

## Conflicts in Community Forestry: Experiences from Uganda

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### Summary

*In Uganda, communal forests managed/governed collectively by communities as a whole are almost non-existent, as most decisions about activities to be undertaken in the forests are taken individually at the household levels. The Uganda Forestry Resources and Institution Centre (UFRIC) has undertaken the task of studying how many individuals using forest resources in common can manage/govern such resources. The studies involve investigating attributes both of the communities and of the forests used by those communities being investigated. The results of such studies will be used in developing forest management systems that will ensure equal, optimal use of forests by all different forest users, while at the same time maintaining the biological diversity of the forests. In these studies, emphasis is put on issues of conflict management while using the forests. The results have identified three types of conflicts, which have been termed utilization, management/rights and value conflicts. Sources of these conflicts are varied, and those which have been identified include a users' mentality of plentiful forest resources, conversion of forest land to agricultural use, cultural differences among the people using the forests and corruption among managers of the forests. Opportunities for conflict management as well as constraints to conflict management have been also identified. The decentralization process, land reform, the availability of empirical data and networking have been identified as opportunities, while economic liberalization, migration dynamics and tree tenure insecurity have been identified as constraints for conflict management in community forestry.*

## Introduction

FAO (1987) defined community forestry in very simple terms as “any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity.” This definition embraces a spectrum of situations, including growing trees for local needs; raising woodlots at the farm level to provide cash returns; processing forest products at the household, artisan or small scale industry level to generate income; joint/collaborative forest management, in rural communities, of protected forests, with government agencies and local communities; and communal forest management by local communities.

Considering that definition and the types of forestry activities taking place in Uganda, one can rightly conclude that community forestry is being practised in the country. However, communal forests managed/governed by communities as a whole are almost non-existent, as most decisions and activities for community forestry are taken either at individual or household levels.

In an effort to understand how local people self-organize and manage/govern the resources they use in common, the Uganda Forestry Resources and Institutions Centre (UFRIC), a collaborating research centre of the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, USA, has undertaken several case studies in Uganda to investigate issues of self-organization, governance, how forests are being used, rules people face while using forests, and the impact of government-driven policies on forest use. In this paper, I will share with you some of the experience gained as a result of these studies. The IFRI research programme was developed at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at the University of Indiana at the request of the Forest Trees and People Programme (FTPP) at FAO. The IFRI research programme provides an empirical foundation for systematic data analysis about:

- how institutions affect the incentives facing forest users;
- how these incentives encourage forest users to engage in sustainable development or destructive use of forests;
- how forest users establish their own effective governance arrangement or continue to pursue independent strategies; and
- how forest users are affected by government-driven development activities and policies.

The IFRI research programme has been established in order to plan and arrange for a multicountry, multiyear collection of systematic and reliable data

about a diversity of forests and forest institutions so that the base containing this information can be used:

- to develop better explanations of the institutions that help forest users and officials to improve the conditions of forest users while sustaining and improving the condition of forested areas and protecting biological diversity;
- to compare the effectiveness of diverse types of institutions including common property, private property or strictly controlled public property, in governing and managing forest resources and adapting to rapid demographic, technological, economic and social change;
- to build over a 10-year period a broad, international database capable of monitoring changes in the conditions of forests and forest institutions and their performance;
- to inform forest users as well as government officials about the long-term condition of forest resources and of forest institutions;
- to build up the institutional and human resource capacities to continue to monitor and advise local users about forest resource governance and management; and
- to develop a network of Collaborating Research Centres (CRCs) that can work together to build and improve the data collection, data storage and data analysis tools that are relevant for this research program.

## Approaches and Methods

The IFRI research programme recommends a multidisciplinary approach to collection of data both on community attributes and on the physical attributes of the forests. Data from the communities using the forests is collected by using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methodologies, while that about organizations involved in management of the forests is gathered through direct interviews and discussion. The type of information gathered is indicated in Appendix 1.

Physical data is collected from the forests using random forest sample plots consisting of three concentric circular areas. The innermost circle (with a 1-metre radius) is for sampling ground cover and woody seedlings. The

middle circle (with a 3-metre radius) is for sampling shrubs and saplings, while the outer circle (with a 10-metre radius) is for sampling trees. The type of information gathered is shown in Appendix 1. The number of plots per forest depends on the diversity as well as the size of the forest.

### Usefulness of IFRI Data

The results generated by the IFRI research programme are of immediate use both to the communities, especially the forest users, and to managers of the forests. For example, a report containing information on the history of the settlements; on types and numbers of Forest User Groups; on the socio-economic status of members of user groups; on the species of plants found in the forests and their uses, indicating their relative occurrence; and on levels and types of human disturbances in the forests can be passed on to the community. Such information can be useful in the formulation of workable forest management plans by forest managers. Passing this type of information on to the communities could mark the beginning of a bottom-up policy formulation. However, this practice has not yet taken place in Uganda for a number of reasons.

- There are no formal organizations of Forest User Groups that can work with government officers.
- There is minimum direct participation of non-government organizations (NGOs) in bridging the gaps between Forest User Groups and government organizations (GOs).
- The majority of government officials are not yet exposed to the bottom-up type of plan formulation.
- There is no legal framework entrusting the responsibilities of acting as forest managers to the forest users of protected forests.

The studies have indicated that collaboration between GOs, universities, and NGOs is necessary for the successful management of forest resources. For example, in the short term, the universities and NGOs can work together in documenting the attributes of the communities using the forests and the rule-use governing the forests, and also documenting how government-driven policies impact on the use of the forests. In the medium term, the GOs and the universities could work out forest management plans based on empirical data from communities and forests. In the long term, the three parties, together with communities, could collaborate in areas such as planting and other maintenance works in the forests, protecting the forests and enforcing rules, for example, especially at the level of operational and collective-choice activities.

IFRI is aiming at developing management systems that will ensure equal, optimal use of forests by all different forest users while at the same time maintaining the forests' biological diversity. Therefore the programme is suitable for studying conflict management in forests, and for this reason I would recommend that studies concentrate on attributes of communities and rules-in-use for managing the forests.

### Types of Conflict

Forest conflicts can be considered to be disagreements between forest owners/managers and users that originate in the way forests are managed and used. They are more than quarrels between the two groups, as in some cases loss of property and threat to human lives may result from such disagreements. In Uganda, there are no forests that can be considered as pure common property in the sense of being owned and managed by the communities as a whole. However, nearly all natural forests, regardless of the property regimes under which they fall, are being used as common pool resources (CPRs). Ostrom (1990) has defined CPRs as "natural or manmade resources that are sufficiently large as to make it costly to exclude potential users from using them." Given such a situation, the following types of conflict have been identified.

■ **Utilization conflicts:** Utilization of forests in Uganda is characterized by several conflicts that are the result of the manner in which harvesting activities are carried out, and also of the various interests of Forest User Groups. Even if the user groups can be classified in two broad categories of non-consumptive and consumptive users, the latter group rarely considers the interests of the former. Yet when a tree is harvested for one purpose, such as charcoaling, it is no longer available for another purpose, such as fruit gathering. This creates conflict between the different Forest User Groups. Consequently, this leads to overexploitation of the forests, as each forest user tends to guard their interests (Gombya-Ssembajjwe, 1996).

■ **Management/rights conflicts:** Forest users' rights are limited to access (the right to enter forests) and withdrawal (the right to obtain products from forests) only at operational level. When a resource user has rights only at operational level, it means that the

person cannot participate in defining future operational rights to be exercised. The authority to devise future operational level rights lies at a higher level, that is, at the collective choice level. At this level, management, exclusion and alienation rights are exercised (Schlager and Ostrom, 1993). Therefore, the situation of many users who have rights of access and withdrawal, but no right to manage the forests or to exclude potential users, can easily lead to management conflicts.

- ***Conflict between traditional use of forests and commercial exploitation:*** The monetary value of trees (based on Western ideologies) is considered more important than any traditional value, spiritual, cultural or historical, for example, by several groups of forest users, especially the young and the educated. They urge that, in order for them to fight poverty successfully, natural raw material must be converted to create opportunities for material wealth, such as radios, bicycles and permanent houses. Unfortunately, very few local forest users have managed successfully to convert natural forests into cash wealth (savings) because of numerous needs for cash (whatever cash is earned is spent almost immediately).

### Sources of Conflicts

Several sources of conflict have been identified in forests used as CPRs.

- ***A mentality that forests are plentiful.*** Some forest users, especially in sparsely populated areas with relatively dense forest cover, still believe that the country has plenty of forests and that therefore, whatever the use pattern, they cannot be depleted. Here the emphasis is being put on local needs and use rather than on regional and national needs and uses.
- ***Conversion to agricultural use.*** The forests outside gazetted areas are not protected by any legal framework. They are classified as agricultural land. Therefore, with an increasing human population, agricultural expansion has been taking place in these forests as well as in some protected forests. Agricultural activities in forests and the forceful eviction of agricultural encroachers from forest reserves have caused conflict in the management of the reserves.

- **The issue of settlers.** The movement of people into different areas means that the local Forest User Groups are no longer homogenous ethnic groups. The newcomers introduce their own cultures, beliefs, values and indigenous knowledge. This reduces the chance that the groups may reach a consensus for the group management of forests.
- **Corruption.** The strong tendency of government officials to accept bribes from illegal forest users has encouraged illegal activities. This practice has made the work of managing the forests very difficult.

### Conflict Management: Opportunities

Some positive steps towards conflict management in forest resources can be mentioned.

- **Decentralizing.** The government of Uganda has decentralized most of the service to local administrative units. For example, the local council courts offer cheap and quick avenues for conflict resolution. The emphasis of these courts is not on punishing the culprits by sending them to jail but rather on making them good citizens through other means appropriate to the local communities.
- **Starting land reform.** The government has started a process of land reform, whereby every individual occupying a piece of land will own it. It is hoped that land will be better managed. However, such a reform has many disadvantages. For example, the rich might buy land from the poor, thus increasing the number of the landless, and again encouraging encroachment of the forests. It should be noted that such a land reform failed in Thailand.
- **Making empirical data available.** UFRIC studies and case studies on conflict management sponsored by FTTP/FAO have generated some data that has given some insight on conflicts in forest management in Uganda. As a result of their studies, now both the Forestry Department of Makerere University and the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources have started asking similar, if not the same, questions about forest manage-

ment. From these studies, it is now clear that the universities can play a linking role between the government agencies and the local forest users, and between the government agencies and NGOs.

- **Networking.** The current political situation in East Africa is conducive to networking in different areas of forest management. For example, there is free exchange of information about community forestry issues within the region. In 1996 FTTP sponsored a visit by about 20 local forest users from Mpigi District, Uganda, to the Babati District, Tanzania, to learn about the process of community forestry management by the local people. With help of the Ford Foundation, an East Africa research network on community-based institutions for forest management has been established for building a network for applied research in issues regarding the kinds of institutions (traditional or otherwise) that facilitate effective and sustainable forest management at the community level.

### Conflict Management: Constraints

Some attributes are likely to hinder the processes of conflict management in forest resources.

- **Economic liberalization.** An economic liberalization programme implemented by the government is likely to increase the emphasis on the monetary value of forests/trees at the expense of traditional values.
- **Migration dynamics.** These will continue to render indigenous technical forest/tree knowledge less useful and effective in forest management by communities.
- **Tree tenure insecurity.** The current legal framework recognizes, in the statute books, both the formal and informal aspects of forest/tree ownership and governance. Yet, in practice, government and courts of law tend to ignore the informal laws, thus limiting the applicability of the customary laws (Ochieng Odhiambo, 1996).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Well managed CPRs have rules-in-use that minimize conflicts. One way of reducing the conflicts will be to empower the local user groups to the point of getting them involved in crafting the rules used to manage the resource, and also to the point of excluding potential users. Unfortunately, the government of Uganda has not shown strong commitment to empowering the local forest users, nor have the NGOs in the country shown strong commitment to helping the local forest users acquire the necessary empowerment. Given IFRI's aim of generating management systems that will ensure equal, optimal use of the forests by all forest users while maintaining the resources' biological diversity, the programme can be used in studies addressing the issues of conflict management in forests.

Some recommendations can be made.

- Collaboration between GOs, universities and NGOs is essential for the successful integration of conflict management considerations into national policy frameworks and therefore is highly recommended.
- Empirical data is a necessity for formulating successful national policies. Therefore, joint research studies carried out by the GOs, universities and NGOs could generate the necessary data that can be used to integrate conflict management considerations into national policy frameworks.
- The IFRI research programme is suitable for studying conflict management in forests, especially in the areas of attributes of communities and rules-in-use for managing forests. This programme could be used to generate the required empirical data.

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## Appendix 1: IFRI Data Collection Forms and Type of Information to Collect

### **Site Overview**

site overview map, local wage rates, local units of measures, exchange rates, recent policy change, interview information.

### **Forest**

size, ownership, internal differentiation, products harvested, uses of products, species names, changes in forest areas, appraisal of forest condition.

### **Forest Plot**

tree, shrub, and sapling sizes, densities, and species types, general condition of the forest.

### **Settlement**

socio-demographic information, relation to markets and administrative centres, historical and geographic information about the settlements.

### **User Group**

size, socio-economic status, attributes of the specific user groups.

### **Forest Association**

activities carried out; governance and structure, membership, records and supervision, staff and officials, resource mobilization and account-keeping, rule-making.

### **Forest User Group**

Relationship products harvested by user groups from specific forests and their uses.

### **Forest Products**

details on three most important forest products as defined by the user group), harvesting patterns, alternative sources and substitutes, harvesting tools and techniques, and harvesting rules.

### **Non-Harvesting**

organizations, information about organizations that make rules regarding forests but do not use the forests themselves, including structure, personnel, resource mobilization, and record-keeping.

***Organizational Inventory and Inter-Organizational Arrangements***  
information about all organizations (harvesting or not) that relates to  
a forest harvest and governance activities.

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Source: Schlager & Ostrom, 1993.

## Developing and Putting into Practice Conflict Resolution Training Materials to Support Community Forestry in Asia

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### Summary

*This paper gives an overview of the development process in designing a conflict resolution training manual series for the Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC) in Bangkok, Thailand, with recommendations for its immediate use in community forestry activities across Asia. Eight authors from six countries, with professional expertise ranging from policy- to field-level experience in community forestry issues, have spent a year developing and writing the series. The eight manuals cover basic resolution techniques, as well as intervention skills for special issues such as environmental, economic, gender or cultural conflict issues.*

*The series has a wide application, as the training and intervention components can be used in one- to three-day overview courses for policy-makers to familiarize them with the basic techniques of conflict resolution, or in in-depth training courses for policy- and field-level practitioners. The benefits of integrating conflict resolution practices into community forest management include supporting traditional resolution practices, improving communication across sectors, and, finally, enhancing information exchanges to develop effective policies.*

## Introduction

Since 1995, RECOFTC in Bangkok has been providing two-week training courses in conflict resolution to community forestry professionals in Asia. In the initial years of the course, the training provided participants with a general background in the theory and skills of negotiation and mediation. As valuable as the training course was in introducing the basic methods, it lacked material that focused on conflicts in natural resource and land use issues common to the Asia region.

In order to provide sustained support for the use and practice of the resolution skills, RECOFTC commissioned the development of a series of case studies to be used as teaching modules that focus on typical community forestry conflict situations. Cases drawn from the Asia region addressed conflicts involving gender issues in co-management, private forestry plans versus forest department planning, community versus national interests, and the evolution of collaborative planning groups.

The Conflict Resolution Case Study Series was published in 1996 and has been introduced as a teaching component in the conflict resolution training program (RECOFTC, 1996). To further complement training and to provide reference support material, RECOFTC, with funding support from the FTTP/FAO programme, is currently developing an eight-volume Conflict Resolution Training Manual Series.

## Developing Conflict Resolution Training Manuals to Support Community Forestry

Traditionally, negotiation and mediation were the normative conflict resolution practices between individuals and within communities around the world. It has only been in recent centuries that state and federal legal systems have been used so extensively for resolving conflicts. Urban populations have taken the lead in utilizing professional lawyers to handle their disputes, though increasingly even the most remote communities are depending on formal legal mechanisms to insure that their individual and collective rights are fully recognized. This trend toward widespread use of the legal system to resolve conflicts has in some areas eroded traditional resolution practices. However, negotiation and mediation practices have a deliberate focus on clarifying the causes of conflicts, finding consensual agreements, and rebuilding relationships between the disputants as part of the resolution process, in contrast to the legal system, which focuses on determining rights, as

already established by law (Moore, 1996; Slaikeu, 1996). Conflict management as a professional skill is a relatively new concept; its earliest uses were in resolving labour disputes. In the past 25 years, practitioners have increasingly focused not only on reintroducing negotiation and mediation skills to the local level, but also in developing linkages between resolution practices and legal systems. In addition, new facilitation skills have been developed to address multiple-interest conflicts that focus on public policy issues (Josayma, 1996).

The Conflict Resolution Training Manual Series has been developed by eight writers whose combined professional experiences provide a broad base of expertise. Two authors from Thailand have recently established a mediation training centre with a specific focus on policy conflicts. Four of the authors, from India, China and the Philippines, have extensive community forestry-related field work experience. A Nepalese lawyer who has worked on gender discrimination issues in community forestry, has contributed to the development, and the project coordinator is a conflict resolution specialist in natural resource management issues in Asia and the United States.

To initiate the project, the coordinator wrote a preliminary manual that introduced key negotiation, mediation and facilitation techniques and that was to be used as a discussion piece during the manual series design meetings. The contributing writers were also given numerous short articles, papers and FFTP publications that covered specialized conflict resolution theory and practices, such as those dealing with policy, planning, power and equity issues (Crowfoot and Wondolleck, 1990; Gamman, 1994; Gray, 1989; Maser, 1996).

Two manual development meetings were held, during which the writers identified common conflict situations in community forestry. These conflict issues became the focus for the development of training and intervention exercises. As the writers outlined the manuals, occasionally there were contrasting opinions on the importance of some issues, and on how those differences would be addressed. For instance, gender conflicts in community forestry were considered very prominent in Nepal and India, whereas in Thailand, gender was considered a non-issue, as women were seen to have equal rights at the local level. The writers decided that the gender section would be primarily written by the authors from India and Nepal, with particular points from the Thai perspective added to balance the content. Similarly, there was a lengthy discussion regarding cultural differences. The writer from China, who comes from Yunnan, where 27 ethnic groups reside, felt that cultural conflicts were relatively minor, whereas in the highlands of Thailand, the Philippines and Nepal, different cultural land use practices have evoked

numerous conflicts. In China, economic and environmental conflicts were considered to be of higher priority, and there was a need for conflict anticipatory planning.

Over a six-month period, drafts were circulated among the writers, giving everyone the opportunity to read and comment on the emerging material. A finalization workshop was held to identify any missing points, harmonize the content across the series and make decisions regarding graphics, tables and charts. Throughout the development and finalization meetings, there were constant discussions regarding the ideas that emerged. The writers all agreed that the theories and practices that they were developing should be broad enough to be used across all the countries. In areas where the writers had differences in opinion regarding the material, such as content applicability in their country, those individuals were given the responsibility of writing sections to highlight those differences as points for special consideration.

## Content

The Conflict Resolution Training Manual Series includes an introductory manual that provides an overview of the series, and seven companion volumes focusing on specific levels of conflicts and resolution strategies. These include: (1) a *Trainers Manual*, (2) a *Field Manual*, (3) a *Policy Manual*, (4) a *Culture and Gender Manual*, (5) an *Economic and Environmental Manual*, (6) a *Conflict Anticipation Manual*, and (7) a *Case Study Manual*, which integrates the earlier case studies with a series of recently commissioned additional cases.

The *Trainers Manual* is the central component of the series. The manual opens with sections on conflict awareness and communications skills, and moves into the basic principles and training exercises for negotiation, mediation and facilitation. This manual serves as the principal training tool for learning conflict management practices. It is followed by the *Field Manual*, whereby practitioners learn to identify traditional community conflict resolution mechanisms, and learn when to introduce additional resolution interventions. This manual includes group exercises to determine the extent of resource dependency, as well as a power and influence analysis exercise. The *Policy Manual* coaches practitioners in identifying the substance, process and dynamics that influence local, national and international interest parties. Policy phases in community forestry are categorized from the design stage through to the monitoring and adjustment phases with an identification analysis chart of common conflicts at each stage. A 'Lamposts and Landmarks' exercise illuminates the causes and conditions of conflicts.

The *Culture and Gender Manual* focuses on specific conflict attributes. The culture section highlights how cultural groups put different emphasis on the importance not only of values and beliefs, but also of time, space and social relations. There are a series of group exercises on communication, cultural values and power that are related to cultural awareness building. The gender section similarly provides an overview of the kinds of conflict issues that gender differences will provoke, which is followed by group exercises that use role-reversal techniques, division of labour identification, and integrating gender differences. The *Economic and Environmental Manual* identifies three categories across five different subsections in which conflicts can emerge. Intervention strategies include a ‘Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats’ (SWOT) exercise, with an evaluation and implementation section. There is also a well developed section of resolution options, such as petitions, lobbying, arbitration, and the court system, with an analysis of the benefits of using these alternate resolution forums.

The *Conflict Anticipation Manual* emphasizes pre-emptive strategies to address obvious conflict situations before they emerge. The focus is on the design of participatory involvement processes, and it includes a conflict anticipation exercise for locating potential ‘Hot Spots’. Hot Spots are grouped within four contexts in community forestry.

1. Period: the pre-phase and implementation phase;
2. Location: insider vs. outside;
3. Chain reaction: spin-off effects; and
4. Contextual differences: agency, community, NGO, government and mixed groups.

The *Case Study Manual* includes new cases from India, Nepal and Thailand that cover intercommunity conflicts, the benefit of conflict resolution for strengthening community capacity, and policy-level interventions. All volumes in the series have an introduction, and a section on methodological approach, followed by a series of either training or intervention exercises. A terminology section and reference section also are included.

## Putting Conflict Resolution into Practice

Conflicts are endemic to every region of the world, and they arise in response to unanticipated effects of change. Conflict resolution practices seek to raise the level of understanding among people of the range of choices and methods available for resolving conflicting interests. The question is how to introduce and encourage conflict resolution practices in community forestry issues. The training manuals can be used in various ways. At the policy level, one- to three-day overview courses in conflict resolution can be developed by drawing from across the series to give forest agency and other policy-level government officials a basic introduction to the practices. Forest agencies, in particular, should consider training specific staff members to serve as conflict resolution specialists for community forestry conflicts. At the field level, conflict resolution trainers can begin working with communities to enhance their traditional resolution practices and introduce complementary skills, as gaps are identified by the community. The training manuals have a variety of conflict issue identification exercises as well as numerous exercises and methodologies ranging from negotiation to facilitated public meetings.

Within two years or so, conflict resolution will become an increasingly familiar approach at both the policy and field level. Cross-learning programmes of successful practices in the two sectors can be initiated as a follow-up objective in order to develop linkages between their resolution methods. Resolution specialists from both sectors can collaboratively design strategies to cross-educate each other about their practices to enlarge their repertory of problem solving skills. Possible approaches could include information meetings or community-agency development of dramas or videos depicting preferred practices. Along with cross-learning, both agencies and communities can focus on identifying appropriate parties to serve as negotiators, mediators and facilitators. These people can be trained in specialized techniques such as gender, cultural, economic and environmental resolution methods to strengthen their skills.

Over time, through focused and in-depth involvement in resolution practices, agency staff and community members will have developed a common approach to dealing with conflicts. These resolution practices can be used to create a regional and cultural synthesis of mediation techniques. Maps can be developed that identify common conflict causes and resolutions, to enable people involved in community forestry to develop future conflict anticipation strategies to support future policy recommendations.

Sustained use of conflict resolution techniques can provide a series of concrete results. The first is that the use of the practices will ensure that traditional resolution practices are enhanced and integrated into the development of any regional conflict resolution approach. The second result is that its use can improve relations across multiple levels as the focus on conflicts reveals the communication and policy gaps, and resolution mechanisms to fill those gaps are identified. A final result is that it provides valuable information for developing enabling policies to assist and support community forestry efforts.

Community forestry is about introducing change, and with change comes conflict. Significant changes are occurring daily within government agencies and at the community level as everyone attempts to find both a more equitable and a more sustainable use of the world's forest resources. The greatest challenge is to raise the level of effective interaction between interest groups and user groups that stimulates productive dialogue and allows for conflicts to be constructively problem-solved. This is possible within the field of conflict resolution as conflicts are addressed and transformed into opportunities for preferred change, enabling policy-makers and local communities to formulate applicable laws and regulations for sustainable forest resource management.

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# A Kenyan Perspective on Conflict Management Strategies for Sustainable Natural Resource Management: Integrating Conflict Management into National Policy Frameworks

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## Summary

*A historical review of natural resources management (NRM) in Kenya reveals how policies have impacted on natural resources management at different levels, causing conflicts among various stakeholders. The conflicts between natural resources management institutions and local communities is a result of historical policy development. Using the example of conflicts involving the Tana River Primate National Reserve (TRPNR), it is found that it is imperative to re-examine the NRM policy framework and formulate appropriate policy both at the local and national levels. In addition, it is critical to establish dynamic institutions to address complex and sensitive natural resources management issues.*

*The status quo option is not tenable, due to inappropriate NRM institutions and conflicts. There is a need to review natural resources policies to make them responsive to the needs of local communities, which are disenfranchised by the current policies. Natural resource conflict management issues are basic community welfare issues of food, access, shelter, clothing, security, equity, human dignity and destiny. Therefore, these 'bread and butter' issues need not be complex if local communities are empowered to make decisions governing natural resource management. Policies will then be seen to work appropriately and to be responsive to local people's needs in dynamic realities. This calls for policy options that could influence*

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*natural resources management strategies, and for creation of responsive and dynamic institutions at local community level. It is recommended that NRM policy, options and actions be reviewed to support local NRM structures and be responsive to local communities' needs.*

*To achieve this reality, the conflict management process demands commitment of stakeholders to overcome formidable socio-economic, political, legal, land and natural resources tenure constraints.*

## Introduction

Recent history of human development around the world has been characterized by unprecedented developments, accompanied by environmental degradation and pressure on natural resources. At global level, these are exhibited by such phenomena as global warming, desertification, forest losses, loss of biological diversity and widespread poverty, despite technological and economic development.

In Kenya, forest cover decreased steadily from 7.5 percent in 1975 to about 3 percent by 1995 (Republic of Kenya, 1994; Ochanda *et al.*, 1981). This has been accompanied by rapid human population increase with associated developments, such as agricultural and industrial development, to meet socio-economic needs. These developments, coupled with changing natural resources management regimes, have put considerable demands on natural resources, leading to environmental degradation and conflicts.

Failures of modern natural resource management regimes are manifested in loss of sustainable livelihoods of local communities, resulting in conflicts over resources. At times, wars over natural resources, such as water, forests or grazing lands, have taken place in various parts of the world because conflict management strategies do not serve stakeholders equitably.

These conflicts are rooted in stakeholders' dynamic rights and interests: access, use, ownership, management, legal, and identity. As Mwangi (1997) noted, these conflicts are manifested in various ways: poor decision-making, conflicts over ownership, boundary disputes, loss of forest cover, eviction of Indigenous People, and illegal exploitation of natural resources. Another key aspect involves conflicting mandates of government and other institutions in NRM.

NRM conflicts represent a historical legacy dating from the colonial era, when traditional management was replaced with centralized management within the central government. This policy did not change at independence (Mwangi, 1997; Juma & Ojwang, 1996). One of the major impacts of modern natural resources tenure regimes was criminalization of sustainable resources use by local people. This was due to development of policies that were geared towards fulfilling socio-economic interests other than local interests.

Due to the conflicts generated, there is pressure to design management regimes aimed at reducing conflicts and promoting sustainable use of resources. Conflict resolution strategies have included policy reforms, development of formal and informal agreements, community management initiatives, multiple use management and zonation, human resettlement, and gazettement of protected areas, such as forests, parks and reserves.

This paper examines the nature of NRM conflicts by using the example of the TRPNR. The current conflict situation, initiatives to manage conflicts, and their strengths and weaknesses are reviewed. Recommendations of possible ways forward at policy and institutional levels are made and the conclusion is made that the status quo in natural resources management is not tenable.

### A Historical Overview of Natural Resources Management and Conflict Evolution in Kenya

The history of Kenya can be divided broadly into three eras: the pre-colonial era, when local communities managed natural resources according to community laws; the colonial era, when Indigenous People were separated from their resources and their traditional mode of governance was criminalized by colonialists; and the post-colonial era, when the colonial structures inherited needs to be re-examined to be responsive to society's needs and natural resources governance.

The centralization of natural resources management transferred management from the local communities to government institutions such as the Forest Department. In parallel to this action, the local people were confined to overcrowded native reserves. The local human dimension was ignored in the NRM process.

The legacy of this tenurial change was denial of access to resources and was the advent of conflict with state institutions that persists up to the present.

This has resulted in inequities in distribution and denial of access to natural and land resources. The existing institutional framework created conflict by disenfranchising Indigenous People. Further, the existing policies confer upon the state overriding management powers over land and resources, thus weakening traditional NRM regimes (Gachugu, 1997).

Currently, the major theme in NRM is the incorporation of Indigenous People as stewards and beneficiaries of such efforts (Anderson and Grove, 1987). The realization that the current NRM strategies are not effective in sustaining the natural resources base calls for greater community partnership (Republic of Kenya, 1975; KWS, 1996). It is in this context that the TRPNR case is reviewed.

### The Indigenous Pokomo People and the Tana River Primate National Reserve

The Pokomo group occupy land along the Tana River, utilizing diverse resources (Gachugu, 1992). Traditionally, the council of elders was responsible for community governance, including conflict resolution and resources management.

After independence, community governance was replaced with the current government system. Presently, unlike the past, the local communities have little say in the governance system. This has resulted in the breakdown of traditional community management and allocation of natural resources, especially forest resources.

It is against this background that the TRPNR was gazetted in 1976, under the management of the Tana River County Council, to conserve the riverine habitat and unique biological diversity along the Tana River. The gazettelement generated conflicts, as the local communities were disenfranchised from natural resources, especially land, with the introduction of a new management regime.

#### *The conflict sources in the TRPNR area*

The primary causes of conflicts due to gazettelement include: disenfranchisement of local people from land and natural resources; lack of appropriate mechanisms to transfer benefits to local people; changing land uses; and a lack of framework to involve local community in reserve management. In addition, demand by wildlife authorities to resettle resident Indigenous People outside the reserve is a major source of conflict.

The local communities lost agricultural land, livestock grazing areas and routes, watering points, fishing rights, access to forest resources, and governance over natural resources. A combination of these effects led the local communities to view TRPNR as a burden imposed on them by modern institutions, thus generating conflicts. Several policy initiatives have been undertaken to manage these conflicts, with varying degrees of success.

### Policy Initiatives to Manage Conflicts and their Weakness

First, it is critical to highlight perspective on land and resource tenure relationships and to define resource tenure and factors governing land and resources. It is in this context that policy initiatives are examined.

#### *Resource tenure*

Resource tenure can be defined as management regimes that govern the rights of ownership, access, use and administration of natural resources. This, in turn, defines various streams of benefits and responsibilities conferred on various stakeholders. One of the key resources is land, which is broadly defined as physical space with diverse resource endowments that govern and sustain human activities over generations, which, in turn, sustain such resources. Different communities view land according to their needs, which vary from one community to another, as, for example, pastoralists, agropastoralists or fishermen.

About 80 percent of Kenya's population is rural and depends on land for its livelihood. Shah and Awori (1996) note that, for the majority, land is the medium for livelihood and determines economic prosperity and the fulfillment of social and welfare obligations. In addition, land confers social status and political power. There are a number of factors that govern ownership, access, use and management of natural resources, with factors governing land playing a crucial role in NRM.

#### *Factors governing land and natural resource use*

Land and NRM are governed by several factors affecting qualitative and quantitative value attached to land and natural resources by various stakeholders. These factors can be broadly grouped by ecological/bio-geo-physical, human population, socio-economic and policy criteria.

Land and natural resources management forms a complex and sensitive web and involves many negotiations in terms of ownership, inheritance, access

to resources and administration. These, in turn, are governed by statutes that regulate ownership, access, use and management, with regulations governing land playing a crucial role in NRM.

*Key policy instruments in the management of natural resources: strengths and weaknesses*

Policies that govern natural resources management can be classified into policies that: (a) confer and define ownership of, and therefore access to, resources; and (b) plan, regulate and facilitate resources utilization. In the context of TRPNR management, a few relevant key policies are examined, with their weaknesses and strengths highlighted.

*The Trust Lands Act, Chapter 288, Laws of Kenya*

Trust lands are held in trust by local county councils for the benefits of the local residents. Land and resources are supposed to be administered under customary laws. Councils are empowered to designate lands for various uses for the benefit of the residents or in the public interest, for example, for forests, parks and towns. The TRPNR was set aside as reserve under the provisions of this act.

The strengths of this policy are that it:

- offers an opportunity for local resource management;
- provides flexibility in resource management at local level; and
- provides framework to protect local natural resources.

Its weaknesses are that:

- there is the perception and interpretation of ‘holding in trust’, and most county councils have interpreted it to mean that the council owns the land and the resources thereon, thus disregarding customary laws;
- other legal instruments come into play once land use is designated, for example, the Wildlife Act for wildlife management; and
- erosion of traditional systems and institutions results in degradation of common natural resources.

*Forest Act, Chapter 385, Laws of Kenya*

The Act provides for the establishment, control and regulation of forest areas on designated lands and does not address natural resources on other categories of land. The Act transferred forest management from the local communities and does not recognize traditional management regimes.

The strengths of this policy are that it:

- provides framework for protection of forest resources; supports industrial plantation; and
- offers a framework to protect water catchment and biological resources in non-plantation forests.

Its weaknesses are that:

- it is applicable in designated forest areas only;
- commercial forests are given preference over indigenous forest;
- there is no recognition of local communities management institutions;
- the Act enhances separation of people and forests and resources;
- it criminalizes local communities' resources use; and
- forest resources do not directly benefit traditional resources owners except under license.

*The Wildlife Act, Chapter 376, Laws of Kenya*

The Act is rooted in the philosophy of separation of people and wildlife resources. The Act governs protection, conservation and management of wildlife resources.

Its strengths are that it:

- offers a framework for establishment and management of protected areas (parks and reserves) to protect biological diversity, and supports the tourism industry;
- manages wildlife for national and international interests; and
- provides for wildlife policies formulation.

Its weaknesses are that it:

- deals with wildlife protection in protected areas, leaving a large policy vacuum on wildlife on other lands;
- criminalizes traditional wildlife utilization;
- poorly defines the roles and participation of stakeholders;
- is punitive and prohibitive in nature;
- made wildlife exclusive state property, leaving local communities little say on wildlife management; and
- has little connection with other policies, such as the Land Planning Act.

The Act has failed to address most of the recommendations in the 1975 sessional paper on wildlife (Republic of Kenya, 1975). However, it is envisaged that these weaknesses will be addressed in the proposed Wildlife Policy and Wildlife Bill (Amendment).

For the bill to succeed, it should address, among others, the following issues:

- national land use planning and sectoral integration, with inputs of stakeholders;
- coordination of tenure, rights, access, use and conservation of natural resources; and
- devolution and delegation of powers to local communities to manage wildlife resources.

*The Local Government Act, Chapter 265, Laws of Kenya*

This Act empowers the local authorities to declare certain trust lands areas for specific land use, such as forests or wildlife reserves, and make by-laws to manage such areas for the benefits of Indigenous People.

The strengths of this policy are that it:

- provides for creation of a management framework for local institutions;

- offers potential for natural resources management for Indigenous People by making by-laws; and
- offers potential for mobilization of resources to manage local resources and institutions.

Its weaknesses are that:

- over the years, the Act was amended to vest more powers in central government, thus weakening local councils' institutions;
- it conflicts with other sectoral laws;
- council decisions are open to manipulation by powerful groups;
- there is conflict between state, council and local institutions over NRM;
- councils' decision-making by majority vote may not address localized needs, thus disenfranchising the local community, as was the case of the TRPNR, where the area councillor did not agree with the council's resolution to create the reserve; and
- by-laws are in most cases punitive, designed to raise taxes and are not supportive of traditional or local community institutions.

### Other Initiatives

Conflicts exist among diverse stakeholders due to the drive towards single resource use and erosion of multiple use of resources. In addition, sectoral policies and developments are not well coordinated or harmonized, leading to institutional conflicts.

In order to manage these weaknesses, various initiatives have been undertaken in Kenya. There are many initiatives; the following are relevant to the TRPNR case:

- Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs);
- District Focus For Rural Development (DFFRD);
- National Environment Action Plan (NEAP); and
- proposed Environmental Management and Co-ordination Bill

### *MOUs*

MOUs are valuable and innovative tools designed to resolve institutional conflicts over NRM issues. MOUs are agreements to achieve common goals through joint planning and implementation of management plans to resolve conflicts over tenure of natural resources. For example, KWS has signed a number of MOUs with various county councils, as, for example, with the Narok County Council for the management of Masai Mara National Reserve.

The strengths of the MOU are that it:

- offers an institutional negotiation framework for natural resources management;
- highlights inter-sectoral weaknesses, and thus the need for collaboration and policies review; and
- provides for joint resources mobilization.

The weaknesses of the MOU are that it:

- conflicts with sectoral laws;
- has limited resources for implementation;
- is not legally binding;
- has a weak framework in which to involve local communities; and does not adequately cover customary tenure.

### *DFFRD*

Since independence, nationwide planning and allocation of resources was done from ministries' headquarters in the capital city in Nairobi. DFFRD was an attempt to focus development at the grassroots level by decentralizing planning, decision-making and coordination of development activities at local level. The District Development Committee (DDC) oversees the implementation of DFFRD initiatives.

The strengths of DFFRD are that:

- planning debate is brought to local level;
- there is an attempt to reduce institutional conflicts, and to harmonize resources mobilization and allocation according to local community priorities;
- it provides a potential and framework to empower local institutions;
- it opened debate on natural resources management, governance and decision-making process; and
- the weakness of centralized decision-making is exposed.

The weaknesses of DFFRD are that:

- it has not managed to empower local communities in decision-making and resources management;
- there is a lack of resources to implement DDC decisions;
- sectoral management is still controlled from the centre;
- legal and administrative guidelines are unclear; and
- it is open to manipulation by powerful and strong groups.

### *NEAP*

The NEAP process aimed at the integration and coordination of environmental management in Kenya. Key issues identified were conflict in the implementation of policies, scattered articles of legislation in various statutes, lack of land use policy and ambiguous natural resources tenures. In addition, the institutional weaknesses in natural and environmental resources management were noted. The report in general recommended formulation of land use and natural resources policy, using ecological and land suitability criteria to reduce conflicts. Issues related to access, rights and use of different resources and tenure were examined. The NEAP further proposed a legal, administration and institutional framework to better address and manage environment matters.

### *The proposed Environmental Management and Coordination Bill*

This is a follow-up to the NEAP process. The bill provides the legal and administrative guidelines on the management of the environment and natural resources. The major advantage is the harmonization of environmental management statutes from a holistic point of view. According to Gachugu (1997), a major weakness is the punitive and restrictive tone of the proposed bill. In addition, the role and participation of local people in managing environment and natural resources at the grassroots level is not clear.

### The Way Forward: Possible Policy and Institutional Options

At the national level, several recommendations have been made addressing the weaknesses of land and natural resources policies and institutions pertaining to management, ownership, access, use, sustainable development and equity (Shah and Awori, 1996; Awere-Gyekye, 1996; Juma and Ojwang, 1996; Kiriro and Juma, 1991; Okoth-Ogendo, 1991). They call for development of appropriate policies, mechanisms and institutions to ensure that the allocation of more management responsibilities and interests are decided at the local level by the Indigenous People.

#### *Issues to consider in conflict management*

New policy initiatives should take into account the issues of equity, responsibilities, ownership, access, uses and needs, benefits, and burden or liabilities of management. Further, initiatives need to examine historical aspects of management, stakeholders, and political and administrative aspects of natural resources management. Recommendations for better management of conflicts and interests are made based on the above issues, with some cutting across the various levels. These need to be integrated into national policy frameworks.

#### **Key NRM policy issues**

##### **Issues:**

- Current NRM policies have weaknesses and inconsistencies, hence the conflict.
- NRM policies developed over the years have left local communities disenfranchised in the process.

- Current NRM policies do not support best land uses in terms of economic or ecological needs.
- In existing NRM policies, instruments of planning, implementation and administration do not support sustainable NRM or equity.
- Existing NRM policies and institutions are not informed by experts in NRM, local communities issues and knowledge.
- NRM policies do not adequately address the role and framework of participation of local communities or the coordination of NRM at local level.
- Current NRM policies have weakened traditional NRM framework due to lack of inter-sectoral communications and policy harmonization.

### ***National level issues***

#### ***Issues:***

- There is a need for overall and comprehensive policy on NRM with emphasis on local community management.
- There is a need for institutions to coordinate NRM in order to support and promote local institutions.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- Given NRM conflicts, there is need to address policy and institutional weaknesses, and to develop a holistic approach that includes local structures. The DDCs may be restructured to better address this issue.
- In view of the above, there is need to develop a national NRM coordination body fully empowered to meet local interests.
- In recognition of diversity of interests, it is imperative that stakeholders develop legal partnerships to empower local NRM institutions and interests.
- There is need to advocate for political support to recognize and empower local community NRM structures.
- There is need to use indigenous and expert knowledge in research and planning systems for better decision-making by stakeholders.

### ***Ecosystem level issues***

#### ***Issues:***

- Indigenous People are affected most by external development policies in an ecosystem.
- Indigenous People are poorly represented and rarely consulted in NRM debates on matters affecting them.
- The current management structures have not ensured wise use of NRs nor have they guaranteed equity in NRM regimes.
- There have been failures to harmonize state NRM institutions with local institutions.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- District and local initiatives should include integrated land management at ecosystem level.
- An ecosystem NRM planning level comprising all stakeholders should be able to bring local institutions and interests into the planning process.
- There is need to formulate ecosystem planning using legal and paralegal instruments and institutions.
- For long-term NRM vision, it is imperative to ensure that NRM policies are governed by best use and equity by empowering of local NRM institutions.
- Land use and NRM policy reforms are likely to be effected in coming years, and it is imperative to change the approach from top-down to bottom-up.

### ***District level issues***

#### ***Issues:***

- Policy administration is based on sectoral organizations. Integrative measures such as DFFRD have been unable to ensure coordination and integration of development activities.
- There are no coordinated land use and NRM planning institutions.
- The district sectoral expertise in private, public and indigenous knowledge is not fully exploited, due to lack of coordination, funding and material support.

- Policy implementation has been top-down, without local communities' expertise.
- The exact role of traditional NRM institutions is weakened by sectoral institutions, mandates and conflicts.

***Recommendations:***

- There is need to support and strengthen existing district framework to strengthen community structure.
- There is need to develop an NRM planning project at district level, based on best land uses, given the range of interests and needs.
- There is need to mobilize and allocate resources.
- A recommended institution should be a key facilitator to initiate and participate in NRM debates at all levels in the development process, in liaison with local communities.
- With the inevitable land use policy review and reforms, there is need to reformulate district-based committees for stakeholders equity representation and participation for proper NRM.
- The role of research should be recognized and used in formulation of NRM strategies.

*The environmental and socio-political realities*

It has proved in the past to be very difficult to put the above aspirations into practice in ways that are acceptable to all stakeholders. The challenges are enormous, but the risks of environmental degradation, poverty and conflicts are much greater and require urgent action. What are at stake are sustainable livelihoods of Indigenous People and the natural resource base that they depend on.

Conflict management should be undertaken in the context of sustainable development (Bingham, 1986). This framework takes into account equity, irreversibility of natural resources, non-substitutability of environmental services, uncertainty of human impacts, social needs, sustainable livelihoods, and human security.

Institutions of natural management should act as facilitators within this framework to ensure sustainable NRM. It is imperative to include local communities' perspectives on economics, sociology, politics, temporal issues and ecology. In order for the above options to become a reality, political good will is needed. This requires material, policy, technical and financial support as well as reorganization so as to make local NRM structures operational.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to resolve natural resources conflicts, it is imperative to re-examine policy framework and formulate appropriate policies at all local levels. In addition, it is crucial to establish dynamic natural resources institutions to address complex and sensitive natural management issues. The status quo option is not tenable in view of inappropriate institutions, conflicts generated, degradation of and stress on the natural resources base.

It is recommended that review be made of land, natural resources and environmental policies, so as to make them more responsive to local communities that are disenfranchised by current policies. This calls for policy options that could influence natural resources management strategies and creation of responsive and dynamic institutions, from the local and ecosystem levels through district levels to national levels.

Management of natural resources conflicts involves issues of sustainable livelihoods and development, which are basic community welfare issues of food, access, shelter, clothing, security, equity, human dignity and destiny. Therefore, these 'bread and butter' issues need not be complex, if decisions are made at local level that influence decisions at higher levels so that local communities are not disenfranchised. Policy will then be seen to work appropriately and to be responsive to people's needs in dynamic socio-economic and political realities. The conflict resolution process demands commitment of stakeholders to overcome formidable socio-economic, political and legal land and natural resources tenure constraints.

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## Conflict Management in Forest Reserves in Burkina Faso

by Hubert M.G. Ouedraogo

### Summary

*This paper addresses how conflicts on forest reserves in Burkina Faso can be limited or reduced and how natural resources can be protected from further degradation and destruction. During Burkina Faso's colonial period, many forest and wildlife reserves were created, however there was little or no public participation involved in the development of these areas. For more than four decades, the environmental policy in Burkina Faso has been based on the fundamental right of the state authority to manage and control the country's natural resource base. The government had utilized a highly restrictive form of forest and natural resource management, whereby local communities and those directly dependent on forests and trees were excluded from management decisions.*

*Following the collapse of the colonial period, local communities began to contest the forest reserve policies enacted during the colonial rule, and they have more recently begun to work constructively with the government administration to develop new policies in forestry management that acknowledge and respect local communities. This paper gives an overview of the process of how forest policy in Burkina Faso has evolved from one based upon exclusionary principles of management to one based on participatory principles.*

## Introduction

Burkina Faso is a land-locked Sahelian country with major environmental problems. The increasing degradation of forests, soils and other natural resources is a major constraint on development activities.

For more than four decades, the environmental policy has been based on the artificial opposition between the need to protect natural resources and the vital interests of local communities. State control of natural resources was given the status of a fundamental principle, expressed by a restrictive definition or even exclusion of rights for the use of forestry resources by local communities.

The results of such a natural resource management policy have been unsatisfactory. Many conflicts are arising between riparian populations of forest reserves and the forestry management administration. Such conflicts constitute a serious menace for the preservation of forests, because when natural resources are under dispute they cannot be properly managed.

How can conflicts on forest reserves in Burkina Faso be limited and how can natural resources be protected from degradation? Experience has shown that peaceful management of forest reserves lies in the reconciliation between communities and forests.

## Forest Reserve Conflicts and their Causes

Today one of the most important conflicts related to forest management is the conflict between the forestry administration and local communities. Burkina Faso has created many forest reserves and protected wildlife areas.<sup>1</sup> Most of the forest reserves were created during the colonial period. By creating the reserves, the colonial administration hoped to protect the forests. Another objective was to create reserves of wood for the needs of the colonial economy.<sup>2</sup>

Protecting forests and natural resources is a valuable objective. Less admirable was the colonial administration's point of view on the relationship

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1. 78 protected areas and forest reserves were created in Burkina Faso. See: Ministère de l'environnement et du tourisme, *Plan d'action national pour l'environnement*. 2<sup>e</sup>ed., 1994.

2. In Burkina, the creation of the Abidjan-Niger railway was a very important motivation behind the creation of forest reserves: most of these forests are located along the railway to provide for the needs of the locomotives. See: Ouedraogo, H. 1991. *Législation des ressources naturelles au Burkina Faso*. Ouagadougou, UICN.

between local communities and forest resources. The colonial administration saw communities as the enemies of nature and forests. The protection of forests was looked at as a restriction, or even an exclusion of usage rights.

Forest preservation procedures were rather arbitrary. Very few precautions were taken in consulting the concerned population. The participatory approach was not the basis for colonial development policy!<sup>3</sup> Even when colonial law itself called for consultation with the interested populations, no public inquiry was really organized. Consultation with the population consisted of a convocation of the village chiefs, who were asked if they had any objections to the preservation of the forest. It can easily be imagined that it was quite impossible for a local chief to contest a decision of the colonial administration. During the colonial period very few challenges were raised against forest reserves mainly due to the lack of liberty and democracy realized in society at that time.

### Challenging the Status of Forest Reserves

The end of the colonial period and the democratization process opened the doors for challenging the colonial forest reserve policy. At the end of the colonial period, local communities started to contest the colonial forest reserve policy. They claimed that the areas within reserved forests were the lands of their ancestors, and that the state could not claim property in those areas any longer. Local communities perceived the forest reserves as an expropriation of their lands for agriculture and pastoral activities. This protest emerged to change the status of forest reserves so that agricultural or pastoral activities could be pursued.

The democratization of political life and the emergence of political parties, elections and representative government accelerated the process of contestation. In light of the problems of poverty, population growth and degradation of natural resources, the forest reserves created during the colonial period are now considered to be very rich and desirable lands.

A new process of conquest started in almost all of the forest reserves. Many strategies were implemented by the local communities. The first was the progressive extension of forest enclaves, not previously allowed. Another strategy was the settlement of new villages in the forest reserves, which was easily accomplished due to a lack of forestry agents who could control the forests. One of

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3. See: Schmitthusen, F. 1986. *La législation forestière dans quelques pays africains*, FAO, Rome.

most common strategies was the distribution of land by traditional chiefs to immigrants. When the immigrant village was settled, the aboriginal populations settled as well.<sup>4</sup> When settlement was not possible, some communities decided to start brush fires in the forest reserves.<sup>5</sup>

Revolts broke out against the forestry administration, who forbid such activities in the forests, but they were considered 'rebellions' and repressed as such.<sup>6</sup>

### The Administration's Response to Community Challenges: From Repression to Cooperation

The response of the administration has changed during the last 20 years. In the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, the administration was uncompromising in its application of forestry law. The local communities looked upon forestry agents as repressive agents, while agricultural agents were considered development agents. The forestry legislation excluded usage rights of communities in forest reserves. However, forbidding access to forest resources is a severe measure for many communities whose subsistence conditions force them to depend almost entirely on the exploitation of natural resources (in such areas as food, health, agriculture, animal husbandry and energy).

The response of the forestry administration was sometimes very harsh. Decisions often led to the expulsion of entire villages that were illegally settled, or of herdsmen grazing animals in the forest.<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes, the administration decided to use less forcible methods, while still, however, maintaining their uncompromising stance. Publicity campaigns were undertaken to convince people to leave the forest area. In exchange, the local community was offered an alternative settlement area. Such negotiations, however, are not really carried out on equal footing. The administra-

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4. See: Faure, A., Ouedraogo, H. & Ouedraogo M. 1992. *La problématique foncière et la décentralisation: Burkina Faso*. Ouagadougou, CILSS-Club du Sahel.

5. This last resistance strategy against the forest reserve policy was also applied in Mali before 1993. See: Ouedraogo, H. 1993. *Les feux de brousse au Burkina: aspects juridiques*. Ouagadougou, Banque mondiale/PNGT.

6. Compaore, A. 1997. *La répression des infractions relatives à la législation forestière, Ouagadougou, Mémoire de maîtrise*, Université (FDSP).

7. In the 1990s, the forestry administration decided to evict hundreds of herdsmen from the Pi national park. These Burkinabe and Malien herdsmen had previously been evicted from the Republic of Ghana because of the increasing conflicts between agriculturalists and herdsmen there. See: Ouedraogo, H. 1996. *La gestion des conflits liés aux aménagements pastoraux*, Ouagadougou, Praset/Gtz.

tion always has the last word, and the community does not have sufficient capacity to put power behind its arguments.

Recently, with the affirmation of participatory development approaches, the administration is trying to change its attitude. Instead of seeing local communities as enemies of the forest, some development projects are trying to demonstrate that the local populations are actually the forest's best ally. This new attitude is based on the established fact, borrowed from the experience of *gestion de terroir*, that is, when a community derives its subsistence from a forest, it will be inclined to protect it. However, when the community is deprived of access to forest resources, it will be inclined to adopt the behaviour of a poacher.

One attempt to implement a new policy in forestry management and reconcile local communities and forests was tested in the Kassou forest reserve, in the southern part of Burkina Faso. A gestion des terroirs project carried out by the ministry in charge of forests has organized the riparian populations of a forest reserve to exploit resources in a sustainable way. The first objective of the project was to ensure an adequate supply of fuelwood to the capital of Ouagadougou.

An agreement was reached between the administration and the local populations. The communities agreed to stop agricultural activities in the forest; and the administration, despite the prohibitions of the forestry law in force, agreed to allow the exploitation of fuelwood in the forest reserves.

The people, particularly women, are trained to collect dead wood first, and then to cut the trees, allowing for quick regeneration. The wood produced is collected and sold to wholesalers. Proceeds from the commercialization of each cord of wood (CFA F 1 650) are distributed among the different forestry management participants as follows:

- woodcutters: CFA F 610;
- forest fitting-up fund managed by the local association, with assistance: CFA F 500;
- forest taxes (transferred to treasury): CFA F 300; and
- working capital of the local community association: CFA F 200.

The result of this forestry management policy is a reduction in conflicts over access to forest resources and better management of forest reserves in the region. One perceptible result is a reduction in brush fires in the region. The

explanation is that the population is now convinced that the forest is a source of wealth for the people who protect it. Many local investments (in particular, a school) were made by using the revenue from the forest.

Another result of this new policy is that the population is no longer clearing the forest reserves in this region for agricultural needs. The population has discovered that the land and the forest can be used in a profitable way other than for agriculture.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Creating forest reserves remains useful for halting natural resource degradation. However, better information on the goals of such actions must be provided to the population.

The negotiation capacity of local communities should be enforced, particularly by the action of ‘para-juristes’ (local lawyers from the communities involved).

Forestry legislation should be changed to extend usage rights and sustainable exploitation.

A decentralization policy should be implemented to give local communities management power over usage rights for forests and natural resources.

## Community-Based Income Generation and Bioresource Conservation: A New Challenge of Integration of Conflict Management into Forestry Policy

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### Summary

*Since the 1980s, local participation has been used as a tool in many rural development and resource conservation programmes. In order to motivate community participation, diverse economic incentives are used. Not all these income gains, however, are compatible with conservation. Some, at the cost of the limited and fragile mountain resource, have exerted increased pressures on natural resources and have often caused their degradation and, at times, even irreversible and permanent losses of biological diversity. Influenced by policies as well as laws and regulations, gaps in research, education, institutional systems, understanding, and such, various debates or conflicts are produced among government, resource management agencies and local communities.*

*On the basis of issues in economic production and resource conservation, and lessons learned from case studies on the topic of indigenous knowledge of natural resources management and utilization and community participatory nature reserve management in Yunnan, this paper addresses the particular issue of community-based income generation and bioresources conservation, which the author thinks is the key challenge for integration of conflict management considerations into national forestry policy. Causes of these issues and conflicts are analysed and discussed in the context of policies, institutional systems, economy and culture based on internal linkages among community, development and conservation. Some approaches and strategies for resolving these conflicts and integrating them into national policy from institutional to national level also are described.*

## Patterns of Community-Based Income Generation and their Impact on Resources Conservation

On the basis of various case studies under the programme of community forestry training and education since 1995, supported by the Ford Foundation, the principal patterns of income generation and their impact to sustainable use and conservation of bioresources are described below.

### *Income generation based on uses of non-timber forest products: cases in Nangun River and Daweishan nature reserves and nearby communities, southern Yunnan*

These two cases indicate that communities are not only heavily dependent on forests for their fuelwood, food, fodder and ecological benefits, but also that forests are their main source of family income. In Nangun River villages with poor transportation, income from tea, shellac and collecting non-timber forest products (NTFP) inside and outside of the reserve account for from 50 percent to 60 percent of total family income. In Daweishan, villagers take advantage of rich resources of wild NTFP, local people's demand and preference for these NTFP, and easy access to city markets, often picking in the reserve wild bamboo shoots, shoots and leaves of edible plants, and traditional Chinese medicinal substances. In general, this is prohibited by reserve laws and regulations. On the average, these NTFP have a value of US\$ 241-360, and they account for more than 80 percent of total family income. Owing to overexploitation and poor management, however, these forest resources are quickly being reduced, and farmers must put in twice the amount of time to gather their basic needs at a distance.

### *Ecotourism development and its impact to forest resources: the case in Lugu Lake Reserve, northwest Yunnan*

Lugu Lake lies on the boundary of Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, and is one of the most important sightseeing attractions in Yunnan, due to the Mosho matriarchal society and its endemic culture and customs. Surveys and farmer interviews reveal that participatory tourism development, such as boating, riding and Mosho dances and songs, and provision of traditional accommodation, have brought a great improvement in the well-being of the village people, as compared with the 1980s. On the average, family income from participating

tourism activities is between five and six times higher than that of non-involved farmers and communities around the lake. Simultaneously, along with increasing tourism development and incentives of cash economy, impacts of foreign culture are increasing, and the traditional indigenous culture and customs are being modified. For example, in order to attract tourists and find more opportunities to earn money, traditional wooden houses that were disappearing are again becoming fashionable and are being built in communities around the lake. This action has been accelerating damage to and depletion of forests surrounding the lake that has resulted in severe run-off, landslides and lake siltation.

*Cultivation of cash crops and loss of biological diversity and wildlife habitats: the case in Daweishan Reserve*

This reserve is the reserve nearest Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, and was established in 1986 for the protection of the tropical mountain rain forests, wet broadleaf evergreen forests, and rare or endangered wildlife species. The main indigenous groups in the surrounding communities of the reserve are the Miao, Yi, and Yao peoples. Due to dense population; subsistence agriculture; and heavy dependence on forests for fuelwood, fodder and income-generating NTFP, the areas that were once covered with forest, and especially those outside of the reserve, have now been depleted to dwarf stands, sparse woodlands and agricultural or bare lands. Since the mid-1980s, to improve the living conditions of these Indigenous People and the local economy, some preferential policies were adopted by local government to motivate local farmers and communities to cultivate a cash crop, *Amomum tsao-ko*, in the reserve. Meanwhile, some incentive measures, such as demonstration sites or farmers, technique extension, awards, and integrated market service, were taken.

Several years later, considerable progress and results have been achieved. A majority of cultivators also have received great economic benefit from *Amomum tsao-ko* cultivation, generating great interest in it (farmer interviews reveal that an average family can earn from US\$ 180 to 240 per year by cultivating *Amomum tsao-ko*, and that maximum family income from *Amomum tsao-ko* cultivation can reach from US\$ 840 to 900 annually). This development project, however, has caused the loss of biological diversity and has caused damage to wildlife habitats. While *Amomum* plants are growing, all ground plants die, and younger plants and bigger trees under the top canopy layer are cut to prevent cash crops from shading. This results in the gradual disappearance of the habitats of animals and birds. In recent years, particularly since 1995, with the strengthening

of the propagation of policies and regulations on the reserve and protection of the rare and endangered species, and recognition of wild bioresources conservation, this change in biological diversity and the problem of lost habitats have been fully understood by local government decision-makers and officers. with the support of and in collaboration with the county government and pertinent departments. Stricter measures and regulations have been adopted to stop *Amomum tsao-ko* cultivation in the core area. As a result, local communities have lost one main source of income generation, and currently no alternative way of income generation has been provided for the local people. Consequently, conflicts specific to the promotion of income generation and to wildlife conservation are created and heightened among local government, communities and reserve institutions.

## Analysis and Discussion

Indeed, local communities have derived economic benefits from these variable income-based development interventions. Meanwhile, various conflicts, issues and restrictions are revealed in contexts of biological environment and policies, as well as laws and regulations, institutional systems and communities' capacity.

### *Policies, laws and regulation*

Undoubtedly, under the policies of an open, market economy, diverse resource-based development programmes have been implemented, and considerable progress has been made. The well-being and the living conditions of indigenous mountain people and forest-dependent communities have improved. With the recognition and consideration of the importance of environmental protection and biological diversity conservation, some strategies, measures and actions related to sustainable resource use and conflict management, such as initiatives of community participatory management, are being taken and are gradually taking effect. All of these provide a good political environment for communities' participation. In general, however, most development interventions are focused on economic production, with a large-scale, top-down and single development approach, such as predominant resource processing and utilization, pure cash trees plantation, and benefit-oriented tourism development. These interventions are incompatible with and impinge on policies, laws and regulations relative to development and conservation of natural resources. From the viewpoint of development, to alleviate poverty and develop local economy, local government formulates and implements diverse development programmes with variable preferential policies

and incentives based on local predominant resources or favourable situations. On the other hand, the current laws and regulations for the management and conservation of nature reserves, rare wild plants and animals strictly prohibit development and use of these wildlife resources, and a special management institute, called the Nature Reserve Management Agency, was established at different government levels to assume responsibility for implementing these policies, laws and regulations in top-down management style, regardless of local heavy dependence and development. There are many examples of households and communities being forcibly removed from the lands where they have lived for generations to be resettled outside the reserve's boundaries. Meanwhile, increasing populations of some protected animals in the reserve have done great damage to the crops and livestock outside the reserve. All of these issues demonstrate that there is severe incompatibility, sometimes impinging on existing policies, laws and regulations.

#### *Development intervention and community participation*

In most cases, development activities are designed and implemented to be centred on outsiders' intervention and local government's decision-making, forcing local communities to switch to a cash economy, ignoring indigenous knowledge, local culture, customs and participation, particularly in the designing and evaluation of development programmes. Meanwhile, there exist serious biases in implementing sites, households and distribution of benefits. Most development activities have been effected to a greater extent in easily accessible villages near roads and markets, with households that have good economic conditions, education, and higher positions, and with men, who have a higher education and who like to talk, rather than in villages with poor transportation and marginal villages, with women, and with poor and less talkative families.

#### *Subsistence agriculture and income generation*

The cases demonstrate that forest plays important roles in these indigenous communities. Due to the poor transportation system, distance from the market, and the inaccessibility of modern agricultural technology, subsistence agriculture, such as swidden cultivation, is the main cropping method. Income generation activities are derived from extensive resource uses, with loss of biological diversity. These actions consequently result in decrease of forest cover, degradation of forest quantity and quality, serious fuelwood and timber crises, environmental deterioration, and damage to wildlife habitats.

### *Land use and tenure system*

Based on case surveys, in these forest-dependent and rural communities, a lack of integrated land use plans, clear land use titles and forest rights and a system of responsibility, particularly for the forest and Wastelands, can be seen. Therefore, there is a lack of incentives to encourage communities to manage these lands for sustainable use.

### *Institutional constraints*

In general, most natural resources are controlled and administered at the different levels by a separate government agency which formulates its own control measures and a development plan based on its own controlled resources. Among the agencies there is poor exchange, coordination, cooperation and integration of the development plans, especially among wild bioresource management agencies. Meanwhile, in the resource management agency itself, there exist a complex administrative structure, poor staff capacity, and top-down management style. On the basis of China's situation, although there are many successful examples of community forestry practices and models, they are initiatives of community participatory forests or protected areas. There is, in fact, an institutional vacuum from local community level to national level.

## Integrating Benefits to Resources Conservation

It is impossible to manage or protect natural resources by alienating local communities from their living environment and not allowing them to meet their subsistence needs for food, fuelwood and fodder. In order to maintain the rural and forest-dependent communities and improve their well-being, and to effectively manage resources and protect rare and endangered species, highest priority needs to be given to resolving these issues or conflicts, and to finding a sound approach for linkages of communities' benefits to resource conservation and integration of these conflict management considerations into national policy. In the linkage with cases and China's situation, the following are ideas and approaches for integrating community benefits of participatory management from community to national policy.

### *Policy environment*

To resolve issues of resource conservation and development, it is imperative to improve current policies and regulations on wild bioresources management so as to increase their efficiency. Compatibility and linkages need to be maintained in a wide range of development-interrelated policies and among policies, laws and regulations that guide and influence the utilization of natural resources. Formulation of resource-based development policy should be based on environmental protection, bioresources conservation and sustainable use, and local communities' participation and benefits, and it should consider their knowledge and culture, and be maintained over time in the face of multiple claims. In order to influence government decision-making, it is necessary to institutionalize community participation forests or other resource management, and local communities should participate in the design, implementation and evaluation phases of resource conservation and sustainable development.

### *Integrated conflict management*

In order to maintain forest-dependent and rural communities' benefits from forest and trees and encourage them to participate actively in management of natural resources and conservation of the rare and endangered species, a core coordinating group should be established and should involve all stakeholders, such as local resource management agencies, local governments, communities, offices of the natural resources management at provincial and prefecture level, and a third party, in order to resolve various conflicts in or issues of resource conservation and use.

In the traditional dispute-resolving process, it is very difficult or even impossible for the adversaries to talk face-to-face or to discuss their conflict together at a table. It is this situation that requires another party, called a third party, to reduce tensions and help the conflicting parties reach agreement on a process for addressing their disputes. This third party is not only a negotiator, mediator and intervenor, but also needs to be a facilitator, extensionist and consultant. The person not only focuses on resolving disputes and reducing tension among government departments, local communities and resource management agencies, but also needs to communicate between the communities and the government. Based on the situation in China, this third party can come from a university, a research institute or an individual source. Because research institutes or universities negotiate and communicate among people in the resource management agencies, government offices and communities, they may also influence the govern-

ment's decision-making process, and they have rich experience and personnel capacity to conduct suitable demonstrations, extension and training in order to improve the productivity of different land use systems and to improve the living standards of communities.

#### *Participation incentives*

Incentives are essential to motivate local communities to co-manage and conserve natural resources. Benefits need not be solely financial but may include access to suitable techniques and markets, increased accessibility or control of resources, and elimination of cost and risk. In addition, community-based development programmes must provide some national-level as well as community benefit in return for the national contribution to any co-management scheme. While the resource management agencies follow national and provincial policies, laws and regulations, the resource agencies need to decentralize control to local communities for incentives to participatory resources management.

#### *Provision of institutional environment for community participation*

To effectively resolve issues in resource conservation and sustainable development, and to provide institutional environment for community participation, it is imperative to change government officers' and staff's ideas and attitudes at the different resource management agency levels, discarding their top-down management style, which can be achieved by organizing various training courses and workshops for them, including government decision-makers at various levels, on topics such as participatory resources management, community forestry, and community-based natural resources management. Meanwhile, more attention is given to balancing power and improving relationships among all parties, and strengthening staff capacity of the resource management agencies.

#### *Strengthening community capacity*

In order to improve the socio-economic conditions of communities and resolve these issues and conflicts in natural resources conservation and utilization, it is first necessary and important to develop some programmes in land use, agriculture, forestry, and so on. An integrated development plan, outlining in detail the actions of various stakeholders, should be developed in cooperation with communities, local government and related resource management agencies. More attention is placed on demonstration and application of suitable modern agricul-

tural and resource processing techniques through experimentation, extension, education and training programmes. Meanwhile, to strengthen local participation in decision-making, design and evaluation of development programmes, and enhance the capacity for negotiation, it is necessary to establish the communities' own organizations on the basis of their interests, culture and rights.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The case studies reveal that local communities have derived economic benefits from diverse income-based development interventions. However, because these development programmes are centred on economic production and decision-making by outsiders, some issues and conflicts consequently result between resource conservation and sustainable development, and between local communities and government and resources management agencies. To motivate communities to participate in natural resources management, and to resolve these conflicts or issues, it is necessary to meet their basic needs and link their participation with economic incentives to improve their well-being. More important is to provide an institutional environment for participation. This is a key challenge of integration of conflict management into forestry policy. Meanwhile, it is necessary to strengthen the resource management agencies' capacity and change their attitudes and management style. More attention needs to be given to enhancement of local integrated capacity through third party intervention.

## Community Forestry and Conflicts in Nepal

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### Summary

*Forest resources play a key role in the daily life of Nepalese people. The current community forestry policy revolves around the concept of Forest User Groups, which consist of all members of a community that regularly use a particular area for collection of forest products. These Forest User Groups are empowered to protect, manage and utilize the forest in order to fulfill their basic needs for forest products.*

*Conflicts are seen within a Forest User Group, between two or more Forest User Groups or between Forest User Groups and the forestry administration. The unintentional exclusion of households, generally of a poor and disadvantaged group, from a Forest User Group brings conflicts. Conflicts due to boundary demarcation of community forests also are common. Equity has not been addressed in community forestry, bringing conflicts. Conflicts have also arisen due to the forestry field staff's lack of confidence in Forest User Groups. Government decisions trying to regulate conditionally the transport and sale of forest products from community forests have also generated conflicts.*

*Conflict management is a new field in community forestry. Conflicts of a less serious nature within a Forest User Group or between Forest User Groups are resolved either by the groups themselves or with the assistance of forestry field staff. But the field staff does not have the necessary skills to resolve serious conflicts. Hence, there is a need to build up capability of field staff in conflict management through training. To resolve conflicts involving Forest User Groups*

*and the forestry administration, there is a need for a neutral third party, such as the Nepal Mediation Forum. Above all, sensitization to conflicts and their management in community forestry is necessary at all levels.*

## Introduction

Forest resources play a key role in the daily life of Nepalese people. These resources are indispensable to about 96 percent of the rural communities and they are used for fuelwood, fodder, timber, wood fiber, medicine and compost manure. The people in the hills and mountains, where half of the population of the country is concentrated, live on subsistence farming, depending to a great extent upon the forest. These forests are fragmented and are in mosaic with farmlands. Due to their coppicing power, these forests have good potential to be managed as community forests.

Nepal has a history of traditional forest management. Traditional management of forests by defined groups was common, especially in hill or mountain communities. People have protected and utilized the nearby forest by making locally accepted rules through which a fixed group of beneficiaries (usually fairly clearly defined) used to regulate forest use. These traditional or indigenous management systems were often relatively sustainable. The community was aware of the need to have sustainable management of the forest because of its dependency on forest products. Sustainability was made possible by strict observance of the accepted rules. But due to political changes and unsuccessful attempts made by government during the course of two or three decades to control and regulate these forests, these traditional systems of protection and management of forests were often destroyed. These attempts had a negative impact on forest management, resulting in deforestation. After many years of policy exercise, the government did, though only lately, recognize forest as community property, as opposed to earlier recognition of it as national property. The current community forestry policy is a result of an evolution of forest policies over a long period of time.

## Community Forestry Policy

The current community forestry policy revolves around the concept of Forest User Groups. The concept is that those who protect and manage the forest may also utilize its products. (MPFS, 1988). A Forest User Group consists of

all members of a community that regularly use a particular area for collection of forest products and grazing, or who have traditionally been using and managing an area of forest. So the current policy has been to give responsibility and authority to local people by forming Forest User Groups to protect, manage and utilize the forest in order to fulfill their basic needs for forest products. The management of forests is regulated by people's own decisions and operational management plans. As such, the country's community forestry policy has been recognized as one of the most progressive forest policies in the region, because it empowers local communities to manage forest resources. The strategy is to hand over all accessible forest to local communities or Forest User Groups, to the extent that they are willing and able to manage the forest to fulfill their basic needs for forest products (MPFS, 1988)

#### *Handing-over process*

The process of handing over a forest to a community basically consists of:

- identification of the forest area to be handed over;
- formation of a Forest User Group through consensus within the community;
- identification of forest users through household visits, information gathering and meetings;
- registration of the Forest User Group, with its operational constitution, at the District Forest Office;
- preparation of the operational plan or management plan by the Forest User Group, with the assistance of the District Forest Office;
- approval of the operational plan by the District Forest Officer and handing-over of the forest as community forest to the Forest User Group;
- implementation of the operational plan by the Forest User Group.

The forest user committee, an executive body of the Forest User Group, is responsible for planning, organizing and managing the activities and maintaining the records and accounts of the Forest User Group.

## Conflicts

Though the process of community forestry is gaining momentum, it is not free from problems. The problem being faced is due to conflicts that arise at different stages of the community forestry process. The conflicts can be seen within a Forest User Group, between two or more Forest User Groups or between Forest User Groups and the forestry administration. (Shrestha, 1996)

The process of community forestry recognizes identification of real users as one of the most important steps. This step involves investigation to identify the real users of a particular potential community forest. It is carried out by forestry field staff through household visits, informal gatherings or meeting. In this process, poor, disadvantaged persons or people of low caste (casteism is still strong in Nepalese villages), who usually have a low profile in the village and are not well informed of what is happening around the village, miss the chance to be identified as members of a Forest User Group. In other cases, people who live at a distance from the forest, while not being regular users, use the forest seasonally, as, for example, charcoal makers. During the identification process, these seasonal users are not included as members of Forest User Groups. These exclusions cause conflicts at the time of benefit sharing. Similar is the case of cattle herders who migrate seasonally from the mountain to lower elevations. They sometimes find that their grazing areas have been handed over as community forest, depriving them of use of the land as grazing land for the cattle on which they depend for livelihood, thus causing conflict.

The new forestry legislation does not recognize the administrative or political boundary as a barrier for handing over community forest (Forest Act, 1993) but forest users at times are identified or themselves form user groups on the basis of administrative boundaries. These boundaries often exclude villagers from using the forest nearest their homesteads simply because they are located in a different ward of a village. These artificial boundaries leave some villagers without forest resources and replace the traditional practice of village boundaries. Conflicts due to boundary demarcation are common in community forests.

Equality, not equity, has generally been the tradition in the country. Thus, when sharing benefits of forest products, such as fuelwood, Forest User Groups distribute equal quantities to every household. The users who have large families face relative scarcity of forest products, while households consisting of a small family will have a surplus. This causes conflicts, and the question arises as to how the forest products should be shared. When Forest User Groups allow forest

products to be collected by charging a fixed amount, the practice has created a negative impact on the poor people of the communities. Charging and collecting equal fees from every household, regardless of the economic conditions of the users, does not do justice to the poor people of the society. The poor people resent such an arrangement, which causes conflict.

The practice of completely closing a forest area for regeneration after it has been declared a community forest has negative effects on weaker sections of the community. Often the Forest User Groups are dominated by elites who do not have to depend on the forest for their everyday needs. For them, such closures do not affect their daily life, but for poor people who depend so much on the forest for their daily needs, this is a serious matter. They are further marginalised. This reflects social inequalities in local communities, resulting in conflicts.

In community forestry, the Forest User Groups and the forestry staff, especially the field staff, must join hands to successfully carry the process further. They must have confidence in one another. But often this does not happen. A prerequisite for handing over forest to a Forest User Group is the preparation of an operational plan (or management plan) by the Forest User Group and its approval by the District Forest Officer. In some cases it has been seen that District Forest Office staff and Forest User Groups do not agree on the apparently liberal provisions in an operational plan for removal of trees from community forests. This invariably is due to the suspicion on the part of District Forest Office staff that the Forest User Group's proposal is driven by the motivation to make more money for the community fund, rather than by need.

In other cases, when Forest User Groups request the handover of pure commercial forests in accessible areas and that, too, in large areas (the law does not restrict this), there has been a high degree of hesitancy on the part of the field staff. This arises from a lack of full confidence in the Forest User Group and from the District Forest Office staff's apprehension that the Forest User Group might be tempted to illegally cut such commercial timber, which has a high market value. Such low confidence has led to conflicts. The District Forest Office staff's suspicions are not without foundation. There have been recent cases of Forest User Groups that are dominated by some elites, who have instigated over-cutting of commercial timber from community forests, compelling the District Forest Office staff to take back the community forest from the Forest User Groups. The resulting conflicts have attracted much attention across the country and have even been taken to higher civil court.

The Forest Act allows Forest User Groups to freely determine the prices of, to transport and to sell the forest products across the country. But a government decision was taken in an attempt to regulate the transport of forest products outside a district. The conditions are that priority must be given first to the fulfillment of the Forest User Group's needs and then of the needs of other Forest User Groups of the district, before the forest products of a community forest can be transported outside a district. This has evoked criticism by Forest User Groups that the rights of the Forest User Group are being encroached by the government. But the government's decision tries to safeguard the interest of other Forest User Groups who do not possess enough forest area to fill their need for forest products. Conflicts are emerging on this issue.

The Forest Act is not explicit on the penalization of forest user committee members if they violate the operational plan. This may encourage the committee members to deviate from the operational plan, for which the government favours an amendment of the Forest Act, empowering penalization by the forestry staff as deterrent. (Shrestha, 1997) The bill of amendment has already been presented in Parliament, but the central organization of Forest User Groups is busily lobbying among Parliament members against the bill, arguing encroachment on the authority of the forest user group's law-given right to penalize any member of the Forest User Group who does not observe the rules set down in their operational constitution. Thus, conflict is brewing between the forestry administration and Forest User Groups.

## Conflict Resolution

Lack of information and of transparency keeps the level of awareness low among users and creates mistrust among users and forestry staff, resulting in conflict. If conflicts are ignored or are not acted upon properly and in a timely manner, the affected communities as a whole suffer.

In community forestry, less serious conflicts within Forest User Groups are mainly resolved by the Forest User Group's executive committee. But other serious conflicts within a Forest User Group, such as exclusion of certain households from Forest User Group membership, or the seasonal rights of other

households in community forests, are generally resolved with the assistance of forestry field staff. Conflicts concerning boundaries of community forests between two or more Forest User Groups are very common and are most difficult to resolve. In such cases, forestry field staff are invariably involved in trying to resolve the conflict. Some of the disputes take a long time to resolve, while others cannot be resolved even after many years. The members of the forestry field staff do not have the necessary skill or capability to resolve all such conflicts. They are not trained to undertake such assignments. Conflict management is a new field in community forestry in Nepal, and it needs considerable sensitization. The Department of Forests has lately realized that there is a need to develop conflict management skills among the field staff. For this purpose, regular training programmes have started for the field staff in sensitization to conflicts and to conflict management in community forestry.

It is not only the members of the forestry field staff who need sensitization to conflict and to its management, but also all those who are engaged in the community forestry process, including national and international non-governmental organizations and even policy-makers. With this as an objective, an innovative forum called Nepal Madhyasthata Samuha (Nepal Mediation Forum), with the involvement of government officials, such as foresters, sociologists from NGOs and INGOs, and independent lawyers, has taken initiatives in preparing case studies, holding workshops and training sessions in the country to develop awareness of conflicts and build capability to resolve the conflicts occurring in natural resource management, especially in community forestry. (NMS, 1995)

This forum earned the goodwill of donor projects, INGOs, NGOs and government departments. It is hoped that such a neutral forum, which would be readily acceptable to conflicting parties, can play an effective role in resolving conflicts involving Forest User Groups and forestry administration in the future. The government should encourage such a forum to play a positive role in conflict management.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Conflict management has emerged as an integral part of community forestry process. Yet it has not drawn the full attention of policy-makers and field workers engaged in community forestry. Sensitization to this issue is an urgent matter and must be reflected in policy framework.

Field workers do not possess the skills to manage serious conflicts. They need to develop such skills for the development of community forestry. So training in conflict management should be an integral part of the community forestry programme.

Mediation by Forest Department staff in conflict management, in cases in which forestry field staff or a unit thereof is one of the conflicting parties, is not appropriate. In these cases a neutral forum would be the best choice and has a chance for success in resolving conflicts. For this reason, formation of a neutral forum should be encouraged and should be given legal recognition. The need for such a neutral forum for conflict management should be reflected in national policy framework.

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## First Analyse Your Conflict

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### Summary

*In this paper consideration is first given to how natural resource professionals and foresters in the field commonly understand the term 'participation', and why the concept of 'conflict' does not seem to overlap with current notions of 'participation'. Often those involved in the discussion of natural resource conflict management assume that the lack of participation on the part of marginalised groups is a significant factor in stimulating conflict.*

*The paper then presents a number of methods for analysing conflict and attempts to indicate not only the strong and weak components of these methods, but also the setting in which they are usually employed. It is critical to focus first on conflict analysis, rather than conflict management or resolution, as a pragmatic method to deal with natural resource-based conflict. Finally, the paper considers how conflict analysis could be introduced much more widely in forestry and natural resource management training, and how it could enter the normal procedure of project and programme planning.*

## Introduction

A great deal of the discussion in the Electronic Conference on Addressing Natural Resource Conflicts through Community Forestry (1996) was devoted to considering how natural resources, and particularly forestry, conflicts can be avoided, managed or resolved. A commonly held assumption in this debate was that lack of participation, particularly of marginalised groups in society, is a major factor in bringing about conflict. Furthermore, the presence of conflict was directly linked to unsustainable forest and natural resource management. There are a number of elements in the logic of this argument that can certainly bear more discussion and debate; the electronic conference was merely a beginning, and stimulates yet more questions.

One of the items that was discussed by a small group of participants was the idea of conflict analysis. Clearly, it makes sense to understand the nature and origins of a particular conflict before attempts are made to manage or resolve it. But more fundamentally, the question of what methods should be used in such a management or resolution process rests almost entirely on the locus, authority and mandate of the ‘managing’ party, and the power distribution in the institutional context. The problem of participation of marginalised groups is not really a question of method. It is a question of institution and politics, and it concerns much bigger issues than just community forestry or even natural resource management in the broader sense.

Conflict analysis focuses attention on the institutional and political setting in which the conflict occurs, but it represents a separation of the analysis of conflict (recognition, understanding) from discussion about its resolution. It is, or can be seen as, ‘independent’ from the politically tinted questions about taking sides or creating institutions empowered to deal with conflict.<sup>1</sup> A pragmatic way to approach the whole question of conflict management in community forestry and related natural resource management is to focus in the first instance on conflict analysis, rather than conflict management or resolution.

In this paper the question of why ‘recognition of conflict’ is absent from commonly accepted concepts of ‘participation’ is first considered. Then a number of frameworks for the analysis of conflict are presented, with some assessment of their strengths and weaknesses and their underlying assumptions, particu-

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1. In fact, all social studies such as conflict analyses are dependent on the particular assumptions and preconceptions of the researcher: nothing in social science is truly value-free. However, we are accustomed to overlooking this fact in practice and working as if an independent party can make an objective, unbiased assessment.

larly as regards the role of the party using such conflict analysis tools. Finally, some thought is given as to how conflict analysis methods such as these could be introduced into training for foresters and natural resource persons and how conflict analysis could enter national policy with respect to mainstream planning of projects and programmes.

### In Practice, the Concept of 'Participation' Does Not Include Any Recognition of 'Conflict'

In the developing countries, the role of agencies promoting forestry is undergoing change. The direct authority of the forestry departments to control the use of large areas of state land is being reduced. Gone are the days when professional foresters could decide without consultation what the best management of such land should be, and enforce this 'in the interests of the nation'. Many other actors have entered the scene and laid claim to the right to determine how forest land is used. Some of these are unorganized actors: villagers and local people who need land for farming and forest products for their livelihood, and who are increasingly acting on this need, regardless of the rules. Others are organized, in the form of NGOs, voluntary organizations, private companies and community groups. These have a wide range of objectives, from strict conservation, through profit making to social justice. There are also other arms of the government involved: ministries of agriculture and departments of wildlife and social welfare. All these groups have something to say about forestry these days. Most forest departments and donor agencies have reacted by creating special units to deal with community forestry and by setting up a variety of participatory forestry programmes, including not just tree planting schemes but also collaborative management of natural forest areas.

Some agencies (both government and non-government) may still carry in their mental baggage the notion that there really is a 'best' solution to any natural resource use question, independent of anything the parties involved may desire (the traditional forestry approach). If this is the case they may still cherish the belief that it is really their job to persuade people that this 'highest and best use' of the land should be adopted (this extension role is often quaintly called 'awareness-raising').

More likely, however, they are convinced that participation is central to forestry planning, and they are struggling already to interpret this in the daily practice of decision-making in forestry projects.<sup>2</sup> Of course there are many different theories about what participation really means, ranging from (a) involvement of local labour in the physical activities necessary for a planned intervention, through (b) involvement in defining local needs and (c) assisting in the selection of solutions, to (d) empowerment and setting the policy.

But whatever level of participation is intended, it is participation of the local inhabitants that is implied, not the participation of outside actors such as logging companies or any other higher powers. If such parties are laying claim to use of a particular forest, this problem may well be recognized by both local forest worker and the people, but it will not be considered an issue relating to ‘participation’.

In my experience, community forestry agencies, both government and NGO, do not perceive ‘participation’ as involving any sort of conflict at all, other than the mild pressure that has to be exercised on the people to get them to do something (‘motivating them’). No conflict is perceived between individuals or groups within the community concerned, who are homogenized, mentally, into ‘the people’ or ‘the community’ or ‘the villagers’. The ideology of ‘harmony and unity’ is unspoken but very much present. I believe this to be as true for the much-discussed Joint Forest Management schemes in India as it is for the woodlot plantation projects of Africa. Even in agencies in which participation is fully accepted as the answer and the means to forest development, there is no preparation for identifying conflict, let alone solving it.

Reluctance of villagers to ‘participate’ (as is noted, for example, in cases where villagers are very slow to put hand to spade and to plant the proffered seedlings) is usually interpreted as due to (a) their lack of awareness of the importance of this intervention (the old-fashioned view) or (b) the fact that there has not been enough input in the decision-making from the people (the more modern one), but in reality it probably more often relates to the existence of conflicts of which the staff of the agency are simply not aware. It can scarcely be doubted that local-level community forestry workers (both those who are foresters by training and those who have other backgrounds) could be much more effective if they were

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2. Although there are, of course, forestry and natural resource institutions that still do not accept the notion of participation, it is noticeable how much attitudes on this have changed over the last 15 years. From personal experience in giving training over this period, it is evident that it is no longer necessary to convince the new generation of the need for participation, but it is sufficient merely to suggest improved ways of going about it. PRA is very widely known and appreciated, not least on account of the efforts of FTTP

trained to work from the assumption that there is always some social conflict in any local community situation. They could look for it proactively and work with and around it, for example by isolating different segments of the community and working differently with each. Also, if they were trained to look for and identify conflicts in which there are actors external to the immediate environment, they might at least be able to assess whether or not certain planned local interventions are likely to be successful, given the power and influence of such external parties.

This is not to say that these community forestry workers should necessarily try to resolve the underlying conflict, nor necessarily take the part of the party they understand to be the weaker or ‘oppressed’, or even that of the party they believe to be ‘in the right’ (which may not always be the weaker party). Whether they are able to do this depends on the mandate of the organization for which they work. At present it is rare for government organizations to be empowered to act as conciliators or advocates, although some NGOs may play these roles.

By far the most important thing for staff working on participatory forestry projects (whether government or NGO or donor) is to understand that conflict is normal; it is to be expected everywhere. If conflict is not immediately visible, this does not mean that there is none: it is most probably simmering somewhere below the surface. What is needed is the means to anticipate and recognize conflict, and to understand where it comes from. With this information the agency is forearmed to deal with many problems in a proactive sense before they erupt and require any sort of settlement process. This includes, of course, identifying opposition that manifests itself in silent ways, most commonly through sabotage of the intervention by ‘non-participation’. What is lacking in training of natural resource specialists, and especially foresters, is not conciliation, mediation and negotiation skills, nor the spirit of advocacy and solidarity with the marginalised people. What is missing is knowledge of the typical origins of conflict and skills for identifying and observing conflict situations as a very natural part of everyday work.

### Reasons for the Lack of Conflict Awareness

One may speculate on the reasons for this lack of awareness, in natural resource specialists, of the conflict that is inherent in and that surrounds every community. The most likely is that natural resource trainees are generally given a technical training. At least in the first instance they are taught to think in terms of ‘best’ solutions to given, physical problems such as the most suitable species to plant in arid zones, or the most cost-effective water retention structures.

Where sociology is included, this may be of a rather general nature, and may primarily consider cultural issues rather than socio-economic ones. An obvious example is that many schools still teach the theory that slash-and-burn farming by individual farmers is the chief factor in the destruction of tropical forest. This is then explained in terms of tradition, poverty and ignorance.<sup>3</sup> The spirit of critical inquiry does not seem to be stimulated in this; it simply reinforces prejudices that trainees may already have against subsistence agriculture and, implicitly, against the class of people who perform it (even though, in looking for solutions, it is the participation of these very people that will be sought). I did not have the opportunity to make a comprehensive analysis of social forestry training programmes for the purposes of this paper, but a quick review of two programmes offered in Europe for foresters from developing countries shows that social aspects do not explicitly cover any sort of class analysis or conflict as a theme (but see also footnote 5).

Interestingly, even where participation is stressed, and this is more and more common these days, this tends to be taught in a technical manner. Participation is the 'best' way (that is, the most efficient) to achieve the goals of forestry, rather than an issue of rights and political empowerment. Projects fail if they are not participatory, therefore to make them work efficiently, participation is required. And how to do participation? This is again a technical approach, instruction in how to do PRA and rapid surveys, rather than development of skills in social evaluation and criticism. PRA is seen as a neutral tool that does not involve value judgements; it is used as a tool for collecting important information on wants and needs, which information is then used to make a technical decisions on the technical aspects of the project. PRA is then often simply equated with participation. In this interpretation, participation has no political connotation other than that of canvassing the opinions of people who were totally ignored before.

## Approaches to Conflict Analysis

There are, however, plenty of approaches to analysing conflict in forestry situations that could be used and in which professionals involved in community forestry and related natural resource management could be trained. At the electronic conference suggestions were made concerning PRA and other methods to allow 'the people' to make their own analysis of the conflict. While getting people to discuss what they consider to be the nature of the conflict may be

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3. The role of much larger enterprises is very evident in reality, as, for example, in the recent forest fires in Indonesia. And a number of studies indicate that where farmers are clearing the forests themselves, very often they are not the poorest farmers but middle-income farmers (Skutsch, 1994; Barraclough and Ghimire, 1995).

beneficial both for their own consciousness and so that the researcher may get a grasp on perceptions around the conflict, it is doubtful whether such an analysis on its own is at all sufficient. Therefore, any such participatory field studies should be regarded as potential input in a broader framework. At least four such frameworks were mentioned in one way or another in the course of the recent electronic conference: stakeholder analysis, actor-oriented analysis, policy instruments analysis and 'root causes' analysis.

### *Stakeholder analysis*

The stakeholder approach is one that has clear roots in the new ideology of privatization and decentralization of power in society. The term 'stakeholder' has been in common use in business management since the beginning of the 1990s, before which it was hardly known, although the concepts were present under other terminology, such as 'parties' and 'interest groups' (Toorn, 1984; Quarles van Ufford, 1988). The implication of the term is that there are many parties with interest in any particular resource, and that all of these interests are legitimate and need to be considered. Although there appears to be an implicit egalitarianization and democratization in using the term, stakeholder analysis is in fact not usually promoted for reasons of equity, but for efficient management. Stakeholder analysis is very definitely a tool to help the manager of a project that is to be implemented to run it better. Projects are seen to have failed in the past because the interests of the various groups concerned were not properly understood and taken into consideration. Stakeholder analysis is a means of increasing the decision-maker's knowledge of the environment in which the planned intervention is to be made, so as to increase its chances of success. It does not necessarily imply 'participation' of these various groups in the decision-making itself, but it does imply that some accommodation has to be made at least to interests that would otherwise be threatening to project success, and it could be used to ensure that the opinions of weaker groups are at least put on the agenda.

The first step in stakeholder analysis is to identify the stakeholders. This is clearly, in itself, a subjective exercise, depending on the experience and the value system of the analyst; many stakeholders may not be recognized as such; there is always the possibility for finer and finer disaggregation of interest groups. The most common fallacy occurs when the analyst leaves himself out of the list of stakeholders, and indeed sees and presents the analytic process as an objective, technical, exercise which could be replicated by any other analyst. This can never be the case. The analyst is tied to an organization or institution that is trying to bring in some kind of change through a planned intervention.

At its simplest (and there is no unique way of doing stakeholder analysis), the idea is to identify conflicting viewpoints. In more formal and detailed studies, the second step involves estimating the costs and the benefits of a potential intervention from the point of view of each of the stakeholders. This is done in a relatively straightforward way and tends to reflect the 'official' objectives of the various groups rather than their hidden agendas. The third is usually to create a matrix in which the stakeholders are listed on both the y and the x axis. Potential areas of conflict (and complementarity) are signaled with pluses (+++) and minuses (- -). Cells of particular interest may be shaded (Grimble, Aglionby and Quan, 1994). Thus areas of danger where some action may need to be taken are highlighted. Needless to say the reliability of the output depends entirely on the information available to the analyst; the matrix is but a handy framework to house the summarized information and present it to others.

#### *Actor-oriented analysis*

This type of analysis was developed from a more academic perspective than stakeholder analysis (Long, 1977; Giddens, 1984; Long, 1990). Its purpose is to better understand conflicts around planned interventions (projects), for the sake of increasing knowledge about the world around us. It is not seen as a tool that the manager would use, but for the observer to understand the dynamics of a situation in which a project is introduced, and for generalization from this to a more systematic understanding the nature of conflict generally. The observer is truly an 'outsider' to the situation, at least that is the implication. In reality, as will be evident from the description below, the difference between this and the stakeholder approach is minimal, apart from the fact that the researcher sees himself as being removed from the action and independent. In addition, it is mostly used after the fact to explain conflicts that have occurred, while stakeholder analysis is primarily used before the fact as a means for dealing with potential conflicts.

The actor-oriented approach was developed to counter the idea that planned projects induce simple cause-effect impacts. It is based on the idea that it is necessary to see social change not solely as the result of the impact of outside forces but more in terms of human action and consciousness, embedded within existing institutional structures and processes. It proposes that the results of planned interventions such as projects are the result of the resolution of a variety of conflicting forces (often obscure, and rarely articulated in formal ways; there are always hidden as well as overt agendas), which are represented by a range of social agencies (actors). Actors are considered to be knowledgeable and capable within their area of manoeuvre, and to be able to express some kind of power even when

in highly subordinated positions. They include parties who may not be involved in face-to-face encounters but who nevertheless influence the situation, affecting actions and outcomes. The ‘actor-oriented paradigm’ uses the concept of ‘arenas’, often informal, in which decisions are made; groups and individuals are conceived of as competing and compromising in these arenas, and the idea is to map this out. One of the interesting things about the approach is that it recognizes that even in authoritarian settings there is diversity present, with complex power structures operating informally within. The main aim of an actor-oriented analysis is “to identify and characterise differing actor strategies and rationales, the conditions under which they arise, their viability or effectiveness for solving specific problems, and their structural outcomes” (Long, 1990).

The actor-oriented approach thus simply provides a conceptual framework and terminology for directing an empirical study of a conflict situation around a planned intervention, and for presenting the results; it does not provide tools as such for the task. It will be noted also that some of the difficulties of the stakeholder approach are repeated here: for example, how to identify the actors and where to draw the boundaries. However, in this case it is a conscious methodological choice that is being made, and it is clear that the observer has to justify the choice of actors he has identified.

### *Policy instrument analysis*

Bresser’s and Klok’s (1988) theory of policy instruments offers an alternative and very interesting way of looking at conflict around planned interventions, although they deal primarily with policy rather than projects in the sense that community forestry knows them. The purpose of the analysis is to provide policy-makers with a prediction of what the likely outcomes of a proposed policy are going to be, from analysis of how the various actors involved will react to it. Thus if the analysis predicts a poor run for the policy in terms of achieving what the policy-makers had intended, they have the opportunity to revise their draft before actually implementing it. The platform from which the analysis operates is the that of the policy makers, and the model is *ex-ante facto*.

The theory of policy instruments recognizes, as do stakeholder and actor-oriented approaches, that there are always multiple actors of a variety of types who operate in an interactive process. These actors have various objectives, and each also has powers of different types which may be used to achieve these objectives. In the model, the aim is to explain or predict both the implementability

and the probable effectiveness of the policy to be promulgated, based on an understanding of the ‘central circumstances’, which are combinations of the particular objectives, knowledge and power of the actor involved. Objectives, knowledge and power have to be mapped out from the point of view of each individual actor, whose decision will be based on (a) the alternatives available, (b) his information on what these alternatives are (which may be by no means perfect information), (c) the pros and cons of these alternatives, (d) his information on these pros and cons, which may also not be perfect, and, finally, (e) the importance he attaches to these pros and cons. Once information has been assembled the situation of the different actors can be compared and some judgement made about the likely outcome around the planned intervention

What is particularly interesting about this model is that it recognizes the fact not only that there are both hidden and overt agendas associated with all parties, but that information on these, and on the intervention itself, and on the powers of other parties in the game, are all variables that have an influence on the positions of the various actors, and can in themselves be mapped.

So far we have presented three different approaches to understanding conflict. All of these have something in common, that is, developing an understanding of the position of different groups. The first, stakeholder analysis, is entirely pragmatic. The aim is to identify areas of likely conflict in a planned intervention so that a tradeoff or compromise can be designed that would be acceptable to all, including to the objectives of the manager. The second, actor-oriented analysis, is not designed to improve the implementation process of a given project but to throw light on conflict processes in general. The third, ‘theory of policy instruments’ analysis, is more like the first, but it overtly simulates the trajectory of a given intervention in a given situation to test whether it will have the effect intended.

#### *‘Root causes’ or structural analysis*

Many of the participants at the electronic conference expressed the view that conflicts can only be understood as being the outcome of deep-rooted historical and political causes. This was especially clear in the regional papers by Odhiambo (1996) for East Africa and Traore and Lo (1996) for West Africa, who showed that today’s conflicts are in large part the legacy of the colonial era, when customary law was overtaken by foreign law and when people were divided into administrative units to suit the government of the day. New uses of land were intro-

duced largely for the benefit of the colonial powers, and market penetration meant new kinds of competition for land and natural resources. The recent restructuring of economies and the encouragement of the free market is simply making this competition more intense. The paper by Villarreal (1996) shows that in Latin America much of the conflict finds its origin in history, in land reforms made for the benefit of elite groups, while Chandrasekharan (1996), for the Asian region, though taking a less historicist stance, also notes that economic and legal issues are at the heart of the problems. Indeed it is without any doubt at all that local conflicts may be the result of much wider influences.<sup>4</sup>

The question is not whether, but how, to integrate an appreciation of these factors into a local conflict analysis. For, while people may certainly acknowledge that, for example, colonial history and exploitation may have had bad effects on a given country's development, finding the linkages between this and the very localized problems of a community forestry dispute may seem difficult. But it is not impossible, as the parallel example of 'the chain of explanation' for the causes of soil erosion shows (Blaikie, 1989).

Another problem is that there is no one handy model or framework that would allow us to systematically scan the evidence and categorize the findings. Most commonly, structural analyses of natural resource conflict situations are done in the sectoral way: a number of headings are made ('historico-political', 'economic', 'social-cultural', 'legal', etc.) and the analyst uses these categories in explaining the origins of the conflict under consideration. It is clear that this requires a considerable and in-depth knowledge of the subject area. The 'framework' itself is not a great deal of help. Unlike stakeholder analysis, it does not represent a real tool that a non-specialist can pick up and use. Yet without a root cause or structural analysis, any sort of conflict analysis will clearly be superficial and fail to provide the basic information that might be necessary to find a lasting solution to the conflict in hand.

These four approaches should not be seen as alternatives but as complementary to each other, each providing a particular way of looking at conflicts. Doubtless there are other methodologies that could be usefully adapted to the case of natural resources and community forestry. There is certainly much room for development of improved procedures that give deeper insights and more

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4. To quote the letter of introduction to this meeting: "A variety of global trends, demographic shifts, increasing degradation of the physical environment and diminishing resource base, globalisation and liberalisation of economies, growing inequity in the distribution of resources and economic benefits, changing role of the state and the decentralisation of authority over resources, changes in political and legal systems, have significant impact on access to and use of natural resources."

useful information for the practitioner. It would be helpful to assess the usefulness of such approaches by applying them to known cases of natural resource conflict and comparing the results. But certainly knowledge and skills in using conflict analysis methods should greatly assist those who are involved in natural resource management and community forestry.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

How can conflict analysis be brought into community forestry planning so that it is as widely understood and used as, for example, participatory methods including PRA? For although PRA methods are not used everywhere, there seems to be sufficient momentum behind them and sufficient awareness of their value that they will shortly be absolutely standard in community forestry planning practice.

Clearly there is the potential to introduce the nature of conflict, in general, and conflict analysis in particular, as a theme within courses designed to train community forestry planners and other natural resource management professionals,<sup>5</sup> just as 'participation' was introduced 15 years ago, and PRA was introduced as a means to bring about participation perhaps 10 years ago. Aiming for this should be very much easier than trying to teach conflict management in the broader sense, which inevitably brings in questions about conflict resolution. As noted earlier, conflict resolution is a much more difficult topic since it relates to the powers of the organization and the context of the local institutional setting. Any discussion on conflict resolution implies the possibility of changing the power structure, which is generally not within the mandate of teaching institutions, to say the least.

As with the case of participation, it is important that any such training deals with the fundamental issues behind conflict (class issues, macroeconomic issues, gender issues) rather than just teaching the tools. Experience shows that there is a tendency to focus on the practical side and on learning to use tools rather than on the more difficult introspective and political threatening elements. Political economists would be needed to stimulate the teaching and the interest in this. Clearly such political economics needs to be very carefully tailored to the background of the course participants and their experience, whether they be

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5. To some extent this has already started: while conflict has been a minor topic for some time in the syllabus of the three-month international course on Local Level Management of Trees and Forests for Sustainable Land Use given at the International Agricultural Centre (I.A.C.), Wageningen, the Netherlands, it was given a great deal more prominence in the autumn of 1997, a direct impact of the electronic conference of 1996.

foresters, agronomists or wildlife specialists, and examples need to be selected that such trainees could empathize with, rather than general materials out of standard political economy texts. Studies such as Barraclough and Ghimire (1995) could be a guiding light here.

Publications on the theme of conflict in widely read literature, such as the *Forests, Trees and People Newsletter*, *Agroforestry Systems* and *Unasylva*, would be a start to bringing this topic to the attention of those responsible for organizing training. Donor influence was quite important in spreading ideas about participation, but it was the experience from actual practice in both government and NGO programmes that was most successful in convincing the forestry community at large and capturing the imagination of students. Thus, any policy statements by international and national policy-makers concerning the desirability and necessity of carrying out conflict analyses in community forestry planning need to be backed up by the wide broadcasting of detailed case studies that analyse conflict and show how it was dealt with. These should include not just large-scale and visible conflicts but the small local conflicts that are 'invisible' because they are not voiced. Gender conflicts are undoubtedly a part of these.

Donors require Environmental Impact Statements and gender analyses as a standard element in project proposals for funding. Putting conflict analysis in as another standard hurdle could focus attention on this and drive the need for training in this area. Of course, this poses the danger that the analysis is superficial and effectively only tokenism (use of tools without in-depth understanding of the issues), as is indeed often the case with environmental and gender analyses attached to project proposals. Nevertheless it is a means of getting a foot in the door. As experience in conflict analysis in community forestry situations develops, knowledge and understanding of the nature of these conflicts will also grow, and the topic will be more widely discussed.

There is support for this in the broader environment: conflict analysis and conflict management are in fact buzz words of the latter half of the 1990s in almost every field. That is all the more reason, therefore, for focusing on methodologies for conflict analysis in the special case of natural resource management, and leaving discussion on means for conflict resolution to the wider debate.

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