coordinator should as far as possible be a DOF staff member posted in the area where the training workshop or seminar is taking place

- \*\*\* One training day consists of a maximum of 4 sessions and last minimum 6 hours One trainer and / or resource person is allowed per session Trainers / resource people will be paid 25% of the applicable fee if they facilitate 1 session 50% if they facilitate 2 sessions 75% if they facilitate 3 sessions

### 3 Norms for Expenditure Associated With Training, Workshops, Seminars and Study Tours

#### 3.1 Stationery and Training Materials

Rates recommended by the Community Forestry Training Project (CFTP) for the stationery and materials used in training workshops and seminars will be applied The standard norms will not be applicable if stationery and/or training materials are provided by projects

Recommended rates (from 5 July 1997)

- a Stationery Max 30 Rs per participant in training, seminars workshops and field based training of a duration of less than 7 days

Max 60 Rs per participant in longer training and in study tours

- b Training Materials (defined as relevant materials for the particular training and target group It is assumed that the District Forest Offices ensure proper use of materials left over from previous activities )

Max 500 Rs per training seminar and workshop of a duration of less than 7 days

Max 1 000 Rs per longer training and study tour

#### 3.2 Ceremonies and Refreshments

- a In principle ceremonies associated with district-level training workshops seminars and study tours will not be supported

- b Snack expenditure is not included in TDA and can be provided by the project in addition to TDA up to

Max Ps 25 per day per participant including trainers coordinators and resource people

#### 3.3 Transport

Transport by most direct and economical route to and from the training workshops seminars and meeting points of study tours shall be reimbursed at actual cost

#### 3.4 Training Equipment

The procurement of relevant training equipment can be supported for district and sub-district offices

High Cost Locations (proposal)

General Pokhara and Kathmandu (valley area)

Major Terai cities Dhangadhi Nepalganj Butwal Hetauda Janakpur Biratnagar  
Dharar Bhadrapur

CFTP area additionally

Farwest None

Midwest Birendeanagar

West Major expensive tourist trekking routes

Central None

East None

## DRAFT

## Forest Sector Coordination Committee

## Implementation and Extension Working Group

Report to the Committee by the sub-group formed to examine the coordination among the MISC departments working with community forestry

### 1 Background

The group was established by 7th FSCC meeting, January 1997. The group first met in the FSCC Implementation and Extension Working Group meeting, December 1997, second meeting, a discussion among most of the group members took place on 10 February 1998.

### 2 Objective

To examine the coordination among the departments under FSCC that are implementing community forestry activities.

### 3 Inter Departmental Coordination

#### 3.1 Status

The group identified Department of Soil Conservation and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation as the two other departments working with community forestry.

To the question whether the community forestry rules and regulations are applied uniformly by the departments, it was opined that this is generally the case. The Forest Act of 1993 and the Forestry Rules of 1995 set the guidelines for all three departments and all applications for hand-over of forest has to be passed by the District Forest Offices (except in the case of bufferzone areas) who have the responsibility to ensure that all legal requirements are embodied in the constitution of the groups and that the operational plans reflect sustainable forest management.

The group was informed that the District Soil Conservation Offices normally will not engage their field staff directly in community forestry activities. In matters relating to formation of groups, forest planning and training and extension, the fieldstaff will refer requests to the District Forest Office. Earlier days activities of establishing Conservation Plantations and subsequently handing them over as community forest has been discontinued. In new approaches adopted in watershed management activities under the department, notably establishment of Community Development Groups (CDGs) there are overlap of beneficiaries of sub-watershed management activities and community forestry activities, and coordination among DOF and DSC as well as other district line agencies is necessary. DSC attempts such coordination in some districts through Field Technical Groups, consisting of line agency staff and others, which coordinates with the DDC and their plans.

The DNPWC is implementing community forestry in the bufferzones of some protected areas (PAs). The Forest Regulations of 1995 apply here as well. Since recently exist special regulations ( Buffer- Zone Management Regulations 1996) for the bufferzones, however the group is informed that compared to the Forest Regulations 1995, only the limitations on movement of lumber and firewood are significantly different. These rules are imposed considering the high demand for forest products outside the parks and bufferzones which would complicate the control of felling in the bufferzone and pose a threat to the PAs. Similarly the authority to approve buffer zone community forests is transferred to the Conservator of the National Park. As DSC DNPWC is operating with alternative group formations and user committees in their areas, but in their case there is little interference from other departments activities.

A set of Bufferzone Bylaws is in the pipeline, the regulations herein will be coordinated with the community forestry regulations of the Forest Regulations of 1995.

### 3.2 Findings

It is the opinion of the group that coordination among the three departments generally is more advanced at district level than at regional level and national level. At the district level various fora exist for discussing and coordinating the development activities. This is not the case at regional level. DSC and DNPWC do not have regional offices and DOF only has regional level representation through the Regional Forestry Training Centers (RTCs).

In most of the development regions the RTCs are located in connection with the Regional Directors Offices. The Regional Directors have mandate to coordinate and monitor the forestry development activities in their regions, thereunder the training, but their capacity to do so in the present set-up has been limited. At the same time differences among districts in the way they interpret the Forestry Rules and Regulation can be observed. Recently (December 1997), the Regional Directorates responsibilities and authority has been reviewed and adjusted by MFSC, there may be a good case for discussing a more visible role for the RD offices in the coordination of community forestry activities. In this context the RTCs has a useful and detailed knowledge of the community forestry activities going on in the individual Hill districts which could contribute to establishing more uniform implementation patterns.

DSC is planning to establish Regional Soil Conservation Units in the near future. An effort should be made to establish a close collaboration with the RTCs on for example in-service training in participatory resource management and extension and to investigate the possibility of canalizing other support to the District Soil Conservation Offices through the RTCs as it is done to the District Forest Offices.

At central level there is no formal coordination body for community forestry. The Community and Private Forestry Division (CPFD) has the responsibility to implement the community forestry program throughout the country, and as such provide information and assistance to the sister departments within MFSC. Although CPFD primarily operates the 38 Hill districts assisted by World Bank credit, the division also provides services to and maintain a dialogue with the districts supported by bilateral donors. CPFD provides guidelines for operational planning, community forestry regulations and various publications such as the Community Forestry Manual for the entire sector and makes frequent use of seminars and workshops at central level to extend the community forestry policy and various current issues in forest user groups, such as for example conflict management, networking and NGO involvement.

It was noted that whereas there is a considerable flow of reports, technical papers etc from the projects, the MFSC information services are weak, and it appears that the departments and divisions do not generally distribute the large amount of project publications to the district level

The group discussed another potential problem of intra-departmental coordination in DOF when commercial forestry is introduced on a larger scale. It is important to ensure that appropriate coordination exists between National Forests Division and CPFD. Again it would be natural to look to the Regional Directorates. Integration of community forestry may not be sufficiently dealt with in all the management plans that have been prepared for Terai districts. Similarly the group noted that it is important that the new regulations for community forestry in the Terai which are under preparation, consider coordination between the forest policies to ensure that the respective regulations are coherent and understandable for the forest users and facilitate appropriate local participation in the forest management.

Also regarding intra-departmental coordination, a recent Leasehold Forestry Seminar concluded that there exist several similarities and potential advantages of coordination between the leasehold forestry and community forestry policies. It is not clear to the group whether initiatives in this regard are in progress.

### *3.3 Conclusion inter departmental coordination*

The group concluded that although the coordination at central level takes place on an informal basis there is a reasonable inter-departmental coordination regarding community forestry as far as HMG policies and implementation procedures are concerned. With the exception of the the additional clauses in the Buffer-Zone Management Rules 1996 the rules and regulations for community forestry are similar for all departments, their interpretation of them does not appear to differ, and there seem to be uniformity in the implementation aspects as they refer to the legislation and guidelines.

The group discussed development of a mechanism of networking in community forestry as a tool for better coordination of community forestry activities. It is envisaged that improved information services on community forestry is an important component of such networking, and is necessary for coordination both among and within the various offices of the departments.

## **4 Coordination between MFSC departments and projects**

### *4.1 Findings*

In the community forestry sector a major part of the development budgets are provided by donor agencies. The conditionalities for this support can have considerable influence on the HMG implementation of the programmes. In terms of implementation the group realised that there is a need to establish a better coordination between the donors supporting community forestry and the departments/MFSC. The starting point should be the agencies working under the umbrella of MFSC but it should also be acknowledged that a number of projects under other ministries has community forestry development as components of their activities.

In the present context the projects dealing with community forestry development refer to different divisions and departments under the ministry this do not facilitate coordination. CPFD has the

responsibility to coordinate in policy matters, but the division does not have the mandate to coordinate in the financial and operational aspects of the projects' activities. Information provided by the projects do not have one permanent address within the ministry and the departments and the compilation and analysis of the information are therefore restricted. Eventual debate and clarification of issues is not communicated systematically within and among the departments.

Likewise, there is hardly any formal coordination among the donors working with community forestry. Although there is traditions for exchange of information between for example the "old projects" (NUKCFP, NACRMP, NSCFP and CFTP), the project areas vary, the objectives and the philosophies of the projects vary and consequently there are considerable differences in strategies and approaches, both towards the MFSC field staff involved in the implementation of the activities and towards the beneficiaries of the projects.

The group noted that particularly in DOF the varied project interventions in some regards affect the department's implementation of community forestry negatively. For example, the projects employ a considerable number of foresters who often are recruited among the MFSC employees who can enjoy comparatively better working conditions in the projects. Staff take long leave or retire permanently from the forest service, and the drain of expertise is felt as a vacuum in the organisation and create inconvenience in the departments implementation of the programs. It was informed that also the nature of incentives offered to HMG counterpart staff by various projects create disparities among the districts in terms of facilities, remuneration, allowances, educational possibilities and other incentives, and therefore result in undesirable service preferences among field staff.

In the implementation of activities for project beneficiaries the projects also follow different strategies. In community forestry in the Midhills there seem to exist some uniformity in the projects' handling of subsidies, participant payments, allowances to fieldstaff, etc. Differences are unavoidable and result in considerable variation among the districts in the availability of technical assistance to forest user groups. But at the same time it appears to be realised that for example handling of material support and participant payments to forest user groups are sensitive areas which would benefit from some uniformity which can be achieved through coordination between project interventions and HMG practices.

#### *4.2 Conclusions: coordination between projects and departments*

The proposal prepared by the Training Working Group under FSCC is one step to create uniformity viz both the MFSC counterpart field staff and the beneficiaries of the forestry projects training activities in the field. Another step is the planned expansion of the RTCs which will include in-service training to staff of DSC and DNPWC and other departments in addition to the ongoing community forestry training programs. This will ensure a degree of continuity in the development of on-the-job training and offer possibilities to further develop contemporary training packages for the field staff.

Both the HMG/Danida Natural Resource Management Sector Assistance Programme (NARMSAP) which is finalised, and the HMG/WB Land Resource Management Programme which is under preparation presumes improved coordination among the MFSC departments and incorporates assistance to development of management information systems for the ministry as such and for the community forestry sector. Once operational, such systems would greatly enhance the coordination of activities through a more systematic flow of information.

The planned Third National Seminar for Community Forestry and the regional seminars preceding it will present opportunities for discussion of the coordination among the stakeholders in community forestry

Additionally, it is recommended that MFSC review the responsibilities within the ministry and the departments for coordination of the donor interventions

With the objective of establishing better networking within the forestry sector it is also recommended that MFSC review the terms of reference for the units within the departments which are dealing with communication and extension to the field offices

## **Extension work in Community Forestry**

by

M R. Maharjan, NUKCFP (East)

### **Background**

Since late 1970s extension work is taken as the major activities in the forestry sector of Nepal. The Masterplan for the Forestry Sector of Nepal (1988) has laid down the following strategies to develop forestry extension and public information capabilities:

- Develop the extension and communication section of the forestry sector to make it effectively programme and coordinate forestry extension work, assist in training forestry field staff in extension, and disseminate information through various media
- Develop extension strategies that effectively involve women and address women's concerns
- Provide full support to field-level extension work (MoFSC, 1988)

### **Issues identified**

Despite all these strategies, extension work, particularly, in community forestry has tended to use agricultural extension models. This has led to serious problems. Most of the field workers who do not have basic concepts and principles of extension and communication were seen using extension work merely as a one-way communication process and have perceived as a top-down approach. Such extension approach has been unable to respond to the demands and needs of forest user groups.

The basic assumption that users are the passive recipient of information is no longer valid. Instead they are the active seekers of information and are the real managers of community forest. In addition, most of field workers in community forest still do not possess adequate skills for extension work to support community forestry programmes.

In fact extension work in community forestry should be a continuous multi-way communication process where the field workers work closely with the users and listen to them using an 'action - reflection - action' cycle. It will help the field worker to support the user while increasing their effectiveness, building up confidence in managing community forests in an equitable and sustainable basis.

### **The extension inputs**

The following are the main extension inputs generally provided by the DoF, the projects and other stakeholders of community forestry:

- Information dissemination
- Regular visits to FUGs
- Participation in discussion meetings and assemblies
- Support to training workshops, interaction and seminars
- Support to conservation education
- Support to study tours

- Establishment of demonstration plots
- Occasional exhibition of community forestry activities
- Conflict management
- Other support such as financial material, facilitation coaching and advices in community forestry

**Vision for extension work in community forestry**

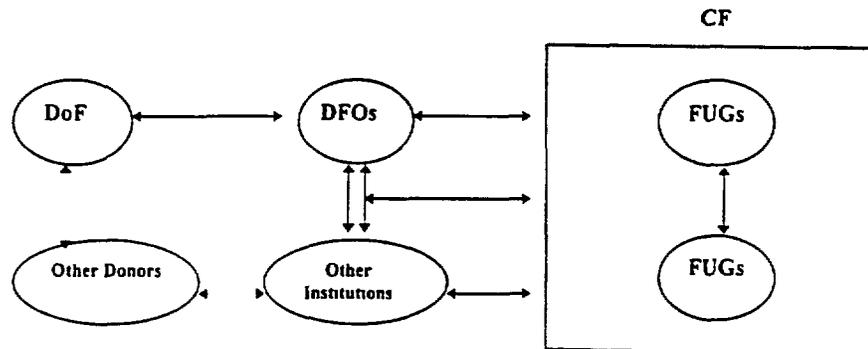
The following statements can be visualised for the effective extension work in community forestry

- The DoF will follow withdraw approach and will focus on the sustainability of community forestry,
- Human resource development will be focused on developing potential to contribute to effective extension work in community forestry,
- Extension work will be more responsive to community forestry needs
- Extension work will be practical and part of everyday community forestry work
- Systematic extension design process will be adopted widely by the community forestry stakeholders,

More users will be benefited from the extension work,

- There will be a process of sharing and learning at all levels

**Extension and Communication as visualised for the Sustainable and equitable community forestry**



↔ = Collaboration      → = Support  
 ← = Demand and Support      ← = Support as and when needed

### **Suggestions and recommendations**

In order to make the extension work in community forestry more effective and supportive of the needs of the users the following suggestions and recommendations are made

- Facilitation, advice and coaching can help both the field workers and the users to learn and gain confidence in the community forestry processes. Particularly for sustainable community forestry the extension workers should play the role of facilitator, coach, and adviser in order to strengthen the cooperation and trust between field workers and the users for the sustainable development of community forestry.
- The whole process of extension work should be an iterative one with constant feedback and modification based on new findings and experience. In fact it should be based on an 'action - reflection - action' cycle.
- The extension work should aim to empower users to capitalise their indigenous knowledge and skills of forest management and should address the burning issues of community forestry such as self-monitoring, gender and equity.
- The strategy of community forestry extension work should be to increase the level of user's participation by running field based training transferring appropriate technical skill and providing moral support to the users. Hence the extension workers should encourage users to organise field based training courses, seminars and workshops for their members.
- Production and distribution of appropriate extension materials is another critical issue in the community forestry process. Most of the extension materials produced and distributed are descriptive and not informative. As such they are not appropriate to the non-literate users. As most of the users are non or semi-literate the extension workers should encourage the users to introduce visual extension materials such as posters, pictures and symbols and help them to carry out self-monitoring and evaluation of their community forestry.
- In reality most of the so called bottom-up planning of community forestry is not based on the needs of the users. Such a planning system is not supportive to the requirements of the extension-client relationships. Therefore, the planning system in community forestry should be user need based.
- Extension workers should be capable of coping with the dynamics of community forestry. For this the extension workers should be clear on their roles and responsibilities. They should be able to collaborate, negotiate and work closely with the users.

Extension activities should be away from structured, formalised and standard procedures. Each stage of extension work should be controlled by the users and supported by the field workers. The field workers should facilitate the process so that a consequential agreement is achieved as the main output.

### **Reference**

MoFSC 1988. The Masterplan for the Forestry Sector of Nepal. MoFSC, Kathmandu.

## **Proposal for the "Third National Seminar on Community Forestry"**

Prepared on behalf of "Task Force Group" of the Implementation and Extension Work Group of the FSCC

### **Background**

The Seventh Forestry Sector Co-ordination Committee (FSCC) meeting held on 24 January 1997 at Himalaya Hotel recommend to hold the "Third National Seminar on Community Forestry". The responsibility to initiate the preparation of the Seminar was given to Implementation and Extension Work Group of the FSCC. This group, in its meeting held on 12 December 1997 at Training Sector, Department of Forest, endorsed the need for the National Seminar on Community Forest and decided to form a task force to prepare a firm proposal covering organisational aspects. The task force held a meeting on 22 December 1997 at Community and Private Forest Division, Department of Forest and discussed all aspects of the organisation of the proposed National Seminar. The outcome of the discussion is presented in this proposal.

### **Rationale**

The realisation that people's participation in the protection and management of the forest was necessary was made in the mid 70s. The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, 1989, further recognised the concept of Forest User Groups as grassroot units which are entrusted for the protection, management and utilisation of community forestry. The Master Plan envisages the objective of community forestry as "to meet the people's basic needs of fuelwood, timber, fodder and other forest products on a sustainable basis". Although the basic objective of community forestry as formulated in the Master Plan is fulfilment of subsistence needs of forest products, the Forest Act 1993 and Forest Regulation 1995 allow Forest User Groups to cultivate non-timber forest products, perennial cash crops and also to commercially process forest products for marketing. The forestry legislation further empowers Forest User Groups to spend their income accrued from forest related activities not only on the development of the community forestry but also for other community development activities. So it is to be accepted that community forestry is dynamic process. As such community forestry needs periodic review, discussion and sharing of experiences on the national scale with all the stakeholders so as to place community forestry in the right perspective. The last such sharing of experience was held in the Second National Seminar on Community Forestry in 1993. Since then community forestry has crossed many milestones bringing along new issues and problems needing reflection, discussion and solution. Therefore a proposed Third National Seminar in 1998 is appropriate.

### **Objectives of the Seminar**

The overall objectives of the seminar are as follows

- To share experiences on the community forestry process
- To identify and discuss the emerging issues on policy and implementation in community forestry
- To find possible solutions and made recommendations

## Topics for the Seminar

- 1 In community forestry vast experience has been gained in the course of its implementation in the field. Gender and equity issues have come up as most prominent and important among other implementation issues. So, the sharing of experiences in the Seminar will focus on these two implementation issues as well.
- 2 Decentralisation has been the focus of the Government. As such it would be timely and appropriate to consider and discuss the linkage of community forestry inter alia Forest User Group with Village Development Committees (VDCs) and District Development Committees (DDCs) in the Seminar.
- 3 In community forestry there are many stakeholders, but the stakeholders are playing overlapping roles in absence of recognition of specific roles to be played by them. There is a need for different stakeholders to take up or play specific roles in the implementation of community forestry so that each stakeholder plays an appropriate role for effective implementation of community forestry. Therefore the Seminar would discuss the role of different stakeholders in community forestry.
- 4 The handing over of community forests to Forest User Groups in itself is not the ultimate goal of community forestry. The management of community forestry basically to fulfil the daily needs of the forest products of the Forest User Groups is an important aspect (element) in the community forestry process. Issues regarding commercialisation of community forestry are emerging quite frequently. As such, the discussion on this issue in the Seminar would be appropriate.
- 5 The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector has envisaged the concept of Forest User Groups in community forestry in hills only. The forestry legislation of 1993 and 1995 has made a blanket coverage of community forestry in the whole country. As such, the implementation of a community forestry program in the Terai (plains) has raised many issues and problems. Therefore the topic of community forestry implementation in the Terai needs discussion in the Seminar.
- 6 The community forestry program is basically for fulfilment of the need of daily use of forest product to communities but it has been realised that the community forestry program must also encompass income generating activities to alleviate the poverty of the communities and to give added credibility to the community forestry program. The inclusion of Income Generating Activities (IGA) in community forestry will be another topic for discussion in the Seminar.

**Date** The National Seminar is proposed to be held in 2nd week of September 1998 (Dasian holidays is from 21-28 September 1998)

**Duration** The Seminar will be held for 4 days

**Venue** Kathmandu

**Participants** Representations of

- 1 Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
- 2 Ministry of Population and Environment
- 3 Ministry of Local Development
- 4 Ministry of Finance
- 5 National Planning Commission
- 6 Department of Forest
- 7 Department of Soil Conservation

- 8 Department of National Parks
- 9 Department of Plant Resources
- 10 Bilateral and Multilateral Projects
- 11 Parastatals under MFSC
- 12 DDC
- 13 VDC
- 14 INGO
- 15 NGO
- 16 Field Staff (DFO, DSCO, Wardens)
- 17 FUG

Expected total no of participants is 150 persons

**Language** The papers to be presented would be prepared either in Nepali or in English. The presentation will be done in Nepali

**Funding** The Implementation and Extension Work Group will be responsible for co-ordination of fund raising

**National Seminar Secretariat** A task force secretariat will be set-up at the Department of Forest

#### **Regional Seminar**

The National Seminar will be preceded by three Regional Seminars. The Regional Seminars would enable the participants to discuss intensively in small groups on the above topics and also on any regional specific issues on community forestry. The discussion and outcome of the regional seminar would reinforce the discussion in the National Seminar. The three Regional Seminars will be organised as follows

- 1 Eastern Regional
- 2 Central cum Western Regional
- 3 Mid cum Far Western Regional

The responsibility to organise the regional Seminars in close co-operation with the Regional Director would be as follows

- 1 Eastern Regional Seminar is to be organised jointly by Nepal UK Community Forestry Project and Community Forestry Training Project (DANIDA)
- 2 Central cum Western Regional Seminar is to be organised jointly by Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project, Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project, Community and Private Forest Division of Department of Forest, Nepal UK Community Forestry Project and Community Forest Training Project (DANIDA)
- 3 Mid cum Far Western Regional Seminar is to be organised jointly by ACTION AID/Nepal, CARE/Nepal and Environment and Forest Enterprises Activities (EFEA)

The Regional Seminar will be organised during the month of April-May 1998

## **Report on Subsidies for Nursery Establishment and Supply, Plantation Development Natural Regeneration, Natural Forest Establishment and Research**

Prepared for the Implementation and Extension Work Group of the FSCC

The 7th FSCC meeting asked the Implementation and Extension Work Group to review subsidies. The Work Groups, which met on 12 December, 1997, proposed a review of subsidies for forest nurseries, plantation development, natural regeneration, forest rehabilitation and research.

### **Subsidies differs from project to project**

NACRMP pay Re 1 per plantable size of seedling (after supplying free poly bags, seed watering cans and water supply pipes up to 500 meters for new nurseries). Depending upon the demand, user nurseries are allowed to produce up to 40,000 seedlings; however, 10-20 thousand seedlings are generally produced by user group nurseries. Similarly, Rs 1800/- per ha plantation is paid to user groups as a subsidy in three instalments. In SDC project areas, the planting programmes have been drastically reduced, hence a very nominal number of seedlings are produced. Rs 1.25 per seedling is paid to user group after counting the seedlings planted at the site in August-September. The user group has to manage their own poly bags and nursery supplies.

SDC has encouraged natural regeneration to enrich the community forest area by controlling the area from fire and free grazing. Grazing and fire control indicates the commitment of the user group for the forest handed over to them. Each year, the DFO selects a number of FUGs who have demonstrated good commitment to protection and awards them with a cash payment. This award system has proven so successful that sites that were previously planted are now rehabilitation by protection activities by the FUG. Similarly, in Nepal U.K. Community Forest Project, nursery establishment is phased out in 3rd year of its establishment. Some poly bags and water supply pipes are provided in the beginning of a new nursery. There are no subsidies for plantation. A new programme for income generating activities has been initiated. Rs 5000/- per user group as seed money can be allotted to plant broom grass (amriso), bamboo etc. For establishment of a new nursery, a lumpsum amount of Rs 5000/- is allocated; however, 50 metres of water supply pipes, locally available seeds and a water can is provided within. The Rs 5,000/- capacity of the user group nursery will be not more than 10,000/- seedlings.

In world Bank funded community forestry areas, a lumpsum of Rs 5,000/- is paid for forest new nursery establishment. User group nurseries are asked to produce a maximum of 20,000 seedlings, assuming the planting stock for 10-11 ha of the area. Rs 500/- per ha is paid for plantation subsidies as well as Rs 1200-2000/month per user group as management subsidies. This subsidy is used to hire Rangers for community forest management on a pilot basis.

In EFE-A Project areas, user group nurseries are supplied with poly bags and seeds. The plantable size of seedlings are purchased at Re 1 per seedling during planting time. There are no subsidies for plantation development and natural regeneration and forest establishment.

In Churia Community Project, Re 1 per seedling is paid in first year of establishment of user group nurseries. No subsidies are paid in the next year.

## Summary

Every project has realised that subsidies need to be phased out in due course of time. All innovations to assist user groups to stand on their own is a common concern. The promotion of optimum utilisation of community forestry areas with income generation activities has been an urgent task. The tangible contribution from forestry sector in poverty alleviation has been questioned by policy makers.

The objective to review subsidies for forest nurseries, plantation development, natural regeneration, forest rehabilitation and research is to explore sustainability. Every project should foresee its sustainability at the end of the project. However, it is recommended that all forestry projects should come out with a detailed proposal with justification to share their experiences.

It is expected that by next FSCC, a reconciled approach on subsidies for forest nurseries, plantation development, natural regeneration, forest rehabilitation and research can be arrived with the consensus among all forestry project.

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## REPORT ON THE NATIONAL PARKS BUFFER ZONE

Prepared by Dr Uday Sharma for the Implementation and Extension Group

There are five categories of protected areas in Nepal National Parks Wildlife Reserve Conservation Area, Buffer Zone, and Hunting Reserve With the addition of buffer zone of Chitwan and Bardia, and the Kanchanjunga Conservation Area, the total area of protected areas is about 2 427,200 ha, which is 16.5 percent of the total country's land This amount is about one third of the country's forest land

The reserve sharing concept has been adopted according to the mechanism 30-50% of parks/reserve would be diverted to the adjoining buffer zone for community development purposes Nepali protected areas have given priority to a participatory approach in achieving the goal of biodiversity conservation Compatible buffer zone activities will help to achieve this goal The Buffer Zone Management Regulations of 1996 have provided a detailed mechanism to spend money (thus received) through user committees According to the regulation and the forthcoming Buffer Zone Development Guidelines, the mechanism includes

- The households in a district settlement (called unit) are mobilised to form a user group
- The user group or several small user groups form a user committee The user committee has a minimum of nine members elected by user group members or their representatives
- The user committee perform co-ordinating and supporting roles between user groups and the buffer zone office to mobilise resources and to design and implement programs
- The user committees facilitate the flow of the share of government revenue committed for community development to fund proposals submitted by user groups
- The Buffer Zone Warden is the point of official contact for various user committee offices spread over the buffer zone The chairpersons of the user groups are the members of the Buffer Zone Development Council of which the Buffer Zone Warden is the ex-office member secretary

The buffer zone is an area surrounding a park or a reserve encompassing forest agricultural land settlements villager open spaces and many other land use forms The concept calls for specially designed community development programs by mobilising resources in the buffer zone to meet the subsistence needs of the local people as well as providing them opportunities to progress economically The design has a mix of several tested models for economic prosperity while being a cause to conserve the biodiversity in the protected areas Elements of community forestry rural development trust funds and others can be seen in this design

In the buffer zone of Royal Bardia National Parks 87 user committees have already been formed The Buffer Zone Development Council met for the first time a few months ago to discuss community development programs In the buffer zone of the Royal Chitwan National Parks 40 user committees have been formed and the Council's Meeting will convene this month to discuss programs

The buffer zone of Langtang National Parks has already been decided and a notification describing its boundaries in Nepal Gazette will soon be published The boundaries of buffer zones of Sagarmath National Parks and Shev-Phoksundo National Parks will be decided in the near future

## FOREST SECTOR CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

### Report of the Financial Planning Working Group for the Eighth FSCC Meeting 13 February 1998

1 The Group had meetings on 5 December 1997 and 9 February 1998 where various issues were discussed. Minutes from these meetings are available for information if desired.

2 Field activities, specially in community forestry development, are based on extensive training and field visits. It is therefore important to apply norms to these activities which on one hand are sufficient to cover the expenses of the people involved without creating major distortions in prioritising activities at field level. The issue on norms for training workshops and seminars was discussed in detail. A proposal for District Level Norms for Training/Workshops/Seminars prepared by a sub-group of the Training Working Group was presented to this Group as well as the Financial Planning Working Group for discussion. In agreement with the Training Working Group it was recommended to adopt the Training Daily Allowance (TDA) rates for officers, rangers and guards for district based Trainings/Workshops/Seminars as proposed by the Sub-group shown in the table below.

#### Training Daily Allowance

| Level         | Within Duty Station / Village Area | Inside & Outside District* |             |
|---------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
|               |                                    | Low rate                   | High rate** |
| Officers      | Max 40% of TDA                     | 175                        | 300         |
| Rangers       | Max 40% of TDA                     | 150                        | 250         |
| Forest Guards | Max 40% of TDA                     | 125                        | 225         |

\* Only when overnight stay away from home (village) is required.

\*\* In principle high rates will be exceptional and are considered to be Kathmandu Valley, Pokhara, major Urban Centres on the Terai and expensive tourist trekking routes.

DSA rates for field visits and TDA rates for beneficiaries were also addressed. It was decided to bring the matter directly to the FSCC for further discussion.

See the attachment for further details.

It is further recommended by the Financial Planning Working Group to adopt the rates for training fees and other expenditures related to training workshops and seminars as presented in the proposal.

3 The database prepared for JICA on projects related to the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation in Nepal was also discussed. The Working Group recommends to update the database on a regular basis and requests JICA or alternative donors to provide the necessary resources.

4 On the request from members of the FSCC papers have been prepared by the MFSC on the progress of the planned World Bank supported Land Resource Management Project and on the Forest Sector Trust Fund.

A L Joshi  
Chairman  
Financial Planning Working Group

Attachment

**FOREST SECTOR CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE**  
**Financial Planning Working Group**

**DSA Rates for Training and Field Visits**

It is widely recognised that the massive training programmes are a main cause for the success of Community Forestry in Nepal. It is therefore important to apply norms for training and field visits which realistically cover the expenses of the people involved.

Application of DSA rates in the Forestry Sector in Nepal shows big variations. There are variations between rates used for central level training, regional level training and district level training, there are variations between HMG rates and the rates used in most donor supported projects, there are variations from one donor to another and variations between DSA rates for training and for field visits. Particularly the many rates used for field level training and field visits have created distortions in prioritising activities at district level and the higher donor rates cannot be sustained by HMG once donor support dries up.

It seems reasonable to apply different rates for central level, regional level and district level activities as conditions - particularly price levels - vary from level to level and indeed often from place to place within each level. It also appeared - particularly in the start-up phase of many donor supported projects - that HMG DSA rates did not cover actual expenses sufficiently. Many donors therefore applied their own, typically higher rates initially without much co-ordination.

It is less obvious why rates for training and rates for field visits should differ. However, most donors focused their activities on training rather than field visits, and through high DSA rates they were able to attract staff attention to the activities supported by them.

These issues have received much attention at the FSCC meetings over time and gradual progress has been made to harmonise the rates. A sub-working group under the Training Working Group has proposed a set of rates to be used for district based training as shown in table 1. Within the sub-group there is agreement about the rates for officers, rangers and guards but disagreement whether or not to give DSA to beneficiaries. The rates were presented to the Financial Planning Working Group, who decided to propose the rates for officers, rangers and guards to the FSCC, and bring the matter of DSA for beneficiaries directly to the FSCC for further discussion.

**Table 1**  
**Training Daily Allowance proposed by the Training Sub-working Group**

| level                 | Within Duty Station / village area | Inside & outside district |           |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
|                       |                                    | Ors/day                   |           |
|                       |                                    | Low rate                  | High rate |
| Officers              | Max 40% of TAD                     | 175                       | 300       |
| Rangers               | Max 40% of TAD                     | 150                       | 250       |
| Forest Guards         | Max 40% of TAD                     | 125                       | 225       |
| Users / beneficiaries | Max 40% of TAD                     | up to 120                 | up to 200 |

- \* TAD for special target groups (teachers, politicians, leaders) will apply according to their level. Normally users' rate shall be followed.
- em Only when overnight stay away from home (village) is required.

For comparison table 2 shows the HMG rates for field visits

**Table 2**

**HMG Field Allowances**

| Staff Category | Field Allowance |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Gaz 1          | 90              |
| Gaz 2&3        | 80              |
| Non/Gaz 1&2    | 70              |
| Non Gaz 3&4    | 55              |

Although remote allowances and walking allowances may be added to the rates in table 2 there is still a considerable span between the two sets of rates sufficient to maintain the preferences of the staff for training rather than field visits

The rates in table 1 are acceptable to the donors who were represented at the sub-working group. However, as mentioned above they only apply to district level training and cannot be applied in projects using indirect funding before they have been accepted as HMG norms.

A L Joshi  
Chairman  
Financial Planning Working Group

**Main strategy in the proposed 9<sup>th</sup> plan for the forestry sector**

- 1 Continue emphasis on participatory forestry sectoral activity management
- 2 Ecosystem based management of the forestry resources
- 3 Focus on productivity increase sustained use and poverty alleviation
- 4 Income generation self-help and user group and special group oriented approach
- 5 Establishing revolving fund for forest development
- 6 Inter and intra-sector coordination
- 7 Effective involvement of private sector

## Master Plan for the Forestry Sector

The plan has the following objectives

### Long-term

- To meet the people's basic needs for fuel, food, timber, fodder and other forestry products on a sustained basis and to contribute to food production through an effective interaction between forestry and farming practices
- To protect the land against degradation by soil erosion, floods, landslides, desertification, and other ecological disturbances
- To conserve biodiversity, ecosystems and genetic resources
- To contribute to the growth of local and national economies by managing the forest resources and forest-based industries and creating opportunities for income generation and employment

### Medium Term

- To promote people's participation in forestry resource development, management and conservation
- To develop the legal framework needed to enhance the contribution of individuals, communities and other organizations to land and forestry resource development, management and conservation
- To strengthen the organizational framework and develop the institutions of the forestry sector to enable them to carry out their missions

## **Brief Project Description Land Resources Management Project**

### **Main Objectives of the Project**

- Assist HMG/N to implement Program of the Master Plan of Forestry Sector
- Assist HMG/N to achieve objective of Ninth Five Year Plan through different strategies of forest development

### **Overall LRM Strategies**

- Improvement of public sector management
- Integrate and operationalize different forestry program like forest development watershed management and biodiversity conservation
- Provide back up support by research and extension apply in environmentally and socially sustainable way

### **Improvement of Public Sector Management will include**

- Improve management practices to enable them carry their roles by necessary reforms for Regional Forest Office and establish Regional Technical Support Units and Project Unit in the MFSC
- Development of human resources for implementation planning and monitoring
- Development of Information Management System to assist planning and management of forest watershed management and Biodiversity conservation
- Biodiversity Trust Fund

### **Integration of forest, watershed and Biodiversity**

- Coordinated Project strategic planning
- Coordination committees at Central (Ministry) Regional and District level and User Group level

## Program Components of LRMP

- A Forestry
  - 1 Hill Community Forest Development (Continuation)
  - 2 Terai Community Forest Development
  - 3 Terai Commercial Forest Development
  - 4 Private Forest Development
  - 5 Strengthening terai District Forest Offices
- B Watershed Development Program
  - Soil Conservation User Group Program
- C Biodiversity Conservation Program
- D Biodiversity Trust Fund
- E Research and Extension Research Program

## Biodiversity Conservation Trust Fund for Nepal

A L Joshi  
8<sup>th</sup> FSCC  
13 Feb 1998

Conservation program is very vital in Nepal. Most of the Funds come from donors and INGOs. But how long they will help. We have to workout a sustainable way.

As a component of the Land Resources Management Project the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation will also implement biodiversity conservation programs. During the past year a team of four consultants (2 Biodiversity experts, a finance expert and a lawyer) organized through MFSC/FORESC and investigated whether a Trust Fund would be an effective mechanism for biodiversity conservation in Nepal. It was decided that a Biodiversity Conservation Trust Fund would be an excellent means of ensuring long-term financing for biodiversity conservation activities in Nepal.

Environmental trust funds are innovative financing mechanisms used in a number of developing countries to cover the recurrent costs of environmental conservation activities. A trust fund is a sum of money generated from donor agencies, private foundations, conservation organizations, national governments or occasionally internal fundraising efforts which is used to fund specific objectives. Trust funds differ from other mechanisms in that they are designed to provide long term funding. Many trust funds are established as endowments meaning that only the interest/income is spent each year where as the principal remains invested. Once a trust fund has been fully endowed it operates independently from donor and institutional budget fluctuations ensuring its long-term stability as a conservation funding mechanism. A trust fund is managed by a board of trustees which holds legal title to the fund and is usually representative of national government, local NGOs and donors to the fund.

On March 2, 1998 a participatory stakeholder workshop is being organized to discuss and reach consensus on the goals and objectives of a potential Biodiversity Trust Fund for Nepal. Experience from other trust funds has shown that several factors are critical to the successful establishment of a fund. Chief among these are participation and consultative processes to identify the fund's objective and constituencies. Therefore this workshop aims to discuss the overall goal and objectives of the proposed trust fund with relevant organizations working in Biodiversity conservation in the country. The workshop will also result in the selection of a small committee which would oversee the design phase of developing trust fund during the next year or two.

Potential issues which have been identified by the above-mentioned consultants as priority areas to be funded by a Biodiversity trust fund include the following:

- Conservation in protected areas
- Biodiversity conservation outside protected areas
- Conservation awareness
- Buffer Zone management

- Community forestry
- Restoration of Biodiversity in degraded land
- Promotion of pasture land management
- Soil and water Conservation
- Human resource development at local level
- Research and development
- Translocation of endemic threatened rare and endangered species
- Promotion of conservation activities

The purpose of this workshop is to reach consensus on reducing and refining this list so that the trust fund has a very focused set of tangible and manageable objectives which reflect the views of all the concerned stakeholders. If you would like to share your views prior to the workshop about the issues the trust fund should address, please contact myself or Lynelle Preston of The Mountain Institute.

In preparation for this workshop, it is also important to develop a clear understanding of the present funding provided for Biodiversity conservation within Nepal in relationship to the priority needs. This includes the need for analysis of existing funds allocated to Biodiversity and the identification of major gaps in current funding. Therefore, during the next few weeks, we will be gathering this information. Any assistance you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

## Ministry of Forests & Soil Conservation - Project Profile

April 1998

*List of Projects, their duration, donor agency and total project cost in the Forestry Sector*

| S No   | Projects   | Duration | Starting Date | Completion Date | Donor Agency       | Total US\$('000) | Remarks  |
|--|--|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| <b>A Ministry of Forests &amp; Soil Conservation</b> |  |          |               |                 |                    |                  |  |
| 1  | Natural Res Management Sector Assistant Prog - Sector Support Office | 5 Years  | Feb 98        | Jan 2003        | DANIDA             | 197000           | Support include to DoF DSCWM & DNPWC   |
| 2  | Shivapuri Integrated Watershed Project (Phase II)                    | 5 Years  | Jan 92        | April 98        | NORWAY             | 1992             | 4 montha bridging phas financed through residue of II phase Discussion going on for the extension (II Phase) |
| 3  | Environment & Forest Enterprize Activity                             | 6 Years  | July 96       | June-02         | USAID              | 8840             | Support include to DoF, DSCWM & DNPWC Covers 8 Districts   |
| <b>B Department of Forests</b>                       |  |          |               |                 |                    |                  |  |
| 4  | Hill Leasehold Forestry & Forage Development Project - II Phase      | 8 Years  | May, 1993     | Sept 01         | FAO/IFAD           | 2888             | Including IFAD loan  |
| 5  | Community Forestry Development Project (Phase III)                   | 8 Years  | July 1996     | July, 1998      | WB/UNDP/<br>DANIDA | 1 55 00          | Covers 38 Hill Districts   |
| 6  | Tree Improvement Program   | 7 Years  | May 91        | Dec 1998        | DANIDA             | 23 10            | Comes under Sectoral program NARMSAP   |
| 7  | Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project                | 5 Years  | May 1996      | April 01        | AUSTRALIA          | 6200             | Support include to both DOF and DSCWM Covers 2 Districts   |

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| S No     | Projects  | Duration  | Starting Date | Completion Date | Donor Agency | Total US\$('000) | Remarks  |
|----------|---|-----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| 8        | Churia Forest DEvelopment Project                                   | 3 Years   | Jul 94        | Jul-98          | GTZ          | 4200             | Support include to DoF & DSCWM<br>Covers 3 Districts                             |
| 9        | Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Proje                                | 4 Years   | July 96       | July 00         | SDC          | 27 00            | Covers 2 Districts   |
| 10       | Community Forestry Training Project                                 | 9 Years   | Nov 1989      | July-98         | DANIDA       | 42 40            | Comes under NARMSAP  |
| 11       | Nepal UK Community Forestry Project                                 | 5 Years   | July 93       | June-98         | ODA          | 1,10,34          | Covers 7 Districts   |
| 12       | Bhutanese Refugee Program - UNHCR                                   | Annual    | Jan 1998      | Dec 1998        | UNHCR        | 47               | As agreed anually  |
| 13       | Palpa Development Project   | Annual    | July-97       | July-98         | HMG          |                  | As agreed anually  |
| 14       | Mechi Hills Development Program                                     | Annual    | July 97       | July-98         | SNV          |                  | As agreed anually Support to both<br>DOF & DSCWM No Extension<br>after July 1998 |
| <b>C</b> | <b>Department of Soil Conservation</b>                              |           |               |                 |              |                  |  |
| 15       | Upper Andhikhola Watershed<br>Management Project - II Phase         | 4 Years   | July-97       | March 02        | CARE         | 12 00            |  |
| 16       | Watershed Management Project  | Annual    | July-97       | July 98         | KR II/JICA   |                  | As agreed annually   |
| 17       | Bagmati Watershed Project   | 6 5 Years | July-97       | July-03         | EEC          | 225,00           |  |
| 18       | Community Development and Forest/<br>Watershed Conservation Project | 5 Years   | July 94       | July 98         | JICA         |                  | As agreed annually   |
| 19       | Nepal Denmark Watershed<br>Management Project                       | 3 Years   | Jyly 1996     | June 98         | DANIDA       | 2680             | A pilot project  |

| S No     | Projects   | Duration | Starting Date | Completion Date | Donor Agency        | Total US\$('000) | Remarks            |
|----------|--|----------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|          |  |          |               |                 |                     |                  |                    |
| <b>D</b> | <b>Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation</b>        |          |               |                 |                     |                  |                    |
| 20       | Parks & People Project II Phase                                      | 2 Years  | Jan 98        | Dec 99          | UNDP                | 1500             |                    |
| 21       | Makalu Barun National Park & Conservation Area Project               | 5 Years  | June 98       | Dec-98          | GEF/UNDP /TMI       | 5000             |                    |
| 22       | Bardia Integrated Cons Project                                       | 5 Years  | July 96       | July-01         | WWF                 | 156              |                    |
| 23       | Northern Mountain Conservation Project                               | 5 Years  | Oct 1996      | Sept 2001       | WWF                 | 592              |                    |
| 24       | Institutional Support  | Annual   | July 97       | July 98         | WWF                 | 81               |                    |
| 25       | Buffer Zone Development Project                                      | 3 Years  | July-97       | July-00         | CARE / NE           | 924              |                    |
| 26       | Kanchanjunga Cons Area Project                                       | 2 Years  | Jan 1998      | Dec 1999        | F/NEP P             | 200              |                    |
| 27       | Wildlife and Domestic Veterinary Prog in Royal Chitwan National Park | 4 Years  | Jan 1998      | Dec 2002        | London Zool Society | 860              |                    |
| 28       | National Bio diversity Action Plan                                   | 2Years   | Sep 96        | April 98        | GEF/UNDP            | 241              |                    |
| <b>E</b> | <b>Department of Plant Resources</b>                                 |          |               |                 |                     |                  |                    |
| 29       | Flora of Nepal   | Annual   |               |                 | HMG                 |                  | As agreed annually |
| <b>F</b> | <b>Forest Research and Survey Centre</b>                             |          |               |                 |                     |                  |                    |
| 30       | Forest Resource Information System Project                           | 3 Years  | July-96       | July 99         | FINIDA              | 1818             |                    |

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| S No                                       | Projects  | Duration  | Starting Date | Completion Date | Donor Agency | Total US\$('000) | Remarks  |
|--|---|-----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| <b>G Forests Product Development Board</b> |   |           |               |                 |              |                  |  |
| 1  | Sagarnath Forest Development Project  |           |               |                 | HMG          |                  |  |
| 2  | Nepalgunj Forest Development Project  |           |               |                 | HMG          |                  |  |
| <b>H Regional Projects</b>                 |   |           |               |                 |              |                  |  |
| 1  | Regional Wood Energy Development Program in Asia Phase II   | 4 5 Years | July 94       | Dec-99          | FAO/Neth     | 8843             | Participating Countries 10                               |
| 2  | Strengthening Country Capacity in For Res Asses for Sust Forestry Planning in the Asia & Pac Region | 5 Years   | July-96       | June 01         | FAO/Japan/   | 1250             | Participating Countries 6                                |
| 3  | Forest Research Support Program for Asia and Pacific -II Phase                                      | 3 5 Years | Jan 96        | June-99         | FAO/Neth     | 3221             | Participating Countries 13                               |
| 4  | Inter regional Project for Participatory Upland Cons and Development                                | 2 Years   | Feb 98        | Jan 2000        | FAO / Italy  | 2058             | Participating Countries 3                                |
| 5  | Farmer Centered Agriculture Res Mgt & Watershed III Phase   | 3 Yrs     | Jun-95        | Jun-98          | FAO / UNDP   | 1500             | Participating Countries 8                                |
| 6  | Participatory Management in Asia  | 3 Years   | Jan-96        | Dec 98          | FAO / Neth   | 1756             | Participating Countries 10                               |
| 7  | Training and Manpower Development in Community Forestry Management                                  | 4 Years   | June-93       | July-98         | ITTO         | 1023             | Implemented through IOF Pokhara Extended up to July 1998 |

| S No | Projects  | Duration | Starting Date | Completion Date | Donor Agency | Total US\$('000) | Remarks                           |
|------|---|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8    | Improvement Productivity of Man made Forests through application of technological advances in tree breeding and propogation | 7 Years  | Jan 91        | Jan-98          | FAO/ UNDP    | 5500             | Participating Countnes 10         |
|      |   |          |               |                 |              |                  |                                   |
|      |   |          |               |                 |              |                  |                                   |
|      |   |          |               |                 |              |                  |                                   |
| 1    | <b>Projects in Pipeline</b>   |          |               |                 |              |                  |                                   |
| 1    | Land Resource Managemetn Project  |          |               |                 | World Bank   |                  | Project Preperation is going on   |
| 2    | Disaster Prevention Program   |          |               |                 | JICA         |                  | Neagotation / Discussion going on |

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**Impact Assessment of the Community Forestry Forum**

**Kedar Sharma and Carina Frantz**

**GreenCOM**

**Sponsored by the US Agency for International Development  
Academy for Educational Development  
Contract # PCE-5839-Q-00-3069-18**

## 1 Background

The forestry sector of Nepal has been going through major policy reviews and changes in the recent past. This dynamism at the policy level in Nepal has led to a successful incorporation of many new concepts and values in forestry development programs. The best known example of this has led to policies which have begun to encourage the participation of organized beneficiaries in managing forest, with an emphasis on the sustainable use of forests against the traditional concept of forest "preservation"

Policy makers have looked for ways to improve their communication with the villagers who live near the forests and must in the end help manage the national resources and learn to use them in a sustainable fashion. While the government has tried to implement various programs to bridge the information, no efforts have been sufficient to eliminate the problem.

In this context, the USAID supported Environment and Forest Enterprise Activity program, which is being implemented in the eight districts of the Midwest Development region, has asked GreenCOM, an environmental education organization, to organize and conduct a Community Forestry Forum. This forum was held on March 13, 1998 in Kathmandu.

The purpose of the forum was to facilitate a dialogue and policy discussion between and within Community Forest User Group (CFUGs) representatives and policy makers. The purpose and end result of the forum dialogue was to provide policy makers and EFEA Activity managers with information from the users' perspective, as to how forest policy is being implemented in the field. This should allow policy makers to assess any need for additional policy reform or policy implementation.

The forum included twenty user group participants representing all of the eight EFEA districts. Seven of the twenty attendees were women. Other noted participants to the forum included three ministers, three secretaries, all department heads of MOFSC, representatives of the Ministry of Finance, representatives of USAID, institutional representatives of all GreenCOM partners in EFEA (CARE Nepal, World Wildlife Fund and Ban Ladam) and representatives from the National Planning Commission.

## 2 Methodology

The purpose of this research activity is to evaluate the impact of the GreenCOM-assisted Community Forestry Forum (CFF) on the knowledge, attitude and behavior of two groups who attended the CFF: policy decision makers (largely focused at the national level and Kathmandu-based) and attending CFUG representatives and their CFUGs. Interviews were to be conducted with both groups prior to the CFF (November 1997) and after the CFF (July 1998). These research results are intended to assist in setting the agenda for future Community Forest Forums.

Questions for CFUG members were to focus on knowledge about community forestry/ soil conservation policy-related knowledge attitudes and past behavior (including income generation activities related to forest products) with particular emphasis on the impact of the CFF on this knowledge attitude and behavior. Questions for policy makers were to focus on current community forestry soil conservation policy-related knowledge attitudes and past policy/ decision making behavior, followed up in the next interview by questions emphasizing recent 'policy/ decision-making behavior which has taken place' since the CFF.

Through administrative problems encountered in the research contractor's execution of Task Order 3 an interview team to conduct pre-forum interviews was not fielded prior to the forum date. This has meant that the assessment of changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior could not be based upon a comparison of statements made by participants before and after their attendance. Consequently interviews were conducted only after the forum using questionnaires designed to compensate for the absence of a pre-forum comparative base.

In order to maintain the emphasis on specific ways that participation at the CFF affected the knowledge attitudes and behavior of interviewees questions were based on the guidelines laid down in the 'Research Memorandum of Understanding' as originally designed. Even without 'blind' accounts of participants attitudes prior to the forum a viable methodology can be developed. Based on a careful progression of interview questions designed to unfold events and attitudes chronologically in the interviewee's mind a deliberate progression of perceptions and attitudes can be set down. While it is impossible to gauge or reverse the affects which attendance at the forum may have on an individual's pre-forum recollections assessing a participant's own sense of what these changes have been helps pinpoint areas of conscious attitude change which are more likely to provide the basis for motivated behavioral change.

Thus questions were tailored to bridge this gap by taking CFUG interviewees through a general progression of the history of their CFUG: how was it first started what problems were faced what help did the DFO give them how did they see the role of the government what has been the history of their interaction with non-members over the years what management skills did they practice what NTFP products did they harvest etc. In effect they were invited to outline the set of issues they were facing at the time they attended the forum. Only then were questions introduced regarding the forum itself. They were then asked to pinpoint specific changes in their attitudes comparing points in the story they had just conveyed and their new situation/ perspective in light of their recent forum attendance. They were then asked to look back again and think about what they had hoped to gain by participating in the forum and whether this had been fulfilled or not.

Questions for the ministers addressed first their general functioning role in policy making and their history in this area. They were then asked to identify what they felt to be the most significant issues to be raised at the forum how beneficial they found the interaction, and what they had specifically done since the forum

See Appendix I for lists of questions used in the interviews

The end result is perhaps more a collection of personal reviews of the forum than scientifically documented accounts of changed behavior. Nevertheless through the participants own assessment of how their attitudes changed, a number of revealing misconceptions changes in attitude and reasons for blocks in communication between the periphery and the center was revealed

### 3 Selection of Interviewees

#### 3.1 CFUG members

Task Order 3 states that for the interview sessions, members from ten CFUGs were to be interviewed three per district from Dang and Pwathan and two per district from Salvan and Banke. Individual interviews were to be conducted with the member selected to attend the CFUG one additional member and one of the group leaders. At least one of the three interviewed was to be a woman

Unfortunately present conditions of civil unrest in the greater part of the EFEA Project area has made much of the region temporarily out of bounds for foreign travel and members of certain foreign development agencies. The research team became unable therefore to pursue interviewees living in Pwathan and Salvan. It also became necessary for the team to delay its movements into the remaining districts of Dang Banke and Bardiya until they had received a positive signal from the EFEA office in Tulsipur Dang

As such the interview team was left with only a one-week window and a limited region within which to conduct their interviews. To compound this time constraint difficult road conditions following the heavy rains of the monsoon and sparse telecommunication networks which eliminated the possibility of presetting interview meeting times made the collection of data extremely difficult

The interview team targeted the seven CFUG representatives which had attended the forum from Banke Bardiya and Dang (the three accessible districts)

Shanta Gvawali Bardiya  
Gopal Chaudhari Bardiya  
Radha KC Dang  
Man Bahadur Magar Dang  
Nanda Kumar Gharti Dang  
Bel Kumari Chalishe Banke

Om Prasad Paudel Banke

Of these selected, the team was able to interview five. One participant was too ill to be interviewed, another could not be located (despite a 45-minute drive, a boat ride and a 30-minute walk to reach his house). In addition, the team located and interviewed two other committee members from different CFUGs represented at the forum: a non-committee member of one of the CFUGs represented at the forum and the chairperson of a very active all-women CFUG near Dang which had not been represented at the forum. This last individual was interviewed in order to get a sense of how news about the forum might have spread through the area to other CFUGs. In total the team conducted nine interviews, of these five were women.

### 3.2 Policy Makers

From the list of policy makers who had attended the forum, the interview team selected their targeted interviewees based on type of participant and hierarchy. Most of the government attendees were from the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation. There were selected five individuals to interview: the new minister (who had attended the forum in the capacity of Minister of Law and Justice), then a stratification of people from different levels of authority to get a representative set of viewpoints. After this one minister from each of the other ministries in attendance was selected (Ministry of Population and Environment, Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Finance, National Planning Commission). From the NGOs in attendance, four people were selected, one from each of the organizations deemed most influential and active in forestry issues. This made a list of 13 individuals with a goal to complete 10 interviews as stated in Task Order 3.

#### MOFSC

Mr. Siddha Raj Ojha, Formerly Minister of Law and Justice, Presently Minister MOFSC  
Mr. N. R. Tiwari, Secretary  
Mr. A. L. Joshi, Chief Planning Officer  
Mr. Udaya Raj Sharma, Director General, Department of National and Wild Life Conservation  
Mr. Tirtha Man Maskey, Joint Secretary (technical)

#### Other Ministries

Mr. Ananta Raj Paudel, Acting Secy, Ministry of Population and Environment  
Mr. Udaya Nepali Shrestha, Acting Secy, Ministry of Law and Justice  
Mr. Harihar Regmi, Ministry of Finance  
Dr. Madhav Ghimire, Formerly Joint Secy, National Planning Commission, Presently Joint Secy, Ministry of Population and Environment

#### NGOs

Mr. Shyam Paudel, Planning Officer, EFEA  
Mr. S. S. Hamal, CARE Nepal

Mr Anil Manandhar, WWF

Mr Madhukar Upadhyay Formerly Chief, Bagmati Watershed Project. Presently Sec  
(technical) Department of Soil Conservation

The interview team faced a number of impediments to successfully reaching their target number of interviews. Foremost among these problems is the general atmosphere of caution among government officials—a predicament common to many newly emerging democracies. Nepal's democratic government is as yet still stabilizing and the frequency with which high level positions are vacated and reappointed is remarkable. As such many high level officials are reluctant to take any risks making public statements that could have unknown and potentially extreme, consequences for their political careers. While many of them are comfortable making public statements to local newspapers and magazines with political leanings, GreenCOM is as yet an unknown entity in Nepal and its political neutrality still unconfirmed. How information given to GreenCOM might be used and to which audience they are directed, is not yet clear to many. As a consequence GreenCOM is at a further disadvantage in an already volatile political climate. As GreenCOM continues its work in Nepal and Community Forest Forums are more frequently scheduled throughout the coming year this caution should recede.

In addition to the general attitudes discussed above, the interview team was also faced with simple logistical problems due to government officials' busy schedules and time constraints.

Of the designated list the team was able to interview six individuals.

Mr N R Tiwari Secretary MOSFC

Mr Ananta Raj Pande Acting Sec Ministry of Population and Environment

Mr Udaya Nepali Shrestha Acting Sec Ministry of Law and Justice

Dr Madhav Ghimire Formerly Joint Sec National Planning Commission Presently  
Joint Sec Ministry of Population and Environment

Mr Madhukar Upadhyay Formerly Chief Bagmati Watershed Project Presently Sec  
(technical) Department of Soil Conservation

Mr S S Hamal CARE Nepal

#### 4 Analysis of Findings by Type of Participant

The bottom up policy dialogue facilitated through the CFF is intended to change the knowledge attitudes and behavior (or intention to act in a certain manner) of both attending policy decision-makers and CFUG representatives and their CFUGs.

If the CFF exposes CFUG representatives to new information, and new opportunities for access to policy decision-makers then we may expect to see changes in the CFUG representatives and their groups. They may gain increased knowledge related to forest policies/regulations or rules. They may also change their attitudes about policy/

decision-makers local staff or the policies/ regulations or rules. If non-leaders are sent then we might expect to see them play a greater group leadership role upon their return to their group. In addition, the CFUG may practice better forest management, demand more services from the local DFO and manage their forest in a different manner as a result of learning from other CFUG representatives at the CFF.

If the CFF is informative and relevant, policy/ decision-makers should leave the CFF with more knowledge about how their policies and decisions are being carried out and impacting CFUGs and their forests. They may change their attitudes about CFUGs, the current realities faced by their field staff or the effectiveness of their policies and decisions. As a result of the CFFs, they may decide to actually modify or replace policies, regulations or rules.

It is acknowledged that the interview sample size is small, and as such very difficult to draw accurate generalizations from. Therefore, analysis will focus only on the more broad and prominent features of participants' statements, and is to be understood not as a series of scientific conclusions, but a broad sketch of potential areas for further study. This discussion of the content of the interviews will focus itself specifically on what changes in knowledge, attitude, or behavior can be identified through the testimonies of the CFUG members, and how these changes have resulted directly from their participation in the forum.

#### 4.1 CFUG Members

A number of positive changes can be identified in what the participants conveyed about their experiences at the forum. The most striking is a new understanding expressed by two of the three female forum participants, as well as by another woman who was not a member of one of the CFUGs represented at the forum. At the close of her interview, one woman was asked, "Do you have anything that you would like to comment to the policy makers?" "Now we are conserving the forest and we don't want the government to come in five years and take it back," was her reply. Similarly, a forum participant states, "In the beginning, we thought the government would take the forests back and only gave us false promises to get the villagers to protect the forests for them. Now I realize that in normal circumstances it is ours and it will remain ours. I came back from Kathmandu believing that." And another participant, "There is a big difference in my opinion before and after the forum. Before I thought the government would take back the forest after a few years. Now I think that they won't if we manage it properly."

The forum was also clearly an opportunity to gain and exchange information, first with the high level government officials, and secondly with other CFUG members from other areas. Three of the participants reported that they had gained useful knowledge about forestry rules and regulations through their participation. "I was not clear on the rules and regulations of the government regarding the CFUGs. This was an opportunity to understand many more things. We were thinking that we couldn't plant fruit trees inside the community forest. Now we know that we can and so are planning to do so." '1

told the members of my CFUG that we *are* legally permitted to remove old trees from the forest [with the DFOs approval]” Yet these statements are also revealing in that each of the examples given pertain to basic information that should have been accessible through the DFO office and the rangers

Every member interviewed also expressed a belief that the forum had been very valuable in the opportunity it gave him or her to meet and interact with members from other CFUGs. They also felt that other members of their committee benefited by the knowledge they gained and were able to bring back and share with them. I not only gained from other's experiences, but I was also able to share my own experiences with others. For example, I shared that we need to encourage ordinary users to go outside for experiences more. One participant also expressed an increased practical knowledge in setting up brainstorming sessions with his CFUG committee members. 'We had a meeting afterwards and I told them everything and I think the level of consciousness about issues has gone up a bit since then. We have also provided reading material about it and people *do* come and read it. I also invited various members of the CFUG to a meeting and divided them into groups like we did at the forum and had them do an interactive exercise. It was very successful and now I feel I know a lot more about how to conduct these.'

Unfortunately, despite these positive aspects, every CFUG member interviewed who attended the forum is now experiencing discouragement. Each of them expressed that they had been very hopeful when they were first invited to participate, that such an opportunity to communicate directly with high-level policy makers would contribute to a greater understanding of their concerns. They also felt it would enable the government to improve areas of policy which was dysfunctional or impeding proper care of the forests. Eight months following the forum, when these interviews were conducted, no changes had come.

Prior to the forum I thought something would happen. Afterwards I realized that it will not be done by the high level people, it will have to be done by ourselves. They are not there to work for us. For example, most of the things we put to them were not taken seriously, they laughed. Even if they delegate something for the villagers to do, it will be absorbed somewhere in between. I don't think they understood us well. I don't think this kind of interaction will bring very much change. And I am not happy with the way they answered our questions. (Radha KC, Uchanimbu CFUG)

Overall, the strongest sentiments remained, "We failed to make them understand" now we don't believe that the government will come here to fix things and "the ministers mostly threw the problems to someone else and talked around the issues."

#### 4.2 Policy Makers and CFUG Users Comparison

Clear changes in attitude resulting from the forum are more difficult to gauge on the side of policy makers. Those interviewed did not come forward with clear statements on the

ways their attitudes had been affected but their comments do provide interesting insights into general orientations on the problems plaguing the CF system. From an examination of these positions we can begin to locate some sources of the miscommunication existing between policy makers and user groups. While it is difficult to generalize from such a small sample nevertheless consistency can already be seen in their responses.

Both policy makers and villagers agree that the crux of the problem regarding effective CFUG functioning lies in the issue of ownership. Government high-level officials in general are eager for community members to gain a sense of ownership of their forests and to feel a personal motivation to protect them. Villagers, in turn, have gained a greater sense of their ownership through their attendance at the forum and in this regard villagers and policy makers share a common perspective. They differ dramatically however in their perspective on where the source of current problems lies, on the level of autonomy desirable in effectively managing forests and thus on how problems need to be solved.

The majority of policy makers interviewed acknowledged that the government still played a role in the difficulties users faced in protecting and running their forests effectively. But they did not locate this problem in the realm of policy. Rather, they identified it as relating to resistance and problems at the procedural and implementation levels, specifically with their field staff. "Government employees particularly feel that the forest belongs to the government so they should retain control, and there is a resistance to change and a lack of motivation among forest ministry staff." Given this the majority of policy makers locate the solution not in policy reform, but in a need for reorientation of government field staff and in user education. "It is not necessary to solve these problems through parliament. Most are of a procedural nature and should be settled at that level. It was acknowledged that new focus and emphasis needs to be placed on post-formation support rather than clarification of the handover procedures, but in general no links were made to how policy might enable this.

Most of the policy makers noted that the most important aspect of the forum was not that such high and low level citizens could talk directly but that mid-level technicians and bureaucrats were also present. In general they all recommended that similar fora be held locally to open dialogue between users and regional government officials. They also felt that the CFUG participants would feel more comfortable if the forum had been held in their own local areas and in a less formal manner. Further, if another national level forum like this is scheduled it should include the attendance of more middle level people such as DFOs and rangers.

One policy maker recommended that a manual be compiled for CFUG users, one which clarifies rights, regulations, legal provisions, the role of line agencies, some basic technical training and which is written in clear language. This recommendation may be taken as an intended modification in behavior due to attendance at the forum but it does not signal a change in attitude. Overall the forum only served to reinforce policy makers attitudes that, as can be seen in this example, the problems lie in education and local procedure, not policy reform. Further, a number of those interviewed noted that due to

the limited regional representation at the forum, none of the problems raised could be taken to be nationally relevant and therefore could not be addressed through national policy

#### Conclusion

In contrast, local CFUG users came to the forum with specific sets of problems which they perceived to be addressable through a modification in the law, as they had failed to be solved locally: border disputes, hiring of guards, punishment of looters, rights to harvesting of products, increased subsidies. Yet to each of these problems they were told that the issues must be handled locally through existing rules and regulations executed by the DFO's office. Villagers took this not as a valid identification of the source of their problems but as a dismissal. Oddly, villagers were reluctant in their interviews to openly place the source of their frustrations with a lack of cooperation by the DFO's office.

Villagers' change in attitude then, was not so much that changes in policy were not what was needed as policy makers maintained, but that since policy makers were not willing to address their problems seriously they must attempt to solve their problems locally for lack of any other recourse. As such, villagers lost faith and remain frustrated.

Policy makers in general did not change their attitudes but only had them reinforced-- that the problems were of a procedural nature and not to be addressed in policy. Unfortunately, this attitude was not made clear to the CFUG participants at the forum. Instead, policy makers gave indistinct answers or made hollow promises. This resulted not in a clarification by the ministers on their opinion that real work needed to be done in reorienting the district offices but led users instead to believe that policy makers were disinterested in affecting change.

As revealed in the interviews, both parties, CFUG representatives and policy makers, fundamentally believed that the purpose of the forum was that they should educate the other. That is, each party entered the forum less with a mind to learn as to explain. As a result, each party comments that they had not been properly understood or listened to and that this was their greatest source of disappointment in the outcome of the meeting. Overall, then, very few significant changes in attitude came out of the forum.

## APPENDIX I Interview Questions

### Interview Questions for Policy Makers

Based on your experience in forestry policy making, what would you identify as the largest impediment to the proper functioning of community forests?

Given this insight, how would you characterize these problems? That is, what are the reasons for the gap between the way things "should" work, and the way things actually do work at the CFUG level?

And at the national level?

To date, what has your personal involvement been in policy making for community forestry?

In your opinion, what were the most important issues that came up at the Community Forestry Forum?

Did your experience at the forum change any of your attitudes about the reasons for the problems faced in effective community forest management?

What specifically have you done since the forum to address the problems you identified above?

Do you ever get opportunities to interact with the general population in such a direct way as you did at the forum?

Has the experience had any direct effects on the way you feel problems can be more effectively explored and solved?

Overall, do you feel this kind of a contact forum has been useful to your understanding of the impediments to adequate community forestry management and the problems faced locally by forest users?

Do you believe that the villagers have an accurate idea of the problems they face and the reasons for those problems?

What do you think of the general charges of corruption made by the community video letter and by participants in the forum?

## Interview Questions for CFUG Members

Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?

Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?

Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?

What, basically, are the responsibilities of the DFO to your CFUG?

Did you encounter any problems during the formation?

Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?

Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?

Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?

Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?

What has been the quality of interaction between members of the CFUG and local non-members? Have there been tensions?

How would you characterize the relationship between your CFUG and the DFO? Cooperative, uncommunicative?

What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?

What has your own personal household received from the CFUG?

What forest products do your household sell?

What types of activities have you been personally involved in?

In your understanding, what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?

What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?

And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse, since your attendance at the forum?

Do you feel that the ministers at the forum adequately addressed these issues?

Can you recall anything specifically useful to your own concerns that they said regarding these issues?

Have any specific changes come to your area since the forum?

What kinds of things did you hope this kind of direct interaction with ministers might achieve

And do you believe this happened?

What do you feel that you personally gained by your experience participating in the forum?

Did meeting members of other CFLGs provide interesting information, insight, a sense of community and common interest?

What skills do you think you acquired through your participation? For example in public speaking

Since you have returned what things have you told your community members about the forum?

Has your own level of activity in the CFLG changed since then? Increased, decreased Why do you think this is so?

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## APPENDIX II Transcripts of Interviews with CFUG Members

**Nanda Kumar Gharti**  
**Secretary**  
**Basanta Hariwal CFUG, Dang**  
**Representative at forum**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

It was three years back. First we discussed the issue with the villagers. This was 25 Asad 2053. The ranger supported us and helped us to write the Action Plan and Constitution and to register with the DFO. Our registration number is 12. We started it because the neighboring forests were getting very degraded and we were having trouble with forest products and soil erosion. Forest products were being smuggled too. The DFO told about the CFUG possibility.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

Others in the area are aware of the process to start a CFUG. They'd been familiar with it before and our neighbors were the first to organize a CFUG. They encouraged us.

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

They know everything. Maybe because we are so close to their office we are getting good service. No complaints with technicians. And CARE is also helpful.

**What, basically, are the responsibilities of the DFO to your CFUG?**

In the beginning they are supposed to survey the area. They did this for our CFUG to start and then they are to give all technical knowledge about thinning, pruning, etc.

**Did you encounter any problems during the formation?**

In beginning we didn't know what a CFUG was and the main problem was not knowing about it. This information came from the DFO.

Nowadays everyone wants to be on the committee so elections are difficult.

**Any party politics?**

No.

**Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?**

All cooperate and decisions are made in the proper way.

**Do you feel there are any grievances against you?**

I've been elected secretary a second time so if there were problems they wouldn't elect me again.

**Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?**

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

Since the forest is mostly sal trees, we concentrate on thinning and pruning for healthy trees. We get technical support from the technicians.

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

No herbs. We sell some fodder for 10 rupees a load. We raised 16000 rupees last year this way.

**Other income?**

Mainly penalties. 24,000 rupees last year because we live in a bazaar area and its full of thieves naturally. We also raise money from fallen trees. 141,000 rupees last year.

**What has been the quality of interaction between executive members of the CFUG and other users? Have there been tensions?**

We have direct interaction once a year in the general assembly. But we are in touch regularly indirectly through members. There was some tension at the general assembly. The main topic was income and expenditures. They don't want to believe us. They don't know how we are collecting and spending. But I don't get angry because they don't understand. If expenditures actual we don't find difficulties with them because they can see for themselves. And we don't have any trouble with non-members.

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

Secretary two terms.

**What types of activities have you been personally involved in?**

I have been involved with organization as the secretary. We have asked some poor people to work as agroforestry workers planting ginger, etc. Have had four applications so far and plan to start after Dasain.

**In your understanding what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

The only thing is that they are reluctant to increase the forest area. We have asked to plant trees in barren land and they have refused approval. In the forum the issue was raised to the ministers and they said it was a local issue so needed to talk to the DFO. But when we asked the DFO they said there was no provision in the rules to add to forests like that so.

**DFO officer sitting with us.** Yes there is a provision to add land but everyone is asking us to give land and if we give them it now then when other communities who are not organized now may not get any land.

**NAME.** No not our point. If any other potential CFUG was around we would not ask.

**What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?**

**And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse, since your attendance at the forum?**

All seemed sympathetic to issues raised. And each said would do something within fifteen days but nothing has happened.

**Do you feel they understood the problems?**

I feel they did.

**Do you feel that the ministers at the forum adequately addressed these issues, did they take them seriously?**

The ministers mostly threw the problems to someone else, like to the secretaries. And they talked around the issues.

**Can you recall anything specifically useful to your own concerns that they said regarding these issues?**

Nothing very specific, but it was generally important.

**Have any specific changes come to your area since the forum?**

No.

**What kinds of things did you hope this kind of direct interaction with ministers might achieve?**

We were very much encouraged. We were very much hopeful to put our problems in front of the policy makers. Our CFUG members had put the last deadline for results at six months. Now it has been eight and nothing.

**What specifically had you hoped would happen?**

One thing was that they not curtail the budget to subsidizing plantation. The other was regarding the big problem of catching looters. The CFUG does not have the authority to punish them and the DFO is supposed to. But when they go to the DFO they say, no you are autonomous now. And then we have to go a very long way around to the courts. And the border issue. They promised to solve it in 15 days now 8 months.

**What do you feel that you personally gained by your experience participating in the forum?**

We were happy with the organizers for arranging the trip to Kathmandu and were happy to interact with the policy makers. We also had an opportunity to meet other CFUG users from other areas. But I am sorry to see that such a huge amount of money was spent to organize the forum because nothing has changed.

**Did meeting members of other CFUGs provide interesting information, insight, a sense of community and common interest?**

It was a good interaction. I had an opportunity to hear what others were doing and the difficulties they were facing.

**Since you have returned, what things have you told your community members about the forum?**

I told everything in the committee meeting when I returned

**Which rules and regulations would you like to see changed?**

We should be allowed to add more land. We have gotten first prize for CFUG management many times. Out of 145 CFUGs we are first, yet still we are not given any more land. I only get 1000 rupees a month for this job. It's really a volunteer position. If more people younger people like myself get more involved, we will see more positive changes.

**Bel Kumari Chalishe**

**Vice Chairperson**

**Mahila Upakar CFUG, Banke**

**Representative at forum**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

After the 1990 movement, many things started to change but we women realized then that we were even more backward. A cooperative manager nearby encouraged us to be united and to start saving money. We started this from the first anniversary of 1990. The manager's name is Siva Bahadur Pandit. We started with 58 women and 100 rupees each. We wanted to go further and be self-reliant, so we went to the VDC about starting a CFUG. We got a small plot of land 1 kata for our own meetinghouse, and registered with the DFO. And another organization (Canadian?) gave us 50,000 rupees, but we can't remember which one. After two years we registered and hired a contractor to build an office building. But we didn't have enough money to finish it, so we had to raise another 18,000 ourselves. We slowly detached from the cooperative office and finally didn't need men's help anymore. And different organizations came to support us, for instance USC, Canadian and PACT. And we started adult literacy classes.

At first we had thought to apply for a leasehold forest instead of a CFUG but many administrative problems arose and the DFO suggested a CFUG for all of us (sisters). Now we have 63 households with 430 members. Two years and one month ago we gathered here in the range post and formed a committee electing members. The next day we made pits for plantation and with 20 rupees from each member we hired a chautara (meeting place) for 1000 rupees/mo and set out to plant 7575 plants. And we made a Kangri House for stray cattle. We planted 16,000 sissau saplings last year.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

No households here are part of a CFUG so they all know about it.

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

We are getting great support from the DFO and rangers and CARE Nepal helps too. We are making a CFUG office nearby here but not yet completed for lack of funding.

**What, basically, are the responsibilities of the DFO to your CFUG?**

To give advice and consultancy, and they do that

**Did you encounter any problems during the formation?**

In the beginning we had problems with the other villagers sending their cattle in, etc. But otherwise no problems

**Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?**

(Kedar knows that she herself has not gotten any timber recently even though she is the vice-chair, and her home was severely damaged in the floods )

We need timber for the recent flood victims, but the current chairwoman is holding it back and we are not sure why. Her husband is very sick and she's said it's not because she doesn't want to give

**Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?**

Last April at the general assembly they agreed that the then existing committee would operate for five years, so they all seem happy with it

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

We have 25.5 hectares of land. It was completely barren at first. So we planted saplings and we primarily protect these

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

We don't sell anything presently for income but only supply ourselves. We are planning now for some agroforestry things to decorate the CFUG office like litchie or mango trees

**What has been the quality of interaction between members of the CFUG and local non-members? Have there been tensions?**

This tea-stall we're sitting in this is the only family in the area that is not a member of a CFUG. When we calculated the effort of our members in terms of money it has been about 5000 rupees per household so instead of asking that much from new members we encouraged them to start their own. A new CFUG nearby has 3-4 hectares. From time to time we have interactions with non-committee members if they have things to convey. I noted in Kathmandu that other people have tensions with community members, but we don't have that. I cannot say if it is because we have all women members. But we have seen that even with women's groups there are tensions

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

The vice-chair

**In your understanding, what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

We have so many grievances, but the government has to look after so many other things too. We need easier policy to take out and sell the timber and non-timber. There are many non-developing trees especially and non-production going to waste. Not to sell necessarily, but just for our own use. Like now I have no timber for my house because we are all afraid to take from our own forest. To use timber in emergencies like this not to save, we need to have at least the confidence to use from our forest this way.

**What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?**

**And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse, since your attendance at the forum?**

Prior to the forum I thought that the government didn't pay us any attention and was feeling that we were the only ones facing these problems. In the hills the CFUGs have no problems at all and can run things totally without the input of the government. But we need a lot of support in the Terai. In the hills they have gotten fully-grown forests but here we are given barren land and it's very difficult.

In the beginning we thought the government would take the forests back and only gave us false promises to get the villagers to protect the forests for them. Now I realize, that in normal circumstances it is ours and will remain with us. I came back from Kathmandu believing that. We didn't think in Rana times that they would go but suddenly they did. In Panchayat times we didn't think things would change and that went too. So anything can happen but if the government doesn't change we believe we can keep our forests.

**Do you feel that these issues were adequately addressed and understood by the ministers at the forum?**

I'm not sure if they understood we'll see with any implementation if anything happens. Generally the answers were just okay. It was nice to expose myself outside of work. But the woman from Bardia who presented our paper added something that was not in the paper. She said that the CARE staff had asked for payment from the CFUG (50 rupees). And at that moment I saw the face of one of the ministers he was angry and embarrassed. And later he asked for a clarification. She said they had asked for 50 rupees and I was so embarrassed for her presentation and felt that the ministers did not like it.

**Have any specific changes come to your area since the forum?**

We were thinking that we can't plant fruit trees inside the community forest. Now we know that we can and so are planning to do so. It's always better to express something directly rather than through a hierarchy of authority so we were very hopeful then. Now we don't think that the government will come here to fix things but we believe that things will happen anyway, over time.

**What do you feel that you personally gained by your experience participating in the forum?**

I not only gained from other's experiences but I was also able to share my own experiences with others. For example, in the beginning we wanted to send ordinary users not a committee member but they were not ready to go and felt uncomfortable, so she went instead. I shared that we need to encourage ordinary users to go outside for experiences too.

**Did meeting members of other CFUGs provide interesting information, insight, a sense of community and common interest?**

Recently we have been awarded 3000 rupees from our DFO and when I shared this with others there and here they were very happy and now we can plant fruit trees etc. We accept any kind of subsidy any time. But to receive the award we have to have a ceremony, so we haven't gotten the money yet.

**What skills do you think you acquired through your participation? For example in public speaking**

I have gained some confidence since the forum. I met friends and relations there, I have three brothers in Kathmandu and I met them. I didn't learn any particular skills, as the time was very short.

**Has your own level of activity in the CFUG changed since then? Increased, decreased. Why do you think this is so?**

Generally I think that all the committee members are happy with my participation and work. I can't speak for all of them but generally things are good and getting better.

**Om Prasad Paudel**  
**Former Secretary**  
**Gijara CFUG Banke**  
**Representative at forum**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

Eight years ago the forest was under the control of the DFO and we thought that we needed control. We didn't know about the CFUG system. I had some idea of the system from Panchayat control and I wanted to start something like that. I am a landless person and the permanent residents of the area liked the idea too so we contacted the DFO and learned about the CFUG provisions. Two years ago we registered. In 2050 VS our application was approved and we got this ward.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

All of the people in this ward are members of the CFUG. Udihara Pur VDC 2. Now other VDCs have a better idea because they have seen our forest and all those around don't have a forest. There is also no kali taun (open areas).

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

So far we are getting very good support from the DFO. Technical support mostly. Last year we had a budget of 30,000 for new plantation and 17,000 for saplings.

**What, basically, are the responsibilities of the DFO to your CFUG?**

**Did you encounter any problems during the formation?**

In the beginning there was a Pahadi Tharu interaction conflict. The local people, who are indigenous, didn't have the faith that we would really get the forest. So when the community took it they didn't feel they belonged and were attacking and taking things from the forest. And the people in the next district in Bardiya also wanted to take the forest products.

**Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?**

Sometimes we loan money to the villagers and there are disputes over its collection. And we are the only CFUG so it is expected that we will have some conflicts over encroaching.

**Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?**

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

Planting saplings in the empty land and managing to protect these by pruning, thinning etc.

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

Daura grass, khar, laura and other grasses to make jhawa (baskets). We have certain NTFP which we allow people to collect in certain portions and members are allowed to collect for free. Grass is free to the members but others have a charge. We raise 70-80,000 rupees last year.

**What has been the quality of interaction between members of the CFUG and local non-members? Have there been tensions?**

Secondary and tertiary users ask us when we will open the forest to them. But the demand for new membership is not high. No one asks as they are not aware of the issues and rights to the CFUG. The government is also not clear on the issue as to whether the neighboring villages with no CFUG have rights to the community closest to them where they can ask for membership.

**What types of activities have you been personally involved in?**

I have been the secretary since the very beginning, up until last year. But it was taking up too much time and I needed to do my own work. Now I am only an advisor.

**What is the difference in CFUG management between the Terai and the hills?**

In the Terai, the forest is very valuable so there is a lot of smuggling and attacking here. They use arms and we don't have any. The government should allow us to use arms and the DFO should provide armed guards. At least so they would be available if we needed to call them in.

**In your understanding, what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

The erosion rate is very high here and if it continues the life of the entire forest will be only 5-15 years. So the government needs to protect it with more river control. We are also not allowed to harvest any trees when the river starts to erode the land.

**What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?**

**And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse, since your attendance at the forum?**

I was not very clear on the rules and regulations of the government regarding the CFUGs. This was an opportunity to understand many more things. At the time I believed we would be able to make them understand our issues, but now that nothing is happening I see that perhaps we failed to make them understand. I think that nothing has happened since the forum.

**Do you feel that the ministers at the forum adequately addressed these issues?**

No, the answers by the ministers were not satisfactory. But the answers by the technicians and the bureaucrats were very satisfactory.

**Can you recall anything specifically useful to your own concerns that they said regarding these issues?**

I raised the issue of arms. Their answer was that if we also start carrying arms there will be a battle and that the user groups should be able to chase the intruders away without arms. I was also concerned about the border disputes which is relevant here. The forum participants suggested that the government should either give the authority of land allocation to the forest technicians or a special land allocation officer should be hired in the DFO to solve land dispute problems. They thought that this sounded good but that it would also involve budgetary concerns so they would have to think about it. Nothing has happened.

**Have any specific changes come to your area since the forum?**

No.

**What kinds of things did you hope this kind of direct interaction with ministers might achieve**

I expected that these higher level people would educate themselves through our experiences and that this could help them make better decisions. I thought that the forum would be beneficial mostly to them in this way, and that the long-term benefits would come back to both parties.

**What do you feel that you personally gained by your experience participating in the forum?**

This was a good opportunity to learn so many things. And to interact with friends from other CFUG and exchange information.

**What skills do you think you acquired through your participation? For example in public speaking**

For public speaking I have been very much involved at the district level but I didn't present anything in Kathmandu so it was not so helpful this way.

**Do you think this kind of forum would be useful at different levels, other than only the national?**

This kind of interaction program should be arranged at many levels so that people with little experience can participate at different levels, as it suits their experience. Those with no experience could participate at the EFEA level, and then others at the national level. This way participation will be very high and more concrete things will come out.

**Since you have returned, what things have you told your community members about the forum?**

We had a meeting afterwards and I told them everything and I think the level of consciousness about issues has gone up a bit since then. We have provided reading material about it also and people *do* come and read it. I also invited various members of the CFUG to a meeting and divided them into groups like we did at the forum and had them do an interactive exercise. It was very successful and now I feel I know a lot more about how to conduct these. I am also on the regional and district level EFEA/ CARE networking committee and we try to organize similar interactive programs.

**He asked us: Will the video letter be shown soon?**

We're taking it to NTV in Bardia and it should be shown next week sometime. Do you have a TV available? A: Yes in a neighbor's home.

**Will there be other work in this area?**

GreenCOM might have a renewal for next year.

**Radha K C**  
**non-committee member**  
**Uchanimbu CFUG, Dang**  
**Representative at forum**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

There was some plantation work going on before 1990 in the name of the Panchayat. After that we started our own planting because it was handed over to us. We started planting and protecting in our own capacity. And when we were able to show that we could care for it and do protection work, it was handed over to us. That was in 1991. The first chairman, Lila Man, had very good connections in the DFO so we had very few problems. In 1993 we got the first prize for protection and got a 15,000 rupees cash prize. Now foreigners and outsiders have started to come also and have suggested that we divide the forest into plots and have shown us how to make this work and have demonstrated the benefits of thinning and pruning. Again we recently won first prize.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

Everyone has understood but there are some people who pretend not to understand and create problems for the conservation work.

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

We receive good service from the DFO and on time. (We asked about the Action Plan controversy) It was also a mistake from our side. We didn't follow up the way we should have. If I said that publicly many people would disagree with me but that is how I see it.

**What, basically, are the responsibilities of the DFO to your CFUG?**

They should process the Action Plan paperwork when we send it. They should do a financial follow up of the status of the CFUG and there should be an evaluation system that determines how each chairperson has conducted the CFUG's business. The DFO should evaluate in order to facilitate a comparison.

**Did you encounter any problems during the formation?**

Since the Panchayat started the forest immediately after it fell we started using the forest haphazardly. When we started to protect it many people would say, "oh is this land only for your use now?" And now we have extended our protection efforts up to the hills and people take their cattle there and say this is not your land but the government's still, so we can still take things from it and graze here. They don't understand that we need to preserve all our land for long term good.

**Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?**

These days there are many things wrong in the CFUG. The executive committee members are just sitting on their positions and not doing very much. I live here near the road where the committee house is and I see many things. I tell them what I think but they don't listen. They recently made a rule that the guards should go and meet the secretary twice a day. There is so much time wasted on administrative things. Now the guards think they only need to go see the secretary instead of going into the forest.

**Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?**

What can I say? This year they did not plant anything in the rainy season. They had 10,000 saplings but did not plant them on time. At the end of the monsoon they came and said that each household was to plant 20-30 trees. But I didn't participate because it was so untimely and now I think all the saplings are just lying there and no one is planting them.

I've said so many times that we should take out the dead ipl-ipl trees to use. Instead they are being stolen. If it remains like this our reward level forest won't get anymore praise. I'm not happy with how representation has been in our CFUG. I feel that their intentions are not good. They have even made things difficult for the new chairperson, even though he is a good man (Narayan Sharma).

**What have they gained by this?**

They haven't really gained anything. But they were trying for personal gain, power, etc.

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

We've created a demonstration plot and done agroforestry-- fruit trees, plantation, thinning, pruning. We also need to take out the old trees. They're not dead but they have very little environmental or commercial value.

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

We don't have any. The only thing to sell is the root of the khavar trees for dye.

**What has been the quality of interaction between members of the CFUG and local non-members? Have there been tensions?**

The interaction is very low. There is very little interaction.

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

I have not been involved.

**What has your own personal household received from the CFUG?**

I get firewood and I take the goats there. We had pruning in April and that provided enough wood until now and for awhile longer. They Tharus us a lot of firewood and they still go there every Saturday. But we use it very carefully.

**In your understanding, what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

There should be a provision for regular follow up by the government. If they do that the villagers will know the quality and quantity of the forest and will be encouraged to preserve it.

**If you were chairperson, would you be able to manage the forest well?**

Management is not done by the chairperson (she corrected him)

**Okay, could you mobilize the community?**

If the chairperson cannot do that, which is precisely what he is liable for the very definition of his post then he should not hold it. If a service holder or a teacher holds that post it is nearly impossible for him to pay adequate attention to both places. Our office gets no use. It is always closed and there is no one there.

**What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?**

**And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse, since your attendance at the forum?**

Prior to the forum I thought something would happen. Afterward I realized that it will not be done by the high level people it will have to be done by ourselves. They are not there to work for us. For example most of the things we put to them were not taken seriously they laughed. Even if they delegate something for the villagers to do it will be absorbed somewhere in between.

**Do you feel that these issues were adequately addressed, understood by the ministers at the forum?**

I don't think they have understood us well sir. I don't think this kind of interaction will bring very much change. And I am not happy with the way they answered our questions. Some promises were made but I will believe them only after I see my friends receive things equipment etc.

**Can you recall anything specifically useful to your own concerns that they said regarding these issues?**

The border dispute I raised it. This was in the CVL as well. Again they told us that it should be handled from our side so I am not satisfied.

**Have any specific changes come to your area since the forum?**

None

**What kinds of things did you hope this kind of direct interaction with ministers might achieve**

First I had hoped that they would make a concrete decision on the border issue and would help us to not have conflicts with neighboring CFUGs. Secondly, I hoped they would be supportive in trying to help us manage the forest inside our boundaries and by understanding that we cannot patrol all the farthest boundary lines. We asked them for forest guards, etc. But they just say that it is our responsibility now that we are managing the forest, but we still can't take any of the benefits. And if we cannot manage the whole thing then we should not take more land than we can manage.

**What do you feel that you personally gained by your experience participating in the forum?**

The experience of going to Kathmandu, eating and sitting with the ministers, and going sightseeing was good. It was a nice experience to interact with participants from other districts.

**Since you have returned, what things have you told your community members about the forum?**

I told about my experiences twice in a meeting. They all listened well. There were not really any specific questions, they all seemed happy. I told them everything about the things they didn't take seriously, etc.  
(The villagers were not happy when Kedar specifically requested that she be sent to the forum. But this negativity has not continued since she returned.)

**Shanta Gvawali**  
**Secretary**  
**Bhrikuti Mahila CFUG Bardiva**  
**Representative at forum**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

Ganga Ram Acharki, a local social worker, encouraged us to do planting near the river to prevent erosion. Before that we didn't plant anything. We invited a ranger from the DFO and formed a committee four years ago. At that time we didn't know how important it was to invite the Women's Development Office, so we organized another meeting and invited them. But they asked us why they had not been invited the first time and we said we just didn't know we were supposed to. They said, well, you yourselves know everything then and you don't need our support. And since then we haven't gotten any support from them. All the help has come from the DFO. Even since the chief of the Women's Development Office changed our relationship hasn't improved.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

The forest was handed over just one year ago. Almost everyone around knows the importance of the CFUGs. But there are still some people who don't need forest products, and they say that it's good that we protect it since we benefit from grass, daura, better climate and higher ground water level, but still they don't assist. We are encouraging new members. If they joined in the first year, they pay 1000 rupees a year. But if they join later, say after five years, they will have to pay 5000 rupees a year, etc. It is open to everyone with payment.

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

We are getting support mainly from the DFO. CARE is providing adult literacy classes, and has given 300 saplings of sissau trees.

**Did CARE ask for some payment at some point?**

CARE provided us with 9000 rupees to run a literacy class, but when they came to monitor it they asked for 50 rupees payment.

**Did you encounter any problems during the formation?**

There were no problems. We're getting support from the DFO. Now we are facing some problems with conservation. The forest is divided into two sections, and we are raising money from khar, but people are stealing at night, and we have only one Chaukidar (guard). We need two because he can't do enough to stop them. We are saving our income in the bank (currently 30-40,000 rupees) but instead of using that money we are raising from households to pay the guards. But right now we feel we may not be able to raise enough money from households to pay the guard, and we don't want to take our bank money out. We are saving it for something big and important. So now we are looking for another outside source for money to pay the guard.

I went out just this morning and visited every household to find stolen khar and found it in many places. I told them that some day we will do a watch and see them bringing the khar in and then they will be punished.

Our forest is 31.22 hectares with 63 households.

**Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?**

In the last election the secretary and the chairperson stayed the same and the other positions changed. I do accounting, etc. If it gets too complicated I get my husband's help.

We don't have Tharu/Chaudhari members; they have their own CFUG. But 5-6 new members came into our CFUG recently.

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

Planting the forest and replacing dead plants Planting fodder trees We do cutting and pruning We take the shorn branches and other fallen material and distribute it among the households

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

We've been planting bamboo We did some other agroforestry when the trees were small and sold things Now mostly khar is available and the plants are too big to do agroforestry inside

**What has been the quality of interaction between members of the CFUG and local non-members? Have there been tensions?**

There isn't much interaction but they come and steal our products even though they have their own CFUGs

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

I am the secretary I have been elected recently I don't have much education, but everyone chose me

**What has your own personal household received from the CFUG?**

We get grass firewood branches

**In your understanding, what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

The main thing is that we need subsidy for the protection We also need roads and trail construction inside the forest Border problems are also big we have encroaching from all sides

**If they say to you well you are saving money in the bank, but now you ask us for subsidies anyway, what would you say?**

Well we have khavar trees in the forest These are high priced timber They should either give us permission to harvest such old, useless but profitable trees or they should give us subsidies to do other works (Kedar's note Khaera?? are one of five protected endangered species of trees But many people are still getting permission from the government to cut them )

**What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?**

**And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse, since your attendance at the forum?**

There is a big difference in my opinion before and after the forum Before I thought the government would take back the forest after a few years Now I think that they won't if we manage it properly

**Do you feel that these issues were adequately addressed and understood by the ministers at the forum?**

They should have understood. They answered all the specific questions very positively the right to harvest old trees, that we will get equipment for thinning, etc. We also emphasized the necessity for training and tools, and they agreed.

**Have any specific changes come to your area since the forum?**

They brought us there and then promised us many things, especially training programs. But we haven't gotten anything yet. Perhaps they didn't hear, perhaps they didn't understand properly. I haven't really seen any good or bad things since the forum. No, nothing specific has happened, but I told all my experiences and what I learned at the forum to my friends here and we are trying to do those things ourselves.

**What kinds of things did you hope this kind of direct interaction with ministers might achieve?**

We thought that we would get more training and get the authority to take out the old trees. We also would very much like more financial managing training. The treasurer, secretary and other committee members should be trained in administrative matters.

**What do you feel that you personally gained by your experience participating in the forum?**

I was able to interact with forest users from different districts and had a chance to talk directly to the ministers and to represent our group's views.

**Did meeting members of other CFUGs provide interesting information, insight, a sense of community and common interest?**

We shared our different experiences. It was a very nice opportunity to interact with others and to learn what kinds of NTFP they were harvesting and managing and how they were increasing their funds, etc.

**What skills do you think you acquired through your participation? For example in public speaking.**

I had already had some experience in delivering political speeches as I am very active in leftist politics in our area. But I never before had an opportunity to speak before a group of ministers like that.

**Since you have returned, what things have you told your community members about the forum?**

I explained the things I had learned from the other CFUG members. I told them that we are now legally permitted to remove old trees from the forest and explained to everyone that the government was not going to take back the forest from us.

**Has your own level of activity in the CFUG changed since then? Increased, decreased Why do you think this is so?**

If we are permitted to harvest trees, we could make some small park areas and build bus stops. We are targeting our balance in the bank, but it is only 20-30,000 rupees and that is not very much in these times.

**Som Bahadur Budha Chhetri  
Secretary  
Gijara CFUG, Banke**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

We started a new forest. The Forestry Office did the planting, and we started to care for it since 1991. Then we registered as a community forest two years ago. But I wasn't active at that time.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

This is the only CFUG in the surrounding area and has the pressure of a very large population. Many people don't know or understand yet what a community forest is.

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

We get different types of support from the DFO including technical support. They also helped us to build this CFUG meeting house. We have also asked them to provide forest guards but they haven't yet.

**Did you encounter any problems during the formation?**

I don't really know of any as I wasn't involved then.

**Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?**

Sometimes there are minor opinion disputes but generally things are organized.

**Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?**

Yes. We have people from every tal (area) and every jat (caste).

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

Primarily firewood and fodder collection. Roofing material/ grass (Khar) was the main item in the beginning when the forest was thin, but now firewood is increasing. 217,000 rupees were raised last year. With this we built this house and it pays for the office secretary and forest guards. We are also doing different public works, putting in a small bridge in the village and giving some money for a school. We have also started a fire line to control fires and done a lot of pruning and thinning.

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

Only Khar in the beginning

**What has been the quality of interaction between members of the CFUG and local non-members? Have there been tensions?**

The forest borders with another district and we are reluctant to involve people from another district. Others say that because this is the only forest in the area they should have access to it also.

**How would you characterize the relationship between your CFUG and the DFO? Cooperative, uncommunicative?**

Yes, interaction has been fine

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

I'm the office secretary. I do administrative and accounting work.

**In your understanding, what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

They should provide training on management skills. We also need a massive awareness campaign to educate people on the rules and regulations.

**Have any specific changes come to your area since the forum?**

No

**Since your representative returned, what things have you been told about the forum?**

I wasn't here when our representative went to the forum. Generally Om (the representative) tells us everything he learns, but right now I don't recall what he has said about the forum.

**Do you think it is difficult putting problems to the rangers and ministers?**

Even the DFO and others need to bring the problems to the ministers, but it is always better to address them directly.

**Are you allowed to sell things from the forest?**

There are many bureaucratic hassles in harvesting trees. We should get the right to sell the products, but so many bureaucratic hassles.

**Do they ask for bribes?**

No, but they take a very long time and we have to please them in various ways. Once the forest is handed over they should trust the users, but they still want to retain some control. If we get full harvesting rights the forest won't change because our most important concern is protecting it. But sometimes the DFO generalizes from a few bad examples.

For instance, in Dang one group misused their forest rights by cutting trees, so now we all have to suffer

**After a few years will the forest user groups be more powerful than the VDC because of the income generation? And do you think that politicians will start to campaign here more and try to control voting capacity locally through the CFUG?**  
At this point I don't think so

**How large is your forest?**

133.83 hectares with 276 households. There is no other community forest nearby but people near Bardiva are trying to get one

**Gita Adhikari**

**executive committee member**

**Bhrikuti Mahila CFUG, Bardiva**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

We first realized that we needed a forest, and so we made the pits and started plantation. I don't remember how we first made official contacts. I wasn't in the committee then.

**How do you understand the words "community forest"?**

It is a forest grown by the community users themselves.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

Yes, all the surrounding villagers are aware.

**Do you feel your community is being properly represented through the election of those holding committee officer positions?**

I am a new member in the committee by my choice. This election time the sisters in the committee encouraged me because I am one of the most educated women in the area, and they felt I would be helpful. I didn't have any grievances with how the committee was being run before, that's not why I joined. But I wanted to share my time and learn some things.

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

Management mostly. Last year we did some thinning and pruning and this year we plan to take some fodder trees.

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

A little khar. In the beginning we had some legumes but now only a little khar.

**What has been the quality of interaction between members of the CFUG and local non-members? Have there been tensions?**

**How would you characterize the relationship between your CFUG and the DFO?  
Cooperative, uncommunicative?**

We have very good communication with the ranger at the DFO

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

I'm a member of the executive committee. And I bring fodder and firewood from the forest

**What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?**

**And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse, since your attendance at the forum?**

I wasn't on the committee at the time so I don't really know very much about it. But I think it was a very good opportunity to meet with different people in Kathmandu and with the ministers

**Since your representative returned, what things have you been told about the forum?**

The interaction was good. She told us that the government will not take the forest if we handle it well. She communicated all of what she learned, even with people who were not on the committee at the time like myself. This kind of interaction is a very good experience

**Do you think this kind of interaction should be done at different level? Not just at the national level?**

Yes because then more people could participate and benefit

**If you were invited to participate in such a forum, what would you do first?**

I would meet with my friends and discuss what should be raised at the meeting

**Darma Bahadur Chaudhari  
non-committee member  
Baghaura Pata CFUG, Bardia**

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**  
I don't remember how it started. They called for a meeting but I rarely go to these

**What do you understand by the words "community forest"?**

A forest which we plant by ourselves and which we have the right to use

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

Most people understand and have their own forests

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

In the beginning they started the planting. And they are providing technical assistance

**Did you encounter any problems during the formation?**

There were no problems that I can remember

**Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?**

If there is a distribution of plants or a harvesting of firewood, they inform the whole community. But usually the committee works on its own

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

(He is a non-committee CFUG member) My own involvement is going to collect my own necessary items: daura, grass for fodder. In the past there was khar, but now that the trees are bigger there is not so much.

**In your understanding, what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

The government has nothing to do since we have the forest now.

**What was your attitude prior to the forum toward the way the central government was handling community forestry issues and solving problems? Did you feel supported by them, that your problems were understood?**

And in which ways has this understanding and opinion changed, for better or worse since your attendance at the forum?

Gopal (the chair and his brother) said that nothing really new came from the forum. But perhaps he did find out some new things, but maybe he can't convey everything to us. I don't really remember.

**Devi Maya Thapa**

Chairperson

Amilva Mahila Shamudayik Ban, Satbarwa

CFUG was not represented at the forum

**Can you describe for us the procedure through which your CFUG was created?**

The CFUG has not yet gotten its handover papers. Even though we already had a forest around us we thought we should start preserving it or it would disappear as has happened.

in other places. So we got official permission one year ago. Others also encouraged us in the area starting conservation. Now the handover process is nearly finished.

**Do you feel that other villagers in your surrounding area are familiar with the procedures necessary to instigate a CFUG?**

All the villages around are very concerned with the procedure and importance of conservation. This is ward 9 of the VDC. In this ward alone there are six CFUGs. Women only manage two and the others are all men.

**Do you feel your DFO is adequately familiar with these procedures, and are they responsive to requests?**

The DFO is providing technical support for writing the Action Plan and the Constitution, and is doing the surveying. They are doing what they are supposed to be doing and in a fairly timely fashion.

**Have you been happy with the way members have made decisions within the CFUG and cooperated with one another?**

We have called a meeting fifteen days from now to increase the levels of participation of all the members and to discuss further strategies to improve planting and grazing issues. The goal is to stop uncontrolled grazing for the next five years to help the saplings.

**Can you describe the primary management skills that the community practices in the forest?**

We haven't started any specific management techniques yet because the forest is still very new to our conservation efforts.

**Which major non-timber forest products have you been able to harvest/ collect and sell?**

None yet. In the future I think we will have some fallen trees and some paper making grass to sell. But it is difficult to tell how much now.

**What has your own personal involvement been within the CFUG?**

I was one of the instigators and am the chairperson of the CFUG.

**What has your own personal household received from the CFUG?**

We are not now taking wood from our own forest but are buying it from a neighbor's CFUG for 301 rupees/year for all our needs. We want to keep our forest as a model plot now then later we can say to our neighbors see you sold your wood and now your forest looks like this but ours is still so nice.

**In your understanding what is the role of the central government in developing and promoting community forestry?**

For example in Bardia the government cleared all the forest and made open land. And they took all the timber and forest products. So when it came to their main concern settlement and land preservation there was nothing left to build fences with, and no cash

foods. They have many difficulties there. The main responsibility of the government now is to raise awareness through radio, television, everything. But somehow there needs to be information and awareness of the importance of conservation spread. And people need to know about the good and bad examples.

**Have you heard anything about the neighboring CFUGs participation in the forum in Kathmandu?**

No, I don't know anything about the forum.

**Kedar told her a little about the idea of the forum and asked if this kind of program would be helpful to her.**

There is definitely a difference between speaking about things and doing them. I don't think we can work following the leaders. It requires a regular follow up and this is hard to do.

**Do you have anything that you would like to comment to the policy makers?**

Now we are conserving the forest and we don't want the government to come in five years and take it back.

### APPENDIX III Transcripts of Interviews with Policy Makers

Mr N R. Tiwari  
Secretary  
Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation

**Based on your experience in forestry policy making, what would you identify as the largest impediment to the proper functioning of community forests?**

We have not been able to promote the post formation support that is the biggest impediment

**Given this insight, how would you characterize these problems. That is, what are the reasons for the gap between the way things "should" work, and the way things actually do work at the CFUG level? And at the national level?**

Shortage of human resources. Shortage of financial resources. There is a drive now for the handover of the forests but we also need a similar drive for the post-handover support. Many donors are supporting handover procedures, and some of them are working to support the post-handover phase. But they are all limited to their project areas.

**Do you have any comment on the mentality of the forest technicians and bureaucrats?**

There is an opinion difference among the technicians. Some of them support the community forest process and some are reluctant. Some are very passive on this point and they need some reorientation.

**To date, what has your personal involvement been in policy making for community forestry?**

N/A

**In your opinion, what were the most important issues that came up at the Community Forestry Forum?**

The need for post handover support. All other issues come under this phase-- the need for training, timely preparation and registration of Action Plans, etc.

**Did your experience at the forum change any of your attitudes about the reasons for the problems faced in effective community forest management?**

I learned so many things from the forum. I didn't know most of the issues that were raised. It was very impressive that such a large number of forest users were there and that the video letter from a similar group was shown.

**What specifically have you done since the forum to address the problems you identified above?**

We have done an amendment to the law since the forum which has included some of the concerns raised in the forum.

**Such as?**

Well there were so many things and there are so many issues in the law. How can I tell you all of them right here?

**Do you ever get opportunities to interact with the general population in such a direct way as you did at the forum?**

There have been many seminars and workshops of this type, but this one was special because it organized an event where people from the very top and the grassroots level could meet. Before we would discuss *about* the grassroots users in our seminars or sometimes we would be discussing with them but never with the presence of high level policy makers.

**Has the experience had any direct effects on the way you feel problems can be more effectively explored and solved?**

If we make a small committee and analyze the problems raised at the forum we can do some very specific work. We could come up with more practical policy and programs.

**At the forum you made a comment that you would organize a committee. Why didn't you?**

I had so many things to do and no body has followed it up. So it is still living there. If someone would be there to follow it up, it could still be done.

**Overall, do you feel this kind of a contact forum has been useful to your understanding of the impediments to adequate community forestry management and the problems faced locally by forest users?**

Yes it was.

**Do you believe that the villagers have an accurate idea of the problems they face and the reasons for those problems?**

Yes they were able to make things clear but their presentation was from a very limited area (EFEA). So all the problems for the full national context were not presented there.

**What do you think of the general charges of corruption made by the community video letter and by participants in the forum?**

It might be true. If it is really happening if some DFO or ranger is asking for bribes or if for example the users are doing legal pruning and the ranger asks for money for his approval then this is against the law and they should be punished. But if someone asks for some support for their travel money (a per diem) I don't see that as wrong (as when the rangers ask for money from the CFUG for attendance at their meetings).

**Do you have anything else to say?**

If the event had been organized in their own village area they could have expressed things more clearly.

**Dr Madhav Ghimire**  
**Joint Secretary, Ministry of Population and Environment**  
**Formerly Joint Secretary, National Planning Commission (at time of forum)**  
**Former EFEA Coordinator**

**Based on your experience in forestry policy making, what would you identify as the largest impediment to the proper functioning of community forests?**

Many issues are now settling down. There was a tendency among the government officials not to hand over the good forests. And they used to think that the forests belonged to them and they did not want to give them to the villagers. The third issue is how to share the resources among the villagers, and how to share them between the government and the public. There has been much confusion and struggle. But nowadays these problems are not really there and the degree of problems in this area are low through the course of the gradual development of the community forestry system. Now a few other problems remain. For instance the villagers have a fear that the government might take back the forests. There is the lack of technicians and the lack of post formation support for Action Plan development, etc.

**Given this insight, how would you characterize these problems. That is, what are the reasons for the gap between the way things "should" work, and the way things actually do work at the CFUG level? And at the national level?**

First there are the limitations in human resources and technical mapping. We don't have adequate resources or technical facilities. Second is the tendency of the government technicians and the administrators not to accept change. Third there is no clear distinction in practice between use ownership, land ownership and forest product ownership. Perhaps we have not made clear the difference between the land ownership and product ownership (use ownership has already been settled through handover).

At the CFUG level there is nothing specific. We might see some anecdotal problems but most are procedural problems and should not be generalized from by the villagers. Sometimes there are problems of user identification and political boundaries. And these problems are still there despite the guidelines.

**To date, what has your personal involvement been in policy making for community forestry?**

I am not involved in policy making these days.

**In your opinion what were the most important issues that came up at the Community Forestry Forum?**

The most important issues in the forum were those about the forestry staff and the delay in the Action Plan etc.

**Did your experience at the forum change any of your attitudes about the reasons for the problems faced in effective community forest management?**

I haven't had an experience like this forum before, with the presence of individuals from such grassroots levels and also individuals from such a high level within the government. This forum was remarkable because of the difference in levels between these two sides. I have seen grassroots meetings before but never with this great split in representative participants. But what I especially found important about this forum was not only the meeting of grassroots level participants and ministers, but that you gathered the people in between the ministers and the public. I can't say that the technocrats and the bureaucrats have not had such opportunities before, but this helped them to revise and to rethink the issues and to comment and express commitment. In that particular point of time, people from every level tried to concentrate and participate in issues, and to come up with solutions. And for the grassroots people it was a wonderful opportunity to clarify their concerns and problems. It was a nice incentive for them. I cannot say how effective it was but it certainly brings the issues toward a positive direction.

**What specifically have you done since the forum to address the problems you identified above?**

**Do you ever get opportunities to interact with the general population in such a direct way as you did at the forum?**

**Has the experience had any direct effects on the way you feel problems can be more effectively explored and solved?**

It was designed in a way that they could speak in a spontaneous way. But I felt that in some way the villagers were not being fully open with their ideas that they had some hesitation still. But to the extent that they expressed themselves it was wonderful. I think that it would be much better if the forum was held at the front yard of EFEA's office in Tulsipur. But I understand the problem that the ministers were unable to go there. But for the ease of the villagers it would be much better in Tulsipur in their own setting.

**Overall do you feel this kind of a contact forum has been useful to your understanding of the impediments to adequate community forestry management and the problems faced locally by forest users?**

**Do you believe that the villagers have an accurate idea of the problems they face and the reasons for those problems?**

**What do you think of the general charges of corruption made by the community video letter and by participants in the forum?**

If we know for a fact that particular things are happening, then we should not hesitate to acknowledge it. In fact we should support in any way we can to bring the problems out. We all know there is corruption but it is very important that this issue came out here and in front of all of us. It gave a psychological pressure to all of the participants.

**Mr Ananta Raj Pande**  
**Acting Secretary, Ministry of Population and Environment**

**Based on your experience in forestry policy making, what would you identify as the largest impediment to the proper functioning of community forests?**

Community Forestry is based on the philosophy of people's participation. Sometimes it comes to our knowledge that there is no transparency in our activities, and that there is no local participation in budgetary issues and expenditure. If we are willing to increase the participation of local people, we should be transparent in budget matters so that local people will not have doubts as to where money donated by foreign agencies is going.

**Given this insight, how would you characterize these problems. That is, what are the reasons for the gap between the way things "should" work, and the way things actually do work at the CFUG level?**

The government should set rules regarding community forestry and after handing the forests over to the villagers they should look after the technical aspects only, leaving everything else to the community. Everything, income expenditures use should all be in the hands of the community. But we can see that the government is still holding some power in these areas.

**And at the national level?**

There is a necessity for human resource development. There is always this problem of the limitation on human resources in the government offices. We are handing over a huge resource to the communities and we should train them, arrange different types of field trips for them and try to make them as independent as possible in technical matters. Still the government employees and the ordinary public have the feeling that the forests belong to the government and that the government should do some work in this area. The government employees, particularly, feel that the forests belong to the government and so they themselves should retain some control over it. This has been an obstruction to fulfilling the ideal philosophical goals of community forestry.

**To date, what has your personal involvement been in policy making for community forestry?**

Despite the clear concept of community forestry the government has not been able to achieve this goal because of the above-mentioned problems, and because of the lack of practical and useful policy.

**In your opinion, what were the most important issues that came up at the Community Forestry Forum?**

Plantation. The saplings being provided to the villagers are not very useful or suited to local needs. We need to provide them with more beneficial species backed by scientific research. The coordination and participation of the forum was excellent in a way that senior officials and villagers were raising issues together. The main message I feel they were expressing is that the government is still causing difficulties for the villagers.

abilities to run their forests. This helped to make clear that a gap does exist between the attitudes of the government officials and the people.

**Did your experience at the forum change any of your attitudes about the reasons for the problems faced in effective community forest management?**

Nothing very specific, but it has been very beneficial to me. In most of the seminars, all of the invitees are specialists, but in the forum all the participants were directly related to actual work. It was an excellent opportunity to pass information in a very direct way.

**What specifically have you done since the forum to address the problems you identified above?**

**Do you ever get opportunities to interact with the general population in such a direct way as you did at the forum?**

I've never been involved in such a forum on forestry issues specifically. Nowadays many NGOs organize such workshops involving different levels of people, but I have never seen one to such an extent.

**Has the experience had any direct effects on the way you feel problems can be more effectively explored and solved?**

The forum was a nice beginning, but since there was such limited participation we cannot expect to see nation-wide change resulting from it. We should not think of it as an isolated event, but should organize such events on a regular basis. We should also hold such gatherings on a district level, otherwise only a very few people will benefit.

**Overall, do you feel this kind of a contact forum has been useful to your understanding of the impediments to adequate community forestry management and the problems faced locally by forest users?**

Yes, I do. I believe that such interactive programs could have a really positive impact if we could conduct them at different locations regularly and on different participatory/administrative levels. We can see that the villagers are not understanding exactly what the government has said. We should make them more resourceful in developing a sense of ownership.

**Do you believe that the villagers have an accurate idea of the problems they face and the reasons for those problems?**

The atmosphere of the forum might not have been very comfortable for the villagers. If you came here to me with a television camera, I might not feel so comfortable. The formal setting of the forum might have been difficult. However, they might have gained a feeling of increased self-confidence for having participated.

**What do you think of the general charges of corruption made by the community video letter and by participants in the forum?**

If there is transparency, this can reduce the incidents of corruption. We don't have sufficient transparency now. The way the villagers presented the issues clearly shows that the problem exists and that we need to try to solve it at the policy level.

**Mr. Madhukar Upadhyay**  
**Under Secretary (technical), Department of Soil Conservation**  
**Formerly, Chief, Bagmati Watershed Project**

**Based on your experience in forestry policy making, what would you identify as the largest impediment to the proper functioning of community forests?**

We do not very clearly understand the importance of the binding factor for the community forests. Now, most community forests' success depends upon the secretary or the chairperson, but the real community has not been activated so far. And the system is working not because of spontaneous, voluntary motivation toward the community forests but by some sort of compulsory factor, for instance, thinking that unless the community joins together the government will take back the forest. If we fail to ignite their self-interest, the whole movement of community forestry might fail within a few years. Simple solutions such as providing easier access to firewood and fuel will not be enough to bind them forever. Participation should be truly voluntary and we need to do something very different, very extreme, to turn their participation into a voluntary motivation.

**Given this insight, how would you characterize these problems? That is, what are the reasons for the gap between the way things "should" work, and the way things actually do work at the CFUG level?**

The basic concept behind community forestry is based on old-time values of our society. Our society held these same values long ago when the entire political system was different. People would volunteer for different community works for certain things like religion or by the village chief's decree. In today's changed context we need to guarantee that people will get long-term benefits for their efforts. People will unite for many reasons, often for emotional reasons, but these never last. If we want to establish a long-term and sustainable forestry system, then we need to discover the binding fiber that will be effective for everyone in a community. There needs to be some guarantee of profit/benefit. (Kedar clarification: he is referring here to a possible government provision to provide CFUGs the right to distribute cash income among individual households rather than reserving it only for community, public works as is now the law.)

**And at the national level?**

Even at the local level, most things are being done in a clinical, official way only. For example, before there were CFs in Humla, most of the population was dependent either directly or indirectly upon sheep herding and their products for their livelihood. When

the government announced the CFUG system many people began protecting forestland and the shepherders found it difficult to find land for grazing. So the numbers of sheep in the area began to decrease, despite the fact that they provided meat, wool and grain transportation. Last year's famine in Humla was largely due to this decrease in the sheep population as there was no way to transport and distribute grain quickly enough, and the availability of meat went down also. The community forest system in itself is a good thing but it should always be applied in the specific context of local cultural and social needs.

**To date, what has your personal involvement been in policy making for community forestry?**

N/A

**In your opinion, what were the most important issues that came up at the Community Forestry Forum?**

CFUG users came there with genuine questions and concerns, but all the answers were of an official type. All of the responses were lacking sensitivity to the farmer's concerns.

**Did your experience at the forum change any of your attitudes about the reasons for the problems faced in effective community forest management?**

Listening to the concerns of the people certainly widened my horizons. And I realized one thing: people do not get tired or frustrated with expressing their problems and views. I was very glad to see them still hopeful, and still optimistic even though they are at the bottom level in their expectations. They are like baby chicks which open their mouths at every noise they hear.

**What specifically have you done since the forum to address the problems you identified above?**

N/A

**Do you ever get opportunities to interact with the general population in such a direct way as you did at the forum?**

I haven't had such an opportunity to participate in this kind of forum before. I have met with villagers and worked with them and I have various kinds of involvement with ministers. But it was a unique event for the ministers and policy makers to interact with villagers directly.

**Has the experience had any direct effects on the way you feel problems can be more effectively explored and solved?**

The whole event was a little more formal than necessary. If the setting had been more ordinary and informal and if the ministers would have been called upon to address each individual question immediately after it was posed, the meeting would have been far more effective.

**Overall, do you feel this kind of a contact forum has been useful to your understanding of the impediments to adequate community forestry management and the problems faced locally by forest users?**

If such a forum could be conducted at different levels and the session of questions and answers could go back and forth more directly, it would be better in the future

**Do you believe that the villagers have an accurate idea of the problems they face and the reasons for those problems?**

The villagers are very clear in their ideas. It is we who always make them confused

**What do you think of the general charges of corruption made by the community video letter and by participants in the forum?**

We all know that the situation is even worse than they presented it at the forum. The main problem is that no one will take the initiative to actually take action against the transgressors

**Mr. Udaya Nepali Shrestha  
Acting Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice**

**Based on your experience in forestry policy making, what would you identify as the largest impediment to the proper functioning of community forests?**

Not only as the executive chief of the Law Ministry, but also from the perspective of an ordinary citizen, what I see is that much is motivated by sentimentality, and only sometimes this works. The Panchayat system was an imposed system, so the disputes and differences were also settled by imposition. This CFUG system is a result of a sentimentality toward the ideal of people's participation, etc. That is why there are so many disputes at different levels and why they have not been resolved yet. However, it is not necessary to solve these problems through the parliament. Most of the problems are of a procedural nature and should be settled at that level. I don't see that it's necessary to make any amendments to the law just yet. It may be premature.

**Given this insight, how would you characterize these problems? That is, what are the reasons for the gap between the way things "should" work, and the way things actually do work at the CFUG level? And at the national level?**

The government's authority is often used in a negative capacity. That is, we have an authority which allows us *not* to do anything as well, and this is a problem. The rules should be designed to enable people to become more creative, but this is not happening because our bureaucrats need to be reoriented.

The misuse of authority is everywhere in our society. It may be that the CFUGs have a similar problem with this misuse.

**To date, what has your personal involvement been in policy making for community forestry?**

I am involved at the umbrella level. The forest secretary brings his sectoral problems to me and I examine their legal aspects in the national context and determine their applicability. Being a secretary of Law and Justice, I cannot be biased. I need to consult the constitution, other legal procedures, and jurisprudence. My position here in the Ministry of Law and Justice is located at the apex of the policy-making procedure. I do not deal with implementation, but solely policy making.

**In your opinion, what were the most important issues that came up at the Community Forestry Forum?**

First I liked the collectively motivated mass participation. Particularly of the women. I like the direction of those innocent participants. We met them, and they also met us, the policy makers. They brought out and spoke about many of the restrictions and problems created for them from the government side. These are the problems which are caused by the lack of understanding and motivation toward the new community forestry legislation by the forestry ministry's staff. They still carry an outdated attitude. In the forum, motivation on the side of the government representatives was lacking.

**Did your experience at the forum change any of your attitudes about the reasons for the problems faced in effective community forest management?**

However poor, illiterate and deprived the people are, we could still go much further in communicating if we would approach them properly.

**What specifically have you done since the forum to address the problems you identified above?**

We need to make a manual for the CFUG users, to make it clear regarding the rights, regulations, duties, legal provision, the role of line agencies, etc. It could also include some basic technical aspects on community forestry. And it should be written in very clear and simple language.

**Do you ever get opportunities to interact with the general population in such a direct way as you did at the forum?**

Not at all. I'm very impressed with this seminar.

**Has the experience had any direct effects on the way you feel problems can be more effectively explored and solved?**

The proceedings of the forum should be reproduced and analyzed. These sorts of events should be well designed and the length of time should be increased. From the government side, the real implementers should also be present, the rangers and the DFOs, since so much of the discussion was about them.

**Overall, do you feel this kind of a contact forum has been useful to your understanding of the impediments to adequate community forestry management and the problems faced locally by forest users?**

N/A

**Do you believe that the villagers have an accurate idea of the problems they face and the reasons for those problems?**

They expressed themselves adequately, but the language used in the responses by the top-level people was not appropriate. But for the villagers the ministers' very presence was an answer in itself (he seemed to feel they were adequately satisfied) but, in fact, there were no real answers given at all.

**What do you think of the general charges of corruption made by the community video letter and by participants in the forum?**

It is a genuine issue. Our own psychology and the government mechanisms are in themselves corrupt. Many people say that their personal salary is not enough for them which is not a valid reason. They should be able to manage with what they earn, and before joining the government, they know that we have these limitations here. We have a tradition of manipulating someone's power into economic power and this occurs from the top to the bottom.

**Mr S S Hamal  
CARE Nepal**

**Based on your experience forestry policy making, what would you identify as the largest impediment to the proper functioning of community forest?**

The CF policy as such is one of the most democratic policies the country has seen in any sector of society. However, as is the case with every liberal policy, implementation does not follow the essence of the policy. Major impediments to the proper functioning of community forests are

Hesitation on the part of DFOs especially in Terai to implement this policy largely due to

- fear of further erosion of their authority + interest,
- that it will complicate their life with additional burdens (second generation problems), traditional mind-set resistance to change their roles

Lack of commitment from HMG officials

- there is no commitment from DFO staff to solve second generation problems
- some of the DFO lack the capability and resources to address the second generation - problems
- lack of in-depth approach in forest hand over and post hand over support processes

Domination of elite in CFUGs resulting in  
-equity problems,  
-lack of democratic practices,  
-misuse of funds generated through CF management,

**Given this insight, how would you characterize these problems? That is, what are the reasons for the gap between the way things should work and, and the way things do work at the CFUG level?**

Gaps at CFUG level

- Lack of community ownership - power held by executive committee instead of user group Elite (lack of democratic practice) usually dominates the executive committee
- Equity problems and misuse of funds (the marginalized section of the community usually are not getting equal benefits)
- Failure to address the specific needs of the particular section of users, e.g. people who used to live by selling fuelwood earlier, they have lost their employment or source of income. No alternatives are provided in most cases
- General lack of awareness among common users about community forestry and also regarding responsibilities and rights of individual users

At national level

- The feeling of full ownership of the forest is still lacking due to some contradictory policies and action from the side of government e.g. extraction of NTFPs (resin) from community forests by contractors assigned by the HMG
- Hand wash off attitude - the HMG feels that after hand over all second-generation problems are to be solved by the users. There is a strong need to develop directives, prepare human resources and bring in more funds to address these problems. There are a lot of potential and work to be done in this respect

**To date, What has your personal involvement been in policy making for community forestry?**

My involvement so far has been limited to participation in formal and informal discussion forums regarding CF policy

Formal

- community forest forum organized by GreenCom in March 1998,
- community forest regional workshop (mid and far western development region) held in Nepalgunj in August 1998

**Informal**

-district level networking workshops, a forum annually organized in EFEA districts with a purpose to generate dialog between users and DFO staff regarding policy and implementation issues

**In your opinion, what were the most important issues that came up at the Community Forestry Forum?**

The opportunity for the users to interact with the policy makers in direct and indirect (video letter) way was the most important aspect of the forum. Some of the issues raised at the forum have long term implication regarding the success of community forestry programs

- second generation problems such as boundary disputes, lack of technical as well as managerial skills within the user groups,
- gaps concerning roles of HMG line agencies especially DFO, support required by users to resolve/minimize the second-generation problems,
- discrimination of women and their role in CF by their male counterpart in the community,

One of the highlights of the forum was the sharing of achievements in community forestry. It showed that the balance is heavily tilted towards actual benefits to the users

**Did your experience at the forum change any of your attitude about the reasons for the problems faced in effective community forestry management?**

Basically No. But I was amazed that some issues and their solutions were so lightly taken by the policy makers. They tried to be good listeners, but if you look at the action plans developed afterwards and time frame allocated you can decide for yourself that they were not being serious

Example action plan presented by Border and Administration group (page 32-33)

**What specifically have you done since the forum to address the problems you identifies above?**

Raised reiterated the important issues at different forums such as EFEA planning and progress review workshops  
Tried to incorporate activities that may address these issues in annual work plan of CARE in EFEA context

**Do you ever get opportunities to interact with the general population in such a direct way as you did at the forum?**

Yes. As I am assigned at the field level in EFEA, I usually have opportunities to interact with users that are more intensive and informal in nature.

**Has the experience had any direct effects on the way you feel problems can be effectively explored and solved?**

This forum was an innovative way to look at things. It has certainly helped to boost up the morale of the users. But I think, most of the issues and problems are already identified at the field level and they can be easily resolved at the field level. So, similar forum between the users and district level line agencies might be more practical and realistic.

**Overall, do you feel this kind of a contact forum has been useful to your understanding of the impediments to adequate community forest management and the problems faced locally by the forest users?**

Yes, it was certainly helpful. But the superficial approach of looking at the issues raised and the time allocated for the discussion greatly diminished the outcome of the forum. The action plans could have been more realistic and meaningful.

**Do you believe that the villagers have an accurate idea of the problems they face and the reasons for those problems?**

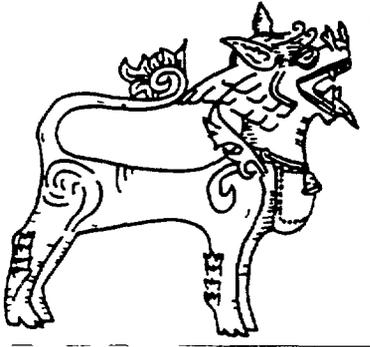
I have stated above that the level of awareness among general users varies dramatically. Same applies here too. Some of them might be aware of their problems but they might be at a loss to pin point the reasons behind these problems. One of the causes of this prevailing situation is lack of interaction among general users and concerned line agencies as well as development agencies. In most cases, interactions of HMG and project staff are limited to executive committee members.

**What do you think of the general charges of corruption made by the community video letter and by participants in the forum?**

Corruption is prevalent in all sectors of society and forestry is not an exception. Basically, I am against the corruption resulting from ignorance of people or through misuse of power (threatening with legal consequences). But I am not against the idea of users paying for quality service even it comes from HMG staff (although it is meant to be free).

**Forest Management by Nepali Communities**

**May 1997**



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The report is structured into seven major chapters. The first chapter, presents a short discussion on the background of the study, objectives and scope of the study and literature review on community forestry in Nepal. Chapter II presents the methodology employed to collect and analyse the data. Chapter III presents the basic sociological information on the study communities. Chapter IV deals with community and organizational processes vis-a-vis knowledge, behaviour and attitude of the CFUGs and indigenous forest managements. Chapter V presents the analysis on knowledge, behaviours and attitude of forestry and conservation policies, rules and regulations. Chapter VI deals with the knowledge on forest management technical skills and behaviour of the user communities. Finally, the summary, conclusions and recommendations have been presented in Chapter VII.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Forest resources are the integral elements of the farming system in Nepal, particularly in the central Hills region. The yeoman and tenant farmers of Nepal need access to forest products such as fuelwood, fodder, leaf litter, and timber for the continuation of their survival. Hence, the forestry sector is considered a cornerstone in the incessant endeavour to develop the economy of Nepal. Historically, forests were unsustainably exploited by a myriad of events which transpired since the mid-1950's. Government policies coupled with unsustainable economic development efforts were the major culprits of the exploitation of Nepal's forests.

The following were the policies and political events that led to the destruction of forests

- the government forest nationalisation in 1957,
- the land tenure system (which reclaimed land and land settlements to augment the state revenue) malaria control in the mid-1950s and the consequent influx of land-hungry migrants from the Hills to the Terai
- political liberalization (opportunistic exploitation of forests during political transitions)
- the Land Act of 1964 (which could not appropriate the desired amount of excess land from the landlords for distribution to the needy people, due to the lack of a cadastral survey which destroyed the hill migrants' anticipation in the Terai went un-materialized),
- government resettlement programmes in the Terai, and
- burgeoning population growth and the subsequent increase in demand for forest products

Furthermore, economic development efforts such as the following caused the exploitation of forests

- implementation of development programmes, such as the construction of roads and hydro-power plants,
- urbanisation and the growth of administrative centres, placing increasing demands on the forest for clearance, settlement, and meeting fuelwood and timber demands,
- the commodification of the forest products, making livelihoods dependant on the poor, and
- opening borders leading to the integration of the Terai economy with India, thus causing theft and smuggling of timber (Saussan, et al , 1995)

As the forest resources began dwindling, it became apparent that they cannot be protected alone by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. In response, His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) initiated in 1978 a community forestry programme in to support the involvement of local people in all aspects of forestry for their own benefit and the sustainable conservation of resources. The principle of community forestry is the control and the sustainable management of local forest resources by local users themselves. The pace of handing over national forests to local users has increased over the last 18 years and now many individuals know that they should protect and conserve forests, however they do not necessarily act upon that knowledge. The sustainable use of forest resources depends on three inter-related elements (i) improved technologies (services, products and practices), (ii) enforced policies and laws and (iii) changes in the actions and behaviours of individuals.

Participation is key to the success of any environmental programme. The needs, values, and constraints faced by stakeholders must be the foundation upon which an effective environmental programmes are built. Participation of stakeholders in program design may help build consensus and thus facilitate the adoption and maintenance of behaviours advocated by such programmes. It creates a new kind of partnership among the experts and the individuals who will be affected by the programme for the environmental programme's success (GreenCOM, 1996). Under such circumstances environmental education and communication play an instrumental role in both disseminating the knowledge among the users of forests and persuading them to act if they are knowledgeable or once they have knowledge.

Currently USAID/Nepal's economic objective is to increase broad-based sustainable income growth. This objective is achieved through the Sustainable Income and Rural Enterprise programme (SIRE) which has two activities in Nepal's Mid-western Development Region (MWDR) (i) the Environmental and Forest Enterprise Project (EFEP) and (ii) the Market Access for Rural Development Project (MARD). In this context, we are primarily concerned with the

EFEP project which provides assistance in nine of the 15 MWDR districts. The purpose of the EFEP is to increase the household income and increase democratic decision-making through local control and sustainable management of natural resources by community forest user groups, private farmers and entrepreneurs. There are five components under EFEP designed to achieve the objective of the project. The five interventions are the following:

- accelerating local control and management of natural resources,
- strengthening user groups,
- developing natural resource-based micro-enterprises,
- bottom-up planning and policy reform, and
- applied research

Of all these components, we are primarily concerned with bottom-up planning and policy reforms which attempt to ensure that local implementation of forest legislation meets the original premise. Through this component, EFEP aims at initiating a public forum so that users and government policy makers can meet and periodically engage in a direct dialogue on the progress or problems of policy implementation. This forum is also designed to provide policy-makers with policy issues from the perspective of local forest users. Similarly, local forest users will have the opportunity to participate in the public "town meetings" to discuss important local issues (USAID, 1995).

This project component will be facilitated by the GreenCOM Project. GreenCOM will develop and field test the communications tools needed for continued policy dialogues and civic education. In order to fulfill its objectives, GreenCOM will carry out the following specific activities: (i) establish an environment and forestry forum, (ii) use mobile mass media for increasing local awareness to stimulate an improved "bottom-up" dialogue, and (iii) conduct forestry planning and budgeting workshops.

Given this background, the present study focuses on the knowledge, behaviour and attitude of the Community Forest Users' Groups (CFUGs) which would provide the priorities, possibly attained from the forestry fora, to be conveyed through a participatory video. Hence, this is a formative study since the future activities vis-a-vis the environmental education and communication component are contingent upon it.

## **1.2 Objectives and Scope of the Study**

As outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR), the objective of this qualitative research activity is to identify barriers and incentives which hinder or help individuals and groups from succeeding as CFUGs or Soil Conservation Groups. It is designed to

- provide ideas and priorities for the producers of the community videos,
- contribute to the July 1997 Forestry Sector Co-ordination Meeting by providing issues for the meeting agenda and the USAID LCD presentation, and
- serve as the first set of CFUG interviews for policy dialogue evaluation task order three

The group and individual interviews have been conducted with men and women in Salyan, Dang, Pyuthan and Banke districts. The interviews have focused on knowledge, attitude and behaviour related to community forestry and soil conservation. Broadly speaking, the following three major topics have been covered: (i) forestry and soil conservation policies/rules/regulations, (ii) technical skills in forest management and (iii) group processes. Gender issues have also been incorporated across these topics.

The following types of communities have been selected: (i) post-hand over CFUGs, (ii) pre-hand over CFUGs, (iii) no CFUGs but indigenous forest management groups. For each district, the research team has worked together with District Forest Officers (DFOs) of HMG/N and other EFEP partners (mainly CARE Nepal) to identify two pre-hand over communities, two post-hand over communities and one community with no CFUGs but practising indigenous forest management. Thus, five communities have been interviewed in each district.

### 1.3 Literature Review

This section briefly presents the development of community forestry in Nepal, the Master Plan for Forestry Sector, the Forest Act, the Forest Rules, Soil Conservation Policy, Operational Guidelines for Community Forestry Development and women in forestry.

#### 1.3.1 Development of Community Forestry in Nepal

In the 1950s development efforts were top-down and guided by economic growth principles. What was important then was to increase GDP with little or no regard for the distribution of any growth achieved. Under that context, government officials involved in forest development worked as policemen assuring timber companies access to natural resources and keeping local residents out of forests.

In subsequent years, with the growth of poverty, this approach was questioned, and it was replaced by one which stressed the importance of satisfying the basic needs of the population. This new approach called for the participation of beneficiaries in program development, and it was guided by a "development from below" paradigm. Under this context, forest development was expected to achieve two objectives:

- make forest products and trees accessible to rural populations and

- increase benefits derived from forest resources to residents in or nearby forest areas

In 1978, FAO published its landmark document "Forestry for Local Development, summarizing the principles guiding the new approach, community forestry began to be supported by FAO, and it was defined as forest development efforts which intimately involved local residents in forest activities. Subsequently, FAO (1985) argued that community forestry has two characteristics

- it changes the role of government officials so that foresters become advisors and provide inputs for planting, managing and protecting the forest, and
- both forests and the rural poor extract and use the forest resources for their own benefit

The development of community forestry in Nepal followed in the above-mentioned development paradigms. In 1957, the Nepalese government passed a law that nationalized all forests, placing them under the legal authority of the Department of Forests. As a means of managing forests, this legislation proved to be completely ineffective. The department was incapable of maintaining effective control over thousands of small patches of forest throughout the mountainous areas (Fisher 1990). The objective of the legislation was to prevent the destruction of national wealth and to nationalize private forests for their adequate protection. This forest nationalization effort, together with a myriad of factors mentioned in the background of the study, led to large-scale deforestation. In response to the failure to protect the forests and in an attempt to conserve forest resources in accordance with the international development trends, in 1978 the Nepalese government reversed the forest policy and initiated a process of handing over the responsibility of forest protection to the local communities.

There were two forest regulatory acts enacted in 1978. These were *Panchayat Forest Rules* and *Panchayat-Protected Forest Rules*. Panchayat was a community - level administrative and political unit between 1960 and 1990 that has currently been replaced by the Village Development Committee.

- *Panchayat Forests* were defined as degraded forest areas entrusted to a village *Panchayat* for reforestation in the interest of the village community. These forests were limited to 125 hectares. The government (through foreign aid projects) provided land, seedlings, and technical assistance in return for labour and the community received all the income from the sale of forest products.
- *Panchayat protected forests* were existing forests entrusted to the local *Panchayats* for protection and proper management. They were limited to 500 hectares in each *Panchayat*, and were similar to *Panchayat Forests* except that villages received three-fourths of the income generated by the sale of forest products (Wallace, 197)

Official community forestry development was influenced by the introduction of the 'user group' concept as defined in the Decentralization Act of 1982. This Act promotes the user group concept

as the most effective approach to development and management of natural resources in local communities (Messerschmidt, et al 1994)

Later in 1988, the *Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, Nepal*, emphasized the importance of community forests and noted that *Panchayat* was too large a unit for day-to-day-management of forests and pointed to the importance of user level management plan. This is right because *Panchayat* boundaries did not necessarily coincide with user-group boundaries. User groups are almost invariably smaller than *Panchayats* and often cross *Panchayat* boundaries (Fisher, 1990). The, age-long indigenous practices (local initiatives) of resource management in the mid-hills have also helped materialize the concept of community forestry.

The Community Forestry Project was initiated in twenty-nine hill districts, with the assistance of the World Bank. In addition, community forestry was also initiated in several hill districts with bilateral assistance. In fourteen terai districts, community forestry programs were also made possible through another World Bank assistance project. Many lessons have been learned from these projects that could prove useful in determining how community forestry could evolve in the future (Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation and FINNIDA, 1988). Now the Forest Act (1993), Forest Rules and Schedules (1995) and Operational Guideline for Community Forestry Development (1995) have been the government efforts to develop and provide sustainable utilization of forest resources, with the involvement Forest User Groups (FUGs).

In order to provide clarity, it is important to define the term 'user group'. A 'user group' is simply the local community of forest users who have traditional tenurial rights (i.e. use - rights) over the resources (Messerschmidt, 1994). Conclusively, community forestry can be defined as the control and management of forest resources by the rural people who use the forest's resources especially for domestic purposes and as an integral part of their farming systems (Gilamour and Fisher 1992). Thus, the control and sustainable management of local forest resources by the local users themselves is the principle of community forestry.

### 1.3.2 Master Plan for the Forestry Sector

In 1988 His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) prepared the *Master Plan for the Forestry Sector* with the financial and technical support of Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). This document states that of the total area of Nepal 14.7 million hectares, 5.5 million hectares are natural forests, that is 37 percent of its land. This spells out the policies for the sustained utilization of forests. The Plan has two sorts of objectives viz, long-term and medium-term. The long-term objectives are

- To meet the people's basic needs for fuelwood, timber, fodder, and other forest products on a sustained basis, and to contribute to food production through an effective interaction between forestry and farming practices.

- To protect the land against degradation by soil erosion, floods, landslides, desertification, and other effects of ecological imbalance
- To conserve the eco-system and genetic resources
- To contribute to the growth of land and national economics by managing forest resources and forest-based industries and creating opportunities for income generation and employment

The medium-term objectives are

- To promote people's participation in forestry resource development, management and conservation
- To develop the legal framework needed to enhance the contribution of individuals, communities, and institutions to forest resource development, management, and conservation (the results are Forest Act of 1993, Forest Rules of 1995 and Operational Guideline of 1995)
- To strengthen the organizational framework and develop the institutions of the forestry sector to enable them to carry out their missions

The Plan has formulated 12 programmes to meet these long-term and medium-term objectives of which community forestry and soil conservation and watershed management are our major concerns. The community and private forestry programme aims to develop and manage forest resources through the active participation of individual people and communities to meet their basic needs. The soil conservation and watershed management aims to protect the land against degradation and conserve its values through the mobilization of national and local resources.

The main programme components of community and private forestry are

- Management of natural forests and enrichment planning of degraded forests, both as community forests
- Establishment and management of community forests in open and degraded areas
- Distribution of free or subsidized seedlings to encourage the establishment of private tree farms
- Spreading the use of fuel-efficient stoves by supporting development, production, and distribution of such stoves

**The key policies which relate to community forestry include**

- **Promotion of community forestry, entrusting forest protection and management to actual users**
- **Priority to community forestry in the allocation of research and development resources**
- **Phased handing over of all the accessible hill forests to the communities, to the extent that they are able and willing to manage them**
- **Reception of all income (from the sale of forest products) by forest users**
- **Emphasis on an extension approach and the retraining of the entire staff of the Ministry of Forest and Environment for their new role as advisers and extension workers**
- **Formulation of simple management agreements as quickly as possible**
- **Planning and rapid implementation of community forestry according to decentralization principles**
- **Ensuring that local people benefit if they protect natural forests or plantations**

Eventually, as a partnership between the government and the people for forest management is established a logical extension of community and private forestry will be people's participation in local soil conservation and watershed management, protection of local flora and fauna, and development of local forest-based industry (HMG/N and FINNDA, 1988) Thus, community and private forestry is the key approach to establishing and managing forests

The Plan also contains a specific policy guideline for the soil conservation and watershed management The geological forces (which are unpreventable) and human pressure on forest and agricultural land for meeting basic needs for food and forest products are destroying Nepal's land and soil resources Therefore the Plan has formulated three major programme components to address the problems of soil conservation and watershed management They are

- **Preventive measures in cultivated lands forest lands, shrub lands, grasslands, and settlement sites**
- **Rehabilitative measures on hillslopes and in valleys including waterways**
- **Conservation extension and education and provision of technical and material assistance in mobilizing the community for soil conservation**

- Supportive components including organizational strengthening, staff training, technology development, watershed resources survey and management planning, and monitoring and evaluation

Thus, Master Plan, if properly implemented, can help induce positive economic, social and environmental impacts by increasing fuelwood, fodder and timber production, income, greater employment opportunities, improving quality for life, having marginal effect on agricultural land and improving the management of forest resources

### 1 3 3 Existing Forest Act

The existing Forest Act was enacted in 1993 for the conservation and proper management of forests. The preamble of the Act states, "Whereas it is expedient to manage national forests in the form of government-managed forests, protected forests, community forests, leasehold forests and religious forests, thereby ensuring the development and conservation of forests and the proper utilization of forest products, and extend co-operation in the conservation and development of private forests, so as to meet the basic needs of the general public, attain social and economic development, and promote a healthy environment" (MLJPA, 1993: 1). The preamble clearly presents the typology of the forests along with the enunciation of the underlying objective of the Act. National forests are all forests within the kingdom of Nepal whereas government-managed forest refers to only national forests managed by His Majesty's Government. Protected forests are national forests declared by His Majesty's Government as protected forests which have special environmental, scientific or cultural significance. A community forest is a national forest handed over to an users' group for its development, conservation and utilization for collective benefit. A leasehold is a national forest handed over as a leasehold forest to any institution for its conservation and utilization. A private forest is a forest planned, nurtured or conserved in any part of land owned by an individual.

The 1993 Forest Act specifies the provisions relating to community forests and the formation of users' groups. The District Forest Office is authorized to hand over any part of a national forest to a users' group in a form of community forest entitling it to develop, conserve, use and manage such forests and sell and distribute the forest products by independently fixing the prices pursuant to the operational plan. The concerned users of a forest, who would like to develop, conserve and use forest products for their collective benefit, form a users' group. The group must register at the District Forest Office by submitting an application along with its constitution. The users' groups are required to manage the forests in accordance with the operational plan (forest management plan) approved by the District Forest Office. The Act stipulated that the users' group is an autonomous and a corporate body with perpetual succession. The users' group is authorized to amend the operational plan according to its particular need pertaining to the management of community forests. The users' group has its own fund created through government grants, donations, or assistance from any institution or individual, fines from illegal extraction of resources, and from the income from the sale and distribution of forest products. It must submit the annual report of its financial activities to the District Forest Office, mentioning

the financial particulars and the condition of the community forest Despite all these legal provisions, the District Forest Office can resume the handed over forest under any of the following conditions

- if the users' group is unable to work according to the operational plan in any community forest handed over to it, or
- if it takes any action which affects the environment significantly, or
- if it fails to comply with the conditions to be complied with under this Act or Rules under it

#### 1 3 4 Existing Community Forest Rules and Regulations

Forest rules and regulations were also enacted in 1995, under the Forest Act The government specified a number of rules and regulations for government-managed forests, protected forests, community forests, leasehold forests, private forests and religious forests But our primary concern is on the rules and regulations of community forests There are thirteen rules and regulations for community forests, which include the following

- determination of community forests
- formation and registration of users groups,
- operational plan of the community forests
- procedure of handing over the community forest,
- maintenance of records of community forests,
- actions prohibited in community forests
- collection and sale and distribution of forest products,
- receipts and records of forest products
- hammer mark to be registered
- transportation of forest products
- operation of user group fund
- resumption of community forest

- and power to obtain assistance

It has been stated that while handing over any part of a national forest to a users' group as a community forest, the District Forest Officer (DFO) has to consider the distance between the forest and village or settlement and the willingness and ability of the local users who intend to manage the forest. Users desiring to manage a forest as a community forest must submit a written application to the DFO and once the application is received, the DFO designates a technical employee (a Ranger) to provide technical support and direct the formation of users' groups and the preparation of its constitution. The constitution contains the following points and provisions

- on the number of user households,
- population of the users' group,
- functions, duties, and powers of the users' group,
- procedure of forming the users' committee,
- names of office-bearers,
- functions and duties of the users' committee,
- working procedure of the committee,
- measures controlling forest crimes,
- punishes violators of the operational plan,
- and accounts for funds and auditing

Once the constitution of the users' group has been approved by the DFO, users prepare a forest operational plan which includes objectives of forest management, forest production methods, silvicultural activities (thinning, pruning, clearing and other forest promotion activities), nursery, tree plantation, income generation activities, time-schedules, particulars of areas suitable for cultivation of medicinal herbs, arrangement on penalties and protection of wildlife. The operational plan is also prepared by the users with the technical and co-operation of the DFO and his Associates (Rangers). Once the operational plan is approved by the DFO, he will hand over the forest to the users' group as a community forest after having it sign a bond stating its compliance with the conditions of the government. In so doing, he will issue a certificate to the users' group.

The DFO, once handed over the forests to the community, has to maintain the records at his office. The users' group has to comply with the following prohibitions mandated by the Operational Plan

- destruction of forests, or mortgage or transfer the ownership of the forest land,
- clearance of forest areas for agricultural purposes,
- building huts/houses,
- actions causing soil erosion,
- capturing or killing wildlife, and
- extracting or transporting rocks, soil, boulder, pebbles, sand, etc

The users' groups can also obtain loans from the financial institutions by pledging the products of the community forests as hypothecation for the purpose of developing the forests. As specified in the Operational Plan, the users' group can collect, sell and distribute the forest products. The sale prices have to be reported to the DFO.

Reforestation must be carried out as early as possible after the extraction of timber, wood and other forest products. The rule also allows users' group to run a forest based-industry outside the area of the community forest after obtaining permission from the concerned institution upon the recommendation of the DFO. The user group can consume forest products for each permit entitled to each committee. It must provide the DFO with a receipt of the forest products, in addition to the one issued to the buyer. It has to maintain accurate accounting records of income and expenditures. In order to transport timber from the community forest, the users' group has to prepare a hammer mark and submit the application to the DFO for registration. The users' group has to issue a permit and hammer mark the timber, when transporting the timber outside the area of the users' group. The users' group operates its fund and account through the joint signatures of the two office-bearers authorized by the group. There is an annual audit of income and expenditures conducted by an individual or institution, designated by the users' group. It can also obtain the necessary assistance from national, international and non-governmental agencies for the purpose of discharging its functions (HMG/N Gazette 1995).

### 1.3.5 Operational Guideline for Community Forestry Development

Since the entire staff of the Department of Forests has not received previous training or has little practical experience in implementing community forestry programmes, there was a need to produce a set of operational guidelines to assist field staff in initiating the program. In early 1990, the first set of operational guidelines for implementing community forestry programmes was issued. These guidelines were based on limited experience, because of donors' development

imperatives, which gave higher priority to establishing new community forestry plantations than to legitimizing community management of existing forests. On the basis of experience in the field, a revised and more detailed set of operational guidelines was prepared. These new guidelines were broadened to provide national guidance on the key policies as well as implementation methods for the government's community forestry programme (Bartlett, 1992: 97)

The existing detailed operational guideline for community forestry development was formally prepared by the Community and Private Forest Division in 1995. It dictates that field staff have to work closely with local communities to identify forest users, prepare operational plans, hand over the responsibility of managing community forests, and to engage in other activities involved in implementing the plan. The operational plan specified four phases for planning community forestry development:

- an investigation phase,
- a negotiation phase,
- an implementation phase, and
- a review phase

These phases basically orient the forestry office field staff about what they should be doing rather than how to do it. The operational plan allows a greater degree of latitude and flexibility to the field staff for programme implementation. The objectives of the investigation phase are: building trust between villagers and field staff, collecting social and technical information (needs, forest products, forest use and forest condition), identifying interest groups, primary and secondary users, learning about existing indigenous forest management systems, if any, and making users aware of government policy on community forestry, forest use and users' rights. Necessary activities which must occur prior to accomplishing the aforementioned objectives include:

- discussions about community forestry with the local community,
- identification and verification of users' households and forest area,
- identification of existing community management systems,
- ascertaining users' requirements and
- assessment of the proposed community forest area are all

Analogously, the negotiation phase also contains five objectives: (i) ascertaining the users' requirements, problems and their solutions, (ii) obtaining the approval of users for community forest management, (iii) preparing forest users group's charter or constitution and registration of

CFUG, (iii) formulating and obtaining approval of the operational plan and (iv) handing over the responsibility for managing the community forest to the FUG. The activities that allow for the accomplishment of these objectives are the following: the formation of FUG, identification of users' requirements, problems and solutions, preparation of the operational plan, review the composition of forest users committee, approval of the operational plan, and handing over the responsibility of managing the community forest.

The implementation phase has also a number of objectives which include

- encouraging the users' groups to protect, develop and utilize the community forest in a sustainable manner,
- implementing the approved forest management programmes,
- keeping the accounts of the users' group up-to-date,
- monitoring the effectiveness of the forest management done by the users, and
- making the users' group self-sufficient

This phase is divided into the following four major activities

- assistance to the users' group in the implementation of the operational plan,
- monitoring the operational plan,
- strengthening the forest users' group and
- revision of the operational plan

And finally, the review phase has two objectives which include (i) reviewing the operational plan after its expiry and (ii) discussing whether the users' group requires major changes in the operational plan. In accomplishing these two objectives, this review phase can be divided into three activities: (i) evaluation of the on-going operational plan, (ii) discussion on the revision of the existing plan or the implementation of a new operational plan and (iii) approval of the revised or new operational plan.

Monitoring and record keeping is one of the principal tasks of the forestry officials at all levels of the Department of Forestry and its objective is to furnish the information to the management of central, district and area levels of the Department of Forests. Monitoring and record keeping are done at forest group level, Illaka (area) and range post levels. District guideline helps the

field staff of the Department of Forests helps considerably in the implementation of the community forestry development programme

### 1 3 6 Soil Conservation Policy

Since Nepalese people are predominantly rural, they rely heavily on natural resources such as soil, water and forests to meet their daily needs. During the monsoon, heavy rains erode fertile soil from the Hills and Mountains. Rampant deforestation, overgrazing, unscientific cultivation (particularly in the marginal land and steep slope), etc are the principal factors contributing to the soil erosion. Water sources are drying up, land fertility is declining and the water cycle is being affected.

In 1974, the Department of Soil and Water Conservation was established to minimize adverse impacts on soil and water, through an integrated approach to agriculture, forestry, livestock, water resources and soil conservation strategies. Initially in 1981, the Department was named the Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management. It was renamed the Department of Soil Conservation in 1993 as part of an organizational reform. During the past two decades, the Department has encouraged projects that have been implemented with people's participation. The government then specified through its policy that the projects that cost one million rupees or less have to be implemented by users' groups. It was an opportunity as well as a challenge to actively involve local people in every step of development such as, problem identification, project planning, maintenance and repair, monitoring, evaluation and benefit sharing (Department of Soil Conservation, 1993).

The Department has been expanding its programme to more and more districts of the country in phases. Now it operates in 45 of the 75 districts of Nepal. The principal policy objectives of the Department of Soil Conservation are to

- i help people meet their basic needs for forest and food products by improving land and increasing agricultural productivity through proper conservation and utilization of watershed resources, and
- ii assist in maintaining the environmental balance in the country's watersheds by reducing pressure from natural hazards such as floods and landslides

For the smooth operation and management of soil conservation and watershed management programmes His Majesty's Government of Nepal has adopted certain policies which are guided by appropriate watershed development principles. These principles include

- to ensure proper land use by a rational land use planning,

- to implement integrated package programmes which include vegetative, agronomic and water management measures to tackle erosion problems using the watershed area as the unit of planning and management,
- to ensure the multiple use of land and water to fulfill diverse needs,
- to operate soil conservation and watershed management programme in line with the integrated management approach and on the basis of watershed conditions,
- to maintain links and networks, among the green and other sectors (forestry, agriculture, livestock, water and land resources,
- to ensure people's participation by developing appropriate technology and by conducting conservation extension, education and demonstration,
- to conserve, develop and manage land and water resources using the watershed area as the unit of planning and management,
- to develop infrastructure in a manner that would least disturb the environment and maintain balance between environment and development,
- to plant, protect watersheds near hydro-electric dams, irrigation systems and river banks, and
- to focus on soil conservation activities in the *Siwaliks* and other marginal lands (Department of Soil Conservation, 1996)

The Department has been launching a number of programmes to implement soil conservation and watershed management activities in line with the policies, principles and objectives formulated until present which comprise

- land use planning (watershed management planning, sub-watershed management planning and land use development technical services),
- land productivity conservation
- infrastructure protection (such as reservoirs, irrigation systems, trails, roads - use of bio-engineering),
- natural hazard prevention (reduction of the damage to life, property and valuable natural resources, gully treatment, landslide treatment, torrent control, stream bank protection and degraded land rehabilitation and

- community soil conservation extension

The government has accorded a top priority for the enhancement of people's participation in soil conservation and watershed management. The rationale is that government's efforts alone cannot be successful in the absence of community participation. Hence, the government has made it mandatory to involve people in all the conservation activities and to implement them together with the local users' groups. The level of participation varies from 10 to 50 percent of the cost of watershed management, depending upon the nature and scope of work (Department of Soil Conservation, 1996)

### 1.3.7 Women in Forestry Development

Women have been considered peripheral to development for a long time in most developing countries. The International Women's Year and the UN Decade of Women focused global attention on a situation of women. Development programmes became interested in the subject only after they realized that, by excluding women, they were losing half of their potential collaborators. In the Nepal, many programmes and organizations set up women's sections or added a female component to their regular programmes. Very few could, however, develop an appropriate strategy to improve the participation of women in their activities. Forestry programmes have followed the same general pattern as other development programmes. Problems in the participation of women actually arise when the programme has not been properly thought out and is not guided by the changing needs of the local community. Little can be expected from a situation where women's participation is seen only as additional work to be undertaken for the consumption of donors, policy makers and other pressure groups. If women's participation is seen as critical to forestry development activities, then the emphasis would logically move to actively organizing the participation of women. A special focus on women is required throughout the various stages of programme design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment (Siddiqui, 1989: 1-7)

In fact, there are a myriad of factors affecting women's participation in forestry which include gender division of labour, culture and social norms, prospect of benefits, sharing of benefits, programme requirements and the attitude and support of concerned agencies. Women have more household chores than men while men have more occupational duties than women. Thus, the traditional belief that women's activities are almost exclusively confined to the home today is still continuing. Therefore, it can be expected that the less rigid the division of labour in a community, the higher can be the level of women's participation in a programme of the forestry. Cultural and social norms also determine women's participation. Although more women might be enticed to leave home to participate in outside economic and societal activities, a social norm which dictates that the women's place is the home and it is the husband's duty to support the family. Other norms stress that men are naturally superior to women (Regmi, 1989: 16). While women suffered most from the decline in forest resources, they cannot articulate the problem to

local planners because the traditional decision-making system favours more males than females and cultural norms allow men to contact and deal with male government officers (Baskota, 1978)

Another factor affecting women's participation in a development programme concerns the benefits that women receive after participating in the programme. In other words, the higher the benefits from a development programme, the greater would be women's participation in its activities (Regmi, 1989). Regmi (1989) further asserts that if there is higher level of equal sharing of benefits from a programme, the greater is the chance of women's higher participation in the programme. If the programme required women for the performance of its activities and if efforts are made to include them, this also helps enhance women's participation.

There is inability, on the part of governments of Third World countries, to appreciate women's productive activities and to understand what and how much women actually do. From the point of view of social forestry planning, an understanding of women's role is crucial for three reasons: (i) women have the most to gain from tree growing for subsistence purposes and for cash, (ii) more so than men, women are aware of the growing properties and diverse uses of the trees they regularly gather from and (iii) women are more permanent residents of the household than men (Shepherd, 1985).

Traditionally, though women were more involved than men in household production and gathering activities, particularly in fodder and fuelwood collection, and their roles are very well-known in forest-related activities, they were not involved in the approval of the management plan and the selection of the forest materials. The women did not also sit in any of the meetings of the forest committee which included local political male leaders as members. It can be concluded that if women are not involved in project planning and/or decision-making, they may have difficulty in conceptualizing project ideas or expressing their own needs (Shrestha, 1987). Therefore, the higher the support given by the concerned agencies to women, the greater is the degree of women participation in a development programme of social forestry (Regmi, 1989). In a study on Women's participation on Forest Committees, Parsai et al (1987) identified that organizers' knowledge of past forest use systems, discussion on roles, rights and authority prior to forest committee formation, selection and motivation of committee members, democratic working procedure of the committee and participation of the forest officials contribute or influence the efficiency of women's forest committees.

Rural women are among the most frequent and most important forest users in Nepal. They are the ones who collect fodder and fuelwood and other forest products. They are the ones who suffer most when there are inadequate sources of water and fuelwood in their locality. Forests, for this reason alone, become a major concern for women. It seems essential, therefore, that women be involved in forestry development activities. Women in forestry in Nepal can be seen as an offshoot of women's participation in development. On the pattern of other Women in Development (WID) initiatives where ad hoc activities are organised to include women in development programmes, the Women in Forestry (WIF) initiative is expected to think up novel

ways to include women in forestry Earlier, forestry interventions did not consider the possibility that women could form a special interest group and participate constructively in the intervention

Now that women have been recognized as an important group of forest users, and their involvement is considered essential for the design and implementation of forest management and development activities, there is a more serious effort to improve their level of participation In forestry, participation of the local community is encouraged and supported so that forests can be managed and utilized in a more fruitful manner As "people", women exist as users in relation to local resources in the same manner as men do The voices of women should be heard in relevant decision-making bodies Forest management improves with the participation of women The status of women improves as there is more participation of the women They can then have improved access to information and resources, increased level of communication with larger groups, knowledge of alternative channels of communication, increased influence on decisions taken by the larger group, improvement in the position of the target group, and increased efficiency and efficacy of the main task in hand are certain indicators of effective participation

Regarding women's participation in forestry, the main points to be noted are whether

- women know more about forestry development activities,
- can get information from other sources if the immediate work group is unable (unwilling) to oblige,
- are maintaining a fair level of communication with the larger group,
- are aware of other channels of communication if there is breakdown within the present group
- have an influence on decisions taken regarding development, protection and harvest of forests
- have received benefits and gained in status following participation in forestry, and
- have contributed to the efficiency and efficacy of forest development and management activities (Siddique', 1989 1-18)

Gradually the crucial role of women as users and citizens is slowly being noted by the planners and implementors of forestry development activities It follows as a corollary that there have been efforts at the grassroots level to include women in the executive committee of the Community Forest Users Group (CFUG) In isolated cases, there have also been the empirical evidences of the exclusive women's executive committee of the CFUG Despite this fact, the knowledge on the organisational process and the forest management skills is still not at par with that of the males

– a function of illiteracy, ignorance, dominance by the males, confinement to homes, very little or no contact with the outside world, etc

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses a set of methods employed to accomplish the research objectives. More specifically, it contains a discussion on the desk review, type of data collected, study area, design, size and selection of sample, data collection instruments, study team composition and orientation, field work and supervision, study period, mode of data analysis and interpretation, and limitations of the study.

### **2.1 Desk Review**

The New ERA study team began this study by doing the literature review at two stages, viz, preliminary stage for the formulation of detailed checklist on the knowledge, behaviour and attitude of the Community Forest Users' Groups (CFUGs) and advanced stage during the period of the report write-up to present a brief literature survey on the community forestry of Nepal as per the scope of work. In the latter stage, various studies on community forestry, Master Plan for Forestry Sector, Forest Act, Forest Rules and Regulations and Operational Guidelines have been reviewed. The review has provided the guidelines for the preparation and rarefaction of the methodology and presented the various activities undertaken for community forestry development in Nepal.

### **2.2 Type of Data Collected**

The present study is primarily based on the empirical data collected from the field work. Notwithstanding this fact, secondary data have also been collected from the various published as well as unpublished reports, documents and articles. The combination of primary and secondary data has helped to provide an integrated picture on the knowledge, behaviour and attitude of the CFUGs.

### **2.3 Study Area**

The study area comprises 20 communities using the forest of the four districts from the Mid-western Development Region. These districts comprise Banke in the Terai, Dang in the inner Terai and Salyan and Pyuthan in the mid-hills.

### **2.4 Design, Size and Selection of Sample**

This study is based on a stratified sample. The strata include communities with indigenous forest management, communities with post hand-over CFUGs and communities with pre hand-over CFUGs. The effort of the selection of the sample involved two stages, viz, selection of the communities and selection of the informants. The 20 communities were randomly selected by preparing a list of the universe of sampling units in consultation with the District Forest Officers.

(DFOs), Assistant Forest Officers (AFOs) in the Illaka (area) Forest Office, Rangers in the Range Posts and CARE Nepal staff who have been involved in the community organizational process for the implementation of the community forests. The list of selected communities by state is presented in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Sample Distribution of 20 Communities in the Four Sample Districts of Mid-western Development Region, Nepal

| Typology of the Communities                | Distribution by Sample Districts                                |   |   |   |       |
|--|---|---|---|---|-------|
|  | Banke   | Dang  | Salyan  | Pyuthan   | Total |
| A Post hand over CFUGs                     | 1 Gagara CFUG, Udrapur VDC<br>2 Mahila Upkar CFUG Kohalpur VDC* | 1 Takiyapur CFUG Pawannagar VDC<br>2 Paluthan CFUG Laximpur VDC   | 1 Laliguras CFUG, Sijwa Takari VDC<br>2 Sidha Gufa CFUG, Kajeri VDC | 1 Bukehidada CFUG, Maranthana VDC<br>2 Paleban CFUG, Khalanga VDC |       |
| Sub Total                                  | 2   | 2   | 2   | 2   | 8     |
| B Pre hand over CFUGs                      | 1 Rimna CFUG Mahadevpuri VDC<br>2 Jan Ekta CFUG Komdi VDC       | 1 Chiurighat CFUG Gangapraspur VDC<br>2 Sarvodaya CFUG Gadhwa VDC | 1 Krisha Himali CFUG, Tribeni VDC<br>2 Gai Gaureni CFUG Tribeni VDC | 1 Ghorthapa CFUG, Khaira VDC<br>2 Newarban CFUG, Khalanga VDC     |       |
| Sub Total                                  | 2   | 2   | 2   | 2   | 8     |
| C Indigenous Forest Management Communities | 1 Kaneshori Forest Bilona VDC                                   | 1 Chandanpur Indigenous Forest Management Community               | 1 Sete Khola Indigenous Forest Management Community                 | 1 Pallo Pakha Band Khola Indigenous Forest Management Community   |       |
| Sub-Total                                  | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 4     |
| Grand Total                                | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 20    |

Note \* It was pre-hand over prior to the commencement of the field work but was formally handed over when the field work was going on. The study team included it in the sample because there was no other option in Banke district where there is very little work on community forest.

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Both Banke and Dang, being the Terai (plain) districts, have had the motorable roads in almost all of the VDCs. Therefore, it was not possible to select a community without the transportational linkage. However, in the Hills, communities are relatively far-flung from the motorable road barring a few ones.

The selection of the informants was the second stage of the sampling process. Criteria were developed for the selection of informants to be included in the group interviews. Committee members of the CFUGs, literate and illiterate, and young and elderly members of the CFUGs were included in the sample as participants of the group interviews. Two group interviews (one male and one female) in each community were conducted and each group contained a range of seven to twenty three informants and participants. Thus, 40 group interviews were conducted, 20 male groups and 20 female groups.

Similarly, two key informants were also selected for obtaining the general sociological information in 20 communities who were CFUG leaders, VDC chiefs, ward members, chairmen of the executive committees of the CFUGs, and elderly village notables. Thus, 40 key informants were selected. In addition to these informants, eight other individual informants at the household level were also selected in each pre-and post-hand over community which comprised two CFUG executive committee members, one male and one female, and six CFUG members, three males and three females. If there were no female members in the executive committee, then an additional female CFUG member was selected for the interview. Thus, a total of 128 individual informants were selected for household interview. In isolated cases, non-CFUG member interviews were conducted by selecting one additional male and one female informant, only if there were non-CFUG members living in CFUG community. During the period of field work, four non-CFUG members were interviewed. Four informants were selected for household interviews in the indigenous forest management community which consisted of two males and two females. Thus a total of 16 informants were selected for individual household interviews.

While selecting the informants for the individual household interviews, attention was paid to include informants of opposite characteristics such as young and elderly, literate and illiterate active and inactive members of the CFUGs and indigenous forest management communities. The selection of all these informants was done using the judgemental sampling technique after building the rapport with the local communities.

## 2.5 Data Collection Instruments

An array of data collection instruments have been used, viz, key informant interview, group interview, in-depth individual household interview and observation -- all being derived primarily from anthropology. A brief discussion on each of these instruments employed to generate the data is presented below.

### **2 5 1 Key Informant Interview**

An interview guide was used to elicit information on basic sociological information such as size of community (number of households), population distribution, caste/ethnicity, distance of the community from the road, farming systems, group formation history (CFUG and other), history of the development project/s (if any), etc

### **2 5 2 Group Interview**

Group interviews were conducted using an interview guide containing questions on knowledge, behaviour and attitude questions to address issues related to community and CFUG organisational processes (e.g. conflict resolution behaviour, group cohesion, democratic process, and attitudes), technical forestry skills and knowledge/attitudes regarding community forestry and soil conservation policies and regulations (rights and responsibilities) All the participants of the interviews were encouraged to express their views and the researchers played the role of facilitators

### **2 5 3 In-depth Individual Household Interview**

A questionnaire on similar themes as in the group interview was prepared to conduct the in-depth individual household interviews. The objective of this instrument was to garner in more comprehensive qualitative information about the CFUGs and indigenous forest management communities vis-a-vis knowledge, behaviour and attitude and thereby triangulate the information generated through the group interviews. Most data generated from the in-depth interviews were from case studies

### **2 5 4 Observation**

Observations were made during the period of the field work which included site observations of forest systems such as whether crops were planted or conserved and what types of forest product management practices were used with timber and non-timber resources. The record keeping system of the CFUGs was also observed. Since seeing tangible results is most convincing, the observation tool complemented the validation of the information generated from the interviews

## **2 6 Study Team Composition and Orientation**

The New ERA research team comprised of an Administrative Coordinator, a Subject Matter Specialist, four Research Associates, one human ecologist, one sociologist, one livestock specialist and one economist by disciplines, and four senior Research Assistants. The recruitment of the Research Associates and Research Assistants was done on a competitive basis by looking at their previous experiences in the empirical research

After recruited, field personnel were trained during five days. The first day of training focused on project objectives/goals, community forestry policy, soil conservation policy, community forestry rules and regulations and techniques of field interviewing, including group interviews and individual in-depth interviews. On the second day, there was extensive discussion on the sampling procedures, direct and participant observation, triangulation, qualitative information organization, and techniques of preliminary field report write-up and familiarization with the interview guide. On the third day, field staff made a field trip and tested the different instruments in an adjoining hill district of Kathmandu Valley. Four groups were formed to conduct four different group and in-depth individual household interviews. The process was scrupulously supervised by the Subject Matter Specialist to streamline the interviews. On the fourth day of orientation, each team prepared its field report and presented the findings in an organized format and discussions were held among the participants to triangulate field findings. Discussions were also held on the problems encountered in using the discussion guides and report write-up. On the final day, discussions were held on un-clarified issues.

There was one research team in each of study district which was assigned to carry out the field work and prepare preliminary field reports. Each team had one Research Associate and one Research Assistant.

## **2.7 Field Work and Supervision**

The field work lasted about one month beginning from March 15 to April 10, 1997. Each team worked in the field according to its own schedule and finished the field work on time. The work of the Research Associates and Research Assistants was supervised by the Subject Matter Specialist in all the four districts and the Administrative Coordinator in two districts. Each team was instructed to prepare a field report of each interview following an established format, field reports were checked by the Subject Matter Specialist who provided guidance on probing and report writing to improve the quality of the final product. Thus, guidance and supervision were provided in order to ensure the quality of the data.

## **2.8 Study Period**

The study period was principally divided into three phases, viz, the preparatory phase for reviewing, designing and planning field work and monitoring phase, and analytical phase, a compilation and analysis of the information collected and preparation of the report. The time allocated for the study was three months effective March 01 through May 31, 1997.

## **2.9 Mode of Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This report is based on the qualitative data generated through the anthropological instruments such key informant interview, group interview, in-depth individual interview and observation. Such qualitative data were analysed by first reading all the original texts and then identifying and listing all conceptual categories/data. The identified data were marked (using colour for similar

categories) and the possibilities of categories were exhausted. The relationship between the categories were also worked out by coalescing them or separating them as appropriate. Then, second order categories were prepared in a similar fashion by verifying the context of the original descriptions. Finally, third order categories were made by developing generalizations. Interpretation of findings, including causes, consequences and interdependent relationships, is furnished in this report.

## 2.10 Limitations of the Study

The study does not claim that it has been fully successful in achieving its principal objective of identifying barriers or incentives to helping groups succeed as CFUGs or Soil Conservation Groups (SCGs). The inability to fully achieve the objective of the study can be primarily attributed to the lack of enough time for a full analysis of the bulk of the qualitative data. While conducting field work, some of the researchers might have had an unintended impact on the quality of research, due to the lack of disciplinary training on qualitative research. Finally, the study does not claim that the generalizations yielded from this study are equally applicable to other rural settings of Nepal, where the socio-economic conditions and the patterns of forest resource management are different. However, the research team has made an untiring effort to accomplish the aforementioned research objectives.

### 3.0 SOCIOLOGICAL INFORMATION

This chapter briefly presents the analysis of sociological data such as the number of user households and their population, caste/ethnicity, composition of the users' committee and CFUG or user group formation history, number of advisors, mainly knowledgeable elderly people or village notables, to the users' committee, other social as well as infrastructural development activities, and the farming systems of the user communities. In addition to all this, some data that is apropos of the area of the forest is distance from the motorable road and typology of the forest. The data, after doing a very scrupulous review, have been presented in tabular forms for quick reference and clear comprehension, since a detailed description in sentences would be superfluous.

In most communities, there are a multitude of caste or ethnic groups with diverse cultural backgrounds. Surprisingly, this caste/ethnic diversity does not cause negative impacts on the evolution of community forestry. This indicates that most of the user households belonging to diverse caste/ethnic groups have similar socio-economic interests, which revolve around meeting their basic needs. Field observations indicate that despite cultural diversity, homogeneity of socio-economic interests is a function of the predominance of the small and marginalized farmers in the visited communities. Common property such as forests are well managed, especially when the communities are in need of conserving forest resources, even in large groups of up to 364 individuals.

Interestingly, empirical evidence from the field shows that there is an increasing trend to involve women in the development and management of forests. For example, in two communities visited, the members of the users' committees are all women. Analogously, women are also present, on a smaller scale, in most of the users' committees, except for in a few cases where they are male-exclusive. Female involvement in these communities reflects the concern of NGOs and the donor community about gender issues. The evolution of community forestry in this study embodies a nascent sociological phenomenon -- a government authorizing the handing over of accessible forests to nearby communities. The sociological information is summarily presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

## Organization of Sociological Information of the Forest User Communities by Sample Districts

| Typology of Forest User Communities by Districts     | Area (in Has.) | Distance from the Motorable Road | No. of HHs | Total Pop. | Caste/Ethnic Groups  | Type of Forest                           | Composition of Users Committee  | No. of Advisors to the Committee | Other Devt Project Activities   | Major Crops Grown                       | CFUG/Group Formation History |
|--|----------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|--|--|---|----------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|
| <b>A Post hand over CFUGs</b><br>1 Banke<br>i Gigara | 134            | 500 meters from the highway      | 276        | 875        | Newars<br>Brahmins<br>Chhetris<br>Tharus and<br>Muslims        | Planted forest conserved                 | 17 members including 4 females  |                                  |   | Paddy<br>wheat lentil<br>and wheat      | Since 1991                   |
| ii Mahila Upakar                                     | 25.6           | 3 kilometers                     | 63         | 483        | Brahmins<br>Chhetris<br>Magars<br>Kamis and<br>Damais          | Conserved but has enrichment plantations | 9 female members  | 5 males                          | UNICEF and Save Nepal have women upliftment programs                                | Paddy<br>wheat and<br>legumes           | Since August 1996            |
| <b>2 Dang</b><br>i Takiyapur                         | 3              | 2 kilometers                     | 27         | 210        | Tharus<br>Chhetris and<br>Kamis                                | Planted                                  | 11 members including 3 males  |                                  | BASE NGO's literacy program   | Paddy<br>wheat<br>maize and<br>mustard  | Since 1994                   |
| ii Paluthan  | 14.84          | 1 kilometer                      | 55         | 321        | Magars<br>Chhetris<br>Gurungs<br>Sarkis<br>Kamis and<br>Damais | Conserved                                | 11 members (originally one female was included but later she was dismissed) |                                  |   | Paddy<br>wheat<br>maize and<br>mustard  | Since 1981                   |
| <b>3 Salyan</b><br>i Laliguras                       | 35.3           | 5 kilometers                     | 53         | 321        | Chhetris and<br>Newars   | Conserved but has enrichment plantations | 11 female members   | 4 males                          | Provision of contraceptives and immunization services by HMG's Public Health Office | Paddy<br>wheat<br>millet and<br>legumes | Since 1989                   |

| Typology of Forest User Communities by Districts   | Area (in Has ) | Distance from the Motorable Road | No of HHs | Total Pop | Caste/Ethnic Groups  | Type of Forest | Composition of Users Committee | No of Advisors to the Committee | Other Devt Project Activites   | Major Crops Grown                           | CFUG/Group Formation History |
|--|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|
| ii Sidha Gufa                                      | 137.75         | 9 kilometers                     | 346       | 1,724     | Brahmins<br>Chhertis<br>Sarkis<br>Damais<br>Kamis and<br>Badis                       | Conserved      | 17 members including 5 members |                                 | Drinking water by Asian Devt ank and irrigation canal construction by CARE Nepal                         | Paddy wheat and millet                      | Since 1988                   |
| 4 Pyuthan<br>i Bukendada                           | 19.5           | 4½ kilometers                    | 83        | 374       | Magars<br>Sarkis<br>Chhetris<br>Kamis<br>Damais and<br>Brahmins                      | Conserved      | 13 members including 2 females |                                 |  | Paddy wheat potato maize barley and mustard | Since 1993                   |
| ii Paleban   | 90             | Close to the roadhead            | 276       | 1,304     | Gurungs<br>Magars<br>Kamis<br>Damais<br>Sarkis<br>Newars<br>Brahmins and<br>Chhetris | Conserved      | 13 members including 2 females |                                 |  | Paddy wheat pulses potato and maize         | Since 1978                   |
| <b>B Pre hand over CFUGs</b><br>i Banke<br>i Rinma | 12             | 3 kilometers                     | 203       | 1,797     | Tharus<br>Chhetris and<br>Kamis  | Conserved      | 15 members including 4 females |                                 |  | Paddy maize and wheat                       | Since January 1996           |
| ii Jan Ekta  | About 100      | 7 kilometers                     | 364       | 2,000     | Tharus<br>Chhetris<br>Damais<br>Sunwars and<br>Magars                                | Conserved      | 17 members including 4 females |                                 | Drinking water and sanitation launched by Plan International and human rights programs launched by INSEC | Paddy maize wheat millet lentils etc        | Since December 1992          |

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| Typology of Forest User Communities by Districts | Area (in Has ) | Distance from the Motorable Road | No of HHs | Total Pop | Caste/Ethnic Groups   | Type of Forest             | Composition of Users Committee | No of Advisors to the Committee | Other Devt Project Activities   | Major Crops Grown                 | CFUG/Group Formation History |
|--|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 Dang<br>i Chiurighat                           | 20             | 9 kilometers                     | 73        | 369       | Chhetris<br>Magars<br>Gurungs and<br>Tharus   | Both conserved and planted | 13 male members (no females)   |                                 | Literacy and income generating programs launched by BASE  | Paddy wheat maize and mustard     | Since 1991                   |
| ii Sarvodaya                                     | 67             | 5 kilometers                     | 357       | 2 335     | Tharus<br>Kumals<br>Brahmins<br>Chhetris<br>Muslims<br>Sarkis<br>Damai and<br>Kamis | Both conserved and planted | 13 members including 3 females |                                 | Literacy program launched by BASE<br>Provision of training on cutting/sewing by conscious Women s Society and awareness created in the community by Youth Club and activities of the Yadav Society for their upliftment | Paddy wheat and maize             | Since 1994                   |
| 3 Salyan<br>i Krishna Himali                     | 30             | 4 kilometers                     | 35        | 275       | Magars<br>Chhetris and<br>Brahmins  | Conserved                  | 14 members including 3 females |                                 |   | Maize paddy and wheat and mustard | Since 1990                   |
| ii Gar Gaureni                                   | 60             | 6 kilometers                     | 152       | 1 007     | Chhetris<br>Damais<br>Kamis and<br>Sarki  | Conserved                  | 11 male members                | 2 advisors (male)               |   | Maize paddy and wheat and mustard | Since 1994                   |
| 4 Pyuthan<br>i Ghorthapa                         | 200            | 13 kilometers                    | 91        | 455       | Chhetris<br>Kamis and<br>Giris  | Conserved                  | 11 male members                |                                 |   | Maize paddy millet and wheat      | Since 1991                   |

| Typology of Forest User Communities by Districts  | Area (in Hectares) | Distance from the Metropolitan Region   | No. of HHs | Total Pop. | Caste/Ethnic Groups   | Type of Forest | Composition of Users Committee | No. of Advisors to the Committee | Other Devt Project Activities | Major Crops Grown  | CFUG/Group Formation History   |
|---|--------------------|---|------------|------------|---|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| ii Newarhan                                       | 19.7               | 1 1/2 kilometers  | 0          | 350        | Brahmins<br>Chhetris<br>Sunwars<br>Damais and<br>Magars                   | Conserved      | 11 members including a female  |                                  |                               | Paddy<br>wheat<br>maize<br>pulses and<br>mustard as<br>well as<br>barley | Since 1991   |
| <b>C Indigenous Forest Management Communities</b> |                    |   |            |            |   |                |                                |                                  |                               |  |  |
| 1 Banke<br>i Biloma                               | 61.2               | Approx. 10 kilometers   | 255        | 3,500      | Brahmins and<br>Chhetris  | Conserved      | 15 members including 6 females |                                  |                               | Paddy, millet and wheat  | Since 1991   |
| 2 Dang<br>i Chandanpur                            | 75                 | Approx. 4 kilometers (across the Rapti river)   | 230        | 1,900      | Brahmins<br>Chhetris<br>Yadavs<br>Magars<br>Kamis<br>Damais and<br>Sarkis | Conserved      | 14 members (males)             |                                  |                               | Paddy<br>wheat and<br>lentils etc  | Since 1991   |
| 3 Salyan<br>i Sete Khola                          | 25                 | Not specified by the field researcher but the Subject Matter Specialist on the basis of his visit to Salyan approximates that it might be four to five kilometers from the district capital | 128        | 897        | Chhetris and<br>Magars  | Conserved      | 11 members including 2 females |                                  |                               | Maize<br>millet<br>paddy<br>lentils etc                                  | Since 1987 but informally it was exploited on a sustained basis for the last 100 years |

| Typology of Forest User Communities by Districts | Area (in Has ) | Distance from the Motorable Road | No of HHs | Total Pop | Caste/Fthnic Groups                          | Type of Forest | Composition of Users Committee | No of Advisors' to the Committee | Other Devt Project Activities | Major Crops Grown                      | CFUG/Group Formation History   |
|--|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 4 Pyuthan<br>i Pallo Pakha<br>Band Khola         | 62             |                                  | 100       | 600       | Brahmins<br>Chhetris<br>Magars and<br>Newars | Conserved      | 7 members<br>(only males)      |                                  |                               | Paddy<br>wheat<br>pulses and<br>barley | Since 1990 but it was conserved by a local <u>Guthi</u> organization for many years (unspecified) prior to 1951 and it was exploited on a controlled basis with the permission of local ward member for more than 30 years |

Note 1 Livestock is the integral part of the farming systems of both the Hills and Terai. The livestock raised primarily consists of cattle, buffaloes, goats, etc.

ii The term 'indigenous' as used here in the text does not always necessarily mean traditional, because traditional management refers to practices which have been nurtured and practiced for many years. 'Indigenous' is basically a 'local people's initiative' which can also be a relatively recent innovation as in the case of Bilona and Chandanpur.

## 4.0 COMMUNITY AND CFUG ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES

This chapter presents a discussion on the knowledge of the CFUG members/users, the process of organization into a CFUG or users' communities, conflict resolution, constitution preparation, formation of users' committee, forest management plan, process of handing over the forest and post-CFUG formation support. Likewise, this chapter also includes a discussion about the distribution of benefits, financial management system, participatory planning and group networking. In this section the following issues are presented: attitudes of the users towards the services of the forestry officials, an analysis of the factors affecting the implementation of community forest management and barriers encountered during the period of the implementation of community forest.

### 4.1 Knowledge

#### 4.1.1 Process of Organization into CFUG

The field data amply demonstrate that a myriad of factors were responsible for the initiation of community forestry and indigenous forest management systems in the communities studied. Among the causal factors that led to the initiation of community forest management systems are historical rampant deforestation, impact of the observation tours, in the sites where the community forest programmes were fairly successful, advice from the DFOs and other forestry staff to initiate such programs, and inspiration by development-oriented agencies such as, Women Development Office and Women's Welfare Forum. Many other factors came from within the communities such as

- local initiatives of household users which stemmed from their reliance on forests,
- earlier indigenous practices
- personal initiatives taken by a few village leaders and conscious people,
- denial of the forest products from the forests controlled and managed by the nearby communities and
- direct influence of the CFUG activities in neighbouring communities

It was also inferred that in each of the communities studied, there is at least a combination of two factors that inspired people and users to unite for the conservation of the forest.

Once the communities decided to get organized, interested residents held a general meeting to identify the potential CFUG members. In almost all cases, barring the indigenous forest

management communities, there was also a representative from the forest office to assist interested residents in the formation of CFUG. Field impressions indicate that there was little to no female participation in these general meetings, the exception occurring when female-exclusive users' committees are formed. The low level or lack of female participation resulted from the male-dominated value system, which does not encourage women to participate in the public domain. Most women users interviewed did not know how CFUGs form. In most cases, the members of the users' committee knew more about how CFUGs are formed than the general forest users.

#### 4.1.2 Conflict Resolution

Conflict is reported to be ubiquitous in ten CFUGs studied, whereas six of the CFUGs were conflict-free. Community forest boundaries are the most commonly reported cause of conflict. Individuals tend to recognize the boundary of the ward or Village Development Committee<sup>1</sup> (VDC) as the boundary of the community forest. This misconception results from individuals' inability to clearly comprehend the basic concepts of a community forest. Usually, forestry officials approach communities and request that the inhabitants of one ward or VDC relinquish the control they have over some portion of the forest to claimants of another adjoining ward or VDC.

Most conflicts were resolved, however some remained problematic. In one instance individuals alleged that their land was included in the forest. This was resolved by giving back the claimed portion of the forest land to the private owners. In another instance, some claimed that the inhabitants of neighbouring wards of the same VDC used the foot-trail within the forest. In response to this problem, the CFUG provided alternative foot-trails in the forest area for those users. The problem of illegal entrance of the inhabitants of one ward into the forests of another ward was resolved by appointing the *Chaukidar* (forest guard). The issue of whether or not to leave some portion of degraded forest unprotected for livestock and grazing remained unresolved, however in another community our research shows that generally users themselves were able to resolve local conflicts apropos of the community forest. Nonetheless, the assistance of forestry officials in resolving those of smaller magnitude was timely and laudable.

#### 4.1.3 Constitution Preparation

The field data explicitly demonstrates that forest officials, particularly the Rangers, generally drafted CFUG constitutions. This occurred because drafting a constitution requires technical expertise which the ordinary villagers lack with the exception of a few cases of well-educated individuals. Hence the constitution of most of the CFUGs in this study were drafted by the Ranger and presented for deliberation at the general meeting of users. In isolated cases the CFUG itself drafted the constitution with the technical assistance of the Ranger.

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A VDC is the lowest level of administrative and political unit which is divided into nine wards.

There was a general trend to approve the drafted constitution by holding a general users meeting. Generally, after discussion and deliberations, a consensus was reached and the constitution was approved. When asked what the constitution contains, responses provided include

- the embodiment of rules and regulations pertaining to the rights and responsibilities of the forest users,
- an outline of the users committee, its rights and functions as well as its role in controlling illegal activities to protect the community forest, and
- a description of how forests are to be managed and the sanctions imposed on violators of regulations

Thus, by and large, respondents have a basic knowledge about what a CFUG constitution is. However, study participants ignored the number of user households, failed to estimate the population of the users' groups, estimate the size of operating funds and indicate the names of the office-bearers.

Two additional findings are worth mentioning about the knowledge regarding CFUG constitutions

- Most women interviewed did not know how constitutions were drawn and what they contain. This lack of knowledge can be attributed to two factors:
  - i the limited or lack of involvement of women in the preparation of the constitution, and
  - ii their relatively low level of literacy or formal education
- Nonetheless, the women in the user committees and a few conscious women knew how constitutions were drawn and had a sense about what their content

#### 4.1.4 Formation of the Users Committee

A democratic process is used to form the user committee of a CFUG. Members of this committee are elected and selected during a general meeting of forest users. The names of candidates are proposed in the meeting and then elected according to their capabilities and popularity. Most committee members are consequently selected the same way.

Out of the sixteen CFUGs visited as part of this study, four have user committees where all members are male, ten have one to four women representatives, and two communities have exclusively female user committees. Overall, limited female participation overall is user

committees reflects traditional attitudes that confine women to the home and farmlands, despite the growing recognition of women as development partners

In CFUGs where the user committee is exclusively made up of males, female informants usually did not know how user committees were formed. In CFUGs where user committees are exclusively made up of females, some male informants were unaware that such committee existed

#### 4.1.5 Forest Management Plan

Of the total sixteen CFUGs studied, only two of the pre-handed over CFUGs do not have forest management plans. As mentioned above, the forest management plan, like the constitution, is drafted by the Ranger and presented in the general meeting of the CFUGs for deliberation. The drafted forest management plan is submitted to the DFOs only after the CFUG members agree to its contents. The forest management plan is a five years' plan for forestry management, containing the modus operandi for sustainable forest use. The forest management plan contains procedures for planting trees and other silvicultural activities such as thinning, pruning, lopping, clearing, and selective harvesting. The village leaders, the active members of the users' committee, and active general users play an instrumental role in finalizing of the management plan. The majority of female informants and some of the male users do not know how the plan is formulated or what it contains, these are study participants that were not involved in drafting and finalizing the plan. The interviewees were generally aware of the basic objectives highlighted in the forest management plan, however they ignored aspects such as how the nursery operates, type of income generation activities implemented, the calendar of activities, indicators for collecting grass or obtaining fodder for animals, cultivation of medicinal herbs, protection of wildlife penalties for violations and forest production methods

#### 4.1.6 Process of Handing Over the Forest

An effort was made to investigate if CFUG members and forest users in indigenous communities know the status of handing over national forests to nearby communities. Findings indicate that respondents are aware of the steps needed to have forests handed over to communities, including the formation of CFUGs, the application to the DFO for assistance, the preparation of the constitution and its submission to the DFO for approval, the preparation of forest management plan and its submission to DFO for approval. Both male and female members of the users' committees and other well informed male users of the community forest are the most knowledgeable about these steps. A large number of female and some general male user informants are not knowledgeable of these issues since (i) forestry officials do not offer wider dissemination of the community forest principles and (ii) there is low participation in the evolution of community forests in their respective local settings

Informants in indigenous communities naturally have a lower level of knowledge on the handing over process. Indigenous forest communities are at a disadvantage since forestry officials do not provide them with community mobilisation assistance. They also have relatively low levels of

intra-group dynamics which results from the lack of information about the process of approaching the DFO for forest hand over. Only one indigenous community visited had the initiative and willingness to overcome this obstacle.

#### 4.1.7 Post-CFUG Formation Support

Post-CFUG formation support is essential for the implementation of a community forest management plan. Other essential mechanisms for community forest formation are monitoring of the forest management plan, strengthening the forest users' group and ensuring that the users' group is self-sufficient. Post-CFUG formation support services have been provided only to the CFUGs which have been handed over national forests for sustained utilization.

The following are examples of post-CFUG formation support services provided to these communities:

- regular monitoring of the implementation of the forest management plan,
- forestry officials provide tree improvement advice,
- observation tours in successful sites of community forests,
- short training on forest management techniques and silvicultural practices such as nursery, tree plantation, pruning, thinning/clearing, selective harvesting, and book-keeping.

There have been merely two to four trainees per community. This number is low because imparting training to all users is impossible and beyond the capability of existing resources, however has been limited. Trained people are expected to disseminate their knowledge on forest management to other users. As mentioned above, the majority of women and some male users ignore support provided once CFUGs are formed.

#### 4.2 Behaviour

##### 4.2.1 Distribution of Benefits in the Community

Benefits from forest products have been distributed both among individual households and on communities. Members of CFUGs and indigenous communities are entitled to harvest the forest for fuelwood, grass/fodder, leaf litter, green leaves, *Khar* (thatching materials), timber and medicinal plants to meet their household requirements. Generally the user households have to pay a nominal charge for fuelwood, grass/fodder, thatching materials and timber. The products that are exempt from the nominal charge are leaf litter, green leaves and medicinal plants. There is no disparity in having access to such benefits to satisfy household requirements. Access to these benefits is possible by obtaining a 'permit' from the users committee. This has been established so that forest utilization of the forest is done sustainably.

Profits generated from the sale of forest products and fines collected from violators, have been deposited in bank accounts. In some cases, a substantial portion of these profits is invested in community development activities, creating additional benefits for community members. In this context, it is worth mentioning two illustrative cases. In Gigara, a post-hand over community of the Banke district, the income earned from forest products and fines has been used as follows: Rs 80,000 has been spent for establishing a school, Rs 10,000 for the construction of a bridge, Rs 1,000 for the local Youth Club and Rs 24,000 for supplying electricity to the village. The users of the Laliguras in the Salyan district have constructed a *Chautari* (community resting place) using Rs 10,000 from the CFUG's fund. In addition, the users' committee can provide credit to CFUG members for up to Rs 500, at 24 percent annual interest.

#### 4.2.2 Financial Management Systems

Most of the post-hand over communities have maintained their accounts properly, this is most likely the impact of a short 3 - 4 day training facilitated by the district forestry officials. The accounts of such communities have been maintained by a treasurer, secretary, chairman and appointed office secretary/accountant (not only by the treasurer in all the communities). The post-hand over communities opened accounts in the nearest banks, with the provision that the deposited money can only be drawn with the joint signatures of the chairman and treasurer, secretary or appointed accountant. The more organized book-keeping is most common in those communities where forest products are more profitable. For example, CFUGs in the Gigara Banke district where income from forest products is high, a secretary was appointed to properly maintain accounts, including records of income and expenditures. The secretary is paid Rs 1,400 per month for the services rendered to the CFUGs.

On the other hand, post-hand over communities that do not have high income and no training have maintained poor financial records. For example, Takiyapur, a post-hand over CFUG has maintained poor financial records. There was no systematic record keeping for income and expenditure. Informants attributed it to lack of training. Pre-hand over CFUGs are not the legal entities and therefore none of them has opened a bank account. One of the pre-hand over CFUGs studied (Jan Ekta CFUG of Banke) has opened a bank account and appointed a secretary to maintain the office records and accounts.

The indigenous forest management systems have not systematically maintained financial records either. Nonetheless they have tried to maintain the records their own way showing income and recurrent expenditures. Yet, everything is out of order - there are no separate columns or entries for income and recurrent expenditures.

The CFUGs accounts are audited by a person designated by the user group and the user group submits a copy of the report to the concerned District Forest Office.

#### 4 2 3 Participatory Planning

Since forests are best protected through the concerted effort of all community members, any activity for sustained utilization and conservation of forests must be planned in a participatory manner. User committees intending to complete any activity (e.g., nursery management, plantation, running, clearing, harvesting and other protective measures), informs all users households to make pertinent decisions for decision-making. This participatory approach is found to have been practiced both in CFUGs as well as in indigenous forest management communities. The dissemination of participatory planning information is usually done by the Ranger for the members of CFUGs.

#### 4 2 4 CFUG Networking

The objective of CFUG networking is to create an environment where members of the CFUGs can exchange their concerns and solutions to problems through the formation of a district level CFUG federation. This is usually facilitated by Rangers or forestry officials. Networking is practiced among the post-hand over CFUGs. Of the total eight CFUGs studied, those in Paluthan and Laligurans of the Dang and Salyan districts respectively reported that they have established a relationship with the district CFUG federation. CFUG networks permit the exchange of views and ideas among members in order to successfully solve common problems such as conflicts and those arising from silvicultural practices.

#### 4 3 **Attitude Towards the Services of the Forestry Officials**

The study has also made an effort to assess the attitude towards the forestry officials' services. By and large, most of the informants interviewed reported that they have had a positive experience with the services that forestry officials render. This positive perception can be attributed to

- assistance in conflict resolution
- assistance in the preparation of a constitution and forest management plan,
- provision of grants for nursery expansion
- facilitation of short forest management skills training (such as pruning, thinning/clearing, and selective harvesting)
- management of observation tours for the CFUG members and committee members to the sites where community forestry has been successful,
- training members in financial management systems (mainly the book-keeping),

- provision of the armed guard when required for forest protection (such as in Paluthan of Dang), and
- regular supervision, follow-up, and monitoring of the program

Some informants from indigenous communities also expressed their affinity towards officials, given they have encouraged indigenous communities to initiate community forestry in their areas

#### **4 4 Factors Contributing to the Success of CFUG**

The informants have identified a myriad of factors that contributed to the successful implementation of community forestry

- strong unity among users for a common goal,
- adequate technical and administrative support from the forestry officials,
- provision of adult literacy classes (for consciousness building),
- community sense of ownership and the collective responsibility for the control of prohibited activities,
- people's awareness towards the community forest,
- strict adherence to community forest rules and regulations,
- timely resolution of conflict and
- the felt need of the forest

#### **4 5 Barriers for the Implementation of Community Forest**

The following list shows the number of barriers identified during the implementation of community forests which comprise

- disunity among the CFUG members
- violation of the community forest rules and regulations,
- lack of forest management skills among the CFUG members,
- users' ignorance about community forest policies, rules and regulations,

- illegal exploitation of forests by neighbouring communities,
- deliberate cattle grazing by both CFUG members and outsiders,
- theft of forest products by both CFUG members and outsiders,
- tendency to maximise one's own personal interests (e.g. users' committee members of the G1gara CFUG have demanded emolument for the voluntary services they render) and
- anti-social behaviours (e.g. the drunkards who uprooted the planted saplings in Tak1yapur of Dang)

#### **4.6 Non-membership**

An effort has also been made to ferret out the *raison d'etre* of not joining a CFUG while a person's household is within the CFUG community. A number of reasons have been ferreted out which consist of

- absence of the person during the CFUG formation stage,
- lack of invitation or interest to join the group,
- poverty (e.g. in Tak1yapur of Dang, one has to pay Rs 1,000 to join the group and in Mahila Upkar of Banke, one has to pay Rs 2,000 which cannot be paid by the poor person. In addition to that entry fee, one has to pay a monthly salary for the forest guard ) and
- people meeting the requirements of forest products within their private land (e.g., a 49 year old woman from the Tak1yapur CFUG area has planted many trees in her small patch of private land where she meets her household requirements )

## 5.0 FOREST POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

This chapter briefly presents a discussion on the knowledge of community forest policies, soil conservation policy, rights and responsibilities of users' groups, rights and responsibilities of users' committees, rights and responsibilities of the local forestry officials, extension services and materials, etc. Also provided hereunder is the discussion of the behaviour vis-a-vis existing practices of forest protection and conservation, the attitude towards forest policies, rules and regulations.

### 5.1 Knowledge

#### 5.1.1 Community Forest Policy

The majority of male and some of the female forest user informants interviewed are acquainted with the government's community forestry policies. Lack of acquaintance with these policies is by and large more common among female than among male informants.

Knowledgeable user informants reported that the government community forest policy views the local users as 'protectors' and 'managers' of forests. In other words, they believe that forest policies underscore the protection, conservation and management of forests through the participation of the local communities. They further reported that the policy's intent of handing over the forests to the local users is to encourage their sustained utilization. The community forest policy encourages local users to protect the forest as their own collective property.

The interviews also revealed that the government introduced the community forestry policy after experiencing the lessons learned from past forestry policies which contributed to massive deforestation. It is believed by respondents that the failure to implement sound policies and the deforestation of these areas is a direct result of the non-participatory approach adopted by community forestry policy. The government recognizes the fact that it can not protect the forest.

In the Terai, the hill migrants are more knowledgeable about the community forest policy than the natives. For example, the migrant settlers (Brahmins and Chhetris) have more knowledge on community forest policy than the native Tharus, a function of the pervasiveness of community forestry activities in the Hills.

Thus, even though knowledgeable informants can not spell out the details of the community forest policy, they have fairly understood the essence or philosophy of the community forest policy as portrayed above.

### 5.1.2 Soil Conservation Policy

An effort has also been made to ascertain the knowledge of user informants on soil conservation policy. Almost all the informants of both sexes interviewed reported that they do not have any knowledge on the current government's soil conservation policy. Even though the recently established district soil conservation offices have initiated work in a participatory fashion in limited areas where soil erosion and land degradation are most serious, they have not been able to expand their services on larger scale.

Despite the lack of knowledge on soil conservation policy, a group of women of Gai Gaurem pre-hand over CFUG of the Salyan district reported that the District Agriculture Development Office conducted an initial short training in soil conservation measures. This group subsequently planted banana trees on the sides of their respective farmlands. Some informants of both sexes demonstrated their awareness of soil erosion problems due to inundation and identified the solution which requires trees planted on the river side.

The users of Sarvodaya pre-hand over CFUG of the Dang district have already done some soil conservation activities, such as the preparation of river embankment and construction of retaining walls for the protection of the soil. Some informants in Paleban in Pyuthan district reported that they are aware of the importance of the soil conservation such as tree planting for controlling the landslide.

These details clearly demonstrate that even though the local people are unaware of the government's soil conservation policy, they are aware of the factors of soil erosion and land degradation and also know measures they must take to prevent them.

### 5.1.3 Rights and Responsibilities of the Users Group

The rights and responsibilities of user groups fall under the forest rules and regulations. An effort has been made to determine the extent of knowledge that users' groups have about their rights and responsibilities. Almost all the user informants of both sexes know their rights and responsibilities. They unanimously expressed that their right is to enjoy the available forest products to meet their household requirements. Similarly, their responsibility is to protect the forest, establish nurseries, plant trees, participate in the activities organised by the user's committees, provide regular salaries to the forest guards, follow the government community forest policies, rules and regulations, extinguish the forest fires, and prevent grazing within the forest.

### 5.1.4 Rights and Responsibilities of the Users Committee

These rights and responsibilities of the users committee also falls within the purview of forest rules and regulations. Most members of executive committees, male and female, know these issues. Similarly, a few female user informants and more than half of the male informants are found to be equally knowledgeable. Knowledgeable informants reported that the right of a user

committee is to mete out punishments to violators of local norms, rules and regulations established by the community forest management plan. However, this committee can arrest and penalize individuals who illegally cut branches off the trees, uproot planted trees, illegally extract fodder/grass, timber and fuelwood, etc. Its responsibility is to call meetings of users on a regular basis, arrange training for both committee members and forest users, persuade users to abide by the CFUG constitution, make users participate in reforestation, pruning, thinning and clearing/weeding activities. The users committee is also responsible for contacting forestry officials for the necessary services, maintain book-keeping and official documents and give forest product permits to users. Basically, the major responsibility of the users committee is to manage the forest by implementing the forest management plan.

#### 5.1.5 Right and Responsibility of the Local Forestry Officials

The members of the executive committee (of both sexes) and more than half of the male user informants and a few active female user informants are acquainted with rights and responsibilities of local forestry officials. Local forestry officials, particularly the District Forest Officers have the authority to resume the forest if the user group has substantially damaged the environment or failed to comply with the Forest Act (1993). These informants also reported that the DFO can penalize anyone within the users committee or other members who violate the Forest Act and forest rules and regulations. The responsibility of the forestry official is to assist and monitor the implementation of the forest management plan, follow-up on CFUG activities, provide regular support to the CFUG (including financial, silvicultural and legal knowledge on community forestry by imparting training to the CFUGs) and arrange tours for members of user committees and CFUGs.

#### 5.1.6 Extension Services and Materials

It was difficult to generate information on extension services and materials since only a few user informants of two post-hand over communities namely Gigara and Mahila Upkar, talked about forest extension services, yet did not say a word about the materials. The user informants commented on forest extension services including follow-ups, monitoring and revision of the CFUG forest management plan, training on forest management skills including harvesting administration financial management systems and book-keeping, and participatory planning. In fact the user informants of other post-hand over communities also reported the same post-CFUG supports services as above, however they define support services as extension services. The user informants of all the CFUGs and indigenous forest management communities reported that they have not received materials (posters leaflets booklets, etc.) of the community forest, its policies rules and regulations, soil conservation policies or any other related activities.

#### 5.2 **Existing Behavioural Practice of Forest Conservation**

The post-hand over CFUGs have been managing their forests pursuant to their management plans. That is by exploiting the forest products sustainably as specified in the plan. The universal

practice for the protection of forests is through the appointment of *Chaukidars* (forest guards). The *Chaukidars* are usually paid in cash, except for in some systems in which they volunteered their services. The *Chaukidars* regularly patrol the forest, arrest the offenders of the CFUG rules for the users' committee to determine a punishment, seize the illegally extracted forest products and return the stolen goods to the committee (which is normally auctioned or sold), drive away the illegally grazing livestock, and to alert the users' committee and CFUG if the forest is caught by the fire, etc. The general rule is to collect a small amount of cash from each user household at the end of the month for the payment of the forest guard's emolument. In some of the communities, it is collected by the *Chaukidar* himself and in others, the secretary or treasurer collects it. In some cases, the money is collected on a specified day of the month on which a general meeting of the users is held for the discussion on the forest management and planning. The *Chaukidars* are appointed by the users' committee in consultation with other CFUG members also. They have to be physically strong and sincere to discharge their onerous protective responsibilities. The employment of *Chaukidars* for forest conservation and protection by the CFUGs indicates that people are willing to conserve the forest with their own efforts and resources. This is by far a great revolution for the development and sustained utilization of the forests.

### **5.3 Attitude Towards Forest Policies, Rules and Regulations**

By and large, user informants of both sexes have had a positive attitude towards the forest policies, rules and regulations. The reason of having the positive attitude is that all of them recognize the local people as protectors and managers of forest resource. In other words, they have created an environment for increased protection, management and sustained utilization of the forest through the involvement of beneficiary communities. However, there were a few user informants of both sexes who could not say anything about their attitude or view towards the policies, rules and regulations.

## 6.0 FOREST MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND BEHAVIOUR

This chapter briefly presents a discussion on the knowledge and behaviour of user informants regarding timber and non-timber forest product management

### 6.1 Knowledge on Timber Management

The level of knowledge on timber management varies among the user informants of the pre-and-post hand over CFUGs and indigenous forest management communities. The user informants of the post-hand over communities have a relatively greater degree of knowledge than the pre-hand over CFUGs. This is attributable to the greater degree of efforts made by the Rangers and forestry officials to provide short training to the general users and members of the committee of both sexes. They have the knowledge on pruning, thinning, clearing and selective harvesting. The user informants are experienced in pruning the multiple stems to allow a single stem to dominate for the quality timber development. They are also knowledgeable of pruning the lower branches to produce a clear tree bole with few knots for quality timber. Similarly, they maintain that thinning is required for removing trees with inferior form and slower growth rates to allow other healthy plants to grow faster. Analogously, they also know to clear the fallen branches and trees from the forest to allow for continued growth. Selective harvesting is required for sustainable forest development, which requires that old, dead, fallen and dying trees should be cut down for timber, leaving the young and healthy trees for future use.

Although a few women of the users' committee are more familiar with silvicultural practices, most female and male user informants lack this knowledge. The members of users committee have, in addition to the training, more contact and discussion with the Rangers about timber management practices. The general practice prevailing in the communities is that a few members, both male and female are given a short training on the silvicultural practices with the assumption that they would disseminate their knowledge to other interested members once they are back in their respective communities. This strategy is used since providing training to all the users would be difficult due to limited resources and manpower constraints. Training is one of the major components of the post-CFUG formation support mostly imparted to the members of handed-over communities. Nonetheless it was ascertained that silvicultural training was imparted to a few pre-hand over communities but still members of all pre-hand over CFUGs do not have knowledge on silvicultural practices. In the case of indigenous forest management communities, there is no silvicultural training imparted to the users. Despite this fact, a few male members have limited knowledge on plantation weeding and pruning which they have gained through observation in nearby communities.

## **6 2 Behaviour on Timber Management**

The timber management activities carried out by CFUG users and indigenous forest management systems vary depending on the types or stages of community managed forestry. For example, the users of post-hand over CFUG at Paluthan do not practice pruning and thinning because their forest is already mature. Instead they practice selective timber harvesting. Moreover, members of the Gigara post-hand over communities engage in pruning, thinning and selective harvesting. The Mahila Upkar CFUG divides the forest into five blocks for rotational pruning, thinning and selective timber harvesting. Conversely, the users of the Takiyapur CFUG do not practice any of these silvicultural activities, despite that, these techniques are known by a few male members of the executive committee. The users of Sidha Gufa practice plantation, thinning and selective timber harvesting. Users at the Bikenidada CFUG only clear forests. Other common silvicultural activities are not practiced since the forest is quite young. The users of the Lahiguras CFUG divide the forest into four plots for yearly rotational pruning, thinning, and selective harvesting. And finally, the users of the Paleban CFUG have established a sample plot for forest management practices such as pruning, lopping, thinning and selective timber harvesting.

The field data indicate that some of the pre-hand over CFUGs practice scientific silvicultural activities and some do not. For instance, the users of the Rimna CFUG have not been trained in silvicultural activities such as pruning, thinning and selective harvesting, thus they do not carry out these practices. The users of the Jan Ekta pre-hand over CFUG divided the forest into five different blocks for rotational pruning, lopping, thinning and selective timber harvesting, particularly the Sisso. The users of Sarvodaya CFUG do not practice the scientific silvicultural activities because their operational plan has not been finalized and they are hoping to learn such activities after the forest is handed over. Similarly, the users of the Gai Gaureni are not practicing the aforementioned activities at the moment, because the forest is not handed over to them and they have not had contact with the forest official or Ranger. On the other hand, the users of Krishna Himali practice the silvicultural activities because the Ranger has provided training to a few users. The users of Ghorthapa and Newarban do not practice silvicultural activities because of the lack of training. Last year, the user informants of Chaurighat CFUG weeded the planted areas.

There is virtually very little practice of scientific silvicultural activities in the indigenous forest management systems, primarily due to the lack of training and interaction with the forestry officials. The user informants of the Sete Khola indigenous forest management system reported that it is common to clear the inferior or weak plant species and prune tree branches. The users of CFUGs and indigenous forest management systems who do not have scientific forest management skills must obtain a permit to exploit forest resources.

## **6 3 Attitude Towards Forestry Officials**

Members of the CFUGs who have received forest management training and skills attain a positive attitude towards the forestry officials, because their services has helped them manage and exploit

timber in a sustainable manner. Previously, when the members and users lacked the forest management skills, they harvested timber haphazardly. Many of them were unaware of and had not practiced selective timber harvesting. The users who did not receive any technical training on timber management skills had no opinion about the forestry officials, but would like to be trained in those skills, as soon as possible.

#### 6.4 Knowledge on Non-Timber Forest Product Management

User informants of both sexes of some CFUGs reported that they are aware of the availability of a limited number of medicinal plants such as the *Harro* (used for curing cough), *Kanchurna* (used for curing animal's liver), *Hadchura* (used for treating the broken bones), *Timor* (used for treating stomach aches and colds), *Amala* (used for curing cold) and *Pakhenbed* (used for curing diarrhoea and dysentery). Though these products are harvested once a year, the users have not been trained in the scientific skills for sustainable exploitation, with the exception of two women. These two women of the Jan Ekta CFUG in the Banke district were recently offered the opportunity to participate in a training on medicinal plants, organised by the District Forest Office.

In all types of CFUGs and indigenous forest management systems, users have been found to be experienced in the selective harvesting of fuelwood. This ubiquitously known system indicates that users are moving towards sustainable exploitation of forests. The users know that the users' committee imposes fines on the illegal feller of live trees for fuelwood. Fodder, *Khar* (thatching materials) and other plants such as *Rasulla* are other non-timber forest products that are useful for initiating their systems.

User informants are quite aware of the indirect benefits of forestry management. For instance, user informants were aware that conserving and planting trees is elemental in controlling soil erosion preventing landslides.

#### 6.5 Behaviour on Non-Timber Forest Product Management

In practice users lack the necessary training and thus do not practice the sustainable exploitation of medicinal plants. They exploit the medicinal plants haphazardly in order to meet their own household requirements and periodic cash income needs. Despite this, users of all pre-hand over, post-hand over CFUGs and indigenous forest management systems have nurtured and established a system of selective harvesting of fuelwood. The users' committee gives the users permits to collect only pruned stems, branches, dying dead, and fallen trees, branches, or twigs for fuelwood. Fodder and *Khar* are sustainably exploited by the users. The roots of grass and trees of fodder *khar* are not uprooted and destroyed, since they are needed every year to meet their requirements.

## **6 6 Attitude Towards Forestry Officials**

Since the forestry officials do not focus on training for non-timber forest product management, (except for fuelwood) they have no opinion on the forestry officials. However, they have expressed their interest in having training inputs as early as possible.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR VIDEO PRODUCTION**

The field observation and the subsequent analysis of qualitative data in the preceding chapters amply demonstrate that all users of community forests and indigenous forest management systems do not have extensive knowledge on the community forest and soil conservation policies, forest rules and regulations, technical skills in forest management and group process. Hence, uneducated user informants have not been able to sustainably utilize the forest, a consequence of the following factors such as illiteracy, poverty, lack of exposure to the outside successful CFUGs, lack of wider dissemination of community forest and soil conservation policies, forest rules and regulations, lack of training opportunities for the forest management and lack of access to audio visual opportunities. Therefore, the video production company must focus its work on the issues described in this report for environmental education and communication. For simplicity, the following themes and messages should be incorporated in the video story and have been prioritised hereunder:

- a Community forest policy (emphasis should be on the factors responsible for past deforestation, its serious consequences, government's response to deforestation in the form of a community forest since 1978, the 1988 Master Plan for Forestry Sector's emphasis on key policies related to community forest, etc. as explained in Chapter 1, and 4)
- b Soil conservation policy (focus on environmental education as explained in Chapter 2)
- c The 1993 Forest Act (vis-a-vis the community forest provision which focuses on community forests, formation of users' groups, registration of users' groups, users' groups as a corporate body, handing over of community forests, and resumption of community forests, etc.)
- d The 1995 Forest Rules and Schedules (focusing on the community forest formation and registration of users' group, operational plan for community forests, maintenance of community forest records, actions prohibited in community forests, collection, sale and distribution of forest products, receipts and records of forest products, hammer mark to be registered, transportation of forest products, operation of users' group fund, resumption of community forest and power to obtain assistance)
- e The 1995 Operational Guideline for community forestry development programme. The phase-wise role of forestry development staff has to focus on as given below (also indicated in the textual presentation)

1 Investigation Phase

- discussion about community forestry with the local community,
- identification and verification of users and forest area,
- identification of existing community forest management systems,
- ascertaining users' requirements, and
- Assessment of the proposed community forest area

11 Negotiation Phase

- identification of users' requirements, problems, and solutions,
- preparation of the operational plan,
- review of the composition of CFUG,
- approval of the operational plan, and
- handing over the responsibility of managing the community forest

111 Implementation Phase

- assisting the user group in implementing the operational plan,
- monitoring the implementation of the operational plan,
- strengthening the forest user groups by helping resolve conflict, training the users in forestry development, organising study tours, training and workshops, interactions among user groups, encouraging them to form a users' federated association, and
- revision of operational plan

1V Review Phase

- evaluation of the on-going operational plan,
- discussion on the revision of operational plan,
- approval of the operational plan

f Conflict pertaining to forest boundary (emphasizing the mistaken association of ward or VDC boundary with the boundary of the community forests, as explained in chapter 4)

g The constitution preparation process (as explained in the text of chapter 4)

The following should be incorporated into the videos to inform people about the contents of the constitution

- name and address of the users group,
- objectives of the users group,
- seal of the users' group,

- full names and addresses of users,
  - number of households in the area covered by the users' group,
  - estimated population of the users' group,
  - functions, duties, and powers of the users' group
  - procedure of forming the users' committee,
  - list of names of the office-bearers of the users' committee,
  - working procedure of the users' committee,
  - measures to be adopted to control forest fires,
  - punishment assigned to members of the users' group who act in isolation of the operational plan,
  - formalities to be fulfilled while punishing any member of the users' group,
  - procedure for managing funds, and
  - procedure of auditing the accounts
- h Forest management plan<sup>2</sup> preparation (with due emphasis as explained in Chapter 4) The following contents should be incorporated in the videos to inform people about the contents of the forest management plan or operational plan
- particulars of the forests, name, boundaries, area, condition, and type,
  - map of the forest,
  - block divisions and their particulars name, boundaries, areas, aspects, slope, soil, type of forest, main species useful species, age, and situation with respect to natural vegetation
  - objectives of forest management,
  - forest protection methods,
  - silvicultural activities thinning pruning, cleaning, and other forest promotion silvicultural activities
  - nursery tree plantation income generation activities, and time-schedule, details about areas suitable for cultivation of medicinal herbs, types and species of such herbs cultivation activities and time-schedules,
  - process of enforcing penalties upon users, and
  - protection of wildlife
- i Factors leading to the easy implementation of the community forest (as explained in Chapter 4)
- ii Factors hindering the implementation of community forest (as explained in Chapter 4)

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While writing the script a model forest management plan approved by the DFO can be used as a reference

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| <b>INSTRUMENTS</b><br><b>FORMATIVE RESEARCH ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND</b><br><b>COMMUNICATION IN FOUR DISTRICTS OF MID-WESTERN NEPAL</b> |
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**A Key Informant Interview Guide**

**1 Background Information**

- i District
- ii Name of the Community Forest
- iii Name/s of the Village Development Committee where the community forest is located
- iv Ward number
- v Distance from the motorable road (in km)
- vi Total area of the community forest in hectare
- vii Forest (planted or preserved)

**2 Socio-demographic Information**

- i How many households are the general members in this community forest user's group? What is the total population by sex? Are there any non-member households living in this CFUG community? If yes, how many?
- ii What are the different ethnic/caste groups utilising this community forest? Could you provide us the number of the households of different ethnic/caste groups? Are all these ethnic/caste groups staying here for long or not? If some of them are the recent migrants could you tell us which ethnic/caste groups?
- iii What is the literacy status of the general members/users of the community forest? Could you tell us what number/percentage of the males and females utilising the forest are literate? Which ethnic/caste group/s is/are mostly illiterate? Why so?
- iv How many members are there in the users committee (executive)? Are they from the same ethnic/caste group or from different ones? If they are from the different ethnic/caste groups can you give us the information about the number of their representation?
- v What is the age group of the members of the users committee? Are there any female members in the committee? If no why no representation? Are the members of the committee socially related to each other?

- vi What is the literacy level of the members of the users' committee?
- vii Is/are there other social group/s or club/s working in the village? If yes what is/are its/their name/s and activities? What is/are its/their history/ies?
- viii Could you tell us the history of the formation of forest user s group of this area/village?

### **3 Farming Systems**

- i What is the land use pattern (e g forest, agricultural land, pasture/wasteland etc ) in this area?
- ii What are the crops grown in the different types of land by seasons?
- iii Is the village self-sufficient in food production? If not, what number or percentage of people are food deficit households? How do these food-deficit households manage to meet the food requirements (coping strategies)?

### **4 Other Project History**

- i Is/are there any project/s being implemented in the community? If yes since when?
- ii What are its objectives and activities? Which organisation/s has/have implemented it/them?
- iii Who are the beneficiaries? How many?
- iv How is/are the project/s implemented? With or without community participation?
- v Has/have the project/s any impact on the process of community forest management?

## **B Group Interview Guide for CFUGs (Both Pre-handover and Post-handover)**

### **1 Community and CFUG Organizational Processes (explore the knowledge, behaviour and attitude)**

- i What is the process of being organized into a CFUG? Could you tell us in detail? If not, why? If you know how did you work or how are you working to organize into CFUG? [Explore the process of identification of forest users/non-users to include in the CFUG including the roles of forestry officials and local community]
- ii Was/were any conflict/s regarding the forest boundary and users? If yes what the group thinks are the reasons for the conflict? Who were/are these conflicting groups by sex and caste/ethnicity? What roles were played by the forestry officials and the community itself to resolve conflicts? What were/are the local mechanisms of resolving the conflicts?
- iii How was the constitution prepared? How were rules and regulations set? What is the objective of the preparation of constitution? What roles were played by the forestry officials and community itself? Did any problem/s crop up? If yes, how was/were it/they solved? Were you satisfied with the way the constitution was prepared? If yes why? If not why? Was the step of the constitution preparation widely known? If not why? How many people were involved in this step?
- iv How was the users committee formed? If yes, could you tell us the formation process (the number of people present process of the selection/election of the group leaders involvement of women and disadvantaged groups such as poor/low caste people consensus disagreements etc)? Were you satisfied with the committee formation process? If yes why? If not why?
- v How was the forest management plan (operational plan) developed/framed? In other words could you tell us the process of its development/framing (number of people involved in this process by socio-economic level such as sex literacy level and caste and the process of participation in discussion)? What is the objective of forest management plan? What matters should be included in the operational plan?
- vi Is the forest actually being managed in accordance with the plan? If yes how do you distribute and/or invest the income generated through fines users and commercial sales? For what forest product's sale do you have to pay tax to the government? How do you pay it?

Note Do not ask the following questions to the pre-handover community

- vii Could you tell us in detail how was the forest handed over to the community? Was there any objection by any user? If yes why?
- viii Are you getting post CFUG formation support from the forest officials such as follow-up, monitoring training on the forest management harvesting administration financial management systems book-keeping and participatory planning and establishing and institutionalizing group to group network?
- ix Has the training given by the forestry officials been helpful to manage forest harvest it, and manage finance and book-keeping? If yes/how? If not why?
- x Have you identified any community-based income generating activity/ies? If yes, what is/are it/these? How have you started? Have you started giving benefits? If yes, how are the benefits distributed among the group members? How are the accounts maintained? Do the users know the accounts of the benefits?
- xi What is your attitude towards the services provided by the forestry officials? Adequate? Inadequate?
- xii What, in your experience has made it easier to implement community forest management?
- xiii What barriers did you have to face in implementing community forestry management?

**2 Knowledge and Attitude Regarding Community Forestry Policies, Rules and Regulations and Soil conservation**

- i What explains the government's policy to hand over forests to the communities or the local users (knowledge on the policy)?
- ii What actions are required by community members to get forests handed over to them?
- iii What are rights of the users' group in the community forestry? What are the rights of the district forestry officials regarding the community forestry?
- iv What are responsibilities (duties obligations) of the community forest users' group? What are the responsibilities of the local forestry officials towards the community forestry?

- v How is the income derived from the sale of the forest products utilized? For what? Do you have the knowledge of the payment of government taxes after the harvest of the forest products? If yes, are you paying it? For what sort of forest products?
- vi What extension services and materials which community residents are entitled to from the district forestry office and soil conservation office?
- vii What is your (users' group) attitude towards the community forestry policies rules and regulations (views on the adequacy/inadequacy of the policies rules and regulations)?
- viii Based on the knowledge of the policies rules and regulations what activities did you do in the past? What were the intentions to carry out these activities (behaviour)? What activities are you presently carrying out? And what are your intentions behind carrying out these activities?
- ix What do you know about the soil conservation policy of the government?

### 3 Forest Management Technical Skills and Behaviour

#### a Timber Management

- i Do you have nursery in the community? If yes, whose?
- ii What plantation techniques do you know?
- iii Do you know to prune/shingle multiple stems to allow a single stem to dominate? If yes how did you know it? Are you practising this skill? How often?
- iv Do you know to prune/lop the lower branches to produce a clear tree bole with few knots? If yes how did you know it? Are you practising this skill to manage timber? How often? What is its objective?
- v Do you know to thin forests to remove trees with inferior growth/form? If yes how did you know it? Are you practising this skill? How often?
- vi Do you also clear fallen branches/trees from the forest floor? If yes how often?
- vii Do you have the knowledge on the selective harvesting of timber? If yes are you practising it?
- viii If you do not have any of these skills how are you managing the timber?

ix Do you sell timber? If yes, how much income does your group or do you generate every year from the timber sale?

x While extracting/exploiting the timber at the present are you also considering its future availability? If yes how? If not why?

b Non-timber Forest Product Management

i What types of medicinal plants are available? How do you collect/exploit these medicinal plants? How often? Do you sell the products of medicinal plants? If yes in what form? Processed or unprocessed form? Do the collectors have to pay tax to the users' committee and the district forest office? Do you know how to manage the medicinal plants for future benefits also? If yes how?

ii What type of wood do you collect for cooking purpose (fallen or dead wood lopped/pruned branches twigs live young trees etc)? What are you doing to handle your future fuelwood needs? or How do you plan for your future fuelwood needs?

iii How do you extract grasses/forage/fodder from the forest? Do you also think of your future need of grasses/fodder? How in the actual practice?

iv Are there other non-timber forest products in addition to the above mentioned ones that are currently being exploited? If yes what are they? How do you exploit them? For what purpose? Are you also conserving while exploiting them at the present? If yes how?

4 Soil Conservation and Wasteland Management

i What activities did you do at group level in the past for soil conservation? And what activities are you presently doing?

ii What activities have been done so far for the wasteland management?

**C Individual Interview Guide for CFUG Members (Both Executive Committee Members and Other Members/Users - Information on Differences of Knowledge, Rights and Responsibilities to be Generated by Age, Gender, Literacy, Group Leaders vs Group Members)**

Note Questions prepared for the CFUG group interview can also be used to ask the individual members The objective of conducting the individual interview is to confirm the information generated through group interview

Preparation of the separate questions on exactly the same themes would be repetitive and hence the Research Associates and Research Assistants are asked to use the guide questions from (i) community and CFUG organizational processes, (ii) knowledge and attitude regarding community forestry policies, rules and regulations and soil conservation, and (iii) forest management technical skills by modifying them in the relevant context of the individual member However, the issues/topics for interview are listed here

**1 Community and CFUG Organizational Processes**

- i Knowledge on the process of the identification of forest users/non-users to include in the CFUG and his/her level of involvement
- ii Knowledge on the conflicts regarding the forest boundary and users and his/her level of involvement for conflict resolution
- iii Knowledge on the process of the preparation of the constitution its rules and regulations roles of the local forestry officials and the users and his/her involvement in the process as well as satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the process
- iv Knowledge on the formation process of the users' committee and his/her involvement in it
- v Knowledge on the forest management plan preparation and its process roles played by the community and local forestry officials and his/her involvement as well as satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the process
- vi Knowledge on the actual management on the forest in accordance with the management plan

Note Ask only to the CFUG member where the forest is handed over to the community

- vii Knowledge on the process of handing over the forest to the community and his/her involvement in the process

- viii Knowledge on the post CFUG formation support from the local forestry officials (see group interview guide question viii) and his/her involvement and views on the impact of the training
- ix Experiences on the factors contributing to easy implementation of community forest management
- x Experiences on the barriers in implementing your community forest management program

## **2 Knowledge and Attitude regarding Community Forestry Policies, Rules and Regulations and soil conservation**

- i Knowledge on the community forestry policy (how does the government intend to develop and manage forest resource)
- ii Knowledge on the actions to achieve the community forestry hand-over
- iii Knowledge on the rights of the users' group in the community forestry and the rights of the district forestry officials
- iv Knowledge on the responsibilities (duties/obligations) of the users' group and the responsibilities of the local forestry officials towards the community forest
- v Knowledge on the division of income among the users and payment of taxes after harvest of forest products
- vi Knowledge on the extension services/materials to be provided by district forest office
- vii Knowledge on the soil conservation policy and his/her activities
- viii Attitude towards the community forestry policies rules and regulations and soil conservation policies

## **3 Forest Management Technical Skills and Behaviours**

### Timber Management

- i Knowledge on pruning the multiple stems and its practice
- ii Knowledge on pruning/lopping lower branches and its practice

- iii Knowledge of thinning forests and its practice
- iv Knowledge on clearing fallen branches/trees from the forest and its practice
- v Knowledge on the selective harvesting of timber and its practice
- vi Household benefits from the timber of community forest

**4 Non-timber Forest Product Management**

- i Knowledge on the extraction of medicinal plants, and benefits received
- ii Types of fuelwood extracted for household consumption and sale (if any)
- iii Techniques of the extraction of fodder from the forest
- iv Knowledge on any other non-timber forest product extraction and its practice

**5 Indirect Benefits**

- i Knowledge on control of soil erosion landslide desertification etc from the conservation of the community forest

**6 Level of Activity in the CFUG Over Time**

- i Involvement in the types of activity related to forest management
- ii Change in activity level in the CFUG over time (if any) and reasons

**7 Soil Conservation**

- i What activities have you done for soil conservation so far ?
- ii What are the problems barriers ?

## **D Individual Interview Guide for Non-CFUG Members Living In CFUG Community**

Note First ask a screen question to determine if he/she has ever been a CFUG member. If yes then ask similar Knowledge Attitude and Behaviour (KAB) issues for topics (policy/rules technical skills, group process) as for CFUG group interview and CFUG member interview guide, preferably the later guide. But add the following questions

- 1 Why are you no longer a member (or active member) of the CFUG? What was your own level of activity in the CFUG over time. What types of activities were you involved in?
- 11 What had your household received in the past from the CFUG? Which forest products? Money? Other benefits direct or indirect?

If no, then ask the KAB questions on policy and technical skills only (but not the organizational processes) from the CFUG member interview guide. But add the following questions

- a Do you participate in other types of the groups in the community? If yes what sort of groups are these?
- b What are your reasons for not participating in the CFUG?

## **E Indigenous Forest Management (IFM) Group Interview Guide**

### **1 Background Information**

- I District
- II Name of the Forest
- III Village Development Committee where the forest is located
- IV Ward number
- V Total forest area in hectare

### **2 Socio-demography**

- I How many households are currently using this forest as members? What is the total population by sex?
- II How many males and females are literate?
- III What are the caste/ethnic groups living in this area? (Find out the distribution of the households by caste/ethnicity)
- IV Who are community leaders by caste/ethnicity?

### **3 Historical Information**

- I When was the group formed? How many members? How were they selected?
- II When did you begin the indigenous forest management?
- III Could you provide the history of group work in this community?

### **4 Forest Management**

- I Which forest products do you remove?
- II What do you do to ensure that you have a continuous supply of these forest products over time?
- III Which forest products do you sell in- processed or unprocessed form?
- IV What are the reasons for not registering as a CFUG and working with the government to get handover of your community forest?

## **5 Knowledge**

- I What is the CFUG handover process?
- II What are the community forestry rules and regulations?
- III What are the your rights and responsibilities of the users group as per the forest policy?
- IV What skills do you have to manage your forest in the way that the government requires?

## **6 Behaviour**

- I What are the difficulties for group organization?
- II Are there internal group conflicts? If yes what sort? How can they be solved?
- III Are there problems for the group regarding the distribution of benefits?

## **7 Attitudes**

- I What is your attitude towards the government community forestry policy and soil conservation policy?
- II What is your view towards the government services for the forest management and soil conservation?
- III What is your view regarding the roles played by DFO and his staff?
- IV What type of advice about forest management would you like to get?

## **F Indigenous Forest Management (IFM) Individual Member Interview Guide**

Note Except the background information the socio-demographic information and historical information, ask all the questions of forest management knowledge behaviour and attitude But following questions have also to be added

- i What has your household received from the group's IFM?
- ii What has your level of activity been over time? What types of group activities?
- iii If your level of activity has changed over time, why so?

## APPENDIX - 1 HAND OVER CFUGs

## **1.0 GIGARA COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, BANKE (POST - HAND OVER)**

Gigara Community Forest User Group (CFUG) is in ward number two of Udrapur Village Development Committee (VDC) which is almost 500 metres south to the Gularia-Nepalgunj Highway. It has a forest area of 134 hectares which has had the trees planted by the Youth Organization under the Terai Community Forest Project during the period of 1985-89. The forest was left unprotected after the completion of its plantation. Hence, a large number of the people of vicinity indiscriminately exploited the planted forest during the 1990 popular movement for the restoration of multiparty democracy (opportunistic exploitation of forest). As a consequence, a few local people took initiative for the forest protection. There is a total of 276 households as the general members of the CFUG with a total population of 875 (of which 50% are males and 50% females). The predominant ethnic groups are the Newars, Brahmins, Chhetris, Tharus and Muslims. The Tharus and Muslims are the oldest inhabitants whereas the Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars are the migrants from the hill districts. Fifty percent of the population is reported to be literate (mainly the hill migrants) and the literacy rate of the women is extremely negligible. Except 55 landless households, other households predominantly practice agriculture as their principal occupation. They grow paddy, wheat, lentil and sugarcane. About 25 percent agricultural households are food-deficit which supplement their income by working as agricultural and non-agricultural labourers. The landless households eke out their livelihood by working as labourers. There is not any developmental activity launched so far.

As indicated in the preceding paragraph, it was the local people who themselves took the initiative for the forest protection. It was reported that two village leaders of Newar ethnicity seriously took the issue of forest protection in 1991 and they, together with other few local people, started imposing the restrictions on the collection of Khar (imparata) and established a system of issuing Purji (permit) for its collection. This initiative created an awareness among the people that if forest is systematically managed, some income can be generated and local people started thinking about the forest conservation. As a result, the local users of the forest constituted a 'forest protection committee' which consisted of 11 members. Having done this much, they approached the District Forest Officer (DFO) for furnishing the information concerning what they had done so far and asking for suggestions to maintain continuity of the conservation activity. The DFO suggested them to form the Community Forest User Group (CFUG). Then, in accordance with the suggestion of DFO, they formed the user group of 276 households of the ward number two of Udrapur VDC by calling a general meeting which was also participated in by the Ranger. At the same time, a constitution was drafted in 1993 with the technical inputs of the Ranger. Having done all this, the users applied to the DFO for further action. Currently, there are 17 members in the executive committee of which four are females.

In 1993, when the households of ward number two were identified as the only forest users, the people of other adjoining wards claimed that the forest also belonged to them and hence, wanted

to continue to enjoy the forest products. But two leaders of the community had read the Forest Act (1993) and they visited the DFO for the further consultation. Finally, they came to know that forest belongs to the community/communities which is/are adjoining it. This was explained to the claimants of the adjoining wards and thereafter, the conflict did not arise any more regarding the forest use. However, a rich villager filed a petition in the district court claiming that about 2 *Bighas* (One *Bigha* is equivalent to 68) of his land was included in the forest boundary which was later returned to him.

Most of the male user informants are knowledgeable about what does the constitution contain. They reported that it contains the laws or rules and regulations pertaining to the rights and responsibilities of the forest users. Analogously, they are of the opinion that the forest management plan contains the provisions apropos of plantation of saplings, protection measures, harvesting techniques, etc. But female user informants of both group and individual household interviews reported that they do not have any knowledge on the modes of the preparation of the constitution and forest management plan -- a consequence of their non-involvement during the period of their preparations. Female informants reported that women have been involved in the executive committee only six months ago and prior to that, their participation in the decision-making was virtually nil. The forest was handed over one and half years ago.

Currently, the users are managing their forests according to their management plan. They have employed two paid forest guards (the senior one is paid Rs 1,200 and the junior one is paid Rs 1 000 per month) who regularly patrol the forest for the protection. The CFUG member can collect grass from May to August free of cost. However, people who are non-CFUG members must pay Rs 2 per bundle (about 40 kg can be carried by a person on the back). Fuelwood collection is done in December and January for 5-7 days and each collector (both CFUG member and non-member) has to pay Rs 20-25 per Bharī (a bundle of about 40 kg). Similarly, Khar (imparata) can be collected in October and November for which the collector (both member and non-member) has to pay Rs 15 per Bharī. Thus, the CFUG has been earning income from the forest products. It has been revealed that such income is used for multifarious constructive activities (such as Rs 80 000 has been spent for establishing a school, Rs 10,000 for the construction of the bridge, Rs 1 000 for a local Youth Club and Rs 2,400 for linking the electricity to the village). Likewise, the executive committee can provide credit facility to CFUG member up to Rs 500 with the annual interest of 24 percent. There is a office secretary who maintains the accounts/book keeping. He is paid Rs 1,400 per month. Altogether 12 user informants (including three females) have already had the opportunity for training, observation tours and participation in the workshop vis-a vis community forest. Users attitude towards the forestry officials seems positive because of the multitude of services rendered as described above.

Both male and female user informants reported that community forest is the consequence of the past experience of forest destruction (when it was being controlled by the state). They are of the view that the existing forest policy underscores the protection, conservation and management of forest through the participation of the community. Notwithstanding this fact, they are unaware of the soil conservation policy. They also reported that the right of the CFUG members is to

enjoy available forest products and the responsibility is to protect the forest. The responsibilities of the forestry officials are to monitor/follow-up the CFUG and train people for the scientific forest management. Male user informants have more knowledge on the silvicultural activities (such as pruning, thinning, and selective harvesting) than the females (which is attributable to the less exposure to these activities for the females). But every user committee member knows the pruning technique. These committee members teach other CFUG members about the pruning techniques. These pruning, thinning and selective harvesting (collection of dead, dying and decayed wood) techniques have been practiced. One male and one female participant of the group interviews had also participated in a training on the minor forest products conducted by CARE Nepal. Barring a few, users have no knowledge about the medicinal plants and their techniques of exploitation. Unity among the users, interest for the conservation and support from the forest office are the factors contributing to the easy implementation of the community forest. Lack of mutual understanding and lack of communication among the users, theft of forest products, deliberate leaving of the livestock in the forest for grazing, etc. are the barriers for the effective implementation.

## **2. MAHILA UPKAR COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, BANKE (POST-HAND OVER)**

This Mahila Upkar (literally women's welfare) Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number four (Rohini village) of Kohalpur Village Development Committee (VDC). It is approximately three kilometers away from the all-weather motorable road. The total area of the forest is 25.6 hectares. It is a conserved forest but enrichment plantations are often done once in a rainy season. The forest has been conserved since August, 1996. The total number of user households is 63 with a total population of 483 of which 250 are females and 233 are males. There are altogether 40 non-user households of ward number five of the same VDC. They are mostly the Tharus (the autochthonous people) who do not know anything regarding CFUG and they feel that there will be more wild animals if forest is protected. The community consists of mainly the Brahmins/ Chhetris, Magars, Kamis and Damais. The Brahmins and Chhetris account more than 65 percent of the total population. There is an executive committee of 9 female members of the CFUG. Five males have been designated as the advisors to the committee. Most of them work in Women's Welfare Forum. This forum is set up by women to start "saving fund" of the women and invest its money in terms of loan to its members. Many institutions such as Save Nepal and UNICEF have helped it financially and technically to uplift the existing condition of the women of this forum. One member had got an opportunity to learn about how community approach works in agriculture and forestry sectors in Bangladesh which, eventually, helped the CFUG to work successfully. Agriculture is the predominantly practiced economic activity supplemented by livestock-raising (mainly buffalo and goat-raising). Major crops grown are paddy, wheat, legumes and vegetables. Department of irrigation has constructed an irrigation canal with the cash and labour contribution of the local people but it is not working satisfactorily.

Women's Welfare Forum provided them an impetus to work unitedly for the development. Some of the women of this CFUG are also involved in the conservation of Forest in Srijana Community Forest Users' group. These women discussed among themselves to set up a new and separate community forest by female members only. Then a general meeting of the active users of forest and a Ranger was organized which was participated in by female representatives of 38 households. Now the households have been increased to 63 because of the motivation created by their work. This general meeting with the participation of the Ranger has resulted in the formation of CFUG. Some conflicts regarding the foot-trail and the right to use the forest were raised by inhabitants of ward number five of the same VDC. It was later resolved by the Ranger by convincing them and providing an alternative foot-trail to them. Then, they applied to District Forest Office for the registration. The Ranger helped the community by providing the draft of the constitution which outlined the rules and regulations (mainly sanctions and fines) for the management of forest. Subsequently, people gathered in a meeting, discussed the drafted constitution extensively and it was approved consensually. However, most of the users except few executive members do not have a detail knowledge about the rules and regulations set in the constitutions and the process of handing over. The nine women of the executive committee and its five male advisors

were elected unanimously from among the forest users. At the beginning of CFUG formation, Rs 200 had been collected from each user household as membership fee and later it was gradually reduced to Rs 20 and Rs 10 because of the sufficiency of money in the CFUG fund. The forest management plan was drafted by the Ranger at the general meeting of the users which was also approved by them after the extensive discussions. The Ranger has, thus, helped in the preparation of the constitution, mapping and surveying of CFUG area and the preparation of the management plan. The forest is being managed by establishing a plant nursery. Nursery has been protected by gabion wires and two members of the users' group supply water daily to plant seeds. Two forest guards have also been appointed to take care of forest.

Animals are strictly prohibited to enter inside the forest. The forest is in degraded condition and hence, none of the forest products except the grass are being extracted at the moment. Grass can be extracted from the forest only by paying money to the committee. Thus, the community is aware of the fact that identification of the users' group, application to District Forest Officer (DFO) for registration, preparation of the constitution and management plan and their submission to the DFO are the sequential steps of the processes of community forestry handover. However, most of the general users do not have knowledge about forest management plan. The CFUG has received post-handover support such as 3 days' training on minor forest products, assurance of providing cash amounting Rs 25,000 for nursery expansion, agricultural tools and frequent visits of the forest officials, provision of the opportunity of the observation tours in other districts, etc. The forest was formally handed over by the DFO on 23rd March 1997 (when the field work was going on).

Users have divided the forest into five blocks. Since the forest is in degraded condition, no silvicultural activities such as pruning, lopping and thinning are being practiced for timber management. They harvest only the decayed, dead and dying trees for fuelwood purpose. The money collected from extracting grass is deposited in the CFUG's fund and is used for buying seedlings and for paying the salary to the forest guards. The committee has appointed one Office Accountant to keep office records and discharge any other financial activities. The community has placed good attitude towards the forestry officials for providing different kinds of services mentioned above. Almost all users know about different kinds of medicinal plants such as *Kurilo*, *Harrow-Barrow*, *Amala* and *Pipla* in CFUG's forest. But none of these have been exploited due to their limited availability.

Members of the CFUG have the knowledge of government community forest policy which recognizes users as protectors and managers. The users' do not have knowledge of soil conservation policy. However, some male informants of the household of users know soil conservation policy. They are of the view that soil can be protected by the villagers by planting trees banana and bamboo on the bank of river and terraced land. They have positive attitude towards government forest policies, rules and regulations because they have created an ambience for the better management and utilization of the forest products.

### 3.0 PALEBAN COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, PYUTHAN (POST-HAND OVER)

This Paleban Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward numbers five, six and seven of Khalanga Village Development Committee (VDC) of Pyuthan district. The total area of the CFUG is 90 hectares. The total number of user households is 226 with a total population of 1,304. There is not a single non-user household. The major caste/ethnic groups are the Gurungs, Magars, Kamis, Damais, Sarkis, Newars, Brahmins and Chhetris. Sixty five percent of the males and 30 percent of the females of the total population are literate. There is an executive committee of 13 members of which two are females. All executive members are literate except two females. There are two clubs, namely, Sarosoti Club and Malla Rani club, both working in the field of social welfare. Agriculture is the predominantly practiced economic activity. Almost 75 percent land of the community is arable/cultivated land. Paddy, wheat, lentil, potato and maize are the major agricultural crops grown by the community. Almost 80 percent of the total households are food-deficit. They go to neighbouring cities for earning the income from the unskilled labour jobs.

Previously, the forest had been protected as Panchayat Kabuliya Ban before the downfall of *Panchayat* system in 1990. (A *Panchayat* was the lowest politico-administrative unit for 30 years in a period between 1961 and 1990 and after 1978, community forests were under the jurisdiction of it). A forest guard had been employed to take care of the forest and the forest was named after the *Ban Pali* (the forest guard). He was paid one *Pathi* (almost 3 kgs) of cereal crops from each user household every year. When *Panchayat* was collapsed in 1990 following the revolution for multi-party democracy, there was no any organization to take care of the forest and consequently, forest was massively destroyed.

People had to spend longer hours to fetch a single load of firewood. They realized that forest should be protected for their future generation and eventually, they got united as community forest users group in 1990. Constitution was prepared after the discussion with the user members for which the Ranger also helped technically. However, VDC chairman, ward members and village leaders played the leading role for the preparation of constitution. There is an Executive Committee of 13 members including two females. One advisory committee with three members was also set up from among the users to give legal advice to the Executive Committee. These members were also elected unanimously from among the users. Forest official drafted management plan which was approved unanimously by all users after the extensive discussion. At present the forest is being managed in accordance with the plan which divides the forest into different sections and forest products such as the firewood is extracted from each section rotationally. The nursery management and planting and replanting of tree saplings is carried out in order to manage the waste-lands. A sample plot has been established for forest management practices such as pruning, loping and thinning. Preparation of the constitution and management plan and their submissions to the District Forest officer (DFO) with an application are necessary.

sequential steps of the process of forest handover This community forest was handed over in 1991 The CFUG has received post- handover supports such as regular follow-ups and training on nursery management, pruning, lopping, clearing and selective harvesting The CFUG has established group to group network with a CFUG in Kavre district

Community has been managing the forest by planting trees, managing nursery and controlling landslide through plantation Forest products such as *Khar* (thatching materials) and fuelwood are harvested once a year by paying Rs 10 for *Khar* and Rs 25 for firewood The income from the forest products is deposited in the bank account It has Rs 40,000 as the balance in the bank account so far Committee has employed two forest guards by paying Rs 500 to each The financial records are being maintained by the treasurer and the account is being checked up by the committee once a year to maintain proper financial records

Community has the knowledge of the government community forest policy which recognizes users as protectors and users Although community does not have knowledge on soil conservation, they know the importance of soil conservation such as tree plantation for controlling landslide

#### 4.0 BUKENIDADA COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, PYUTHAN (POST-HAND OVER)

Bukenidada Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number seven of Maranthana Village Development Committee (VDC) of Pyuthan district. This community forest is approximately four and half kilometers away from the nearest motorable road. Its total area is 19.1 hectares. There are a total of 83 user households with a population of 374 of which approximately 50 percent are males and 50 percent females. Though the forest is in ward number seven, a few households of ward number nine living close to the forest are also the members of this CFUG. The Magars are the predominant ethnic group of the CFUG followed by caste groups such as the Sarkis (shoe-makers), Chhetris, Kamis (Blacksmiths), Damais (tailors), and Brahmans. About 60 percent males are literate whereas the reported literacy rate of the females is only 25 percent. Most of the untouchables (Damais, Kamis and Sarkis) are illiterate -- a function of poverty. In 1993, an executive committee of the CFUG was formed consensually which consists of 13 members of which two are females. Almost all ethnic/caste groups have been represented in the executive committee. Agriculture is the predominant occupation of the CFUG members. Paddy, lentil, wheat and potato are the principal crops grown in the *Khet* (lowland) and maize, barely, wheat, pea, lentil and mustard are the principal crops grown in the *Bari* (upland). As reported, only 5 percent households are self-sufficient in food production and the rest 95 percent households cope with the food-deficit situation by working as seasonal unskilled labourers both in the districts of India and Nepal. No developmental activities have been launched so far in this area.

The user informants unanimously reported that two factors were principally responsible for inspiring the local people of being organized into a CFUG which comprised continuous degradation of forest (due to the unrestrained exploitation of forest for meeting the timber, fuelwood and fodder requirements) and the direct influence of the CFUG organizational activities of the neighbouring communities. The local people, being heavily inspired/influenced by these two factors, gathered to discuss about the conservation of the degraded forest and its consequence was the organization of the CFUG. Households living close to the forest and utilizing it were unanimously identified as the members of the CFUG. There was a conflict regarding the boundary of the forest with other two adjoining CFUGs (each group claiming some stretch of the forest as its own). But the conflict was resolved with the intervention of local forestry officials by convincing and delimiting the boundary of the forest.

The CFUG had framed the constitution by taking the technical inputs of the Ranger and incorporating the opinions of the community leaders. Though the female user informants could not elaborate the essence of the constitution, male user informants reported that constitution contains rules and regulations which govern the behaviour of the users vis-a-vis the forest exploitation. When the constitution was framed with the technical inputs of the Ranger and agreed by the users' general meeting, it was submitted to the District Forest Officer (DFO) for

the approval. The users' executive committee was democratically selected of users by a general meeting which was actively participated in by the users belonging to different ethnic/caste groups. After the approval of the constitution by the DFO and formation of the users' executive committee, the CFUG prepared its forest management plan with the assistance of the Ranger which outlines the modus operandi of the sustainable forest exploitation. The forest management plan was also unanimously approved by the CFUG members. And eventually, the forest was handed over to the users by the DFO by issuing a certificate. The CFUG has received the post-CFUG formation support such as the training on the forest management such as nursery management, plantation techniques, silvicultural practices (such as pruning, lopping, thinning, etc.), follow-up (supervision) and record-keeping.

Currently, the users are managing the forest pursuant to the management plan. For example, the user households have to obtain coupon from the users' executive committee for the extraction of fuelwood by paying Rs 10. Similarly, Rs 5 has to be paid for obtaining a coupon for the extraction of Khar (thatching materials) and grass. As of March 10, 1997, the executive committee had collected Rs 11,000 from the sale of forest products and imposition of fines. The amount is deposited in the bank. The treasurer has received four days' training on book-keeping imparted by the forestry officials and he has maintained the financial records properly. The user informants have held positive attitude towards the forestry officials because the latter have provided the silvicultural skills, to the users (to a limited members), regular supervision/follow-up and book-keeping training to the treasurer in addition to the assistance provided for the preparation of the constitution and forest management plan. The informants are of the opinion that sincere adherence to the community forest rules and regulations, provision of the opportunity of the forest management skill training, unity among the CFUG members, etc. are the principal factors contributing to the success of community forest. Conversely, lack of unity among the CFUG members, violation of the rules and regulations and lack of forest management skills are the barriers of the implementation of the community forest project.

Though a few user male and female informants are not knowledgeable of the community forest policy, most of the informants reported that the government community forest policy encourages the local people to protect their existing forest and plant trees and allows them to enjoy the products as their own property. But the informants are unaware of the government conservation policy. The knowledgeable informants are of the opinion that government forestry rules and regulations have hoped the locals to develop the community forest.

Albeit the female informants do not have knowledge about the silvicultural practices (lopping, pruning, thinning, etc.), most of the male informants reported that they have knowledge on these practices. It has been so because the males are provided the training on these practices. Since the forest is quite young at the moment, silvicultural activities except the clearing to allow the timber trees to grow are not practiced. Stated in other words, the timber trees are not silviculturally managed because of their young age.

*Timbor* is the main medicinal plant available in the forest area which is exploited once a year as per the need of the users. The informants have no knowledge about the sustainable exploitation of the medicinal plants because, to date, no training has been imparted to them.

## **5. LALIGURAS COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, SALYAN (POST-HAND OVER)**

This Laliguras Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number six of Sijwa Takurı Village Development Committee (VDC) It is approximately five kilometers from the motorable road The total area of the forest is 35.3 hectares It is a conserved forest but enrichment plantations are done once a year The forest has been conserved by the users for the last six years The total number of users' households is 53 with a total population of 321 of which 171 are males and 150 are females There is not a single non-user household The community consists of mainly the Kanwar, Giri, Rawat, Bista and Newar caste/ ethnic people There is an executive committee of 11 female members of the CFUG Four males are designated as the advisors to the executive committee These members of the committee have had strong social relationships for mutual co-operation There is a Mothers' Group formed by Public Health Office for the distribution of family planning devices and motivation for immunization Some income generating and skill development activities have been launched by District Women Development Office Agriculture is the predominately practiced economic activity supplemented by animal husbandry Paddy, wheat, millet and legumes (pulses, beans, soybeans, etc ) are the principal crops grown for the subsistence

It has been ascertained that the District Women Development Officer was instrumental in inspiring a group of seven women who had gone to the district capital for participating in a training on women development activities and in the wake of it, the District Forest Officer (DFO) came to village and asked them to organise a CFUG Then, a general meeting of the potential users of the forest was called which was participated in by the representatives of 48 households (now the households have increased to 53 due to the separation) Both males and females of these households were present This general meeting resulted in the formation of CFUG which included all the 48 households of the ward number six of Sijwa Takurı VDC As the process of group formation started and rumour spread about the likelihood of the handover, conflict occurred when a few households of the adjoining ward number one claimed that some stretch of the forest was theirs (boundary conflict) But after three months the conflict was resolved with the intervention of the DFO who asked the CFUG to provide four hectares of forested land to the claimants of adjoining ward which made them acquiesced Then, they applied to DFO for the registration of their group The Ranger, a minor forestry official, helped the community to draft the constitution which outlined the rules and regulations (sanctions and fines) for the systematic management of the forest After the extensive discussion of the drafted constitution in the general meeting of the users which was participated in by all males and females of the 48 households, it was consensually approved However barring the members of the executive committee and some village leaders, the general users do not have the detail knowledge about the rules and regulations set in the constitutions The users' executive committee of 11 women and four advisors were also unanimously elected from among general users Then the forest management plan was drafted

by the Ranger in the presence of the villagers' general meeting. It was revealed that the key informants (more knowledgeable people) of the community played a dominant role in finalizing the forest management plan which was later approved by all users. The Ranger also did the forest survey, mapping and forest inventory. The forest is being managed in accordance with the plan which contains details about timber, fuelwood and fodder extraction (and their fees), silvicultural activities such as pruning and thinning, forest protection, etc. Thus, the community is aware of the fact that application to DFO office for registration, constitution preparation and submission to DFO and preparation of forest management plan and submission to the DFO for approval are the sequential steps of the process of community forestry handover. However, some general users do not know what does the management plan contain. The CFUG has received post-handover support such as frequent visits by the Ranger (follow-up), four-day training on tree plantation, pruning and thinning imparted to the two leaders of the committee, four-day book-keeping training imparted to the secretary of the committee, etc. The CFUG is linked to a CFUG Federation of the district for which it has to pay Rs. 200 annually.

Users, pursuant to the management plan, have divided the forest into four blocks/plots for yearly rotational pruning, lopping and thinning practices for timber management. They harvest dead, decayed and dying trees for fuelwood. Every household has to pay Rs. 5 for extracting grass, Rs. 10 for fuelwood and Rs. 500 for one *Sallo* tree (pine) for timber (when required). Such money including the fines is deposited in the committee's bank account which can be drawn with joint signature of the chairman and an advisor. They have already constructed a *Chautari* (community resting place) by expending Rs. 10,000 from CFUG's fund. The committee has maintained all the accounts by keeping bills, receipts and documents properly in a record file. The community has good attitude towards forestry officials for a number of services rendered above. They also substantially exploit a number of medicinal plants such as *Chuuri*, *Harro*, *Timor*, etc. But the technique to exploit the medicinal plants is not taught to the farmers.

Community has the knowledge of the government community forest policy which recognizes users as protectors and managers. The users are not really cognizant of the government's conservation policy but are aware of soil conservation office recently established at district headquarters. They are positive towards government forest policies, rules and regulations because they have created an ambience for the better management and utilization of the forest.

## **6.0 SIDHA GUFU COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, SALYAN (POST-HAND OVER)**

The Sidha Gufa Community Forest User's Group (CFUG) is in ward numbers four, five, six and eight of Kajeri Village Development Committee (VDC) of Salyan district. It is approximately nine kilometers away from the motorable road. The total area of the forest is 137.75 hectares. It is a conserved forest. The total number of users' households is 346 with a total population of 1,724 of which 879 are males and 845 are females. There is not a single non-user household. The community consists of mainly the Brahmins, Chhetris, Sarkis, Kamis, Damais and Badis. Almost all these caste groups have been living in this place for generation. There are no recent migrants. The Kamis, Damais, Sarkis and Badis are mostly illiterate people due to their poverty. There is an executive committee of 17 members of which five are females and there is representation from each caste group. These members have had relationship in terms of co-operation for economic and social activities. Six out of 17 executive members are illiterate. Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been assisting to supply drinking water by constructing a reservoir tank and taps and CARE Nepal has been working to provide irrigation facility by constructing a canal. Almost 1,000 people of different castes from 135 households will be benefitted by this project. The major agricultural crops grown in this community are paddy, wheat and millet. Almost 60 percent of the total households have food deficiency. They go to neighbouring cities for earning income by working as unskilled labourers.

When the forest was destroyed massively in the past, people of this community realized the importance of forest and started to conserve it. The knowledgeable and elderly people of ward numbers four, five, six and eight gathered at a place and decided to form the users' group to protect and utilize the forest of their respective wards. Altogether 346 households were identified as the users' group of four wards having similar topography. Then, forest area was also divided into four blocks for better management. There has not been any conflict regarding users' identification. However, there inter-ward conflict arose regarding the use of forest products. For example people of one ward were used to enter the forest block of another ward for collecting firewood and extracting timber. The community resolved it by appointing forest guards in each block and by imposing rules of charging Rs 5 to 10 against such illegal actions. Then, they applied to DFO for the registration of their group. The Ranger presented the drafted constitution to the users at the school compound where women had also participated in. The constitution outlines organization of the users' committee and control of illegal activities to protect and utilize the community forest. After the extensive discussion held by the users who attended the meeting, it was approved consensually. Most of the female users do not have knowledge about constitution and its mode of preparation. The users' committee of 17 members of which five are females were also elected unanimously from among the users. However, the name and position of the executive members were proposed by the VDC chairman. Then the forest management plan was drafted by the Ranger in the presence of villagers' general meeting. It was approved by all users and decided to forward to DFO for his approval. The Ranger also did forest survey, mapping and

forest inventory. Female users except the executive members do not have knowledge about forest management plan. The forest is being managed in accordance with the plan which includes silvicultural activities and punishments. The community is aware of the fact that application to DFO office for registration, preparation of the constitution and forest management plan and their submissions to the DFO are sequential steps of the process of the forest handover.

The CFUG has received the post-handover supports such as frequent visits by the Ranger, training on the plantation and pruning and help to sell dead trees and timber by arranging auctions. The users have heard about establishment and institutionalization of group to group network in Salyan district but they have not been involved in its process.

As specified in the management plan, the community has planted trees in the forest of ward number eight and practiced thinning in the forest of ward number six. Any users can buy up to 30 cubic feet of timber of pine in a year by paying Rs. 200 along with additional 20 percent sales tax per cubic foot. The violators of the forest rules are penalized. For instance, a person has to pay Rs. 25 per bundle of illegally collected fodder and Rs. 50 for illegally collected fuelwood. Community has opened a bank account. Although the users have collected money by imposing tax on timber sale, they have not paid it to the government so far. Forest guard in each ward receives two *Pathis* (about 6 kgs) of cereal crops from each user household per year as salary. Community has provided financial supports to other social activities. For example, they have donated almost Rs. 15,000 to the village school for paying the salary of the school teachers. The committee has maintained all the accounts properly. The committee has positive attitude towards forestry officials for a number of services rendered above. All CFUG members do not have knowledge about thinning and pruning. They have knowledge to clear the surface of forest by collecting dry leaves. Different kinds of medicinal plants such as *Silpu*, *Pakhenbeed*, *Tindu/Khalnu*, *Disety*, *Vala*, and *Chotro* are available in the community forest. These medicinal plants are harvested once a year.

The CFUG has the knowledge of the government community forest policy which recognizes the users as protectors and users of the forest. Most of the users including females do not have knowledge about soil conservation policy. The CFUG informants expressed that they do not face any problem of soil erosion and hence they do not need to know about it.

## **7.0 TAKIYAPUR COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, DANG (POST-HAND OVER)**

This Takiyapur Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number seven of Pawannagar VDC of Dang district. This community forest is two kilometers away from the motorable road. Total area of the forest is 3 hectares which has all the plantations. There are a total of 27 households with a population of 210 of which 103 are males and 107 females. Tharus are the autochthonous tribal people whereas Chhetris and Kamis (blacksmiths) are the hill migrant communities. There is an executive committee of CFUG which consists of 11 members of which eight are males and three are females (two from Tharu and one from Kami). The community is predominantly agrarian. Paddy and wheat are the principal crops of lowland and maize and mustard are the principal crops of upland. Backward Society Education (BASE) – a NGO run by conscious Tharu youths – has launched adult literacy programme among the Tharus for the last five years.

Initiation of the community forest in this small village is the consequence of the strong disapproval and protest for forest exploitation by the people of Manakamana, an adjoining village where the numbers of Takiyapur CFUG used to go for fulfilling their timber and fuelwood requirements. To put it in other words, once the people of Manakamana village started conserving their forests, the residents of Takiyapur felt the severe scarcity of fuelwood and timber. Then, they held a general meeting of 27 households which decided to initiate a community forest by planting trees in the wasteland of the village. Thus, the necessity of the forest products forced the villagers to be united for community forest plantations -- an action which would fulfill their future needs. CARE Nepal also assisted the local people for being organized into CFUG by making them feel the necessity of organization.

No conflict arose regarding the identification of the users and the boundary of the community forest. It was reported that the Ranger, staff of CARE Nepal (an INGO which works for the organizational aspect of the forest resource management) and the local village leaders played an instrumental role in the preparation of the constitution. Though illiterate females and some males have no knowledge about the rules and regulations, some of the informants reported that the constitution reflects the opinions of the villagers which is prepared for governing the behaviour of the users of the forest. The users' executive committee is also organized consensually which has included its female members from the backward community such as the Tharus and the untouchable such as the Kami. Though most of the women informants did not have any knowledge about the forest management plan formulation, most of the male informants had the knowledge about it. The Ranger and staff of CARE Nepal helped the users to draft and finalize the forest management plan by incorporating local users' views from a general meeting which was mostly participated in by the males. It was revealed by the informants that forest management plan outlines the ways according to which the group has to manage the forest such as activities of plantation, grass cutting, etc. Except the female of the executive committee, other female

informants are not knowledgeable about the process of forest hand-over. However, male informants had the knowledge about it. They reported that once the forest management plan was submitted to the District Forest Office, the District Forest Officer (DFO) and the chairman of the executive committee signed the agreement and certificate of forest hand-over was given to the CFUG. The chairman and one woman member of the user committee took part in a seminar organized for the executive members of the CFUG. Except this invitation, no other post - CFUG formation support has been provided.

Apropos of the behaviour of the users, villagers gather once in every six months for the plantation of the saplings. There is no forest management practice at this moment because the forest is very young (2-3 years old). Hence, except a few male members of the executive committee, all members of the CFUG (both males and females) do not have knowledge about the scientific forest management (pruning, lopping, thinning, etc.). Since there are not medicinal plants planted, the members also do not have any idea about their exploitation. Currently, one *Chaukidar* (forest guard) takes care of the forest for which he is annually paid Rs 5,500 and each member household has to contribute Rs 18 per month to meet this salary expenditure. The executive committee has also generated some income from the sale of grass through open bidding system. They earned Rs 1,200 last year which is with the committee. It was also reported that such money is lent among the member users. Book-keeping is not properly maintained owing to the lack of training.

Majority of the male informants reported that they have knowledge about the community forest policies as well as rules and regulations. They are of the view that the objective of the government forest policy is to handover the forest to local users for its proper management. However, female informants (save one or two informants of hill origin) have no knowledge about the community forest policy, rules and regulations. Both sexes lack knowledge about soil conservation policy. It has been reported that the sense of ownership is the main contributing factor to the success of community forest.

## **8.0 PALUTHAN COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, DANG (POST-HAND OVER)**

The Paluthan Community Forest User Group (CFUG) is in ward number five of Laximpur VDC of Dang district. The forest is in one kilometer distance from the motorable road. The total area of the forest is 14.84 hectares which has been conserved for the last 15 years. There is a total of 55 households as the general members of CFUG with a total 321 population (of which 150 are males and 170 females). The predominant ethnic group is Magar followed by Chhetri, Gurung, Sarki, Kami and Damai (the latter three being the untouchables). 75 percent males are reported to be literate whereas 90 percent females are illiterate -- a function of poverty. The rampant deforestation till the period of early 1980s and the local political leaders' visits to other community forest areas inspired the local people to start the conservation through the community efforts and it was indigenously managed until three years ago when a CFUG was formally organised. Agriculture is the mainstay of the villagers who grow paddy, wheat, maize and mustard as their principal crops. Half of the households are food ---deficit which supplement their household income by wage earning activities (both agricultural and non-agricultural).

In 1981, the then Pradhan Pancha (now the chairman of Village Development Committee) and a local farmer visited Sindhupalchowk district (a hill district of Central Development Region of Nepal) where there are successful stories of community-managed forest systems and as a consequence of it, both became very impressed. And, upon arrival in the village, they started making the people aware of the community-managed forests. Shortly, a committee was organised which functioned until 1994. Thus, initially the forest was managed through the people's initiative because they had been aware of the effects of the rampant deforestation.

In 1994 the users of this forest (all 55 households) were united and formed into community forest users group (CFUG). Then, an executive committee of 11 members was organised by holding a general meeting of all 55 user households. One of the members of the committee was female who was not called to attend the meeting and later her membership was discontinued. Female informants reported that they were not consulted during the period of the formation of the committee. There was a conflict for the determination of the forest boundary because some part of this forest incidentally happened to be within the boundary of ward number nine of this Laximpur VDC. However this disputed patch of forest was included into the forest of Paluthan with the intervention District Forest Officer (DFO). This disagreement with the boundary is still continuing. Analogously, the inhabitants of the ward number four of Tribhuvannagar Municipality claimed the continued use of this forest (because they were traditionally using it) which is now solved through mutual understanding.

The constitution was framed by the users' general meeting with the necessary technical inputs of the Ranger which contains the details about the rules and regulations for the governance of the behaviour of the forest users and their committee members. Though this was the voice of males,

surprisingly majority of the women informants do not know how the constitution was framed and what it contains. It came to be known from the male informants that the forest management plan contains the procedures of plantation, silvicultural activities such as thinning and pruning, grass cutting, forest harvesting, etc. However, female participation was zero during the period of the preparation of constitution. They also do not know about the process of forest handover. But male informants have the knowledge of the process of forest handover (e.g. formation of CFUG, preparation of the constitution and submission to DFO, preparation of forest management plan and submission to DFO for approval, etc.). Post-CFUG formation supports such as regular monitoring, suggestion for tree improvements, observation programmes and short training on the forest management techniques have been provided by the forest officials.

Currently, there is a *Chaukidar* (forest guard) employed by CFUG who is paid Rs. 600 per month. He patrols the forest for its protection. Each household has to pay Rs. 11.00 per month to pay his salary. Reportedly, the forest is being managed in consonance with the forest management plan. The forest is open to the user households once in a week for fuelwood extraction. They cannot cut the live tree. The axe and *Khukuri* (the Nepali national knife) cannot be taken to the forest. Only the dead and fallen branches have to be collected. Though the users have knowledge on pruning, thinning and lopping, it has not been put into the practice till present because they are of the opinion that their trees are already fully grown (and hence, no need). Some wild medicinal plants such as *Harro* (used for curing cough), *Kanchurna* (used for curing animal's liver diseases), *Hadchurna* (used for the treatment of bones), etc. They are used in unprocessed form but they lack knowledge of the sustainable exploitation of these plants.

Most informants have had knowledge about the community forest policy but lack knowledge on the soil conservation policy. They also know that the right of the CFUG is to use the forest products and their responsibility is to manage the forest in accordance with the government's community forest policy. The male informants' attitude towards the forestry officials is positive because they have received the required assistance from them. But the female informants participating in the group interview have no knowledge about their services. Unity of the villagers, people's awareness towards the community forest and their support from the forest office, etc. are the contributing factors to the successful implementation of community forest. Ignorance among the users and illegal exploitation of forest by the neighbouring communities are considered as the barriers of the effective implementation of the community forests.

## **APPENDIX - 2: PRE-HAND OVER CFUGs**

## **1.0 NEWARBAN COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, PYUTHAN (PRE-HAND OVER)**

This Newarban Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward numbers seven and eight of Khalanga Village Development Committee of Pyuthan district. It is approximately 1.5 km away from the motorable road. The area of the forest is 19.7 hectares. There are 70 user households with a total population of 350 in the community. There is not a single non-user household. The community consists of mainly the Brahmins, Chhetris, Sunars, Damais and Magars. Almost 60 percent of males and 35 percent of females of this community are literate. There is one executive committee of 11 members including a female. Almost 70 percent of the total land is cultivated. The major crops grown by this community are maize, barley, wheat, lentil, mustard, paddy and soybean. Almost 98 percent of the total households are food deficit and they supplement their income from agricultural production by working as unskilled labourers in India and Nepal.

This forest had been protected since 1978 by the people themselves by appointing one forest guard to take care of the forest. He was paid 1 *Pathi* (about 3 kgs) of food grains for his salary every year by each household. However, the forest was destroyed massively in 1978. Then people of the ward numbers seven and eight gathered to form a committee to conserve the forest and identified 350 households as users. Since then CFUG has been continuing its conservation activities. There is a boundary conflict of the community forest. One user of dominant caste (Karki) has claimed that his 1.5 ropanis (20 ropanis is equivalent to one hectare) of land is included inside the forest area. The conflict has not been resolved yet. Now this CFUG has an executive committee of 11 members of which one is female. This executive committee has been changed from time to time since 1978. This executive committee has the old forest management plan prepared in 1978 which excluded two of the total three forest plots, namely, Barikera forest and Bhimlari forest. The old forest management has now been rejected by the users. The new executive committee has been formed three months ago which is now preparing a new management plan. The forest is managed by restricting people and animal to enter the forest. Because of the hostility between two different castes (between the Karkis and Sarkis), the forest is not properly managed. The conflict arises because of excluding the two forest plots in the CFUG area. No plantation activity has been performed and no forest guard has been employed yet. The users are allowed to collect only dry leaves once a year without any charge according to the decision of committee. None of the other activities such as financial management system and book-keeping are done by this CFUG.

Submission of constitution and management plan are necessary steps of the process of forest handover. Community does not have knowledge on technical skills of forest management such as pruning, lopping, thinning, clearing and selective harvesting. There are neither medicinal plants nor the local people have knowledge to exploit them. Informants have knowledge on the community forest policy which recognises users as protectors and managers of the community forest. They do not have knowledge about soil conservation policy. They do not have positive

attitude towards government forest officials because they have not received any financial and technical help so far

## 2.0 GHORTHAPA COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, PYUTHAN (PRE-HAND OVER)

This Ghorthapa Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number five of Khaira Village Development Committee (VDC) of Pyuthan district. This community forest is 13 kilometers away from the nearest motorable road. Its total area is 200 hectares. There are 91 user households with a total population of 455 of which 50 percent are males and 50 percent females. The predominant ethnic group is the Magar followed by the caste group people Chhetris, Kamis (blacksmiths) and Giris. About 70 percent males and 30 percent females are reported to be literate. However, the literacy status of the Kamis is extremely low -- a function of poverty and lack of interest. Agriculture is principal means of livelihood. Farmers grow paddy, wheat, and lentil in the *Khet* (Lowland) and maize, mustard, barley, wheat and lentil in the *Bar* (upland). As reported, about 50 percent households are reported to be self-sufficient in food production. The other 50 percent food-deficit households supplement their income from the agricultural production by working as seasonal unskilled labourers (both agricultural and non-agricultural) both in India and Nepal. To date, no developmental activities have been launched in this community.

The continuous degradation of the forest and the consequent scarcity of fodder, fuelwood and timber inspired the local community to be organized into a CFUG. In 1991, a general meeting of the forest users was called for the identification of the users which, eventually, concluded that 91 households living close to the forest are the real users of the forest. No conflict arose regarding the boundary of the forest. The users have also drafted the constitution with the technical inputs of the Ranger which contains the rules and regulations regarding the use of the forest in addition to the functions of users' executive committee. Subsequent to the preparation of the constitution a users' executive committee consisting of 11 male members was consensually formed by the general meeting of the forest users. Having done this much, the CFUG has recently applied to the District Forest Officer (DFO) for initiating the process of the handover of the forest. Some female informants do not have any knowledge about the preparation of constitution formation of the users' committee and preparation of management plan. It was also reported that the users' committee has prepared a management plan with the consensus of the CFUG which has divided the forest into two parts, that is, one part of the forest is open to the users for the collection of the fuelwood and grass and the other part is closed for its better growth (the rotational time for the exploitation is decided by the committee). The users can collect fuelwood (mainly dry fallen branches or twigs) any time when needed.

The users (both male and female) have neither any knowledge on the silvicultural activities (pruning, lopping, thinning etc.) nor practiced any of them. Though a few female informants do not have any knowledge on the government forestry policy, most of the female and male informants have knowledge on it. It creates a situation for the local communities to work as

protectors and managers of the forests in the form of the collective property. They are neither aware of the soil conservation policy nor have done any activity to conserve the soil.

Albeit most of the general user informants of both sexes are unaware of the sequential steps of the process of handover of the community forest, they are found to have had knowledge about the right and responsibility of the CFUG. It has been emphatically said that the right of the CFUG is to use the forest products as per the need and the responsibility is to comply with the rules and regulations pertaining to the use of the forest. Similarly, the right of the users' committee is to punish the violators of the rules and regulations and the responsibility is to implement the forest management plan.

There are no medicinal plants and they also do not have knowledge about the sustainable exploitation of such plants. They have not got any forest extension services and materials. The informants are of the opinion that compliance with the rules and regulations set by the community would contribute to the successful implementation of community forest and conversely, non-compliance would work as the barriers.

### **3. RIMNA COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, BANKE (PRE-HAND OVER)**

This Rimna Community Forest User Group (CFUG) is in ward numbers four and five of Mahadevpuri VDC in Banke district. The area of the forest is 12 hectares. This community forest is 3 kilometers north of the East-West Highway. There is a total of 203 forest using households with a total population of 1797 and about a half of them are females. It has been reported that only five percent of the total population is literate. Only a handful of women are literate. The predominant ethnic groups are the Tharus (the autochthonous tribe) and Chhetris followed by Biswokarma (blacksmiths). Agriculture is predominantly practiced as a means of livelihood. The major crops grown are paddy, maize and wheat. There is no any other development activity in this community.

As reported, there was a dense forest at Rimna until a few years back but the burgeoning needs of the local people coupled with reckless exploitation contributed to the degradation of the forest resources. And the consequence is the severe scarcity of fuelwood and fodder which was giving lesson to the local people about the protection of the forest in order to meet present and future requirements of the forest products. Two of the users had also seen the community forests of the hill districts which had given them the empirical knowledge of the importance of the forests. Meanwhile, a Ranger from CARE Nepal (an INGO working in the forestry sector of Nepal) came to this community in January 1997 and discussed about the community forest management as well as the CFUG organizational process. Then, a general meeting was held which was participated in by almost all potential user households. No problem cropped up in the process of the identification of the forest users. All the 203 households of ward numbers four and five of Mahadevpuri VDC have been included as the CFUG members. But a conflict arose on a issue whether or not to leave some portion of the degraded forest unprotected for the livestock particularly for the rainy season and this conflict still remains unresolved.

Informants (except the Tharu women) reported that constitution is the embodiment of the rules and regulations about the forest management (such as protection and the use of forest products). The constitution was prepared in a participatory manner. It was revealed that about 200 representatives had taken part in the general meeting during the period of the preparation of the constitution. The Ranger of CARE Nepal helped the users in drafting and finalizing the constitution through the incorporation of the views and suggestions of the users pertaining to the forest management. Some informants reported that the constitution contained the provisions about the process of the formation of users' committee and their duties, imposition of fines on prohibited activities (such as Rs 5 for the entry of a goat, Rs 10 for a cow and a buffalo, Rs 500 for the ox-pulled-cart, Rs 500-1,000 for illegal felling of a live tree, etc.)

There exists a users' committee consisting of 15 members. The surprising thing that happened during the formation of the users' committee is that it was CARE Nepal's Ranger, not the user

of the community who proposed the names of the members of the users' committee and which were consensually accepted by the users present in the general meeting. To date, the users have not had the forest management plan yet. In the absence of the formulation and its implementation of the forest management plan, the forest is being exploited in the traditional way, that is, no practice of selective harvesting. Likewise, in the absence of enforcement of the finalized constitution, forest is still being haphazardly exploited for fuelwood and timber. The autochthonous Tharus, being fearful of the establishment of the national reserve forest in the name of community forest, are exploiting forest products (firewood and timber) as much as they can prior to the enforcement of the constitution. The attitude of the users towards the forestry official, particularly the Ranger of CARE Nepal, is good because it is he who was instrumental in mobilizing and convincing the local people for the initiation of the community management of forest. Unity among the users, awareness of the protection of the forest resultant from the rapid deforestation and external support from the forestry official could contribute to the easy implementation of the community forest whereas the misunderstanding among the users (such as by the Tharus and regarding the boundary of the forest to be delimited) is the barrier.

The user informants are knowledgeable about the government community forest policy because according to them, it aims at handing over the forests to the local people/communities for protection, conservation and sustainable use. Users have no knowledge on government's soil conservation policy but are aware of local soil erosion problem due to the inundation. They are aware of the fact that tree plantation on the river side would contribute to control the soil erosion. User informants are of the view that the right of the CFUG is to enjoy the forest products whereas its responsibility is to protect the forest, establish nurseries, plant trees, accept the government community forestry rules and regulations, etc. They also reported that the responsibility of the user committee is to call meeting of the users, arrange training, convey messages to the users and convince the users to abide the constitution and as well as manage forest according to the management plan. The role/responsibility of the forestry officials is to monitor the CFUG activities, provide training of the forest management to the users, etc. They also know that if the forest is not properly managed, he/she can use his/her authority for the resumption of the community forest.

Though some of user informants reported that thinning, pruning and cleaning as well as selective harvesting are useful for better/scientific forest management, none of these are reported to be practiced. This is the function of the lack of the dissemination of the silvicultural activities by the forestry officials.

#### **4.0 JAN EKATA COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, BANKE (PRE-HAND OVER)**

This Jan Ekata Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number nine of the Komdi Village Committee (VDC). It is approximately seven kilometers away from the highway that goes to Nepalgunj. There is a village settlement in the western boundary of the proposed CFUG's forest whereas there is a dense government owned forest in the eastern boundary. The total area of the forest is 150 *Bighas* (*Bigha* = 0.68 hectare). It is a conserved forest. Forest conservation activity has started four ago (in December 1992). The total number of users' households is 364 with a total population of 2,000 of which 1,200 are females. Almost 70 percent of the total users are literate. There is not a single non-user household. The community consists of mainly the Tharus, Chhetris, Damais, Sunuwars, Magars, etc. About 35 percent of the total population are Chhetri caste people and they have migrated to this area from the neighbouring hill districts such as Salyan, Rukum and Pyuthan. There is an executive committee of 17 members of which 4 are females. These members of the committee have had strong social relationships for mutual co-operation. PLAN International (an INGO) and Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), working in different social sectors like drinking water, toilet construction and human rights. Agriculture is the major economic activity supplemented by animal husbandry. The main crops grown in this village are paddy, maize, wheat, millet, lentil, etc. Almost 50 percent of the total households of different castes have food deficiency and the people of these households go to the neighbouring urban areas such as Nepalgunj and Butwal for earning income by working as unskilled labourers.

In the past forest was destroyed so massively that these people had to spend longer hours to fetch a single load of firewood and they realized that forest should be preserved for meeting the present household requirements and for coming generation, too. Hence, all active people (both male and female) from 364 households gathered in a meeting to identify the users which was also participated in by the Ranger. This general meeting resulted in the formation of CFUG which included all 364 households of all the six villages of ward number nine of Komdi VDC. Few people unknowingly, raised the skepticism that forest products cannot be used for ever. But the skepticism was over when the Ranger and the local leader convinced them about the rationale of the community forest. The Ranger helped the community to draft the constitution which outlines the rules and regulations for the systematic use of the forest. After the extensive discussion by the male people the constitution was finalized in February, 1997. Only a few male informants understand about the constitution. None of the female has had knowledge of the constitution because of their non-involvement in its preparation. The user's executive committee is of 17 members of which four are females who were unanimously selected from among the female forest users. The forest management plan was drafted by the Ranger which was later approved by all the users. The forest is being managed by extinguishing the fire, prohibiting the collection of young trees for firewood and grazing livestock inside the forest.

Many people have suspected that forest is going to be reserved by the government and they will be restricted to use forest products. And as a consequence, they have already collected firewood haphazardly as much as they can. It was reported that a few people have collected so much firewood that would be enough for eight years. Almost 50 percent of the total users depend on firewood sale which they collect from the government-owned forest (which is close to the community forest). People now have strong commitment for the protection of forest by taking actions against illegal work such as setting fire, felling of the live trees by making constitution and submitting the application to the forest officials for its approval, etc. The users think these activities are some of the steps to be followed for forest handover. However, female users do not have any knowledge about the process of community forest handover because they are not exposed to these processes. Everything needed is done only by their male representatives.

Few users suspect about the future of community forest because of the large number of users and their less participation for its conservation. Few households who depend on firewood sale for their livelihood may not co-operate in this effort. Another alternative of income generating activities must be provided to them for the sustainability of community forest.

Users have divided the forest into five different blocks for rotational pruning, lopping, thinning and collection of firewood and fodder and forest protection and plantation (especially Sisso). Each executive committee member has contributed Rs. 50 to open the CFUG bank account and now they are going to collect Rs. 10 per month from each user of CFUG. One secretary has been employed to keep office records and accounts. 150 user households earn cash income from other economic activities other than forest products such as goat-raising, buffalo-raising, etc. Forestry officials have helped them to form users' group and users' committee and prepare constitution and hence, the users have positive attitude towards them. Most of the users have knowledge about local medicinal plants such as *Rasulla* (which helps to make soap), *Kurrilo*, *Santabar*, *Aamla*, *Baral Barrow*, etc. But they have not been exploited to date because of their limited availability. Recently, two women users have recently got an opportunity to participate in training on medicinal plants organized by District Forest Office.

Community has the knowledge of the government community forest policy which recognizes users as protectors and managers of the forest products. Community is found to have little knowledge about soil conservation policy but people have done soil conservation activities such as the preparation of the river embankment and retaining wall construction for the protection of soil.

## **5.SARVODAYA COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, DANG (PRE-HAND OVER)**

This Sarvodaya Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward numbers one, two, three of Gadhuwa Village Development Committee (VDC) of Dang district. It is approximately 5 kilometers away from the motorable road. The total area of the forest is 138 hectares of which 67 hectares have had planted forest. Hence, it is both preserved and planted forest. The total numbers of user households is 357 with a total population of 2,335 of which 1,262 are males and 1,133 are females. All the households of this community are members of CFUG. Regarding the caste/ethnicity, the community consists of mainly the Tharus, Kumals, Brahmins, Chhetris, Muslims, Sarkis, Damais and Kamis. The Tharus and Kumals are the oldest inhabitants. The Brahmins, Chhetris and Kamis have been the migrants from the hills. Most of the males of the hill origin communities are literate. There are 13 members in the executive committee of the CFUG of which three are females. The executive members are from different caste/ethnic groups. Currently, there are three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in this community. These are (i) Chetnseel Mahila Samaj (Conscious Women's Society) working in the field of training on cutting and sewing, (ii) Yuba Bahumukhi Club (Youth Multipurpose Club) working in the field of creating awareness among the people in the community, and (iii) Yadav Sudhar Sewa Sangha (Yadav Upliftment Service Association) working for the betterment of the Yadav Community. Agriculture is the predominantly practiced economic activity. Paddy, wheat and maize are the major agricultural products. Mustard and lentil are also grown as cash crops in this community. Backward Society Education (BASE) has been working here for the last 4-5 years by launching literacy classes for the females and children belonging to the poorest households.

The main reason of being organized into the CFUG is for the fulfilment of their future needs of timber and firewood. There are three plots in the area of community forest. Conservation of the forest has been started by planting trees in one of them since 1994. At first, people of ward number one had held a general meeting and formed the users' group which was later joined by the people of other two and three wards. Local forest officials had helped in this regard.

There was not any conflict regarding the boundary of community forest. Local forestry officials provided the guidelines for the preparation of the constitution which was subsequently discussed and revised for four/five times and then was finalized and submitted to the District Forest Office (DFO). Initially, there were 17 members in the executive Committee who were reduced to 13 after the preparation of constitution. The committee represents all major castes. The forest management plan is under preparation. Forestry official from CARE Nepal are helping in this matter. Most of the women do not have knowledge on community forestry policy. One of the executive member interviewed did not know about how the constitution was prepared. Some of the general users do not know that there exists an executive committee.

There are three plots of the forest having an area of 47, 20 and 71 hectares. The first two plots have some newly planted trees whereas the latter plots (of 20 and 72 ha) have some old trees and need massive afforestation. They are protected forests by restricting animal grazing. There are three forest guards employed who are paid Rs 500 per month each. The CFUG has income from Khar (thatching materials) harvesting. In 1996, they had sold Khar of amounting Rs 8,000. This year also they sold Khar of Rs 2,000 and grass of Rs 3,000. The CFUG members are provided the Khar on priority basis at the rate of Rs 2 per load. Only then comes a priority for the outsiders. Few local potters bring clay from the forest and make earthen pots. Community forest is discouraging this practice because of the soil erosion problem in the forest. Users collect Rs 5 from each household every month. There is an executive committee member designated in each village pocket of settlement who collects the sum from all the households of his area. The chairman, secretary and the treasurer are responsible for the financial transactions. The executive committee meeting takes place once in a month at the chairman's house and all the documents are kept there.

Most of the users are of the opinion that the preparation of the constitution and forest management plan and their submission to the DFO are the necessary sequential steps for the community forest to be handed over.

Community has the knowledge of the government forest policy which is a measure taken by the government for both preserving the national forest and empowering the users to benefit from the forest in the long run. They do not have the knowledge about soil conservation policy. However, they know that plantation on river banks is necessary for soil conservation. They are positive towards government forest policies, rules and regulations because they have encouraged them to protect the forest to meet their present and future requirements of the forest products.

## **6.0 CHIURIGHAT COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, DANG (PRE-HAND OVER)**

This Churighat Community Forest User Group (CFUG) is in ward number six of Gangapraspur VDC of Dang district. It is approximately nine kilometers south to the East-West Highway. The area of the forest is approximately 20 hectares which is both conserved and planted. Seventy three households are the general members of the CFUG which has a total of 369 population (of which half is that of the males and half females). The ethnic composition is heterogeneous. The predominant caste groups are the Chhetris and untouchables ("Damais"-tailors and "Kamis" - blacksmiths) followed by the Magars, Gurungs, and Tharus. Barring the Tharus (who are the oldest inhabitants of this area), all the other ethnic groups are the migrants from neighbouring hill districts. Seventy five percent of the males are literate whereas a large majority of the females are illiterate. The history of the forest management by the community is only four years old. Agriculture is the mainstay of the village economy. The principal crops grown are paddy, wheat, maize and mustard. The first two are grown in the lowland and the latter two in the upland. About 50 percent of the households are food-deficit who supplement their income by working as labourers within the Dang district and India. Backward Society Education (BASE) -- an NGO run by the Tharu Youths -- has been implementing the adult literacy and income generating programme for the last one year in which women have also started to participate in. It has been providing credit to the rural women group (Rs 5,000 00) which consists of nine persons. The credit has been channelized for goat-raising, poultry, potato cultivation and grocery. Though the project does not have any impact on the forest management activity (because the project is also new) its literacy programme might help the women to participate more in the future.

On the one hand the members of the CFUG had experienced the severe scarcity of the forest products owing to the degradation of forest -- a function of the haphazard exploitation in the past. On the other hand the initiative of the community forest taken by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village also inspired them to start their own community forest. Meanwhile, the local forestry officials also made them aware of the importance of CFUG. And consequently, the 73 households of the ward number six of Gangapraspur VDC living close to the degraded forest were unanimously identified as the members and were organized into a CFUG in 1991. No conflict arose apropos of the process of the organization of the CFUG and delimitation of the forest boundary. Then they applied to the District Forest Officer (DFO) for the formal registration of their CFUG. Then the constitution was prepared by the CFUG with the assistance of the Ranger. This CFUG had to change the constitution five times because initially its leading members did not prepare it properly. Now they have submitted their constitution to the DFO for the approval. The existing users' executive committee consists of 13 members (no females). The executive committee was consensually formed by holding a general meeting. But there were no women representation in the meeting. Therefore the user female informants reported that they do not know about the process of the formation of the executive committee. Forest management plan has not been prepared so far. Female informants do not know what is forest management plan but

some male members of the executive committee are cognizant of it. They are of the opinion that it is the five years' plan for the forest management which will be prepared in consultation with the Ranger. Only a few male informants are knowledgeable about the process of forest handover.

Regarding their behaviour concerning the forest protection, this CFUG has employed a local forest guard who regularly patrols the forest. He is paid Rs 450 per month. Each CFUG member household has to contribute Rs 6 per month. Some income is also generated by imposing fines on the owners of the livestock who deliberately make them astray in the forest. For example, Rs 5 is fined for a goat entry, Rs 10 for a cow/ox, and Rs 15 for a buffalo. Money is also charged for cutting the grass grown on the ground. One member has to pay Rs 35 for cutting grass in a season. Last year, this CFUG collected Rs 700 by selling the grass. All this is also used for paying the salary of the forest guard. The book-keeping is maintained by the chairman and the secretary of the committee. The general meeting of the CFUG is held when they have to plant more saplings. There is no knowledge about the establishment and institutionalization of CFUG network in the district.

Most of the informants have the knowledge about the government community forest policy, rules and regulations. All this helps for the conservation of the forests. But they do not have a smattering of soil conservation policy. They also know the responsibility of the executive committee such as collecting money from the members, imposing fines and informing members about the community forest rules and regulations etc. But female informants are ignorant of it. There is no knowledge about the extension services and materials to be provided by the forest and conservation offices. However, the user informants hold positive views towards the forestry officials and community forest policy because they all contribute to the conservation of the forests.

The user informants reported that they have very little knowledge of plantation, pruning, weeding, thinning, selective harvesting etc. Last year they did some weeding in the rainy season. Other silvicultural activities have not been practiced yet. They have neither any medicinal plants nor any knowledge for their exploitation.

Some informants reported that the constitution contains the rules and regulations about the forest management. They also know that trees should not be cut down without permission, houses should not be constructed and cultivation cannot be done in the forest.

## 7.0 GAI GAURENI COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, SALYAN (PRE-HAND OVER)

This Gai Gaureni Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number four (Simka village) of Triveni Village Committee (VDC) of Salyan district. It is six kilometers away from the nearest motorable road. The total area of the community forest is 60 hectares. It is a conserved forest. The total number of user households is 152 with 1007 population of which 510 are males and 497 females. Though the forest is in ward number four, a few households of the ward numbers three, six and seven of the same VDC also utilize the forest because they are living close to it. There are no non-CFUG member households. There are mainly two caste group people such as the Chhetris and untouchables (Damai=tailor, Kami=blacksmith and Sarki=shoe-maker). The male literacy rate is 25 percent and that of the female is 10 percent. Currently, there is an executive committee of the users which consists of 11 members and two advisors. Though majority of the members of the committee are from the higher caste (i.e. the Chhetris), two representatives from the untouchable community (the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy) have also been included. Of the total 11 members of the committee, three are females. Local people have been conserving the forest by forming an informal CFUG since 1983. Agriculture is the mainstay of the village economy. Farmers grow maize, paddy, millet and wheat as the principal crops. Only 25 percent households are reported to be self-sufficient in food production. The rest households supplement their limited agricultural production/income by seasonally migrating to India to work as unskilled labourers for remittances. To date, no developmental activities have been launched so far.

It has been revealed that the local people experienced massive forest destruction till 1983 which was conducive to the creation of the scarcity of forest products such as fuelwood, fodder and timber. As a consequence of this, they decided to protect the forest by calling a general meeting and thereby making a decision for the appointment of a *Chaukidar* (forest guard) who is paid two *Pathis* (one *pathi* is 3 kgs) of food grains annually by every household. Despite these details, the formal CFUG was formed only in 1994 with the assistance of the Ranger. All the user households living close to the forest were invited to attend the general meeting for the formal identification of a CFUG which was participated in by 130 representatives (100 males and 30 females). The general meeting formally identified 152 households living close to the forest as the CFUG. Likewise, there was no conflict regarding the boundary of the forest. In this forest, the users disregarded the politico-administrative boundary for the identification of CFUG (as stated in the preceding paragraph, though the forest is in ward number four, farmers of ward numbers three, six and seven living close to the forest have been included in the CFUG).

The constitution of the CFUG was prepared/drafted by the Ranger. However, it was extensively discussed in the general meeting of the users which was participated in by one representative (male or female) from all 152 households. It was revealed that it were mainly the males who spoke something about what the constitution contains. They reported that constitution contains

the rules/regulations which aim at controlling prohibited activities (of forest exploitation) through the imposition of penalties and thereby protecting the forest. But no further details were reported by the members of the executive committee and general users. Almost all the representatives of the user households had also participated in the general meeting for the formation of the users' executive committee. The 11 members of the committee and two advisors were consensually selected after the participatory discussion and deliberation of the users. User informants were satisfied with the selection process which also included representatives from the lower castes. The forest management plan was first drafted/prepared by the Ranger and was discussed in the general meeting. Most of the female informants cannot explain what the forest management plan contains. But a few female informants and most of the male informants are of the view that it contains the details about the management of the community forest (which includes ways of forest management such as plantation, thinning/clearing, collection of fuelwood and dry leaves and timber extraction, etc.) Until last year, the farmers used to collect fallen, dead and decayed non-timber wood as fuelwood free of cost. But this year onwards, they have planned to open up forest for not more than 10 days in a year for the collection of fuelwood through pruning and thinning. Violators are strictly penalized and the fine ranges from Rs 10 to Rs 100 (depending upon the degree of crime). The users have already divided the forest into five blocks/plots for the rotational pruning and thinning. The Ranger has provided the training to users on plantation techniques, pruning, thinning and selective harvesting (e.g. collection of old, dead and dying trees). Though users can collect dry leaves/litter free of cost any time, timber extraction from live trees is strictly restricted. Nonetheless, the member households can extract the timber from the dying/dead trees by paying Rs 50 per tree.

Female user informants do not have knowledge about the community forest and soil conservation policies. But male informants are of the view that community forest policy lays emphasis on the forest protection by the user community and for which the forest is handed over to them. They also do not have its deep knowledge. They also do not know about the soil conservation. Despite this fact a few male and female informants reported that they had seen the soil conservation activities launched by the District Agriculture Office which had also provided a short training to the local women on soil conservation. A few local women have practiced to plant the banana trees on the side of their farmlands. Majority of the informants of both sexes know that the right of the user group is to enjoy the forest products and its responsibility is the protection of the forest. Silvicultural skills are required for the management of the forests. The right of the executive committee is to work for the enforcement of the rules and regulations outlined in the constitution (including the sale of the forest products, imposition of fines and checking the forest destruction) whereas its responsibility is to manage the forest on the basis of the use of silvicultural skills. It also arranges meetings, contacts District Forest Officer (DFO) and maintains records.

The responsibility of the forest officials is to impart training on forest management skills and they also reserve the right of the resumption of the community forest if it is not properly managed. The forest management behaviour is already indicated in the preceding paragraph. The community holds positive attitude towards the forestry officials for a number of services rendered.

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such as assistance in the drafting of the constitution and forest management plan and provision of the training

There are a limited number of the medicinal plants available in the forest such as *Amala* (used for common cold and preparation of pickle and *Harro* (used for curing the cough) The locals can collect/exploit these plants free of cost. No training has been imparted on the skills of their exploitation for their sustainable use. However, they are exploiting other non-timber forest products sustainably (such as cutting grass in the rainy season leaving the root for the future growth, collection of fallen green branches for fodder and dry fallen branches for the fuelwood, etc )

## **8.0 KRISHNA HIMALI COMMUNITY FOREST USERS' GROUP, SALYAN (PRE- HAND OVER)**

This Krishna Himali Community Forest Users' Group (CFUG) is in ward number one (Mulabari village) of Tribeni Village Development Committee (VDC) of Salyan district. It is approximately 4 kilometers away from the motorable road. The total area of forest is 30 hectares. It is a conserved forest. The total number of users' households is 35 with a total population of 275 of which 141 are males and 134 females. There is not any non-user household. The community consists of mainly the Magars, Chhetris and Brahmins. There is an executive committee of 14 members of which three are females. The age of executive committee ranges from 20 to 60 years and only nine of them are literate. Agriculture is the predominantly practiced economic activity in the community. The major crops grown are maize, paddy, wheat, groundnut, mustard oil and soybean. Most of the users have food deficiency for more than six months in the year.

Due to the massive destruction of the forest in the past and suggestion of the local forestry officials, everybody of this community took initiative for the conservation of the forest. They had appointed one watchman who was paid 6 kgs of cereal crops (could be paddy, wheat, millet) by every household per year. But this effort could not be successful because the forestry officials did not co-operate considering the forest within their jurisdiction. Later, in 1990, all representatives from 35 households gathered in a meeting to form community forest users' group. All males and a few females of these households were present which was also participated in by the Ranger. This meeting resulted in the formation of CFUG. There was no any conflict regarding the forest boundary and users' identification. Then, users also they applied for the registration of their CFUG. The Ranger helped the community to draft the constitution which outlined the rules and regulations for systematic forest management. After the extensive discussions on the constitution drafted by the representatives of all 35 households in the general meeting it was approved consensually. Most of the female users do not know about preparation of the constitution due to their lesser participation.

The users' committee of 14 members (of which three are females and five are low caste people such as the Kamis and the backward ethnic group such as the Magar) were also elected unanimously from among general users. Then the forest management plan was drafted by the Ranger in the villagers' general meeting. Most of the general users do not have knowledge about the details forest management plan. The Ranger also did the forest survey, mapping and prepared forest inventory. The forest is being managed in accordance with the plan. For example, forest is divided into two blocks. One block is used for pasture such as cattle grazing and fuelwood collection and the some amount of fee is fixed by user's committee. Another block named "Rani Ban" is not allowed to extract any of the forest products. A forest guard has also been appointed who is paid 3 kgs of food grains and Rs 12 annually as his salary by each household.

The forest is opened once a year for the extraction of the forest products. Fuelwood is distributed to the users according to their family size. The users are charged Rs 25 for fuelwood, Rs 200 for *Khar* (thatching materials) and Rs 150 to Rs 500 for a pine tree for timber (depending on the size). The pine tree is harvested only for the purpose of building construction. In the protected forest, i.e. "Rani Ban", harvesting of forest products is strictly prohibited. However, this is opened for thinning and pruning activities for the fuelwood for two days of rainy season. Any user can collect fuelwood by paying Rs 2 per bundle or load to the committee's fund. The benefits derived from the forest products are always deposited in the users' fund which is managed by executive committee. Some of the money is invested to the users at the interest of 20 percent per annum. Bank account has not opened yet. With the help of this fund and the assistance of District Forest Officer (DFO), community has planted about 300 seedlings in the wasteland. Community has assigned task to each of the executive member in accordance with the constitution such as the chairman leads the community and secretary maintains records and manages accounts.

A few medicinal plants are also available such as *Barrow* (for cough treatment). *Malungo* is also available which is used for roofing purpose.

Male and female user informants have the knowledge on the government community forest policy which recognizes users as protectors and managers. They know that community forest users should manage the forest by themselves and plant new seedlings to check soil erosion. They have positive attitude towards government forest policies, rules and regulations because they have created good opportunity for the community people to manage forest for their future generation. They are also positive towards forestry officials as they have helped to prepare constitution and management plan including the formation of CFUG.

**APPENDIX - 3**  
**INDIGENOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

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## 1 BILONA INDIGENOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT, BANKE

This IFM, locally called Kaneshori forest, is in the ward numbers five, six, seven and eight of Bilona VDC of Banke district. It is approximately 3 hours walk from the nearest seasonal motorable road across the Rapti river which is devoid of bridge. The area of the forest is 90 *Bighas* (one bigha is equivalent to 68 ha). A total of 255 households with 3,500 population are currently using this forest. There are basically two types of people/users (i) the autochthonous Tharus, and (ii) migrants of the neighbouring hill districts which are the Brahmins and Chhetris. The literacy rate among the Tharus is reported to be very low compared to the migrant Brahmins and Chhetris. The conservation of this national forest commenced in 1991 with the local people's participation. In fact, the initiative was, first of all, taken by a local resident -- a response to the massive deforestation (mainly timber extraction) during the period of revolution for the restoration of the multiparty democracy in 1990. The community support had taken initiative in 1992 despite the initial disagreements. There is a main executive committee of 15 members of which six are females from the caste group people of hill origin. Under this, ward forest protection committee consisting of 9 to 11 members has also been organized in each ward. The only other social development intervention is the literacy and social awareness programme of Backward Society Education (BASE) - an NGO run by Tharu conscious youths. The community is predominantly an agrarian. The Department of Irrigation constructed an irrigation canal in 1992-94 with the cash and labour contribution of the local people of ward number four of this VDC.

There are no written rules and regulations for the forest management. However, certain forest protection measures have been orally agreed by a general meeting of the users held initially which was participated in by the people from all wards. The forest protection measures include the prohibition to cut the green leaves, permission to be taken to collect grass and dead/dry/fallen wood for fuelwood and control of the forest fire. Local people are not allowed to take their ox-pulled cart to the forest for the transportation of forest commodities. Infraction results in the imposition of fines which is usually decided by the meeting of the committees.

At the beginning forest guards were employed by the users' group in ward numbers five, six, seven and eight of Bilona VDC for the protection of forest in the respective wards. They were almost invariably paid in kind, that is, payment of cereal crops after the seasonal harvest. Each household of each ward was required to pay one Lumber (5 kg) of cereal crops (could be either paddy or wheat or maize). But later on some households refused to pay the forest guards because of the unavailability of the desired quantity of the timber during the time of necessity. They started thinking that if some amount of money is paid to the Ranger, they would be allowed for the sufficient timber extraction as per their need. Therefore, at present, only two forest guards have been employed with the financial support of VDC office (that is, they are paid Rs 1,000 per month by the VDC office's income source). Presently, if people need timber, they can collect dry timber from the forest according to their need but only with the approval of the VDC office.

It has been determined that the hill migrants have more knowledge about the community forestry policy and rules and regulations than the autochthonous Tharu. The raison d'etre of being so is that there is a long tradition of community management of forest in the hills and currently, there is also a more practice of handing over forests to the communities which the migrants know due to their regular contact with the provenances. But the Tharus, due to the plethora of forest resources, neither practiced community management of forest resources in the past nor are exposed to CFUG at the present. However, some users have the idea of the constitution and forest management plan also. But there does not seem to be the awareness towards the soil conservation policy. But people have the knowledge that if trees are planted on the both sides of the Rapti river, soil erosion would be controlled. As per the forest policy, the right of the users' group is to enjoy the forest products (such as fuelwood, fodder, timber etc.) sustainably and forest protection, in accordance with their verbally agreed rules and regulations, is their responsibility. But majority of the informants held the opinion that except the "fire protection" (for which training to a few users and members of the executive committee has been imparted by the Ranger office) and limited "selective harvesting", they do not know about the scientific silvicultural activities which has also the implication on forest management behaviour (such as no selection of species, no thinning, no clearing the inferior growths, no pruning, etc.)

By and large, the users have positive attitude towards the government community forestry policy because it allows the users to utilize the forest products as the community wishes. The forest officials also cannot threaten the community on the issue of the exploitation of the forest and government alone cannot protect the forest and hence, forests have to be handed over to the communities. The users are of the view that the governmental forestry service is inadequate because they lack the knowledge of scientific forest management. They want forestry officials to impart training to them on nursery establishment, plantation techniques, species selection, etc. Their attitude towards the forestry officials is good because they are being encouraged to practice the community forestry. However some informants are of the opinion that forestry officials are not happy with the system of community forestry because they are losing their power and benefits which they used to enjoy in the past.

## 2. CHANDANPUR INDIGENOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT, DANG

**Note** Historically speaking, indigenous forest management was practiced in the hills where there was the forest resource crunch as a function of the population explosion. Conversely, there was no need to initiate indigenous forest management in the Terai because of the plethora of forest resource and low population. But as malaria was eradicated in mid-1950s, there was an unprecedented influx of the hill migrants to the Terai (plains) and Inner Terai in search of the fertile land which resulted in the massive deforestation. Deforestation was also triggered off by excessive timber exploitation and smuggling. All this resulted in the forest resource crunch and lately, people have begun to take their own initiative for forest conservation. And the research team has studied an indigenous forest management which is also a relatively recent innovation in Dang District.

Chandanpur indigenous forest management is in ward number nine of Gadhuwa Village Development Committee (VDC). The area of the forest is 75 hectares. There is a total of 230 households who are currently utilizing this forest. The total population is 1900 of which 50 percent are males and 50 percent females. The predominant population is that of the Tharus (the autochthonous tribe) followed by the Brahmins/Chhetris, Yadavs, Magars, Kamis (blacksmith), Damais (tailor) and Sarkis (shoe-maker) -- all the latter three being traditionally the untouchables. The Brahmins/Chhetris and other untouchables are the migrants from the neighbouring hill districts such as Pyuthan and Rolpa. The literacy level was difficult to be determined. However, it was reported that the Brahmins and Chhetris have more literate people than other ethnic/caste groups and it follows as a corollary that the leadership of the community is also taken by them.

The field work has revealed that the forest under study was still dense 25 years back. But immigration from the neighbouring hill districts and the consequent land reclamation coupled with the excessive extraction of timber and fuelwood contributed to the loss of the valuable forest. In 1988-89 the District Forest Office took the initiative to plant saplings in the degraded forest land which was also participated in through the labour contribution by the local people. In 1992 the local people being fully cognizant of the need of the forest protection, approached the District Forest Office and expressed their intention to manage the forest by themselves. This was also agreed by the forestry officials and subsequently, they formed a forest management executive committee which consisted of 14 members (no females). This committee was elected by the general meeting of the user households. But women group interview revealed that they do not know how many households are the general members of this forest users' group and how many members are there in the executive committee. This might be attributable to the exclusion of the women during the initial general meeting of the potential forest users. The community had decided its own unwritten rules and regulations apropos of the forest management such as imposition of fines on the entry of the livestock in the forest (e.g. Rs 30 for a buffalo, Rs 25 for a cow and an ox, Rs 15 for a goat, Rs 10 for a pig, Rs 50 for the unauthorized mowing or

extracting the fodder, etc ), prohibition on the extraction of timber and fuelwood from the forest at the moment, establishment of norms for the sale of non-timber forest products which include Khar (thatching materials) grass for livestock and Siru (a kind of grass predominantly used for the preparation of broom) to earn income to run the recurrent cost for the forest management, prohibition on cutting the live trees, capture and kill the wild animals and cultivate the land for growing the crops, etc

They have employed a Chaukidar (forest guard) who patrols the forest for its protection. He is paid Rs 800 per month and the money for the payment of his monthly remuneration comes from the sale of non-timber forest products and the imposition of the fines. For example, in 1994, the community sold the grass worth of Rs 6,000 and this year, they sold it worth of Rs 3,000. They also charge Rs 7.00 to the member household which mows grass for each adult buffalo, cow and ox (head counting of the animals and thereby multiplying the number of animals by Rs 7 to calculate the amount to be charged to the grass mowing household per a particular season). Though most of female user informants and a few male user informants do not know why they are not registering as a CFUG and working with the government to get handover of their indigenously- managed forest, most of the male user informants reported that they do not know about the advantages of a formal CFUG formation. They also argue that they have already set their rules and regulations for forest management and hence, they do not know why they should register as a CFUG.

Most user male and female informants do not know exactly what are the community forestry rules and regulations. But a few the male informants think that they are framed for the conservation of the forest and they also view that preparation of a constitution and measurement of the forest with the help of the Ranger are some of the activities to be done for the handover of the forest to the CFUG. The users know that the right of the community is to enjoy the forest products and the responsibility is to protect the forest. Some male user informants claim that they have the knowledge of plantation, weeding and pruning but majority of the users do not have technical skills for forest management.

Since there are no internal group conflicts there are no difficulties encountered for group organization. Neither there are the problems for the group regarding the distribution of benefits. They have positive attitude towards the government community forest policy because it will contribute to the conservation of the forest. But almost everyone is unaware of the soil conservation policy. They want forest management technical skills and more opportunities to participate in community forestry training/seminars and other relevant assistance for forest management. It was also revealed that some users do not know the government services for forest management.

### 3.0 SETE KHOLA INDIGENOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT, SALYAN

This Sete Khola Indigenous Forest Management (IFM) is in ward number four of Phalabang Village Development Committee (VDC). The total area of the forest is approximately 25 hectares. There is a total of 128 user households with a total population of 896 of which 457 are males and 439 are females. As reported by the key informants, 33 percent and 18 percent males and females are literate respectively. The community has Chhetris as the predominant caste group followed by the Magars. The community is predominantly an agrarian one which grows maize, millet, paddy, lentil, etc.

It has been ascertained that this forest has been conserved by the community for the last 100 years with the help of the unwritten mutually agreed upon rules and regulations to protect the forest from the haphazard exploitation. But in 1987, the community started conserving the forest by forming a committee (which was responsible for the overall management of the forest) and employing a *Chaukidar* (Forest Guard) who was responsible for patrolling the forest for its protection. The *Chaukidar* was paid two *Pathis* of food grains (one *Pathu* is equivalent to 3 kgs) every year by each forest user household as an incentive (it is a kind of remuneration paid to him for his role to conserve the forest). But since the beginning of 1995, the users' household meeting decided to pay the *Chaukidar* in cash in lieu of commodity or food grains. And currently, every household has to pay Rs 25 per annum to pay the remuneration of the *Chaukidar* (who is paid Rs 700 per month). However, this collected amount is inadequate for the payment of the salary and hence, is supplemented by the sale of other forest products. Last year, the old forest management committee was dissolved and a new committee was formed which comprised 11 members including the two females. It was also reported that members of the committee represented different *Toles* (Pockets of village/settlement). The members of the forest management committee were democratically selected by the representatives present in the general meeting.

The users of the Sete Khola forest remove different types of forest products such as *Sal's* (*Sorea robusta*) green leaves free of cost (anytime when needed), *Babriyo* (a kind of grass grown wildly which is used for making string/rope) in September, *Khar* (thatching materials) in January, fuelwood in February, etc. The general practice is to pay Rs 5 for the wood to prepare one plough, Rs 2 for a bundle of fuelwood, Rs 30 for one cubic foot timber, Rs 25 for the *Khar* (thatching materials). *Babriyo* is collected free of cost.

The users have planted new trees in the wasteland. In order to ensure the continuous supply of the forest products overtime, the users are found to have practiced collecting fallen wood/tree/dry branches, clearing the inferior growths/bushes and pruning the branches of the timber trees, etc. They extract the minimum quantity of fuelwood from the forest considering the future necessity. They do not sell any forest products to the outsiders.

The reason of not registering the forest user group until now at the District Forest Office is that they have been utilizing the forest for long and fulfilling their household needs without any major constraint. However, they have recently applied to the District Forest Officer (DFO) for the registration of their a CFUG – an impact of another adjoining CFUG within the same ward. Only a few male informants are knowledgeable about the CFUG handover process. They are of the opinion that application for registration, and preparation of constitution and forest management plan are the processes of CFUG handover process. The male and female informants are aware of the right of the user groups (such as enjoyment of timber and non-timber forest products) and responsibility (such as protection of forest by prohibiting the entry of the outsiders and imposing fines on the violators). It is also the responsibility of the users to plant trees, protect forest from the fire, and practice silvicultural activities (such as thinning, pruning and clearing) in the traditional way. Users are of the view that the rules and regulations of the community forestry help protect and manage the forest with the participation of the user community. Though they are practising some of the silvicultural activities in a traditional manner, they want scientific/modern forest management skills/training.

Though most of the male and a few female informants know community forestry policy, they lack knowledge on soil conservation policy. They have positive attitude towards the community forestry policy because it helps manage the forest in a better way for the benefit of the community. Male informants reported about the practical aspect of the soil conservation by asserting that if soil is not conserved, its productivity would be adversely affected. They have not had any extension services for forest management and soil conservation so far. They have neither faced any conflicting situation nor have had any problem pertaining to the distribution of benefits (because everybody is enjoying/utilizing the forest products as per the need).

#### 4.0 PALLO PAKHA BHAND INDIGENOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT, PYUTHAN

This indigenously-managed forest is in ward number one of Khalanga Village Development Committee (VDC) of Pyuthan district. The total area of the forest is 62 hectares. There are a total of 100 households with a population of 600 of which 50 percent are males and 50 percent females. The predominant caste groups are the Brahmins and Chhetris followed by the Magars and Newars. There are also a few households of the untouchable groups, mainly the Kamis (blacksmiths) and Sarkis (shoe-makers). The overall literacy of the males, as reported, is 70 percent (mainly the Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars) and 35 percent that of the females. The literacy among the untouchables is low which is attributable to poverty and lesser interest/awareness about the importance of education/literacy. Despite the heterogeneity in the social composition of the caste/ethnic groups, there is homogeneity in the interest of the community vis-a-vis the development of natural resource management. Agriculture is the mainstay of the village economy. Farmers grow paddy and wheat, pulses and barley in the *Khet* (lowland) and maize, mustard, barley, wheat and pulses in the *Bar* (upland).

Only 4 percent of the total households are self-sufficient in food production whereas other 96 percent households are reported to be food-deficit which supplement their income from agricultural production by working as unskilled labourers (mainly in the construction activities) both in India and Nepal. To date, there have been no developmental activities implemented so far.

This forest has been managed indigenously for many years. The users recall that it was protected and managed even during the Rana regime (hereditary prime ministership of the Ranas for 104 years that is, between 1846 and 1951). The protection and management of the forest was taken care of by Shive *Guthi* (a local community organisation which took care of the management of the land granted to the religious institution and its income was primarily used for performing the religious rituals and maintaining the structures of the institutions). Forest, during those days, could be exploited only through the permission of the *Guthi* organization which helped control the haphazard exploitation. This system continued until 1961. Then, during the *Panchayat* regime (a non-party system which lasted for 30 years from 1961 to 1990), the ward member (an elected representative of the lowest level of administrative and political unit) was given the responsibility to care for the protection and management (i.e. forest could be exploited only through his permission to meet the household requirements). Since 1990, the local users themselves have been managing and protecting the forest in a more organized manner -- an impact of a neighbouring community-managed forest and gradual degradation of the forest after the downfall of the *Panchayat* regime. They have formed a 'users committee' of seven members (only males) who have been consensually selected by the general meeting. This 'users committee' has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing the forest on a controlled basis.

Currently, the forest has been divided into two sections such as 'grazing area' and *Rani Ban* (meaning protected queen's forest). Animals are allowed to graze in the 'grazing area' but the *Rani Ban* is strictly prohibited for grazing and only dry, decayed and fallen branches/twigs/old trees are allowed for exploitation or collection to meet the household forest product requirements. Collection of fuelwood is allowed twice a week, that is, Friday and Saturday. And fuelwood can be collected according to the household needs. But only one person from one household can collect one *Bhari* in one day. Similarly, each household is allowed to extract two *Bharis* of fodder (bundle of about 40 kg) daily (if needed).

At present, the users are interested for having the forest handed over. But they are confronted with a serious problem of the identification of the users' group because the inhabitants of the two wards of another VDC are also utilizing the forest. And therefore, all of the users of ward number one of Khalanga VDC and the users of the inhabitants of the two wards of another VDC have been claiming the forest as theirs. So the identification of the community forest users' group (CFUG) has not been finalized which is the impediment of the whole process of the livelihood of forest handover. This inter-group conflict has not been resolved to date.

The interview has revealed that the user male and female informants are knowledgeable about the process of the handover of the forest such as application to the District Forest Officer (DFO), submission of the copies of constitution and management plan to DFO and their approvals are the major steps of fulfilling the pre-conditions of the handover of the forest. The male informants reported that constitution is the embodiment of the rules and regulations which helps protect and manage the forest. Female informants are not aware of this. But informants of both sexes are of the view that the right of the users is to enjoy the forest products according to their needs and their responsibility is to protect and manage the forest in the way prescribed by the rules and regulations enacted consensually by them (No violation of the rules and regulations). The user informants of both sexes have held positive attitude towards the government community forest policy because it aims at protecting and managing the forests through the involvement of the community. But they are unaware of the soil conservation policy. The group of users needs technical advice and guidance for the better management of forest.

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