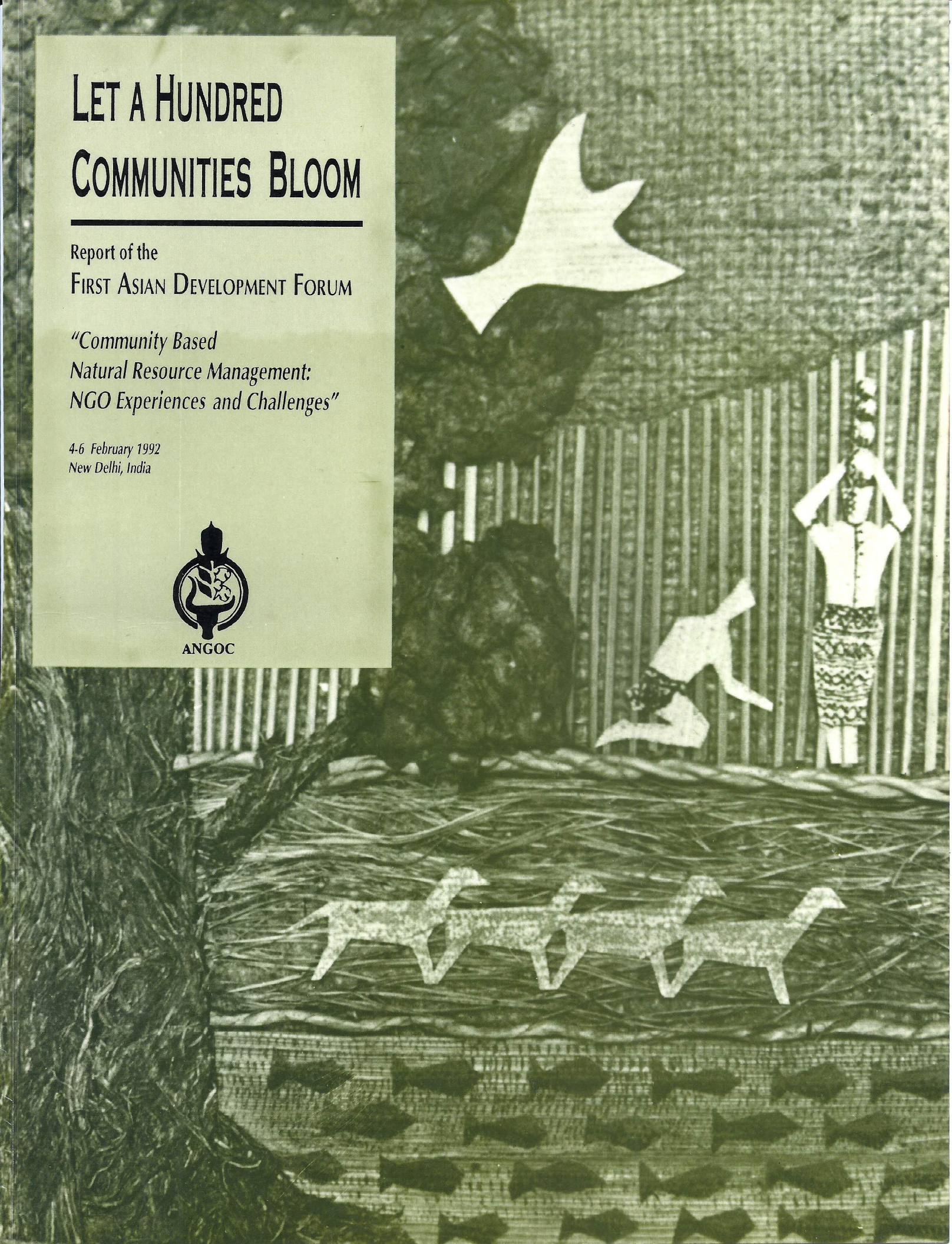


LET A HUNDRED COMMUNITIES BLOOM

Report of the
FIRST ASIAN DEVELOPMENT FORUM

*"Community Based
Natural Resource Management:
NGO Experiences and Challenges"*

4-6 February 1992
New Delhi, India



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Asian NGO Coalition
for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
(ANGOC)

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Foreword | ii |
| Message | iii |
| Keynote | iv |
| Introduction | |
| Let a Hundred Communities Bloom: Lessons in Community Based Natural Resources Management ... | 8 |
| Country Reports | |
| <i>Thailand: Slowing the Tree-Toll of Thailand's Progress</i> | 16 |
| <i>Philippines: A Tri-Sectoral Solution to the Philippine Crisis</i> | 26 |
| <i>Bangladesh: Bangladesh Resurgent</i> | 37 |
| <i>Sri Lanka: "SARVODAYA" is Sinhalese for Hope</i> | 50 |
| <i>Pakistan: Bonded by Need</i> | 59 |
| <i>Malaysia: People Above All</i> | 65 |
| <i>India: Lessons from the Indian Experience</i> | 72 |
| <i>Indonesia: Land as a Basic Resource for Democratization</i> | 83 |
| References | 89 |

FOREWORD

The increasing marginalization of people and unabated environmental degradation have spurred the growth of non-government organizations (NGOs) in the Asian region. The 1980s saw increased networking efforts of NGOs as a response to the complex problems of development and environment. At country level, NGOs have formed networks and alliances to widen their scope of operations and maximize the use of resources. NGOs have likewise started venturing into policy advocacy to complement their field services to the poor.

At the regional level, through the initiative of the Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC), Asian NGOs have started the process of discussions regarding common issues of urgent concern. NGOs are challenging the growth-oriented policies of Asian governments and donor institutions that contribute to poverty and wanton environmental degradation.

In this light, a small group of NGOs, together with ANGOC, organized an Asian NGO Forum on 22 February 1991.

A five-year annual activity, the Asian Development Forum is envisioned to become the Asian Grassroots Voice to the international community and a starting point for South/South and South/North dialogue. *"Food and Freedom, Jobs and Justice, Land and Labor: Towards an Asian Development Agenda for the Year 2000"* is the overall theme of the five-year Forum, with specific themes chosen each year to highlight critical development issues.

The following is the report of the First Asian Development Forum held in New Delhi, India on 4-6 February 1992. Its theme was *"Community-Based Natural Resource Management: NGO Experiences and Challenges"*.

I note the work of David Ingles, Roel Ravanera, Manolo Gregorio, and Auri Milanco of the ANGOC Secretariat for helping coordinate the Forum's activities; Marivic Mandalihan and Fe Luzon for typing the manuscripts; Faina Lucero for overseeing the production of this report; Margarita Debuque for the editing and layout; and Klaid Sabangan for the cover design.

Finally, I thank the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for its assistance that made the program and this publication possible, and the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD) for hosting the Forum in New Delhi.

ANTONIO B. QUIZON
Executive Director
ANGOC

MESSAGE

In recent years, we have witnessed sudden changes in the state of world affairs caused mainly by a series of national collapses in the socialist world. It is obvious that these changes are exerting a strong influence on Asian countries in many areas, particularly in their political and economic sectors. In the area of development, these difficult times require the government and people of each Asian country to take prudent development measures based on their own initiatives.

In this respect, the implementation of the Asian Development Forum is very timely as it breaks the ground for regular forums that will allow NGO leaders at the regional level to discuss vital issues of development in Asia from a private-sector perspective. The first Asian Development Forum was held in New Delhi, India on 4-6 February 1992 on the theme "Food and Freedom, Jobs and Justice, Land and Labor: Towards an Asian Development Agenda for the year 2000." More than 40 people from eight Asian countries participated in an enthusiastic and constructive discussion on prevailing development issues based on the country case-studies, which are compiled in these proceedings. It is the hope of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation that the efforts made by the NGOs at this Forum will add valuable contribution to the resolution of urgent development issues affecting the lifestyle and welfare of the people in the region's communities.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the late Dr. Dioscoro L. Umali, Mr. Antonio B. Quizon, the staff of ANGOC and AVARD, and to all the participants in the First Asian Development Forum for their contributions to its success.

Yuji Kondo
Program Officer
Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan

KEYNOTE

Today, the monolith called government, which for years loomed large and impregnable, stands cracked in many places. With the suddenness of changes which had recently swept through Eastern Europe, governments everywhere are either collapsing or losing hold of their traditional roles of governance. For non-government organizations (NGOs), whose identity derives (as their designation suggests) from whatever it is that government is not, a redefinition of their antithesis, indeed its demise — as some are wont to speculate on — gives rise to a crisis of identity. Without government, or what it used to be, NGOs, too, would have to redefine their reason for being.

Non-government organizations exist apart from government, and often in spite of it. That they came to be called that way has turned out to be not only a serious mistake but a grim tragedy. If we had kept our bearings locked in with the people — the community — we wouldn't be in such a bind today.

Organizations in India who had been active during the colonial rule — working with the people, mobilizing their strengths, energies, imagination, and resources (albeit limited) — had a clearer vision of what they were supposed to be. Under alien rule, one thing was clear: one could not depend on government.

Independence brought with it the benefit and the privilege of self-government, but it also resulted in dependence on government for every single thing, with very tragic results.

The task of transforming society — in India as in the other newly independent states in the Third World — could have been one of the most exciting adventures after independence. The people were inspired, raring to go. They had waited long years to come to the point where they could shape their own destiny. But there was this belief prevalent among the little infant states which choked their potential for transformation, and it was that bureaucracy can be an ally to the weak and the poor. It was assumed — among the tribal people, the scheduled castes, the women — that private capital driven by the profit motive would work against the poor in the same

way that the multi-layered caste system had discriminated against them. The state was seen as a way out, an instrument for liberation and social change. Hence, the delusion — to which many people in India had fallen victim, myself included—that bureaucracy is invaluable to the task of changing society.

Today, we realize how wrong we had been. Government turned out to be something quite different from what we imagined it would be. The idea of a state playing a supplemental albeit an enabling role while the people take charge of their lives is now no more than a concept. Even on empirical grounds no one today can deny that the state has failed to live up to its promise. Organized in a hierarchical order, it has adopted the trickle-down theory of economic development, a pie-in-the-sky proposition that what it invests at the top of the social pyramid will somehow fall to the ground to benefit people in the grassroots. The hierarchical bureaucracy which emerged was a natural consequence, an offshoot of the state's hierarchical nature.

Nowhere has our misplaced confidence in state governance had more tragic results than in its mismanagement of the economy. For years we had thought that state intervention in the economy is necessary to put dynamism into it and to ensure that equity and development move in tandem. Now, we are told that this does not work. We are told that the state is an inefficient instrument, an inefficient user of resources. Hence, we are now being told to put our trust in the almighty "market".

This view has acquired legitimacy in light of what is taking place in Eastern Europe, where only recently state intervention had been so institutionalized that markets were totally abolished. China and the former Soviet Union have each launched their market-based economies, the first slowly, the other more rapidly. But without the rudimentaries of the market organization, their experiments have resulted in chaos, pain, and suffering for the people.

In India, we had adopted what is called a mixed economy. We did not totally abolish the market. In fact, the market performs a great number of functions. However, a mixed

economy requires that the elements in the mixture be determined in some judicious way — how much would be controlled by the public sector, the private sector, the cooperatives.

Unfortunately for us, our mixed economy got mixed up along the way. The public sector took on too much; not content with controlling the infrastructure industries, it went on to produce bread and started running hotels and holiday resorts... it just didn't know when to stop, or where. The public sector undertook managerial tasks which were beyond the capacity of the state, and as a result, destroyed the very reason for which it was set up: to accumulate savings which could in turn be reinvested. Today, the government is saddled with businesses which lose money year after year. Because it owns such enterprises, government spends huge amounts to subsidize their continued operation instead of investing on the more basic needs for health, education and environmental protection.

And as the public sector expanded, so did the bureaucracy. Today, the latter is so overstuffed that the government cannot even pay for salaries. It has resorted to borrowing from the market. Predictably, public sector loans have ballooned to such an extent that servicing them eats up a substantial portion of the annual budget.

This is why when I say that the government had better be called a "destructive work organization" I am not being rhetorical. It is an apt description for an organization which consumes without producing, and then makes it hard for the real producers to produce. For example, 80% of India's labor force are employed—in spite of so much industrialization—in what is called the informal sector. A recent seminar at Bangalore (convened by two United Nations agencies for Asian participants) came out with the declaration that the informal sector was really the First Sector. If it provides employment to 80% of workers, uses little capital, absorbs all business risks, and is spread throughout the country, giving employment to women as well as men, what else should it be called?

For us, NGOs, this sends a message. Let's stop calling ourselves non-government organizations. Let's stop thinking of ourselves as the informal sector. Instead, we should call ourselves the First Sector. The others—government, big business—are mere interlopers, johnny-come-latelys. We, the people, were here first.

And this is not all. While the "informal sector" makes up for what government has consistently failed to provide, it has received no support from it. Indeed, the informal sector has suffered setbacks as a result of state sanctioned harassment. While government has largely kept off the back of big business (in accordance with its policy of deregulation), state inspectors continue to be a thorn in the flesh for the small entrepreneurs. The big ones are now free to make all policy decisions, what products to manufacture, when to manufacture, where to sell. Meanwhile, the small fry continue to be strangled by government restrictions.

The basic resources for livelihood in countries in South and Southeast Asia are the natural resources. Every inch of soil, every drop of water, every blade of grass: this is what Mother Earth is made of. Yet, everywhere, voices are being raised in protest against the reckless destruction of this our elixir of life. The story of the Indian state of Punjab is a telling example.

Punjab has been called the land of five rivers, owing to the number of rivers flowing through it. Nature had endowed it with rich fertile soil. Because of this, Punjab has become the granary of India.

As a mother makes sure that food is first served to the breadwinner in the family (while, in many cases, ignoring a member who earns little or none at all), the government would have been expected to tend to Punjab, which was feeding the rest of the country. Unfortunately, the government has no such wisdom.

As a result of many years of intensive chemical cultivation, Punjab is close to collapse. Its soils are burnt and exhausted. In the land of five rivers, water logging and salinity have come to plague the soil.

This and other examples of government incompetence in striking a balance between development and environmental preservation seals the case for restoring community control and stewardship over the natural resources. No central authority can mobilize as many pairs of eyes, hands, and limbs to protect local resources as an empowered community can. No remote national government can question nor match the commitment of people whose livelihood and security depend on the sustainable use of nature's gifts.

However, in seeking to "empower" local communities, NGOs risk falling into a trap. By advocating for political space to make room for voluntary organizations or seeking acceptability for the idea of community resource management, NGOs may unknowingly be perpetuating the primacy of the state over the community.

Instead, NGOs must work toward making the community aware of its rights and responsibilities so that the community may truly assert itself. Even if to do so means coming against the instruments of the state, the laws of the state which violate the community's inherent authority to assert its rights.

Without this kind of empowerment, the vision of communities strong enough to become a countervailing power to the state will be much harder and will take longer to attain. There is no short-cut to awakening people's power. If it is done by government fiat, with a change of government it can also be taken back.

This is the challenge and the primary task for NGOs today and in the coming years. We cannot afford to be complacent. We may not have the time to hold many more seminars like this one. If government systems collapse, as they are doing in many places in the world, the people

will suffer enormously. Right now, the social upheaval happening in Eastern Europe may seem remote to us -- as distant as a newspaper article. But the changes are already afoot even on our shores.

Among and between us, the political systems may be different, the stage of economic development may be different, the language may be different, but the social tensions turning societies upside down are familiar. If there is a single fundamental dimension that binds our people together, it is their social identity, their social vision, and it is upon this that we should build the future.

Laxmi C. Jain
Chairman
Industrial Development Services, India

LET A HUNDRED COMMUNITIES BLOOM

Lessons in Community Based Natural Resources Management *

Surveying the ecological plunder unleashed by every society that aspired to economic progress tempts one to speculate that nature and wealth-seeking humans cannot peacefully co-exist. Especially in recent years, man's relentless pursuit of economic growth has unfailingly been accompanied by remorseless pillage of the environment. While industrialization has been the Midas touch to modernizing societies, to the ecological world it has brought death.

In light of this, must humans now abandon their aspirations for economic well-being for the sake of maintaining a habitable planet? Are progress and environmental peace really so opposed? Not necessarily. As in any human endeavor where questionable methods often discredit even the most laudable aims, what is at fault here is not the end but the means.

Modern societies, whether capitalist or socialist, all swear by a common formula for progress: the growth-centered development paradigm. This model "defines development almost entirely in terms of growth in a single indicator, the economic value productive output"¹.

Growth, according to this model, is "a function of investment, which in turn is a function of savings"². Hence--following its logic--the only significant difference between high-growth and low-growth economies is the amount of trade and investment flowing through their systems. No country--by extension of the same reasoning--need ever be poor, forever. With the infusion of sufficient capital poverty can be "cured";

and if a poor country cannot by itself put the money together, foreign investment, loans, and grants will do.

All things are reduced to input. Natural resources, for instance, have no value as such apart from their fair market price. Their extraction, therefore, is viewed solely in terms of the economic gain it brings, no adjustments are made in the balance sheet to account for the costs of depletion. As David Korten and Antonio Quizon have aptly put it, "This leads to the anomaly that the faster resource stocks are drawn down and consumed, the better off people are presumed to be."³

The escalating number of the world's poor in spite of unbridled resource extraction is proof of just how anomalous this premise is. Not only has growth-driven development failed miserably to promote economic improvement in less developed countries, it has also widened the wealth gap within them, making the rich fabulously richer, and the poor that much more destitute.

Driven by need, marginal sectors in less developed countries have themselves fallen upon an already beleaguered environment, taking as much as they can get--and more than nature can bear. This, together with the systematic--and infinitely larger-scale--plunder done in the name of economic growth, has sent the planet hurtling--and the offending human race along with it--to the brink of total collapse. In what amounts to a war of attrition, modern man is destroying the

* Written by MA. TERESA LINGAN-DEBUQUE, ANGOC Project Officer, based on plenary discussions and country papers presented during the *First Asian Development Forum: "Community Based Natural Resources Management: NGO Experiences and Challenges"*, held on 4-6 February 1992 in New Delhi, India.

very world on which his survival depends, while nature—pushed to the limits of endurance—is fighting back by dying.

The idea that economic growth is a never-ending joyride should have been unmasked by now as a fatal illusion. That it hasn't is one of the tragedies of our time. After upwards of a half century's ascendancy, this paradigm remains deeply entrenched in the world's economies. Endorsed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB)—twin sentinels of the global market system—the present unsustainable path to development thus continues to hold governments in thrall.

Counterposed to this growth-obsession is people-centered development which non-government organizations (NGOs) worldwide espouse. According to this alternative model, "development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations."⁴

Its theory for underdevelopment points not to a lack of investment—as the prevailing model does—but to the concentration of economic and political control in the hands of an elite class "who lack a true entrepreneurial spirit". Instead of enhancing the productivity of available resources, this class—having appropriated for itself much of the country's natural wealth using the monopoly powers of corporation and state—sets itself up as a super resource-lord extracting "economic rents". Its devices—resource expropriation, exploitation of cheap labor, dependence on international loans—all earn for it spectacular profits, which it promptly invests abroad. Hence, while the conventional growth indicator is registering an economic boom, only the elite class is actually benefiting. At the same time, the ecological resources on which the poor majority depends for its meager earnings—now and in future—are increasingly depleted.

Hence, the people-centered vision calls for "a radical restructuring of political and economic institutions to allow the full-flowering of society's productive potentials based on the sustainable use of its social and natural endowments"⁵. As a necessary first step, such transformation requires the restoration of community stewardship of natural resources.

TRADITION AS INSPIRATION

Community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) is not a novel, NGO brainchild. Indeed, the operative word is "restoration". Almost all pre-colonial societies have a tradition of community stewardship of land, fisheries, forests, and other natural resources. The following papers on South and Southeast Asian

country experience of CBNRM provide ample documentation of this.

Allowing for variations across countries, CBNRM in pre-colonial South and Southeast Asia had a number of distinct features. First, "Community" was the village. A chieftain—headman, priest, or *shaman*—wielded control over village affairs, together with a council of elders. There was, however, no ruling class—based on economic power—as we know it today. Land was the main form of wealth. Individual members of the village "owned" parcels of it, apportioned by the headman according to need. "Ownership", in this sense, though, did not imply rights of disposition for whatever purpose; private holdings were handed down through generations to be worked by the clans for their livelihood. There was also communally owned land, usually found in the periphery of the village, which was cultivated by a designated group. Part of the produce was used to "pay" for articles of clothing, pottery, implements, and other items made by village artisans assigned to such work, partly, to provide for the headman's needs and the rest, to barter goods with other villages. Aside from land, certain areas of the forest were marked off for "community use". This community forest supplied individual members' fuelwood, food, medicinal, and other needs. There were, however, clear stipulations as to how much could be harvested by every member—as well as the kind of penalty reserved for those who got too greedy. The members were also obliged to

set aside time for the maintenance of common property resources.

Chroniclers of such pre-colonial setups note that the communities were self-sufficient economic units producing almost everything they needed. These societies also reportedly had a highly developed sense of equity and set up rigorous measures to ensure that no one had too much nor too little. Sir Charles Metcalf, in describing pre-British Bengal, wrote: "The Villa/Village Communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts."⁶

Alas, we all know that these self-sufficient villages have long since disintegrated, crushed underfoot in the capitalist stampede for colonies. The republics

In what amounts to a war of attrition, modern man is destroying the very world on which his survival depends, while nature -- pushed to the limits of endurance -- is fighting back by dying.

lics which flourished with hardly any need for foreign relations are now barely sustained by total integration into the global market system.

REVIVING A TRADITION

Fortunately, NGO efforts to revive the spirit of CBNRM are slowly bearing fruit. In recent years, many parts of South and Southeast Asia have witnessed a resurgence of CBNRM--albeit in modified form.

To be sure, a number of obvious adjustments have had to be made in light of modern-day realities. For instance, "community" is no longer just the village. As the late Dr. Dioscoro L. Umali put it, "a community may be a dynamic (network) of several villages

where the comparative advantage of one (complements that of the others)"⁷.

Skeptics who dismiss CBNRM as a throwback to a romanticized former-way-of-life are mistaken; so are those who theorize that CBNRM would reduce the country to a patchwork of communities set up as fiefdoms going their own uncoordinated ways. Neither does CBNRM require a country to do a Maoist China--shutting its doors to the world in a fit of xenophobia.

The following country case studies and other documented examples of CBNRM initiatives show that much of the knee-jerk reaction to CBNRM is largely uninformed. NGOs promoting CBNRM concur that traditional systems of stewardship are anachronistic to present needs and challenges, and have therefore sought a more relevant re-interpretation of the strategy's basic principles. In attempting this, NGOs face many obstacles.

ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS IN CBNRM

Centralized Planning and Development. Centralized control over natural resource management is one of the biggest stumbling blocks. Where pre-colonial communities were held together by a chieftain who lived among the villagers, today's societies are ruled by a monolithic structure that is far removed from the people and thus largely alienated from them. Where the chieftain served only as guardian of an environmental

stewardship ethic, today's centralized government is set up as the sole authority in all matters pertaining to natural resource development and planning.

In most instances, governments do not acknowledge the capacity--nor the right--of local people's organizations to manage and control their own resources. Most legislation expropriates resources from local communities and vests exclusive rights to centralized governments. As a result, governments have become a kind of overlord--holding monopoly rights to their country's natural wealth. In Thailand, for instance, "the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) considers all forests its property, to be utilized and exploited as it sees fit"⁸. For many years it earned windfall profits from extensive logging operations and cash crop cultivation on clear-cut land. When the forests were depleted, the RFD clamped down with a nationwide logging ban in 1989 and declared the remaining forested areas as reservations. As many as 250,000 peasant households are expected to be evicted from their homes to make way for the RFD's new source of income: large-scale eucalyptus tree cultivation and paper pulp operations. In Pakistan, where government inefficiency has failed to stem

the loss of irrigation water, the government has done little to mobilize the communities to make the necessary improvements on the watercourses.

Then again, when governments are seen to make concessions to the people's demand for local control, their interventions have often proved to be inappropriate and ineffective. In Bangladesh, *upazilas* working to regenerate their *sal* forests have largely been left alone by the forestry department in spite of opposition from government protected timber traders in the area. However, neither will the government enter into any formal commitment to a benefit-sharing arrangement with the *upazilas*. The lack of tenurial security has fostered a sense of uncertainty among the participating groups and discouraged others from undertaking similar initiatives elsewhere. In Thailand, a five-year government program to resettle a quarter of a million forest dwelling households in the Northeast is shot through with bureaucratic mishandling. Under the program each resettled family is to receive 15 *rai* of land. However, only those families with legal documents proving land ownership and household registration are eligible; over half of the target beneficiaries are, by this requirement, excluded from the redistribution scheme. Qualified families have found that the land allocated to them is generally unproductive. No land title has been issued to them, making their tenure on the land dependent on the ever-changing policy of the state on the matter. Furthermore, much of the redistributed land already belongs to other farming communities. This has created a great

Governments' complicity in largenous attacks on the environment by the elite legitimizes big-time environmental theft and discourages marginalized people from making further -- painful -- sacrifices in the name of sustainability.

deal of tension and resulted in confrontations--some bloody--between the relocated communities and the previous occupants of the allocated land. Sri Lanka meanwhile has at least 40 statutes dealing directly with environmental conservation, and as many as 60 others indirectly related to this purpose. The poor implementation of these laws, however, has resulted in inadequate protection for the environment. For instance, the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance has not been amended since 1970 to adjust the stipulated fines at pace with inflation; with its paltry fines--ridiculous by present-day standards--it is hardly surprising that poachers and other offenders flout the law. The Felling of Trees (Control) Act, on the other hand, prohibits the felling of any tree gazetted by the minister; to date, however, only one tree species, the *Jak*, has been so stipulated.

Elite Interests. Security of land tenure is a basic precondition of sustainable land resource use. This is due to a generally accepted principle that good stewardship comes naturally or at least more readily with a sense of ownership.

In many countries in Asia, one of the most formidable tasks for NGOs promoting sustainable land resource use is to dismantle monopoly control of privately owned land. In the Philippines, for instance, the agricultural landholding pattern is basically skewed--with only a handful of landlords owning most of the arable land. This situation has changed only slightly through many generations--despite the implementation of various agrarian reform programs by successive administrations--because feudal families have time and again used their political power to circumvent, if not totally evade, agrarian reform.

Of 10 million Filipinos comprising the agricultural labor force, only 15 per cent are owner-cultivators while 85 per cent have no control over the lands they till. With the double cost-price squeeze, the lack of credit facilities, perpetual indebtedness, and runaway inflation, poverty has become endemic to farming. Thirty per cent of the poorest Filipinos are from the

With their largely Western educated leaders, NGOs have been inclined to adopt a paternalistic attitude towards the people they're committed to empower, and thus have fallen -- unwittingly -- into the bad habit of the colonizers whose legacy of a shattered self-esteem NGOs are now trying to undo...

rural areas, and the vast majority (62 to 68 per cent) of them are farmers.

Under these conditions, concerns of land resource sustainability pale beside the more compelling demands of survival. To ask the farmers to sink money, time, and extra labor into land which belongs to oftentimes resented landlords is really asking too much unless the farmers are assured that they, too, will benefit.

Elite interests hinder CBNRM initiatives in other ways. Local people's organizations engaged in agro-forestry constantly run up against companies engaged in the illegal lumber trade; communities working to preserve and re-plant their mangrove forests are turned back by operators of aqua farms; fisherfolk disciplining their ranks against overfishing and the use of destructive fishing methods watch helpless as trawlers and dynamiters sweep the bottoms clean.

These larcenous attacks on local resources are not unknown to the government; they are even sanctioned by it or its eminent officials in exchange for a portion of the booty. In Sharanpur, India poor people who depend on *Bhabbar* grass to make rope have been all but cut off from their supply by a forest policy under which a major part of the *Bhabbar* harvest is sold to paper mills at much cheaper prices. In the Bhagalpur district of Bihar a high court ruled in favor of two waterlords controlling an 80 km stretch of a river, in spite of laws abolishing *panidari* (waterlord system) and to the detriment of many fisherfolk. In Indonesia 35 hectares of land being cultivated by farmers of *Rarahan kampung* was selected by the provincial government for conversion to a golf course. The land was leased to the private developer and the farmers were told to accept a measly sum as compensation for their displacement. In Bangladesh people's organizations (POs), assisted by NGOs, succeeded in getting government lands allocated to them but found out that gaining control of such lands is not so easy. Most of the lands were illegally occupied by the rural elite and they resorted to violence to prevent the POs from taking control of the lands. In Thailand, the National Forest Reserves Act allows private companies to take a lease on forest lands for commercial exploitation. The Act, however, prohibits the "unlawful" use of forest land and forest products by local people without formal authorization from the Forestry Department. Villagers in Baan Mae Harn were charged with illegal logging for cutting wood to build their homes, while the government granted a logging concession leasing portions of national reserved forests to a commercial firm. Local groups protesting the forest depleting operations of concessions came up against military troops serving as security guards for the concessionaires. In Paikpara (Bangladesh), local landlords and timber traders dispatched mercenaries to terrorize a group of villagers protecting the forests from lumber pilferage. This act of harassment was done with the tacit consent of local government officials.

Governments' complicity in these illegal acts legitimizes big-time environmental theft and discourages marginalized

people from making further--painful--sacrifices in the name of sustainability.

Fragmented People. The lead players in the restoration of CBNRM present a special challenge to organizations working to "catalyze" the process. Many NGOs believe that the communal spirit which animated pre-colonial societies in South and Southeast Asia is still alive and needs only to be revived. Others argue that all systems of religion being practised today provide a usable framework for the resurgence--among deeply religious Asians--of a common tradition of environmental stewardship. Unfortunately, however, these assumptions can no longer be taken for granted. A colonial past, a destitute present, and all the cultural effacement that went on in between have conspired to erode those same values on which the transformation to a just and sustainable order depends. The communal spirit and respect for nature which pre-colonial people seemed to carry in their bones have been all but supplanted by the modern day ethos: "Look out for Number One". Moreover, old ties to the community have long been replaced by loyalty to clan, caste, class, and other such affiliations.

All these have created special problems for NGOs involved in CBNRM promotion. In Pakistan, for instance, a community initiative to equitably distribute scarce irrigation water had initially met with some resistance because inadequate allotments to the members resulted in the lowering of crop yields. In Thailand, fruit tree growers are reluctant to shift to more sustainable techniques because these lengthen the waiting period (*reportedly by three to five years*) to harvest time and require much capital and labor investment. Of course, marginalized communities can hardly be faulted for hesitating, if not refusing, to make the change they can ill afford. Unless NGOs can make the effort worth their while, impoverished people will do what they must in order to survive.

"START WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE"

In what promises to be a long-drawn out struggle to restore community control of natural resources management, NGOs in South and Southeast Asia are finding that the best intentions

By unintentionally reviling the people's way of life and extolling their alternative vision for it, it comes as no surprise that NGOs have had serious problems building self-sufficiency in the communities they work with.

do not guarantee success. They are realizing that their efforts, though stamped CBNRM all over, will not catch on unless they correspond with what the people want to do themselves. And that any vision for change cannot be sustained--beyond the initial enthusiasm it generates--unless people actually throw in their lot with it.

In plenary discussions during the First Asian Development Forum, Bishan Singh, MINSOC Executive Director, related a Buddhist parable which vividly illustrates how NGOs can go wrong in trying to bring development to the people. It tells of a man who comes across a fisherman sitting under a tree with a basketful of fish by his side. The man asks the fisherman why he is sitting there and not out in the sea

trying to catch more fish. The fisherman answers, no, he doesn't have to go back, he has already caught enough fish. The man then tells the fisherman that if he went out and caught more he would earn enough money to buy a motor for his boat, which would then make it possible for him to go farther out to sea and bring in more fish and earn still more money. He could then use the extra income to buy nylon nets, enabling him to catch more and bigger fish. Unimpressed, the fisherman asks simply, "What for?" "What for?!" the man cries, incredulous. "Why, so you could have money and be happy." And to this the fisherman replies, "But what do you think I am now?"

NGOs and other like-minded groups would easily identify with the man in our allegorical tale. They make much of the people's capacity to improve their own lives but do not quite trust them to get it right the first time. With their largely Western educated leaders, NGOs have been inclined to adopt a paternalistic attitude towards the people they're committed to empower, and thus have unwittingly fallen into the bad habit of the colonizers whose legacy of a shattered self-esteem NGOs are now trying to undo. By unintentionally reviling the people's way of life and extolling their alternative vision for it, it comes as no surprise that NGOs have had serious problems building self-sufficiency in the communities they work with.

STRATEGIES FOR NGO ACTION

The proper role for NGOs is to create the environment and conditions whereby people can regenerate not only their capacity for self-determination but their self-respect. Only then will the people have the confidence and the courage to take hold of their lives and pursue the kind of development they aspire to. In fulfilling this role, South and Southeast Asian NGOs have found the following general strategies invaluable:

1. *Build viable people's organizations.* As a minimum requirement, communities need to be financially self-reliant; without the independence this brings their demand for autonomy loses much of its persuasion. Just as importantly, communities taking on the task of sustainably managing local resources--which requires short-term but painful sacrifices in exchange for long-term benefits--must be prepared for the long haul. Otherwise, they will be forced to go back to their old ways of coping. This is why in preparation for Project Exodus, the ALAMAT alliance in the Philippines instituted forced savings among its members in order to build up a fund base. The tripartite effort to promote agrarian reform in the same country has a productivity systems development component which is directed towards increasing farmers' income. Proshika urges its partner organizations from the very beginning to mobilize their own resources to reduce their dependence on interest groups. NGOs in Bangladesh, specifically those engaged in initiatives to regenerate denuded forest lands, provide credit to help their partner groups set up nurseries, while NGOs promoting fisheries management give financial assistance to partners setting up hatcheries and help them market the fingerlings. Similarly, the CVP Program in India started by soliciting investment from external sources, while gradually generating resources within the system.

Organizing communities also requires value formation to reinforce communal ties and the traditional respect for nature. PROCESS-Panay organized PAMMI on the central issue of fisheries protection. NGOs in Bangladesh, on the other hand, make their target groups aware--before anything else--of the importance and benefits of developing the forest resources. Having done this, NGOs should instruct their partner organizations on the socio-political and economic roots of unsustainable resource use. Organizers of the KPD Program in Malaysia realized the importance of building socio-political skills in their project beneficiaries and incorporated this component in the KPD's Grand Strategy.

Capacity-building is another important component of this strategy. In the course of their advocacy against illegal fishing, the members of PAMMI had to undergo seminar workshops on fishery law enforcement, while in the soil conservation-based agricultural programs administered by Xavier Agricultural Extension Services, the community beneficiaries received training in various farm technologies. Under the TRIPARRD Program (Philippines), communities had to learn skills in land mapping and the bureaucratic processes of agrarian reform implementation. Meanwhile, NGOs in Bangladesh train their partner groups to set up and operate seedling nurseries and fish farms. KPD personnel worked to enhance the participating communities' capability to run fish ponds, *padi* and fruit farms, tapioca factories, and ecotourism projects. Water Users Associations in Pakistan were taught to build, repair, and maintain watercourses to stem the loss of valuable irrigation water.

Capability building involves more than training the people in sustainable resource management methods; it also calls for

the preparation of people to run the organization by themselves and to deal with government and other agencies confidently. TRIPARRD, KPD, Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Movement, and the Bhoodan Gramdan Movement in India all emphasize the social preparation stage in community organizing. Several months before the implementation of Project Exodus, leaders of the urban poor organizations underwent rigorous training in group management, communication skills, and community organizing, among others. To bolster their partner groups' service delivery capability, TRIPARRD, Proshika, and KPD set up multi-level coordinating committees to ensure that cooperation and technical assistance can be effectively mobilized for effective program implementation. Proshika, in particular, encourages its partners to federate at the village, union, *upazila*, and development center levels in order to fortify themselves against attacks from the local elite. TRIPARRD strives to develop strong local leaders by assigning a PO representative to each of the program's coordinating committees.

Just as important in building viable POs is community goal setting. This must be facilitated by the NGOs in such a way that the people themselves, based on their perceived needs, are able to identify their objectives and the programs necessary to fulfill them. Needless to say, the programs' implementation must be led by the people themselves. In developing and protecting reserved government forests, NGOs in Bangladesh devolve management responsibilities to the POs. In Proshika-organized *upazilas* the farmers collectively decide on a forest protection plan during group meetings. Following the plan, they take up a certain area of the degraded forests, and each member is assigned plots to supervise and patrol. KPD's strategy, on the other hand, stresses that people must be enabled to adapt the most effective intervention mechanism in order to successfully establish and operate enterprises for their own development. In all of its projects, KPD personnel take on the processing and marketing risks at the start then help the communities to take over the enterprises--and the risks--eventually.

2. *Create a favorable policy environment for CBNRM.* This implies making sure that agrarian reform, urban land reform, aquatic resources reform, and similar programs are implemented speedily and effectively. In the meantime, NGOs must initiate programs to obtain whatever benefits are available to the people under the existing policy framework. In East Java, Indonesia, where the sheer number of landless and near-landless families makes land redistribution under an ineffective agrarian reform program well-nigh impossible, the NGO-sponsored Land Asset Endowment Program presents an acceptable compromise. Using government owned land, this Program seeks to guarantee each of the 4 to 5 million landless families 25-year renewable rights to holdings of at least 200 m². Though it is not redistribution as the landless would like, the Program hopes to demonstrate that the holdings can be run viably and thus lay the groundwork for genuine land reform in

East Java. Similarly, in South Cotabato, Philippines SCFI assists families to take advantage of the government's Integrated Social Forestry Program which grants forest occupants a renewable 25-year secure tenure in 3 to 7 hectare tracts of land in which they

4. *Build a movement for CBNRM.* Finally, NGOs must take the back seat and let the momentum be sustained by the people. Preparatory to this, however, they should help communities network with one another and provide opportunities for

The task of reviving a tradition that has long fallen into disuse is not an easy thing. To make it flourish in a hostile environment requires a massive act of faith...

can engage in agro-forestry activities. Under Project Exodus, ALAMAT took the initiative to acquire permanent land tenure for the urban poor even before a national housing act recognizing the claims of squatters was enacted. In Bangladesh, NGOs negotiated with government to allow their partner groups to plant trees along roadsides and other public places; NGOs involved in fisheries management assisted their partner groups to identify and take out long-term leases on degraded govern-

ment land, idle private land, and *baors* for fish farming. Concurrently, NGOs should generate wider mass support for CBNRM not just among marginalized groups but also among other sectors of society.

LET A HUNDRED COMMUNITIES BLOOM

The task of reviving a tradition that has long fallen into disuse is not an easy thing. To make it flourish in a hostile environment requires a massive act of faith. Yet, NGOs working--and

... Yet, NGOs working -- and hoping -- to restore community responsibility and control over local resources are seeing the first faint promise of a tradition's rebirth.

ment land, idle private land, and *baors* for fish farming.

NGOs may also inquire into the legal basis of community claims to land and other resources based on customary rights and laws.

At the same time, NGOs must step up the campaign against illegal logging; conversion of prime agricultural land into industrial estates and non-productive uses; destruction of mangroves; dynamiting and trawling in territorial waters; and other environmentally destructive activities involving vested interest groups.

3. *Form partnerships with government.* Notwithstanding the obvious difficulties and pitfalls in working with government, NGOs promoting CBNRM need the resources that governments control. In certain cases, the government has even proven itself to be a useful ally. For instance, the tripartite partnership among people's organizations, NGOs, and government agencies working towards agrarian reform in the Philippines seems to be a promising model for grassroots reform in partnership with government. NGOs in Bangladesh also collaborated with the government to implement a national land reform program. They set up a Coordination Council for Land Reform to work in cooperation with the Land Ministry on such activities as identifying the genuine landless, preparing the basic policy document, and training beneficiaries, among others. Unlike the tripartite experiment in the Philippines, however, the Land Reform Program in Bangladesh has lost momentum due to lack of political will.

hoping--to restore community responsibility and control over local resources are seeing the first faint promise of a tradition's rebirth. Still--it must be said--this resurgence we are all hoping to see is a delicate flower, and NGOs will have to cultivate it carefully if it is to survive and reach full bloom in today's societies. ■

NOTES

1. Korten, David C. and Antonio B. Quizon, "In Search of Common Grounds Among Governments, NGOs and Donors," Paper prepared by invitation of the Asian Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for presentation at the Regional Dialogue on GO-NGO Relations: Prospects and Challenges for Improving the Policy Environment for People-Centred Development held 11-15 March 1991 in Chiangmai, Thailand.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Paper prepared by Dr. Khawja Shamsul Huda for the Asian Development Forum, 4-6 February 1992, New Delhi, India.
7. Taken from the transcript of plenary sessions at the First Asian Development Forum held 4-6 February 1992 in New Delhi, India.
8. Ibid.

THE COUNTRY REPORTS

THAILAND

VITAL
SIGNS

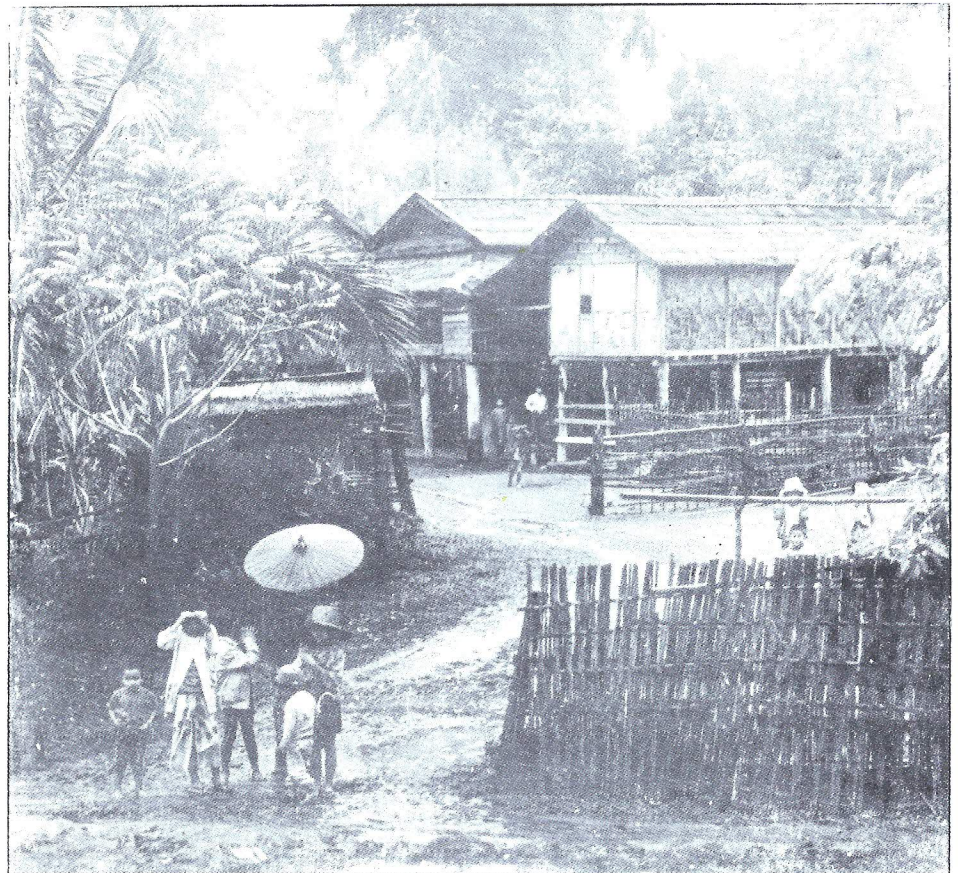
Remaining forested area:
28% of total land area (down
from 53% in 1961)

Land conversion trends:
182 golf courses (each occu-
pying 1,000 to 2,000 rai) are
located on agricultural land
(65 to 75%) and on forest land
(13.5 to 26%); 11 new indus-
trial estates (each occupying
on average 1,000 rai) have
sprung up in 1991 alone;
prawn farms (occupying 500
to 5,000 rai) have been
established in coastal areas;
1,121,701 rai of mangrove
forests have been destroyed by
shrimp culture, salt farming
and mining as of 1981

**Debt of average Thai
farmer:** 16,819.49 Baht

**Percentage of urban poor
(in Bangkok):** 20 to 25% of
Bangkok's population.

SLOWING THE TREE-TOLL OF THAILAND'S PROGRESS



Hailed as an Asian economic success, Thailand is slowly realizing that the pursuit for growth and progress has failed to protect the community and the environment. To preserve economic gains, a community-oriented and people-centered development model is called for.

Paper presented by YOS SANTA-SOMBAT, Local Development Institute, Thailand, for the Asian Development Forum, 4-6 February 1992, New Delhi, India.

In Thailand, the destruction of tropical forests has been going on at an alarming rate. The total forest land area has declined from 171 million rai in 1961 (or 53.33% of total land area) to 89 million rai in 1988 (or 28.03% of total land area). From the elitist point of view, rural populations are to blame when, in fact, commercial exploitation (logging concessions) and government policies, or the lack of it, are the main culprits behind the depletion and degradation of tropical forests.

Since its inception, the National Forestry Policy has been guided by two popular misconceptions: namely, the overemphasis on short term economic benefit and the separation of people and forest.

The logging concessions granted by the state to private business before the total logging ban in 1989 clearly indicate the government's perception of forest as mere wood lots to be logged for both domestic consumption and export purposes. The state has failed to understand the significance of forestry as the center of the local ecological system and the core of the local communities' livelihood and well-being. The classification of forest land into "conserved" forest and "economic" forest is based on this unchanged misconception. The "economic" forest (25% of total forest land) is merely another form of logging concession under the guise of a new classification system. The only difference is that in this newly concessioned forest the private sector is entrusted with the responsibility of reforestation. However, the concessionaires may reforest the land with tree species of their choice, e.g. eucalyptus, without considering the needs of local communities or the environment.

Forestry policy has been based on the belief that local communities are not a part of the ecological system and that local residents are the main cause of deforestation. This belief has invariably been used as justification for moving local communities from areas that the government has declared **conserved forest land**. This particular misconception has not only caused increasing tension, conflict and suspicion between local peoples and the state, but has also undermined the traditional role of the local communities as guardians, custodians, and managers of the forest.

Aside from the misguided forestry policies, additional factors contributing to the rapid destruction of the forest include unbalanced growth between urban and rural sectors, skewed land distribution and insecure land tenure, unsustainable exploitation of forests for industrial timber production and export, inappropriate government policies regarding land tenure, rural poverty, and encroachment into forest land. They are interrelated issues which stem largely from the growth-oriented development paradigm, the policy of centralization, and the mismanagement of natural resources. Large-scale development projects in agriculture and other sectors, especially the

construction of dams, are major factors as well.

Furthermore, increase in agricultural production in the past few decades has by no means brought about an increase in productivity and real income. Increased production has been carried out by expansion of land for cultivation which means, in effect, clearing of more and more forest lands. There has been very little, if any, improvement in farm technology for most farmers. Infrastructure services such as irrigation are limited largely to the Central Plain. Education-wise, it has only served to draw talented human resources away from the rural communities. In the process, the majority of rural population have become poorer and more helpless. The alternative left to them is either to migrate and seek jobs in urban areas, or to go into the forests to seek their own livelihood. Hence, the poor and landless have been pushed further and further to the end of the country's frontiers. This is how a large part of the forest reserve came to be occupied by a large number of people.

In the past several decades, it has become increasingly clear that tropical forest destruction and degradation present an unprecedented environmental problem. The development of a national forestry action plan cannot be regarded as the only possible or feasible solution to this crisis. Indeed, contrary to the dominating, centralized system of planning and management of forest resources, a more feasible solution to the problems of deforestation and environmental degradation is the decentralized system of community forestry and sustainable management of local forest resources. Certainly, sustainable use of tropical forest resources includes not just maintaining timber and conserving biological diversity but also maintaining the ecological balance and functions of forests such as soil quality, hydrological cycles, climate and weather. Logging can definitely never be sustainable in such terms. Furthermore,





C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
T H A I L A N D



the tropical forest conservation effort cannot focus solely on establishing forest reserves, watersheds and national parks. Because the clearing of forest is symptomatic of a pattern of uncontrolled and destructive land use, it is unlikely that forest reserves can be protected within a landscape that is completely over-exploited. Unless the surrounding areas are developed in a sustainable manner and local communities are actively involved in the protection of "their" forests, conservation will never succeed. Forest conservation methods, therefore, must include not only forest reserves, but also local participation and innovative approaches to rural development. This is the crux of the concept of forestry for community development.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN THAILAND

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Community forestry has been practiced in many parts of Thailand for centuries. Isolation, traditional self-sufficiency,

and a simple way of life had kept the forests largely intact. It was not until three decades ago, when the villagers followed the logging trails and burned the thinning forests down to grow cash crops, that the Thai forests began to suffer massive and rapid destruction. The revenue earned from cash-crop exports, however, was spent on infrastructural services for the urban industrial sector. The state policy of keeping the price of cash crops low has also led to greater deforestation as the rural farmers sought to increase their income by expanding their farmlands.

Despite the massive expansion of land for cash crop production, however, each community normally maintains its own forest area as a source of food, firewood, herbs and medicines, and building materials. Villages in mountainous areas also have strong traditions of protecting their rain catchment forests and watershed areas because their agricultural production system and livelihood depend on them. Many villages also preserve a large portion of their forests for ritual and ceremonial purposes.

From a two-month survey of community forestry in the North and Northeastern Thailand, our research teams uncovered hundreds of community forests that are managed and controlled by local peoples based on customary laws and practices. Depending on the different geographical, historical, and cultural contexts, community forestry may differ slightly in meaning from one locality to another. Rules and regulations governing the practices of community forestry also differ among communities.

Central to the seemingly different definitions and practices of community forestry, however, is the belief that the community forestry is a "common property" to be preserved, maintained, and utilized by all members of the community. Community forestry is always multi-dimensional. It is the core of local ecological and production systems; it is concerned with the system of land use, traditional practices, customary laws, cultural patterns and lifestyles of people living in and dependent upon forest resources. Customary laws governing the use and maintenance of the forest, including the tenurial status of land and the ownership of the trees, are always conceptually a central part of community forestry practices.

Community forests are normally classified into different types, each according to its importance and functions. The assumption underlying the demarcation of forests into different types and functions, each governed by its own set of rules and regulations, is to distinguish the "common property resource" that is controlled, managed and utilized for the communal welfare, from the "private property resource" that is to be exploited and maintained for individual gains. All community members have access to the common property resource. They are also obliged to contribute time and labor to the maintenance of these resources. Common property resources, such as community forests, thus serve as symbols of unity and social cohesion.



Customary rules based on religious beliefs are applied to each type of forest. The goal of protecting watershed areas, conserving flora and fauna, and maintaining the ecological balance; awareness of the interdependency between forest, water and agricultural production; and knowledge of tree species, medicinal herbs, the forest habitat and carrying capacity have been passed on from generation to generation. The community forestry concept also serves as a basis for the promotion of local people's sense of belonging and attachment to the community, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

PO/NGO INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

In recent years, the Thai NGO movements have expressed increasing interest and concern for environmental problems and the unsustainable management of natural resources. The acceleration of industrialization in Thailand in the past has led to a growing demand for and conflict over the use of natural resources, especially land, water and forest. Environmental NGOs have also expressed concern over issues such as biodiversity, ozone-destroying chemicals, natural disasters and the impact of urbanization on the environment.

At the national and global levels, NGOs have participated in environmental campaigns against the policies of centralization and mismanagement of natural resources. The growing environmental concern of the public provides the NGO movement with the necessary leverage to demand a change in development paradigms at both the local and national levels.

As such, the NGO movements will continue to play a critical role in forging shared consciousness and shared objectives in the environmental and development issues. Of utmost importance in terms of development policies however, is the con-

tinuing lack of appreciation and recognition on the part of the government for local wisdom, knowledge, and expertise in natural resource management. Local people's organizations are not recognized by the state as legal entities and hence are not entrusted with the authority to manage and control their own resources. Bureaucratic centralization, thus, remains a major obstacle.

The cultural heritage and traditional practices of local resource users, especially regarding how these translate into customary laws and regulations governing the use of local resources, are fundamental considerations that need to be integrated into natural resource management planning. Policies securing local tenure and access rights are also fundamentally important. Yet, most legislation expropriates resources from local communities and vests exclusive rights to centralized governments. This type of policies works against the goals and objectives of sustainable resource management.

Thus, at the local level, the ultimate objectives of the NGO movement are to restore local communities' potential in resource management and to develop self-reliance. This point is elaborated in the case study of "community forestry" in Thailand discussed on the next page.



A child's painting, inviting people to plant trees



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
T H A I L A N D

Case Study: BAAN MAE HARN

Baan Mae Harn is situated on the right bank of Mae Harn River, in Mae Saraeng District, Mae Hong Sorn Province, one of the most mountainous provinces in Northern Thailand. The village proper, covering an area of approximately one km², is subdivided into two sections, Mae Harn and Mae Jon. The 3,125 rai of agricultural land provide for their subsistence needs (swidden agriculture on the plain and dry rice on steep and infertile cropping zones). The rest of the village area, covering 34 km², is healthy evergreen forest land.

Most of Baan Mae Harn's residents are Karen Sgaw, a tribal group whose traditional management of natural resource has been recognized by many researchers and development workers. Beset by bad roads, mountainous terrains and, until quite recently, isolation, the residents of Baan Mae Harn have maintained their traditional system of resource management, lifestyle, and cultural practices. Its population numbering 766 is dependent on a traditional land use system and subsistence agriculture. Limited asset accumulation, few cash crops, and labor exchange ensure equitable distribution of income.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the expansion of agriculture and state control has added immense pressure on Thai villagers to

colonize the forests as land was increasingly put to purposes other than local subsistence production. The colonization of Burma by the British further accelerated the

invasion of forest frontiers as logging concessions by British companies were introduced to Burma and later on to Northern Thailand. When the British first expanded their teak logging concessions over the Burmese border to Northern Thailand, users' rights to forest land were allocated by still relatively autonomous Northern nobles for their own benefit. In 1896, however, the Royal Forestry Department was set up under a British director to extend administrative control of the forest land and capture foreign contracts for the central government. In 1899, the king formally claimed the rights to all forest lands. With the abolition of absolute monarchy in 1932, these lands were passed on to the state. In 1938, the Protection and Reservation of Forests Act was promulgated. Through this Act, the government formally authorized permanent forests leasable to foreign, and later on, Thai logging companies.

By 1953, the amount of wood removed from the forest had amounted to a total of 2.7 million m³ per year. The effect of commercial logging on village forest commons held under customary laws, however, has not been well-documented.

In accordance with FAO recommendations, the National Forest Reserves Act of 1964 was promulgated allowing further expansion of state holdings of forest lands which were then leased out to private firms for commercial exploitation.

The Act, however, prohibited "unlawful" use of forest land and forest

products including logging by local people without formal authorization by the Forestry Department. In the mid-1960s, villagers in Baan Mae Harn were arrested on charges of illegal logging even though they had only cut down what was needed for household construction. Meanwhile, in 1965 the government granted a logging concession leasing portions of Mae Yuam National Reserved Forests to the Panasidh Company. The first paved road was constructed soon after and many residents of nearby villages, including Baan Mae Harn, were employed by the logging firm.

In 1980, another logging concession, leasing other portions of Mae Yuam National Reserved Forests, was granted to the Vanakij company. By this time, however, villagers were aware of their dwindling forest resources and tried to stop the encroachment of the logging firm. Local anti-concession groups were formed only to be met with military troops serving as security guards for the concessionaires. In 1984, the Vanakij company began its logging activities in Baan Mae Harn's forest. As the loggers moved closer to their watershed areas, anti-concession movements led by Baan Mae Harn's headman became fierce. Villagers from other nearby communities joined their protests and roadblock. The villagers also petitioned the Ministry of Agriculture to revoke the logging concession in this area.

Their collective efforts finally paid off when General Harn Lilanondha, then Minister of Agriculture, inspected the area and revoked the logging permit in Baan Mae Harn's forest as requested by the villagers.

Notwithstanding the popular myth

that the tribal groups are detrimental to the forest environment, the Karens are living proof of a conservation ideology still firmly held by many tribal groups. Their organized efforts in fighting against outside encroachment is a case in point. More importantly, their culture and lifestyle, upon careful examination, are indeed quite compatible with the concepts of conservation and ecological balance.

Excellent agriculturalists, the Karens have practiced multi-crop farming which maintains the soil's nutrients and provides them with a variety of vegetables and grain for local subsistence. Apart from rice, their staple diet, the Karens also grow sugar cane, banana, tapioca, potato, maize, peanuts, sesame, and millet. By growing a variety of crops in the same field, the Karens can produce enough for their dietary requirements without having to farm large areas of land. They are aware of the advantages of growing different crops together in the field. For instance, the Karens usually plant maize and rice in the same field. When the crops ripen, the maize stalks which are taller hide the rice stalks from birds. Although portions of maize are lost in the process, the birds tend to leave the hidden rice alone.

Local wisdom also dictates that the Karens plant several varieties of rice in the same field. As such, if one or two varieties succumb to a disease or pest, chances are other varieties will not. This is simply a traditional method of insuring that an entire harvest is not destroyed.

The Karens do not use chemical fertilizers or pesticides on the crops. In fact, their agricultural methods and technologies are

extremely appropriate and sensible, especially in the way they select varieties of crops to be planted. They consider such factors as the quality of soil in the fields, the type of grain, and of last year's crop. For example, the inferior varieties of rice are weeded out while the more suitable varieties are developed. The Karens also practice rotational farming which gives the soil a chance to replenish its nutrients.

Their religious beliefs also symbolize their commitment to environmental preservation. Indigenous social and political structures such as the presence of a ritual chief and a Council of Elders are believed to further ensure harmonious relations with "watershed spirits" and environmentally sound land use. Breach of certain moral codes is believed to result in sickness, crop failure or loss of livestock, unless the spirits are appeased.

Modern times, however, have ushered in new problems. Growing competition and conflict over forest resources have made the villagers aware of the importance of conservation. Like their counterparts in hundreds of community forests throughout the kingdom, villagers of Baan Mae Harn are now organizing surveillance teams to protect "their" forest against outside encroachment. They organize and elect a community forest "committee" to manage and control their forest resources. A forest conservation map is drawn whereby different areas of the forest are clearly demarcated. Watershed areas are declared off-limits, and the gathering of such forest products as mushroom, bamboo shoots, etc. is limited solely to domestic consumption. Commercial exploitation of forest resources is strictly forbidden. Naturally felled trees are considered common property, and priority to use these trees as con-

struction materials is given to newly wed couples.

From in-depth studies of community forestry in the North and Northeastern regions, we have learned that the existence of community forestry has invariably been based on local wisdom and tradition, including classification of land into compound and housing areas, and communal grazing land; formation of forest management committees; and formulation of rules governing local use of forest resources and penalties for violations.

In the past few decades, however, community forestry has been greatly undermined, challenged, and encroached upon by outside forces. The most important problem is the Land Redistribution Programme for the Poor Living in Degraded Forest Reserves, a military-led five-year programme for mass rural resettlement that is now being implemented in the Northeast. This forced eviction is the culmination of many years of conflict between the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) and local villagers living in the areas classified as National Reserved Forests. The project seeks to uproot 250,000 peasant households and to destroy 2500 village communities.

Since the beginning of its implementation, there have been abundant evidence to discredit this resettlement project. The idea of upgrading the livelihood of the uprooted peasants and instilling in them a sense of belonging and responsibility for natural resources - as envisaged by the proponents and implementors of the project - contrasts sharply with the cruel reality faced by the people evicted from the land where they and their ancestors had labored for



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
T H A I L A N D

generations.

The resettlement project has drawn a great deal of criticism from NGOs and academicians. *"The inhuman measure will hurt the people on the most massive scale we've ever seen in our history,"* said Prof. Saneh Chamarik, a prominent scholar and advocate of balanced development. *"It will tear apart the social fabric of the countryside."* Because the government and its agencies, especially the RFD, believe that *"man and forest cannot co-exist,"* the consequence is the eviction programme. The RFD certainly considers all forests its property, to be exploited and utilized the way it sees fit. Until the logging ban in 1989, its main activities had focused on the forest industry, especially logging. After over a century of extensive logging and several decades of state promotion of cash crops which resulted in massive land-clearing, the forests which had been the source of RFD's income, are now virtually gone. Thus, the RFD finds itself facing the challenge of maintaining its earnings and status quo. For the RFD, evicting people from the so-called National Reserved Forests and replacing them with fast-growing eucalyptus plantations, has become a promising mission.

Consequently, the authorities have resorted to force to get the land they need for their profit-making commercial plantation plans. The lack of proper arrangements to accommodate those resettled, the

disregard for human suffering, and more significantly, the total dismissal of the community forestry concept have all contributed to making conflict over natural resources all the more serious and problematic.

To begin with, the project planned to redistribute 15 rai of land to each relocated family. After its completion, the land area that will be redistributed to the poor farming household will amount to approximately 4.8 million rai, out of the total land area of 14 million rai. There is reason to believe that the remaining 9.2 million rai will be leased out to the private sector for eucalyptus plantations and the paper pulp industry.

Second, the national forest policy and the forest land classification system have remained unclear since aerial maps are used for demarcation of forest areas. This method has inevitably led to the overlapping of community lands and conserved forest land.

Blind enforcement of the law in these cases has caused serious conflict between the communities and the officials involved. Furthermore, although one of the aims of the resettlement project is to help villagers with land rights problems, the implementation of the project has in fact aggravated the situation simply because the redistribution program is based on legal documents proving land ownership and household registration. This means that over half of the people will be excluded from the land redistribution scheme.

In practice, the actual land allocated to the people is usually unproductive. No land title has been provided to the newly resettled villagers. This makes the security of land

tenure dependent upon the policy of the state which may change. Furthermore, much of the land that has been allocated under the redistribution program already belongs to other farming communities. Thus, conflicts among the relocated communities and the existing ones have created a great deal of tension and violent confrontation.

The implementation of this project has not solved the agricultural land crisis in the forests. On the contrary, it has aggravated it. The answer to the problem of land crisis hinges not on central authority but on local people's taking greater control of the land, forests and water around them. Policies securing local tenure and access rights are fundamental to solving this problem. ■

COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Amidst all these problems, community forestry is, more than ever before, a breeding ground for local people's organizations and their attempts to adapt local wisdom, knowledge and traditions in order to meet the changing needs and challenges of modern times. As a social movement, the community forestry concept stresses social cohesion and networking among local peoples to protect themselves and their resources against outside encroachment. Community forestry also stresses local self-reliance and people empowerment by improving local capacity to handle community problems, strengthening their community spirit, increasing people's participation, and striking a balance between the utilization of forest resources and its conservation.

In the past few years, groups of Thai NGOs have also been actively involved in promoting the community forestry concept as a feasible alternative not only for environmental protection but also for rural development.

The issue of rural development brings into view the question of sustainable development as the ultimate purpose of community forestry. As distinguished from industrial forestry (with its exclusive interest in commercial plantation and wood products), the primary concern of community forestry is local people and communities that are co-existing with their own environments. The basic concepts and principles of community forestry stress sustainability in meeting local needs and enhancement of agricultural productivity and environmental stability. Viewed this way, the tree-growing activity under community forestry is naturally related to agriculture and sustainable land-use systems and practices.

The basic issue in community forestry is how to change land use in such a way that people get what they need on a sustainable basis from a relatively fixed, or even shrinking, land base. This is an immense task.

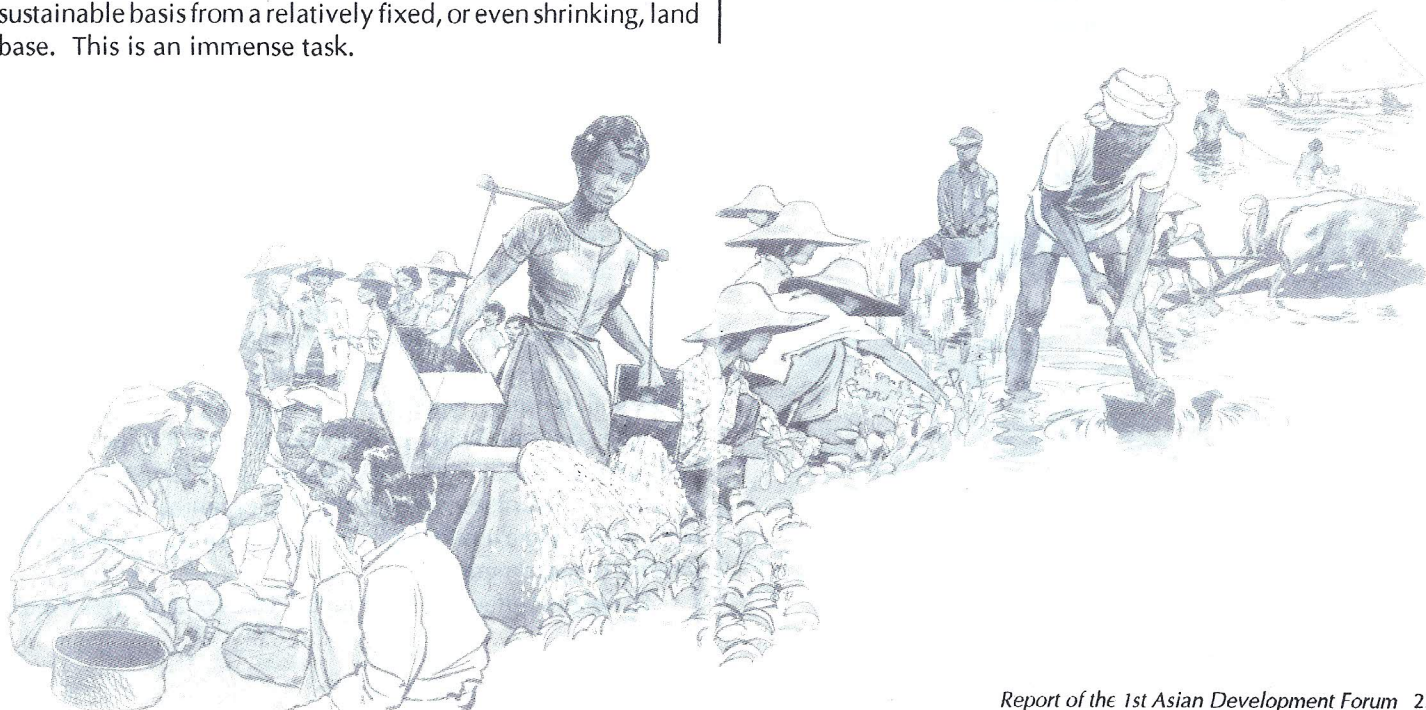
On the socio-economic front, the problem is how to promote local participation in activities involving a combination of technologies that can stabilize the environment and increase productivity simultaneously. Conservation without economic benefit is difficult to promote. If planners have a good understanding of the local situation, local knowledge, wisdom and practices, they can select activities that are both technically sound and likely to be well-supported by the local people because they involve economic benefits.

It is here that local NGO workers play a vital role in community forestry project. NGO workers can gain local support and involvement by working closely with the people and selecting activities that will meet the people's objectives. The fundamental question here is not the importation of new technologies into the communities but rather one of how local knowledge and wisdom could be advanced and extended to cope with the needs and demands of modern times.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY: NGOS AND LOCAL PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS

In light of the preceding remarks, the central focus of community forestry is necessarily the issues of human development, rural self-reliance, and sustainable increases in productivity. The main scope and objectives of community forestry in Thailand from the NGO's point of view can be summed up as follows:

1. To strengthen and develop local wisdom, potential and capacity for resource management and policy analysis, and to encourage local participation in resource management and decision-making;





C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
T H A I L A N D

2. To strengthen and develop local people's organizations and their awareness of community forestry (including the potential of community forestry for self-reliance and self-development on the basis of local customs and practices).

3. To promote sustainable increases in production from the relatively fixed land base, to halt unsustainable development paths that are leading to forest destruction, and to promote conservation activities and new use of forest resources that contribute to the well being of the community, promote equity, and ensure environmental protection.

4. To establish and promote community networks in order to build cooperation, to share methods and techniques relating to community forestry activities and to enhance the community's problem-solving capacity;

5. To formulate guidelines (from the grassroots' standpoint), for setting out a development strategy with the objective of rural self-reliance and sustainable use of land and other forest resources;

6. To formulate viable alternatives to national policy on community forestry, particularly through bottom-up planning, policy and institutional reform;

7. For possible legislative action, to inquire into the legal basis for legitimate claims of customary rights and laws concerning the use and management of local forests, and to formulate policy recommendations on legislative measures.

Community forestry is meant to be participatory and action-oriented. It involves collaborative efforts among local people, NGOs, GOs and academicians to identify the neces-

sary policy measures, strategies, actions and resources requirements in forest management and conservation efforts while keeping in mind the ultimate goal of rural self-reliance and sustainable development. Community forestry activities can be summarized in major areas as follows:

1. **Local People's Organizations Development.** Activities in this area should aim at promoting and strengthening local organizations and local leaders especially in their problem-solving capacity. Activities should include training of local leaders, and organizing local workshops to promote conservation awareness and activities.

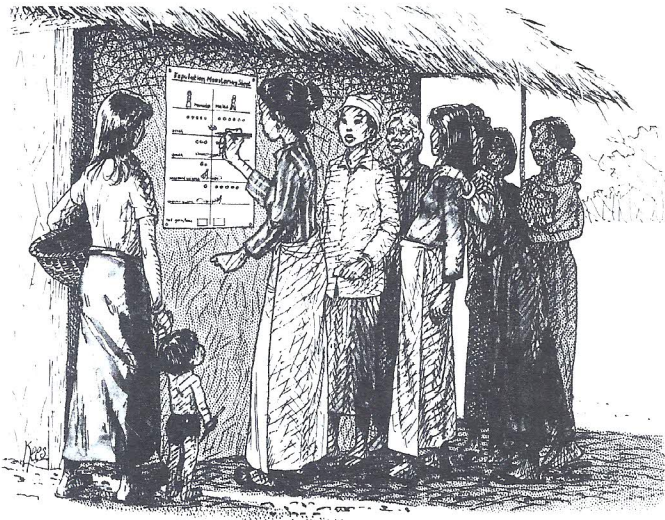
2. **Sustainable Increases in Productivity.** There is a need for sustainable increases in production from a relatively fixed land base. A fundamental concept to be utilized here is the relationship between stocks of trees and the sustainable flow of goods and services from them. One of the important tools is agroforestry. Increases in productivity can result from growing a wide variety of trees that have multiple purposes, for example. Trees can be planted to contain livestock, provide food, fuelwood and fodder, and add nutrients to the soil. Local people, NGOs and agricultural specialists should work together to select and introduce tree-related technologies with bearing on sustainable increases in productivity. Livestock production and fishery can also be promoted and expanded where appropriate through the setting up of community-revolving funds. Small-scale enterprise activities based on locally grown tree products should be promoted if practicable.

3. **Conservation and Reforestation.** Conservation and reforestation activities entail not only tree-growing activities, the setting up of nurseries, forest boundaries, and forest surveillance teams but also require urgent action to slow or halt unsustainable development paths. Activities should focus on planning, protecting, funding and managing community forest areas through local action. Both traditional knowledge and modern science is required in order to create new uses of forest resources, enhance the properties of foods, medicines and tree-related products. Management systems that promote the sustainable use of forest and agricultural production as well as policies and mechanisms that ensure that the grassroot innovators and custodians of the forest are provided incentives are also needed.

4. **Networking, Education and Training Activities.** This area of activity focuses on providing education and training through community forestry programs including field workshops and seminars. These training activities should involve specialists in agroforestry, agricultural extension, farming systems, soil fertility, watershed management, irrigation and drainage, soil and water conservation, laws and policies on community forestry, etc. Workshops and seminars among various communities should also be organized to promote networking and exchange of ideas and techniques involved in forestry management.

To be most effective, community forestry activities should





be a collaborative effort involving active participation of local people, NGOs, GOs, academicians and technical specialists, and should be integrated with education. This will help ensure that community forestry is relevant to the problems faced and that it addresses priority needs as identified through an interactive process of planning and consultation involving all parties concerned.

Government commitment and assistance through legislation, technical, and financial support will have a positive effect on community forestry. Government policies that recognize existing customary property rights, local decision-making processes and local resource management system, and promote the tenurial security of forest dwellers will strengthen the initiative of local peoples to protect the forests.

AGENDA FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

On the international level, despite the growing concern of the world community with the problems of global warming and environmental degradation, and despite increased recognition of the need for sustainable practices in tropical forest management, tropical forests continue to disappear at the rate of millions of hectares per year. International organizations and development agencies continue to ignore the fact that unsustainable forest and other natural resources management are but a manifestation of larger socioeconomic ills. The Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP), the main response of the United Nations agencies and the World Bank, for instance, raises serious doubts about the commitment to countering environmental degradation simply because the TFAP continues to ignore the presence, needs, and potential of millions of tropical forest dwellers, and seems unduly focused on funding commercial forestry while failing to identify the root causes of deforestation. Most international organizations and development agencies show very little initiative in environmental

issues. They preclude equitable, economical, and environmentally sustainable responses to the ever more serious problems of tropical deforestation.

The time has come for sustainable and community oriented development models. Forces driving the political economy of tropical deforestation - credits and loans, subsidies, trade barriers, etc. - should be reassessed for their impact on natural resources, and comprehensive policy reforms put in place to create the preconditions for successful implementation of sustainable resource management. International organizations and development agencies committed to the goal of sustainable environmental conservation and development should increase their programs and priorities to include support for research and development on bio-technology and biodiversity, rehabilitation of degraded tropical forests, sustainable agricultural practices and secure land tenure, community forestry and local management of natural resources.

Furthermore, while international organizations are searching for institutional innovation and adaptation in the area of environmental protection and sustainable resources management, they have generally failed to develop an "environmental strategy". To accomplish this, international organizations and development agencies should render their support in establishing an international "NGO Consortium on the Environment and Resource Management" which would nurture and support the development of effective environmental strategies by providing an international forum for policy deliberation, exchange of information, and streamlining the costs of responsible environmental action. ■



PHILIPPINES

A TRI-SECTORAL SOLUTION TO THE PHILIPPINE CRISIS

VITAL SIGNS



Number of persons living below the poverty line: 63 million

Number of unemployed: 4 million (1991)

Population growth rate: 2.5 to 2.7% (compared to the world's 1.8%)

Daily minimum wage: half of the minimum daily cost of living

Deforestation rate: 120,000 has. per year or 14 has. an hour

18 animal species rare and endangered

40% of total flora extinct

19 lakes and rivers badly polluted

12 lakes and rivers biologically dead

Against the backdrop of remarkable economic progress in the Asian region, the Philippines stands out - still burdened by pervasive poverty and underdevelopment.

ROOT CAUSES OF PROBLEMS

1. **Unequal Distribution of Wealth and Productive Resources.** The richest

10% of Philippine families control 35% of the total family income, while the poorest tenth control only 2.1%. Twenty percent of the population owns 80% of the total agricultural land.

2. **An Unsustainable Development Strategy.** Philippine development policy has favored profits from traditional cash crops, natural resource exploitation, and operation of industrial enclaves, and has failed to lay the groundwork for diversified and balanced industrialization.

Relentless exploitation of the country's natural resources for the profit of a few, combined with a rapidly increasing population, has led to near break-point pressure on finite, life-sustaining resources. The results are floods and drought due to lack of forest cover, water and power crises, low agricultural productivity, pollution, etc.

3. **Foreign Domination.** The country allocates 30% of export earnings for foreign debt service, to the detriment of social services. Of the top 1,000 corporations in the country in 1986, multinational companies numbered 232. From 1961 to 1980, American Transnational Corporations alone extracted \$959 million from the Philippine economy.

The NGO community of the Philippines finds an effective mechanism for the planning and implementation of development programs in Tripartism - the coordination of GOs, NGOs, and POs.

Paper presented by FR. FRANCIS LUCAS, WILFREDO HOMICILLADA and JOEL PANGSANGHAN of the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA) for the Asian Development Forum on Community-Based Natural Resource Management, 4-6 February 1992 New Delhi, India.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

1. **The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.** President Aquino proclaimed the comprehensive agrarian reform law (RA 6657) as the centerpiece legislation of her administration. However, the law is riddled with loopholes and exemptions for landowners, and therefore fails to make an impact on the feudal land ownership structure in the country.

2. **Promotion of People's Participation.** People's participation is now enshrined in the Philippine Constitution, and various institutional mechanisms now exist whereby citizens and NGOs can participate in governance and decision-making. While progress has been made on this aspect, there remains a tendency for government to involve the people only in the implementation and monitoring of development programs.

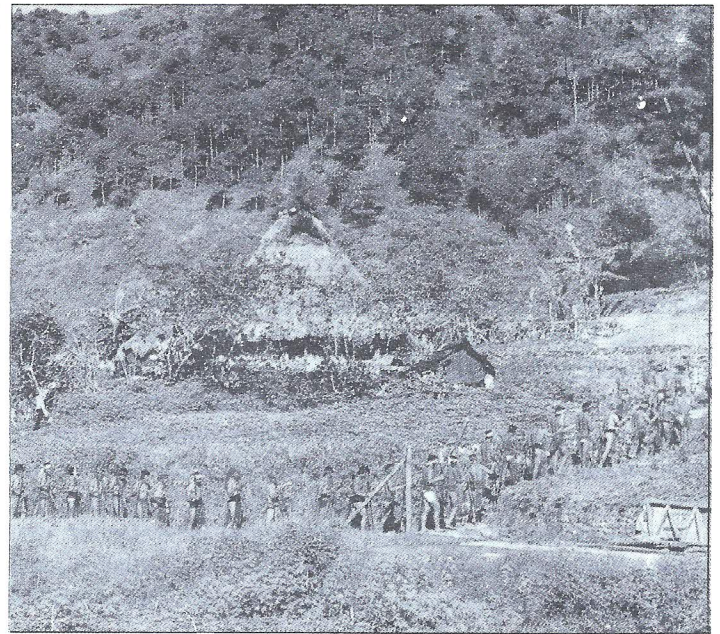
3. **Promotion of Free Trade and Fair Competition.** The administration dismantled monopolies nurtured under the previous regime, enacted measures to further liberalize trade, and removed barriers to domestic private enterprises. However, the failure to implement comprehensive social equity programs to distribute the benefits of economic growth have led to wider income disparities. A series of natural calamities have also derailed any progress which had been made towards prosperity.

4. **Decentralization.** A new Local Government Code, which devolves significant powers, responsibilities and resources to local government units has been enacted recently. A law projected to have far-reaching implications, the new Code can be viewed as an admission that centralized government has failed to bring progress to the country.

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to Spanish rule, the social unit in the Philippines had been the *barangay* (from Malay term "*balangay*" meaning "boat").



Indeed, most *barangays* were coastal or riverine in orientation, with people travelling mainly by boat. The average *barangay* was composed of 100 to 500 persons, most of them related to one another by kinship or marriage. Villages were headed by a chief who was an administrative leader - not an absolute ruler. The *barangays* engaged in subsistence agriculture, with little or no surplus for profit.

According to historian Renato Constantino, "the baranganic society had one distinguishing feature: the absence of private property in land". Thus, there was as yet no non-working "elite" class extracting profit from those who tilled the soil. The more advanced Muslim societies of Southern Philippines, however, were already at the threshold of class society - an Asiatic form of feudalism where land was still held in common but private in use.

Spanish conquest of the islands accelerated the disintegration of communalism with the super imposition of a Europeanized class structure over indigenous kinship structures. An integral part of the early Spanish administrative system was the *encomienda*, an administrative unit awarded to deserving Spanish military commanders. The *encomendero*, theoretically, was supposed to look after the welfare of the natives in exchange for exacting a tax. Most *encomenderos*, however, used the system to enrich themselves. They made numerous unlawful and cruel exactions and thereby reduced the natives to abject poverty and degradation.

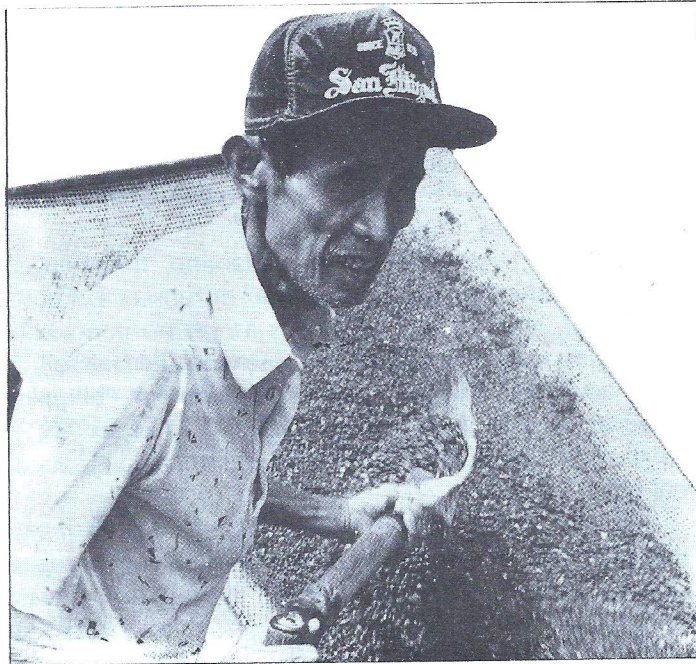
Towards the latter half of the Spanish period, the growing capitalist linkage with the world created a demand for cash crops. This, in turn, made landowning very attractive. Through various schemes - royal grants, foreclosures for failure to pay debts, royal decrees awarding land ownership to the person who registers it - the wealthy and influential Spaniards, mestizos and friars were able to acquire large tracts of land. Thus



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
P H I L I P P I N E S

began Philippine feudalism, which persists to this day.

The United States' colonization of the Philippines was motivated by the need to find new markets for US goods, more sources of raw materials to fuel US industries, and more areas for capital investment to absorb idle US money. Even after the Philippines was granted "independence" in 1946, the country's economy remained dependent and weak, because of "free trade" imposed during American rule and several years after. Under free trade (institutionalized by the Payne-Aldrich Act of 1909 and continued by the Bell Trade Act of 1946), American goods could enter the Philippines free of tariff and vice versa.



Since American goods were expensive finished products from highly developed industries, and Philippine goods were cheap, unprocessed agricultural products, free trade had the effect of promoting dependence on a few cash crops for export, since these had a guaranteed market abroad. Another onerous provision of the Bell Trade Act was the parity amendment which granted US citizens and corporations the same rights and privileges as Filipinos to exploit Philippine natural resources and operate public utilities in the Philippines.

To this day, the Philippines bears the marks of its colonial past - a feudal, monocrop agrarian structure inherited from Spanish rule, a weak industrial base because of free trade under the US, and unequal ownership of resources.

**PO/NGO INITIATIVES AND EXPERIENCES
 IN COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT**

Due to escalating poverty and government's inability to address equity and environment concerns, NGOs/POs have initiated their own community-based resource management initiatives. In the lowland rural areas, initiatives have revolved around the twin issues of land ownership and agricultural productivity. In the uplands, the focus has been on reconciling the need to conserve forests and the need to fulfill community subsistence needs. In the urban areas, efforts have been concentrated on access to decent and secure shelter.

LAND AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AGRARIAN REFORM: TriPARRD IN ANTIQUE

TriPARRD, or the Tripartite Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, is a partnership between non-government, and people's organizations that aims for actual land transfer and the delivery of support services. It is a six-year program initiated in the provinces of Antique in the Visayas, Bukidnon in Mindanao, and Camarines Sur in Luzon.

Antique in the Western Visayas island of Panay was chosen as one of the initial provinces for TriPARRD implementation because 1) it is one of the more depressed provinces in the island, thus needing more assistance; 2) it has been designated by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) as a strategic operating province where the bulk of CARP resources will be infused; and 3) it is home to several NGOs which are deemed capable of implementing agrarian reform, such as Hublag Evelio and PROCESS.

TriPARRD was installed in Antique starting May 1989 through a series of GO-NGO-PO consultations, data-gathering activities and a strategic planning workshop. TriPARRD in Antique is officially known as the Antique Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (APARRD).

Eight sites with a total land area of 1,393 has. were selected for prototyping. Identified as beneficiaries were 561 farmers.

Eight community development officers (CDOs) were hired and deployed to the sites to organize and strengthen the farmer-beneficiaries through mobilization for actual land transfer and support services accessing.

To date, over 400 has. have been transferred to 224 farmers; over a million pesos in support services have been delivered to the sites; eight sites have functional people's organizations with 395 members (seven registered with government agencies); a tracking mechanism for monitoring activities related to land transfer has been developed; and training courses on organizational development, technology, and agrarian reform have been given to the farmers.

But more than the quantifiables, TriPARRD has given the farmers the confidence to stand up to people. It has also brought back the farmers' belief in government, and in the law.

TriPARRD has proven that the teaming up of NGOs and

POs with the government is an effective mechanism for implementing agrarian reform.

SOIL CONSERVATION-BASED AGRICULTURE IN ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

Soil erosion is one of the most destructive effects of unrestrained logging in the Philippines, since 59% of the country's agricultural lands have a slope of 18 degrees or greater. Precious topsoil is eroded at one billion m³ a year, or 100,000 has. annually.

One response to this problem is the Soil Conservation-based Agricultural Development Program initiated by the Xavier Agricultural Extension Service (XAES) in the municipalities of Ipil and Titay in the province of Zamboanga del Sur. Launched in March 1989, the project aimed to increase production through the introduction of appropriate farming technologies, provision of farm input assistance, and development of cooperative associations.

The municipalities of Ipil and Titay lie in the mountainous area of Zamboanga del Sur. Both are accessible from Zamboanga City through rough, dusty roads that turn into mudpools when the rains come, or by Beechcraft which takes only about 30 minutes. The interior barangays are accessible only by motor-cycles.

Farming is the main occupation in these areas. Main crops are corn, coconut, and rubber. Fruit trees are also an important source of income.

The project covers 12 barangays in both Ipil and Titay and involves 161 farmer participants. It has three main components: 1) organizing the beneficiaries, 2) provision of training on agricultural technology and community leadership, and 3) expansion of project's services.

Training seminars on community awareness/leadership and farm technology were conducted. The first covered value formation, community service, leadership and organizational skills and technology transfer. Farm methods training involved seminars on sloping agricultural land technology (SALT), organic farming and farm management. The training courses were first extended to farmer-leaders who then conducted echo seminars for their respective cluster members with the help of consultants.

Erosion in the area's upland farms was checked by planting *flamengia*, *ipil-ipil* and *madre de cacao* in between rows of crops. These plants prevent topsoil from being washed away while trapping cascading rainwater which can then be used more efficiently. They also provided "green manure" - leaves from these plants improve the soil by making it more friable and easier to cultivate. This practice replenishes and preserves soil fertility.

Before XAES implemented the project, marketing activities were controlled by local traders whose unscrupulous practices deprived farmers of income. Now, Ipil and Titay farmers have established their own marketing scheme. One

barangay was designated as pick-up point where produce for sale would be bought and sold. The goods are transported using a "paragos" - a raft-like contraption pulled by a work animal.

In August 1991, XAES embarked on an expansion of the project to include production and marketing assistance. The number of participants has been increased to 210 and 14 barangays are now covered, up from the previous 12.

The new program continues to provide training on soil conservation, organic farming, farm management and appropriate farming technologies.

AGROFORESTRY IN SOUTH COTABATO

Rapid population growth, poverty, and an economy dependent on resource extraction, have all contributed to deforestation in the uplands. Government has traditionally left the management and utilization of forest resources largely to private entrepreneurs, through a system of licenses, leases and permits.

Under the Aquino administration, there have been initiatives to transfer the management of forests to marginalized communities residing in the upland areas. For these schemes to be successful however, the communities must be able to derive income from the land. Otherwise, they will resort to cutting more trees in order to meet basic needs and generate income.

The South Cotabato Foundation, Inc. (SCFI) was founded in 1983 with the vision of transforming underdeveloped communities in South Cotabato into self-reliant, productive and ecologically-aware associations. SCFI assists families in these communities in acquiring a Certificate of Stewardship Contract (CSC) under the government's Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) program. ISF is a means of mobilizing forest occupants for forest conservation by giving them a renewable 25-year secure tenure in a three to seven hectare tract of land in which to engage in agro-forestry. CSC owners can derive benefits from agroforestry enterprises while reforesting the area.

Aside from assistance in organizing the beneficiary communities, SCFI also provides support services such as linking and training. SCFI also maintains a central nursery which has a regular inventory of 130,000 *Gemelina* tree seedlings intended to supply the needs of the communities as well as to sustain SCFI's own agroforestry programs. Community tree nurseries are also being developed. SCFI also provides initial credit for short term production of cash crops.

Presently, this initiative is being pursued in 33 communities in South Cotabato, benefitting about 1,500 people. The program is being implemented mostly in denuded public lands. Over 700 hectares have been agroforested so far.

ADVOCACY AGAINST ILLEGAL FISHING IN IBAJAY, AKLAN

In 1987, government statistics placed the number of small fisherfolk in the Philippines at a little over 500,000. This sector provides 77 percent of the population's protein requirements



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
P H I L I P P I N E S

and contributes almost half of the nation's total fish catch.

Yet, the small fisherfolk community remains one of the most marginalized sectors in the country despite the fact that the Philippines has one of the richest marine resources in the world.

Fish catch of the sector during the period 1984-1988 remained virtually constant with only a 4.8 metric ton increase over five years (from 1,089.2 to 1,094 metric tons) or a 0.96 metric ton increase per year.

One factor which contributes to this general decline in small fisherfolk's catch is the use of illegal and destructive fishing practices. Among these are dynamite fishing, illegal purse seine operations, and muro-ami. These methods deplete fish resources by destroying the natural habitat of fish and other marine life, and by indiscriminately catching even small fish.

Such operations have been on-going in the municipality of Ibajay, Aklan since the 1960s. Ibajay is rich in marine resources. Prawn, crabs, milkfish and tilapia are some of the marine products found in the area. A wide stretch of coral reefs could be found specifically in the municipal Ibajay's Barangay Bugting-Bato water portion, covering its entire seven km expanse.

In response, PROCESS-Panay, a non-government organization operating in Panay island in Western Visayas (of which Aklan is part), organized the *Pagtililigyog it Maintok nga Mananagat it Ibajay* (Association of Small Fisherfolk of Ibajay) or PAMMI in 1987. PAMMI is presently operating in nine coastal barangays in Ibajay.

The organization has been spearheading the campaign against illegal fishing in its locality since its inception. Its advocacy efforts include information dissemination, conducting dialogues with concerned government officials, filing petitions and cases in courts, supporting local ordinances against illegal fishing and staging mass mobilizations.

PAMMI monitors and reports illegal fishing activities to government agencies concerned. Its members participate in various consultations, seminars and workshops designed to educate and train the people regarding fishing laws and advocacy. Among the seminars they have conducted are the small fisherfolk consultations, para-legal trainor's training, and seminar workshop on Fishery Law enforcement.

Members have also participated in an information campaign aimed at educating the people on the harmful effects of illegal fishing. Also discussed during the campaign was government's role in implementing fishing laws.

PAMMI has completely eliminated illegal and destructive

fishing from the ranks of its members. Today, fisherfolk in Ibajay use only appropriate, non-destructive fishing methods such as *taksay* (use of a local net) and hook and line.

**HOUSING RIGHTS FOR THE POOR IN PASIG,
METRO MANILA**

The Philippine government estimates that there are 4.82 million people categorized as "urban poor" in Metro Manila, the country's biggest urban center. The urban poor problem has its roots in the rural areas where poverty drives rural folk to seek opportunities in the cities. In Metro Manila, there are 654 "slum colonies" or concentration areas of squatters.

Since the 1950s, the government's response to the squatting problem was demolition of squatter shanties and relocation of squatters to far-flung areas. From 1986 to April 1990, there were 14,626 houses demolished affecting 20,000 families. The present dispensation is still under the spell of Presidential Decree 772, a law passed by the Marcos Administration which penalizes squatting in private and government lands.

A parallel development, however, is the passage of an Urban Development and Housing Act, which for the first time recognizes the just claims of squatters to urban lands.

Even before this law was passed, some active urban poor organizations such as ALAMAT or the *Alyansa ng mga Maralitang Tagalunsod sa Pasig* (Alliance of Urban Poor in Pasig) had taken the initiative to acquire permanent land tenure for its members. ALAMAT, with assistance from the Foundation Development Alternatives, Inc. (FDA), is presently facilitating the transfer of indigent families to a settlement site which the members could rightfully claim as their own.

The municipality of Pasig, located in the southeastern end of Metro Manila, has witnessed a series of demolitions of urban poor communities. In Barangays Santo Rosario and Manggahan, the urban poor have been threatened with forced eviction by the local government of Pasig. Land ownership was thus identified by ALAMAT as the fundamental issue needing resolution. Much of the land in the two barangays, however, are classified as Areas for Priority Development (APDs) or Danger Zone Areas. APDs are reserved for government infrastructure projects unless otherwise given or sold to the urban poor. Danger Zone Areas are those near railways, along riverbanks and under bridges - places where the building of homes is strictly prohibited.

ALAMAT discovered, however, that the prices of the lots under APD areas are too high. Succeeding negotiations with local government officials for other safe relocation sites with corresponding security of tenure have likewise proven fruitless.

It was then that ALAMAT conceptualized **Project Exodus** - a self-initiated resettlement program whose main objective was to relocate at least 614 families that would be most affected by the demolition plans of the Pasig local government. With the assistance of FDA, the Santo Rosario parish priest, and

other NGOs and individuals, ALAMAT was able to identify a suitable relocation site. Located in Barangay San Vicente, Municipality of Angono, Province of Rizal, the 53,000 m² lot is ideal for the following reasons: (1) existence of primary institutions (i.e. school, hospital, church, etc.) in the area, (2) proximity to Laguna Bay, which can be a source of livelihood, (3) easy access to main thoroughfares and public transport, and (4) reasonable price of the lots.

Several months before Project Exodus' implementation, urban poor organizations were first strengthened. Local leaders underwent rigorous training including group management, communication skills, community organizing, value formation and management of local resources. The local leaders, in turn, have been transferring what they have learned to their community members.

Other preparatory activities towards the realization of Project Exodus include the following:

1. The creation of a management team composed of representatives of the urban poor groups, and technical support groups. Each member of the group has been assigned to perform a specific task, such as funds management, resource accessing, education, research and documentation, etc.

2. The requirement of compulsory savings among the member-beneficiaries. Over time, and through thrift and various income-generating activities, ALAMAT intends to pay the full value of the resettlement site.

3. The accessing of major funding support for Project Exodus. ALAMAT and FDA were able to acquire a loan from a church-based funding agency.

Although Project Exodus is still in the preparatory phase, there is every indication that success is close at hand. Active involvement of the urban poor themselves, and coordination among the various organizations and agencies involved contribute greatly to the project's progress.

Upon visiting the relocation site, one ALAMAT leader remarked, "We've finally found our promised land." ■

Case Study: TriPARRD IN ANTIQUE

The Antique Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (APARRD) was initiated in May 1989 to assist the government in the speedy implementation of agrarian reform in the province. APARRD is the provincial arm of the Tripartite Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (TriPARRD), a consortium of non-government and people's organizations based in Antique. TriPARRD aims to assist the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), specifically to speed up the land transfer process and the provision of support services to farmer-beneficiaries.

Eight areas were selected for prototyping. These are:

consultation meetings was held among the province's NGOs, POs, and GOs. APARRD was officially convened by the director of Hublag-EVELIO and the Executive Director of PROCESS-Panay. Eight community development officers (CDOs) and one provincial coordinator were hired.

2. **Site Selection.** Eight sites for prototyping were based on the recommendation of the APARRD staff, DAR provincial and municipal personnel and the review of TriPARRD National Secretariat personnel and the review of site selection included accessibility of the area, people's receptive-

| Prototype | Location | Area (ha) | #FBs |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|------|
| Hacienda Bernabela | Hamtic | 113.9758 | 91 |
| Hacienda Siason | Sibalom | 346.7114 | 139 |
| Igdagmay | Sibalom | 109.0154 | 50 |
| Baladjay | San Remigio | 94.9260 | 31 |
| San Rafael | Patnongon | 115.7004 | 50 |
| San Roque | Anini-y | 41.2408 | 29 |
| Buluangan 2 | Valderama | 300.3218 | 114 |
| Aurelania | Patnongon | 271.0675 | 57 |
| | TOTAL | 1,392.9591 | 561 |

APARRD Activities

The operationalization of TriPARRD in Antique entailed the following activities:

1. **Installation.** Installation of TriPARRD in Antique started in 1989 when a series of

ness to the program and to organizing work, presence of at least 25 farmer beneficiaries (FBs) and closeness to other sites.

3. **Initial visits and data-gathering.** The APARRD staff



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R E P O R T :
P H I L I P P I N E S

conducted initial visits to six sites to gather information about the area from the DAR and the farmers residing in the sites between April 30 to May 7, 1989.

4. *Joint NGO-PO training.* Organizing Proper. The CDOs were deployed to the sites starting August 5, 1990. After making the customary courtesy calls to the mayor, the Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer (MARO), the parish priest, the police/military commander and the barangay chairman, the CDOs commenced the community organizing work. They prepared profiles of their respective sites, prepared short write-ups on the lands being covered, gathered municipal and barangay maps and even conducted their own mapping of the lands. The CDOs also gathered information about the individual farmer beneficiaries (FBs).

The CDOs used the mapping activity to mobilize initially the potential FBs and to obtain land-based data about their respective sites. The CDOs employed the mapping process wherein sketch maps which showed the individual parcels were produced. At this time, the CDOs were already integrating with the community — setting up residence in the area in the process. Formal introduction of the program to the community was done during the first General

Assembly.

5. *Core group building.* A selected group of FBs were tapped to assist the CDOs in organizing the community. These people were trained to enable them to take on more functions of the CDO.
6. *PO building.* In line with the formation of the people's organization, drafting and ratification of Constitution and By-laws, election and induction of officers and registration of the organization with government agencies were undertaken. Training seminars were provided to the PO leaders and members to strengthen the organization.

7. *Land transfer activities.* Activities pertaining to land transfer varied according to the land's mode of transfer. Prototype sites in Antique are under one of the old laws, two land transfer modes—Operation Land Transfer (OLT) under Presidential Decree No. 27, and RA 6657 or CARL's Voluntary Offer to Sell (VOS) scheme.

The following are activities undertaken under the OLT land transfer mode:

1. Conduct of the parcellary map sketching/carpet mapping;
2. Final Survey;
3. Land Valuation;
4. Generation and Distribution of Emancipation Patents.

Under the VOS scheme, the following activities are undertaken:

1. Claimfolder Generation;
2. Land Valuation;
3. Preparation of Land Distribution Folder (LDF);

4. Generation and Distribution of Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs).

One land transfer activity undertaken in Antique which facilitated the transfer of land was the use of mapping to identify potential FBs. In Hda. Bernabela, the farmers themselves mapped their individual parcels, delineated boundaries and determined the shapes of these parcels.

8. *Productivity Systems Development.* To increase farmers' income, TriPARRD is developing a productivity systems development framework which is envisioned to be as site-specific as possible. Antique was identified by the DAR as suitable for cattle raising under its agro-industrial development area (AIDA) approach.

Accomplishments (as of September 30, 1991)

The following have been accomplished in over two years of TriPARRD operations in Antique:

1. *Land Tenure Improvement (LTI).* A total of 432.5 hectares were distributed to 224 farmer-beneficiaries. Four mother CLOAs for 313.8 hectares were awarded to 128 FBs and 156 EPs for 118.7 hectares were distributed to 96 FBs.
2. *Coordinated Support Services Delivery (CSSD).* A total of 518,863 Pesos in loans were extended to the farmers for peanut and rice production. Twenty-four farmers received 29 animals via the Department of Agriculture's animal dispersal program. Three grain

millers, one knapsack sprayer and one set plow and harrow were provided the farmers. Rice, vegetable, coffee and cashew seeds were given to the farmers in addition to tree seedlings for reforestation. A 450,000 Peso road rehabilitation project was also granted.

3. **Social Infrastructure Building and Strengthening (SIBS).** All of the eight prototype sites already have functional people's organizations with a combined membership of 395 persons. Seven POs are already registered with the Bureau of Rural Worker-Department of Labor and Employment (BRW-DOLE).

4. **Partnership-building.** The APARRD Coordinating Committee (ACC) and the Field Implementing Teams (FIT) composed of GO, NGO and PO provincial leaders and field implementors, respectively, were formed and made operational to address issues in the prototypes.

5. **Research and Development.** A tracking mechanism for each of the major components (LTI, CSSD, SIBS) has been developed to closely monitor goings-on in the sites so that issues arising from program implementation can be identified, understood and resolved.

6. **Staff Development.** The eight community organizers were formally trained on subjects such as agrarian reform, community organizing, mapping, communications, community information and planning system and project development, monitoring and evaluation.

Problems and Issues Encountered

The following are key problems encountered in TriPARRD implementation in Antique:

1. **Land Tenure Improvement (LTI)** DENR survey team members give priority to their regular programs than to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Also, the survey team members are lodged at the regional office. DAR, on the other hand, lacks survey personnel and equipment.

Registration of farmer-beneficiaries lacks thorough validation and authentication and always needs constant updating.

Centralized registration of land (with LRA-Manila) takes a lot of time.

Processing of claimfolders is impeded by bureaucratic processes, priorities, distorted policies and procedures of concerned agencies.

The deteriorating peace and order situation in the province.

2. **Social Infrastructure Building and Strengthening (SIBS)** Resource institutions' guidelines on financial assistance affect POs' development framework; e.g. associations can only avail of short-term loans while multi-purpose cooperatives can avail of medium- and long-term loans.

Some farmers have no time to attend meetings, training and seminars because these contradict with their work schedules.

3. **Coordinated Support Service Delivery (CSSD)** Some line agency (LA) and local government unit (LGU) person-

nel are afraid to enter remote areas due to the province's deteriorating peace and order situation.

Prototype sites are inaccessible, especially during the rainy season.

Lack of cooperation and support from LGUs.

Learnings and Insights

1. **Empowerment of the POs and their participation at all levels of the development process** is vital and should be institutionalized. For instance, at the APARRD Coordinating Council, PO leaders sit as regular members, together with representatives from NGOs, DAR, and other government agencies.

2. **GO-NGO-PO partnership** is an effective mechanism for agrarian reform and rural development so long as roles are clearly defined and guiding principles are set.

3. **Land transfer transactions** take a longer process, much more if not prioritized by concerned agencies. Also, if community development officers do not understand the process, they could not provide the pressure to speed up Land Tenure Improvement on government.

4. **Process documentation research** can be very helpful in improving and hastening the pace of program implementation and in providing feedback and pointers to program participants.

5. **Community organizing** can be very effective in land transfer and in the delivery of support



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
P H I L I P P I N E S

services. Empowerment of POs and their participation at all levels of the development process is vital and should be institutionalized.

6. *A process-oriented program design* provides an opportunity to participants to adopt innovative approaches and to respond more flexibly to the urgent needs of the farmer-beneficiaries.
7. *Complex support structures* such as the Provincial and Municipal CARP Implementing teams do not function effectively when there is no focus. Organizational structures and composition should be kept lean and should address issues in priority areas.

Strategies

1. *Intensify resource accessing and linking activities.* This means the promotion of partnership principles through joint activities on agrarian reform and rural development that would result to a more harmonious relationship among NGOs, POs and GOs.
2. *Enforce periodic project monitoring and evaluation.* Come up with a tracking mechanism for LTI, a monitoring and evaluation scheme/system for SIBS and CSSD and develop a performance review mechanism for CDOs.
3. *Conduct regular six-month joint GO-NGO-PO Program Review and Planning Workshop* and institutionalize sharing of resources.
4. *Intensify capability and awareness building.* Conduct continuing education and training activities to further hone the skills of program participants.
5. *Further institutionalize the program* by strengthening its support of program management system (ACC) and professional staff. ■

ANALYSIS AND LEARNING ON PO-NGO COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE



Since government services are generally inadequate, Philippine NGOs have been increasingly active in performing functions traditionally discharged by government. Agrarian reform implementation and urban poor relocation for instance, have in the past been strictly government responsibilities. Under the TRIPARRD program however, POs/NGOs are now discharging many functions of the Department of Agrarian Reform -- identification of distributable lands and qualified beneficiaries, land mapping and even processing of paperwork. The urban poor alliance ALAMAT, with the assistance of FDA, is also performing functions of the local government and the National Housing Authority -- searching and developing suitable relocation sites, securing land titles, facilitating the relocation process, etc. It can be argued that NGOs should not allow government to escape its responsibilities, but when the welfare of the impoverished are at stake, all efforts should be exhausted to ensure that basic services and development reach the poor.

In line with their pro-active role in basic service delivery, NGOs are in the process of expanding their development impact. At the advocacy level, impact has been achieved through massive networking and coalition-building initiatives along sectoral lines. Several major peasant federations have formed the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR) in order to push for genuine agrarian reform. To lobby for aquatic resources reform, several fisherfolk organizations have formed

the Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reform (NACFAR). PAKSA - LUPA is among the major urban poor formations banner the issue of urban land reform. NGOs have, in turn, formed networks. PhilDHRRA, for instance, is a network of 57 NGOs nationwide. Ten national NGO networks, including PhilDHRRA, have formed the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) in order to achieve even greater impact through coordinated activities. Through the formation of CODE-NGO, development NGOs also seek to differentiate themselves from other types of organizations in the broad "NGO" category-welfare/charity groups, business groups, etc.

The formation of national and sectoral coalitions/networks reflects an understanding by the basic sectors that community-based resource management can only see fulfillment within a hospitable policy framework. Fundamental legislation such as genuine agrarian reform, urban land reform, and aquatic resources reform are needed in order that communities may gain control over their natural resources. Ground-level, community-based initiatives must be complemented by macro-policy reform.

In most cases government structures and laws are the biggest obstacles to community-based management of resources. The loophole-ridden agrarian reform law (Republic Act 6657) is an example. Government policy awarding logging concessions to big business interests causes disenfranchisement of the marginal upland dwellers, and also causes large scale deforestation.

At the service delivery level, on the other hand, NGO impact is achieved through expansion of area coverage and delivery of integrated service packages. Philippine NGOs are moving away from the traditional micro, project-based interventions, towards integrated area development strategies covering large areas. TRIPARRD in Antique, for instance, is a comprehensive rural development program for the entire province. The SCFI agroforestry program is being implemented in 33 communities in South Cotabato province.

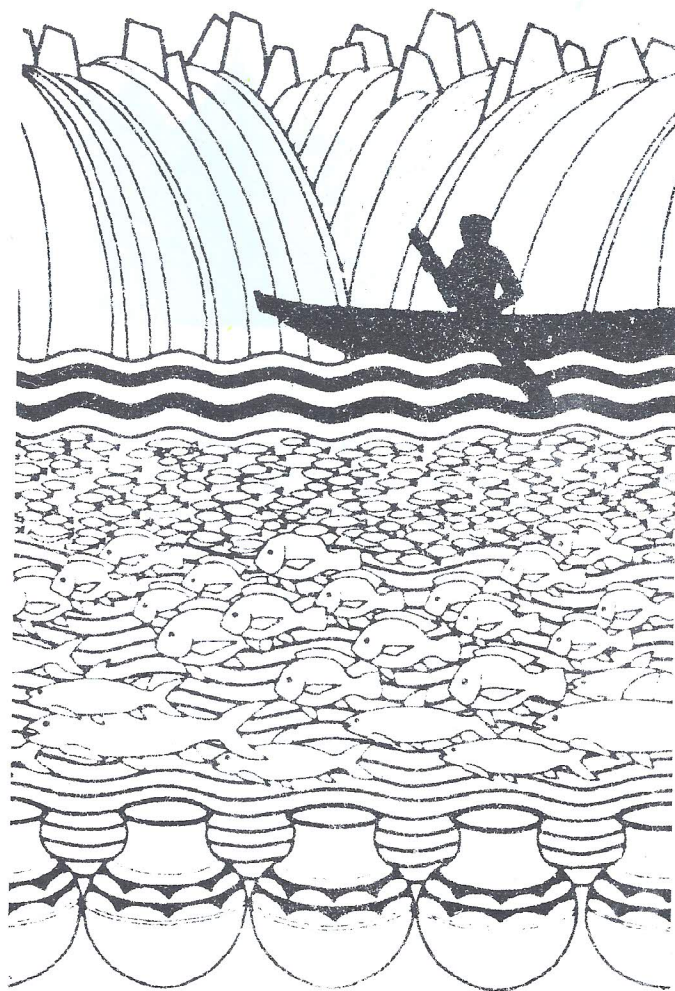
Even as the basic sectors await basic policy reforms, individual NGOs/POs have taken the initiative to improve standards of living and prototype new initiatives. Even as peasants await genuine land reform, initiatives such as TRIPARRD are designed to obtain whatever benefits are available to farmers under the present policy framework. SCFI's agroforestry program hopes to maximize community benefits from the government's social forestry programs. The ALAMAT alliance is already implementing a form of urban land reform.

Tripartism (GO-NGO-PO) has been found to be an effective mechanism for planning and implementing development programs. GO participation ensures cooperation of the implementing bureaucracy while NGOs provide technical assistance. POs, of course, should always be the main actors. Tripartism, in short, establishes complementation of resources and expertise.

Tripartism can also create greater impact due to the wider range of development interventions available. Traditional government grassroots programs suffered from lack of social preparation for instance, which is an NGO area of expertise. On the other hand, NGO programs can be bolstered by the resources, technical expertise and legitimation offered by GOs.

Tripartism also allows more entities to participate in, and therefore "own" the program. It is a mechanism through which the three development actors can contribute something and feel a sense of shared achievement. This translates into higher motivation and performance.

Even now, tripartism is being explored as an implementation strategy in other fields. In the light of the new local government code for instance, provincial NGO/PO networks are being formed and efforts to institutionalize partnerships with local government units (LGUs) are underway. LGU-NGO-PO partnerships may well become the dominant mode of development cooperation in the future, as the local government code becomes fully operational and NGOs/POs shift to area-specific development strategies.





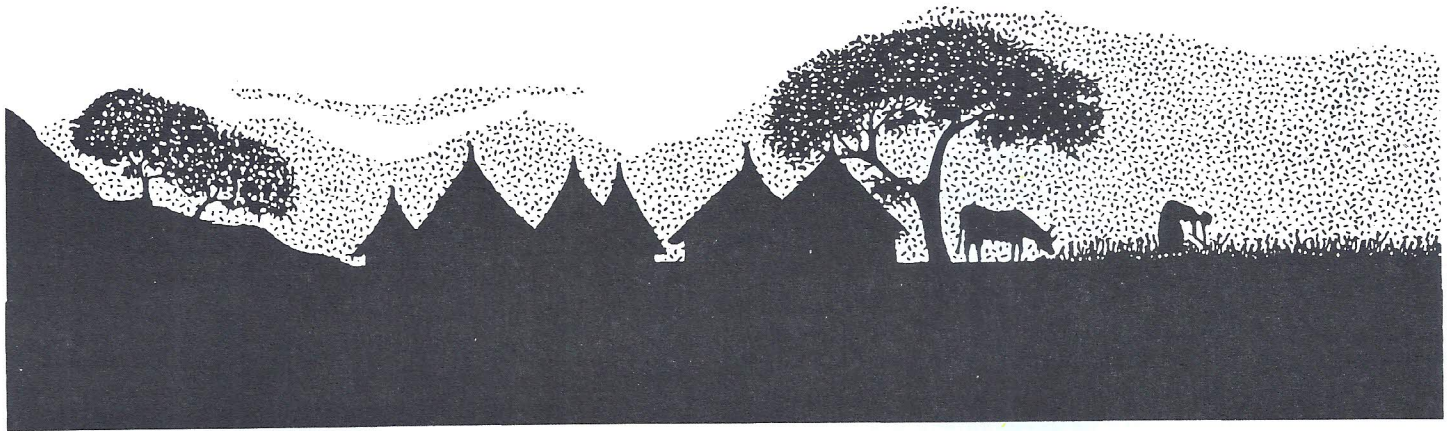
C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
P H I L I P P I N E S

Resource management initiatives are most successful when planned and implemented by the people themselves, and thus fulfill a felt need of the community. Effectivity is optimal if the community is organized, with democratic and participative decision-making processes and structures installed. Under this scheme, NGOs play the role of catalyst, technical consultant and liaison officer. Given proper support from NGOs and GOs, the people themselves are capable of managing community resources towards sustenance for the present, and sustainability for the future.

eration and specialized technical expertise needed for effective program implementation.

For instance, TriPARRD implementation in the provinces is assisted by a national-level technical committee (TC), which devises and implements learning strategies to accelerate the process in the specific areas. The TC is composed of representatives from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), Institute of Agrarian Studies (IAST-UPLB), the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and other institutions with the needed technical expertise. There is also a national coordinating committee, composed of the TC and the DAR Management Committee.

Financial sustainability and meeting immediate basic needs are always pressing concerns as communities mobilize for resource control and management. In preparation for Project Exodus, the ALAMAT alliance instituted forced savings among its members in order to build up a fund base. In the case of TriPARRD, the productivity systems development component

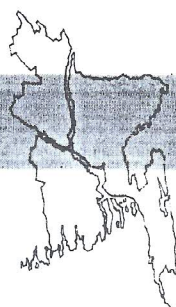


In the TriPARRD program, the peasants themselves are often the most important source of knowledge on the boundaries of estates, the owners, and the qualified beneficiaries.

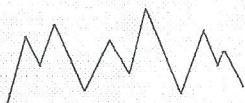
Capability-building is essential for community-based initiatives to succeed. For the TriPARRD program for instance, the communities and community organizers had to learn new skills, such as land mapping and the bureaucratic processes of agrarian reform implementation. In the course of their advocacy against illegal fishing, the members of PAMMI had to undergo a seminar workshop on fishery law enforcement. In the soil conservation-based agricultural programs administered by XAES, the community beneficiaries received training on various farm technologies, including sloping agricultural land technology (SALT).

Basic service delivery on a relatively large scale is a complex undertaking for NGOs and POs. The creation of technical committees and coordinating committees at various levels has been found to be effective in drawing in the coop-

is directed towards increasing farmers' incomes. In the uplands, evidence has shown that the local communities can best conserve the forests, provided they can also earn a living while doing so. If they have no other means of livelihood, the communities will cut trees indiscriminately to fulfill basic needs. Thus, agroforestry programs like those of SCFI are needed in order to diversify the upland communities' economic activities. ■



BANGLADESH

**VITAL
SIGNS**


Population: 114 million
(1991)

**Percentage of landless
households:** 60% of total

Number of unemployed:
11 million (1989-90) or 1.3 of
the total labor force

**Percentage of persons
living below the poverty
line:** 60%

**Percentage of malnour-
ished children:** 94%

Remaining forested area:
6-7% of total area (compared
to 20% in 1960)

**308 species considered
rare and endangered**

BANGLADESH RESURGENT

With the Bangladeshi landscape now overcast by the pall of poverty, the memory of its proverbial golden past hardly comes easy to its impoverished people today.

By restoring control and management of community resources to the people, NGOs in Bangladesh are attempting, if not to regain the fabled Bengali gold, then at least to give the people a longer lease on life.

The proverbial golden Bangladesh today presents a grim scenario. The country is considered one of the poorest in the world with a vast majority of the population living in dehumanizing poverty, deprived of the bare necessities of life and suffering from acute malnutrition and diseases. It does not produce enough food to feed its population and has to depend on foodgrains imported from other countries. The lush green cover has almost disappeared leaving a vast tract of barren land stripped of trees for miles on end. The reserve forests of the Sunderbans and the Madhupur tract look much thinner in tree cover with fewer animals. The mighty rivers do not flow with the youthful rage as they did once. They are badly silted and have almost been depleted of fish.

In short, the life of the people of Bangladesh today is characterized by

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C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
B A N G L A D E S H

despair and desperation, indeed the changes are appalling and pathetic.

Much of the current predicament of Bangladesh may be attributed to its rapidly expanding population, currently estimated at 114 million up from 55 million in 1961, and nearly 90 million in 1981.

The implications of such population growth are quite evident. Besides an increase in requirements for food, clothing, shelter, employment, and other necessities of life, there will be an increasing demand for greater investments in the social sectors which already suffer from low investments. But the most far reaching implication of the population growth is on the per-capita availability of land and consequent poverty.

**COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

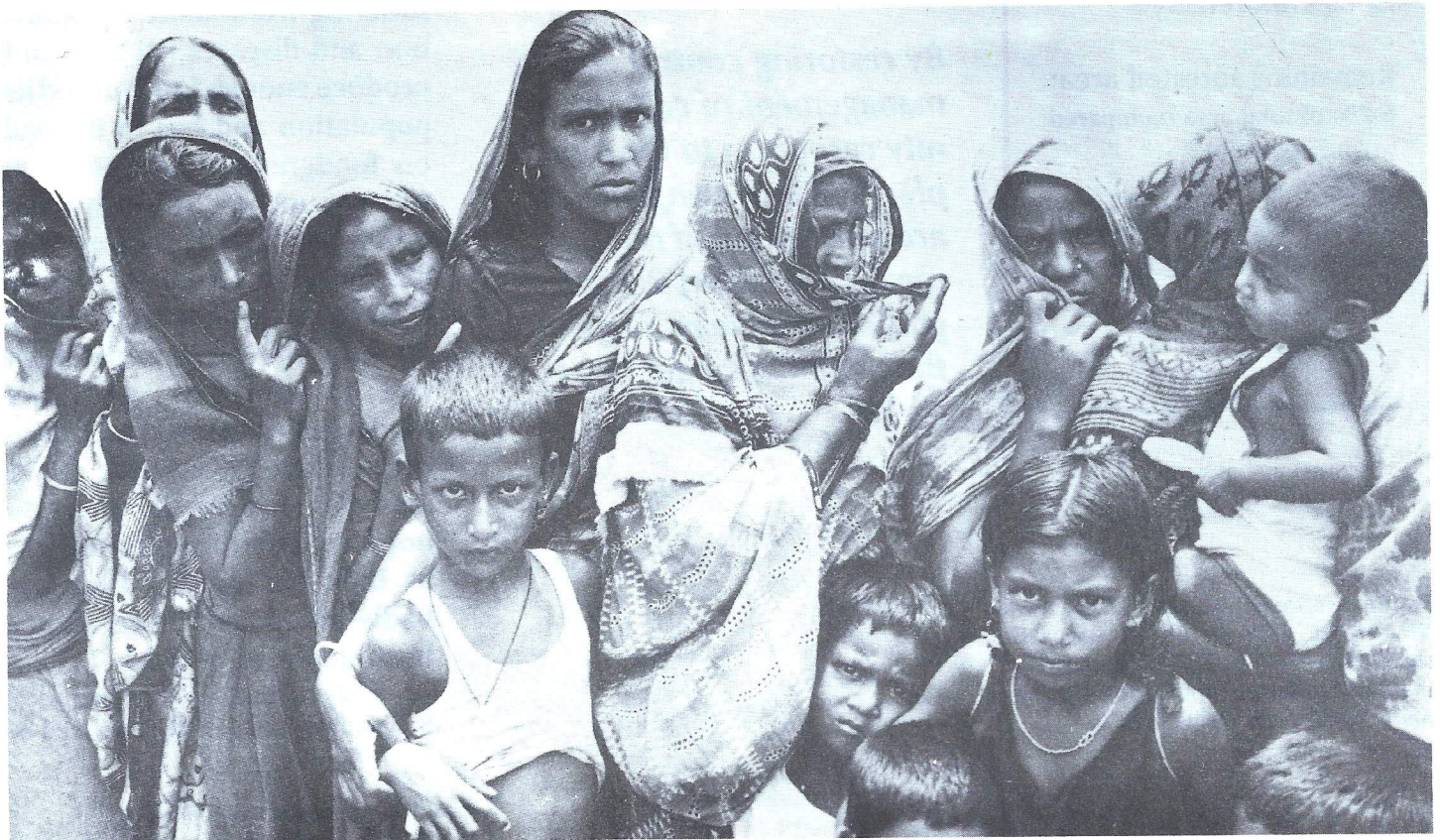
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

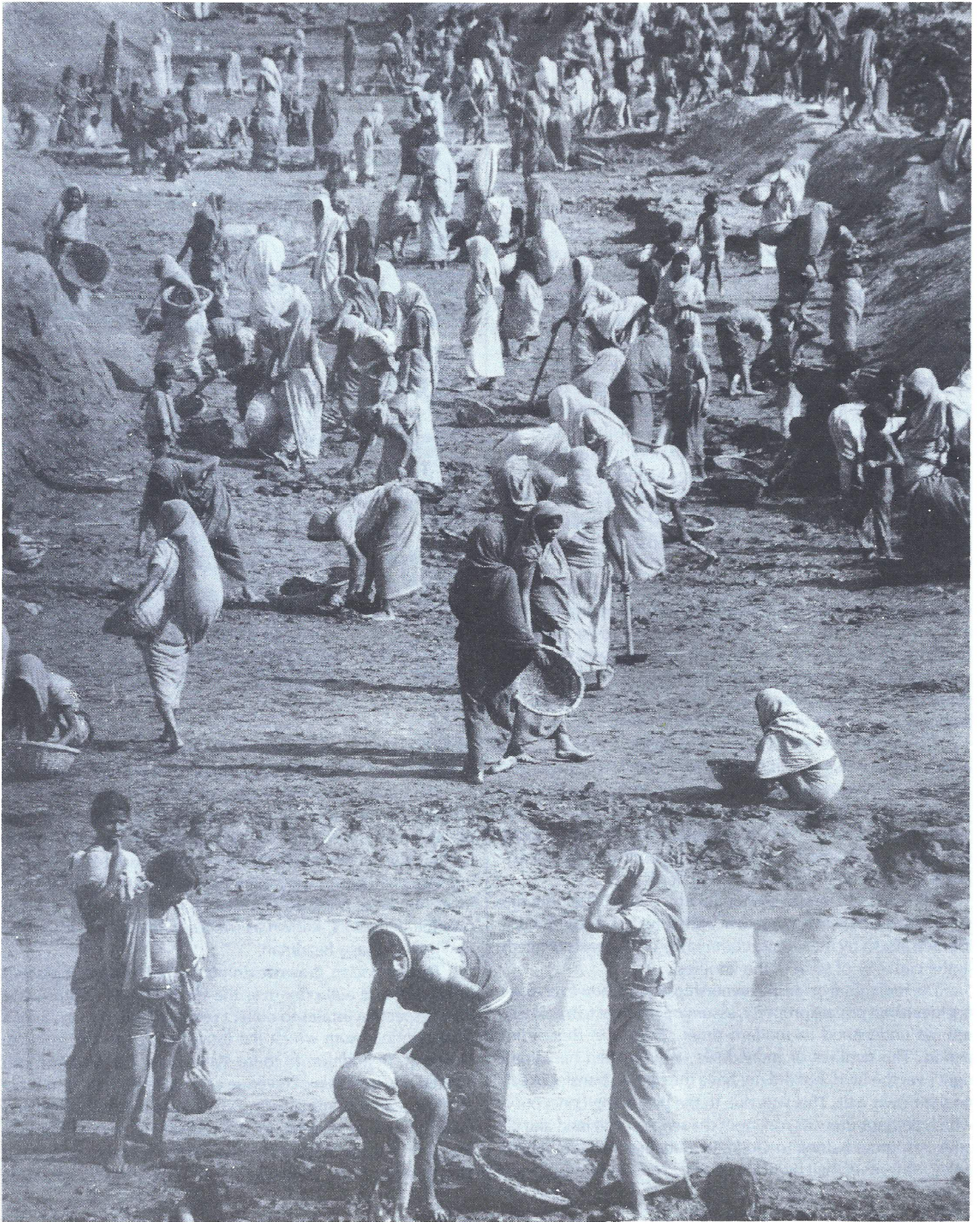
The main form of wealth in pre-British Bengal was land and the primary economy was agriculture. The society that existed had also evolved around that economy and was organized within

the structure of village communities. The village communities were unique institutions performing both the economic and government functions.

The classic description of such village communities has been provided by Sir Charles Metcalfe: "The Villa/village Communities", he notes, "are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts".

Indeed, the village communities in Bengal were very strong and vibrant working institutions conditioning every aspect of life of the people living in the communities. It not only exercised rigid social control but also maintained a control over production and distribution of productive assets and resources and collection of revenue and other fiscal operations. The communities were self-sufficient economic units producing everything they needed by themselves with the exception of perhaps salt and iron which they obtained from outside through exchange. There were different functional groups which produced goods to meet the needs of the community and they maintained an unchanging division of labor. They were paid in kind. A fixed share of the produce was paid to them each year by each peasant. The nature of the product, their duties and payments were determined by the village community itself. Besides the fixed payment the village community also provided agricultural and homestead lands to them either rent-free or at a reduced rental. The village community also exercised control over fisheries, forests, grazing land, market places which were held in common. It







C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
B A N G L A D E S H

collected surcharges upon the rental and miscellaneous receipts from these resources to form a common village fund to meet common villa/village expenses. The management and administration of the village community was carried out by the village council commonly known as the village *Panchayat*.

The *Panchayat*, or the rule of the five was constituted by elders from all classes and communities and would even consist of 50 to 100 members. Besides exercising control over production and distribution of resources, they would also settle questions relating to the repair and maintenance of irrigation channels, digging and repairing wells, building or repairing temples, arranging for temple festivals, processions or amusements, among others, and other matters arising within the community that demand a solution. In addition to the Gram *Panchayat*, there was also a villa/village headman who used to represent the villagers in their dealings with the Government. He was appointed by the Government and was responsible for collecting and paying the revenue assessed on the village to the government.

Although the villa/village community exercised control over production and resources and played an important role in the economy of the community, it does not own the land. Evidence from ancient Hindu scriptures suggests that individual or family ownership in land had been in vogue since the dawn of the history of the Indo-Aryan. Thus U.N Ghosal, an authority on ancient Indian land system, notes:

"Regarding the early forms of property in land ... it is authoritatively held in later times that individual ownership was the oldest form of property ... the evidence of the Rig Veda Samhita shows that among the Indo Aryans at any rate, the arable land was held in individual or in family ownership while the communal ownership was probably confined only to grasslands lying on the boundaries of the fields."

Although the land was individually owned, the holdings were, however, thrown together from time to time and redistributed afresh by the village community on the basis of needs or the capacity of each of the families.

The individual or family ownership of land, however, does not mean that private property, assuming the right to transfer or sell, as understood in modern times, existed in the earlier period. The families or individuals only enjoyed hereditary right over the land, but did not have the right to transfer or sell on their own will. This was due to the prevailing conception which perhaps drew its root from the religion that land and all other resources belong to God and all beings had the right to enjoy the fruits of their own labour on it. Thus, the king was not,



in theory, the supreme owner of land and other resources and as such could not create subordinate owners of the land.

The traditional villa/village communities underwent significant changes during the Muslim rule. They lost their administrative and fiscal importance under the new system introduced by the Muslim rulers. Instead of dealing with individual village communities, the Muslims divided the provinces into large tracts and farmed them out to a new class of revenue collectors, known as the *Zamindars*, in place of the traditional village headman.

The *Zamindars*, drawn mainly from the Hindi, were granted full power and authority over the villa/villages comprised in their respective estates to collect revenue and pay annually a predetermined sum which the estate was expected to yield. However, in addition to these *Zamindars*, the Muslims also created another class of revenue collectors from their military chiefs or their subordinates known as *Subadars* or *Faujders* and made annual agreements for the revenue of several districts. The duty of these officers was not only to preserve peace, but also to restrain the *Zamindars* from exploiting the peasants

ruthlessly and to prevent them from erecting fortifications or making any provisions for war.

Change in Resource Management : From Community to State. The total disintegration of the traditional village communities, however, occurred under the impact of the British rule. The British introduced their own concept of land tenure in Bengal and created a new class of landlords with proprietary rights as they existed in their own country. Through the introduction of the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793, the British suddenly transformed the *Zamindars*, who for so long had acted as mere revenue collectors of the Muslim rulers, into landlords with proprietary rights over the land and other resources including people connected with it. The control and management of natural resources which was done by the community for centuries suddenly went into the hands of the newly created landlords. Land became both socially and economically the most valuable asset and a profitable marketable commodity. Social status, power and prestige also revolved around the ownership and control of land. Thus, the prosperous class of merchants began to invest in land which gradually led to the development of absentee landlords, who were merely interested in extracting resources through squeezing the tenants with utmost severity. The result was far-reaching. The peasant who had enjoyed hereditary right over land and other resources were suddenly reduced to the status of serfs and went directly under the control of the landlords. Their fate was now determined by their private relationship with the landlords rather than the community. The artisans suffered the most. They, among others, comprised the newly created class of the landless laborers and became helpless under the changed circumstances. Many changed their traditional trade and took to a different profession.

The merchant class assumed the most important position. They joined hands with the British merchants to enrich themselves. They helped the British merchants to extract and transfer resources and also helped them to expand the British rule in India.

PO/NGO INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Although voluntary undertakings have been in vogue in Bangladesh for centuries, NGOs with formal organizational structures and professionalism emerged only after 1971 in response to the ravages and damages wrought by the War of Liberation and the consequent need for immediate relief and rehabilitation interventions. Since then NGOs have evolved over time with shifts in strategies and redirection of priorities in the wake of the emerging socioeconomic crises in the country.

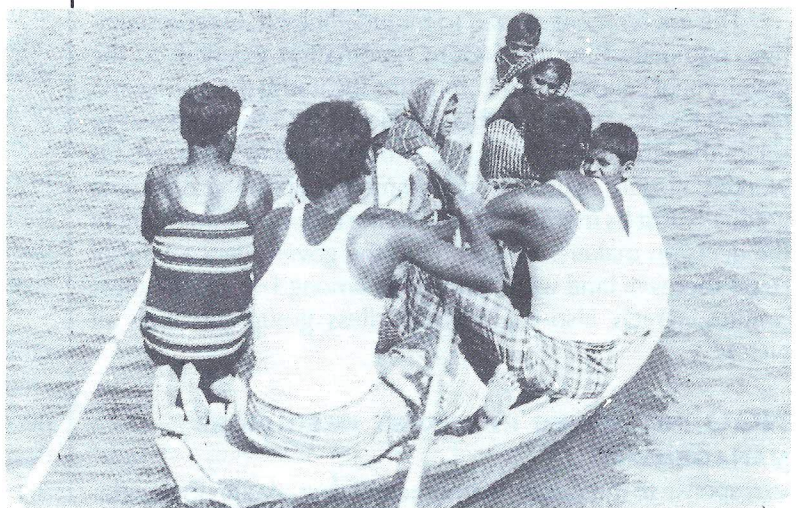
The programmatic interventions of development NGOs are large and vary in nature. Many of their programmes are directly related to the management of natural resources at the community level. These programmes include agrarian reform, forestry, pisciculture, agriculture, irrigation and water management, and protection of coastal ecosystem. Each is briefly described, as follows.

NGO INITIATIVES IN AGRARIAN REFORM

NGO initiatives in agrarian reform are usually confined to catalysing organized landless groups [henceforth referred to as people's organizations or (POs)] to undertake collective social actions to take lease of, and gain control over, the land owned by the state and also to bargain for the minimum wage fixed by the government.

Many NGOs catalysed their organized POs to identify government land in their areas, apply for allocation from the government, and finally control the land once the allocation has been made. Many POs, supported by their respective NGOs, succeeded in getting a large amount of land allocated in their favour in different areas, but gaining control of such land posed a serious problem. Most of these lands were illegally occupied by the rural power elite and they resorted to violence to prevent the POs from taking control of the land. In many places, fights that ensued were bloody, and were followed by innumerable court cases filed by the elite against the NGO workers and members of the POs. However, in all cases POs won and they took control of the land. Gaining control over the land, however, did not mean peaceful possession and safe use of the land. The POs always had to remain vigilant against the subversive acts perpetrated by the power elite. Particularly prior to crop harvest, sudden attacks have been launched by the elite to take away the crop but their attempts were foiled by the collective resistance of the POs.

Besides, the NGOs also collaborated with the government in 1987 to implement its Land reform programme. The NGOs set up a Coordination Council for Land Reform to work in close





C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
B A N G L A D E S H

desh, NGOs focused their attention on the development and management of forest resources within their project areas. NGO initiatives were confined to plantation of trees on homesteads, but with the increasing interest of the poor and the enhancement of their organizational capabilities, NGOs slowly moved on to roadside plantation and protection and regeneration of reserved government forests.

In implementing the forestry development programme, NGOs first made their target beneficiaries aware of the importance and benefits to the people of developing the forest resources.

Subsequently, NGOs motivated the organized poor to plant trees on their homesteads and also assisted their organizations to take lease of roads and embankment strips from the government for planting trees. NGOs, in all cases, provided the beneficiaries with technical support ranging from training to supply of seeds and seedlings. To ensure adequate and timely supply of saplings and seedlings, NGOs catalysed the POs to develop their own nurseries within their project areas.

One of the most innovative undertakings of the NGOs had been the protection and regeneration of the degraded reserved government forests. Some NGOs, particularly *Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendra (Proshika)*, enhanced

the awareness of its organized beneficiaries to protect and afforest the reserved forests which were depleting rapidly due to indiscriminate felling of trees by timber traders in alliance with the forest rangers and local power elite. The poor beneficiaries through their organized social actions succeeded in protecting and afforesting more than 1500 acres of reserved forests over a period of three to five years. Necessary policy changes allowing the poor to share benefits will facilitate rapid expansion of such efforts at the community level.

The management of forest development pursued by NGOs is somewhat complex and demands a high level of motivation and supervision. In general, NGOs try to energize the poor organized by them to undertake the responsibility of planning, developing, and managing their own programmes. Also they provide technical back-up support and mediate in times of confrontation with the vested interest groups and power elite. In case of homestead afforestation, NGOs generally provide the organized poor with training and required seedlings, while the beneficiaries along with their family members take intensive care of, and manage, the plantation.

On the other hand, for plantations along roadsides and other public places, NGOs negotiate on behalf of the organized groups with the relevant government authorities for necessary agreements. They also assist the organized groups to develop their own nurseries which they can use and sell. The roadside plantations are managed by the beneficiaries them-



cooperation with the Land Ministry. The areas which were identified by NGOs for cooperation and joint action were:

1. identifying government land;
2. identifying genuine landless;
3. preparing the basic policy document;
4. publicity campaign;
5. holding divisional and regional conferences with NGOs, field workers, landless group leaders and the government officials; and
6. training of the landless men and women who received government land.

The government agreed to include one NGO representative, nominated by the NGO-Coordination Council, to the government Land Reform Committee located at the district and *upazila* levels. The job of the Land Reform Committee was to select the landless families and allocate land to them. NGOs worked closely with the government but the programme gradually lost its momentum due to the lack of commitment of the decision makers. According to the government a total of 16,843 acres of land were distributed among 167,867 landless families, which also included landless group members of NGOs.

**NGO INITIATIVES IN FOREST RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT**

in response to the rapid environmental degradation in Bangla-

selves. Usually, the NGOs encourage them to select a few, mostly women, from among themselves as caretakers to protect the plantation from any kind of encroachment or illegal felling. The NGOs provide a certain amount of payment, either in cash or in kind, to these caretakers, which not only aid in the protection of plants sown and grown, but also generate income for the poor women.

In developing and protecting reserved government forests, the total management responsibilities devolve on the POs. They usually form small groups to guard the forest areas to prevent the encroachment of wood-loggers and other vested interest groups from felling the trees. Occasionally, the POs encounter pressure and attacks from vested interest groups, but they are able to overcome those through collective resistance and support from the local community. The NGOs in such cases usually assist in mobilizing necessary support from the government law-enforcing authorities in favour of the landless.

NGOs feel that afforestation is an integral part of the development process and as such, negligence in this aspect would defeat the very purpose of the integrated people-centered development that NGOs aim at. They also feel that through their interventions, afforestation would gain momentum, bringing about a balance in the ecosystem and also relieving the poor of the energy shortages from which they critically suffer. Such efforts are also likely to generate and enhance income and employment opportunities for the poor which would have a rippling effect on the overall development of the country. According to ADAB, roughly 120 NGOs are



currently involved in forestry programmes in different parts of the country (see **Table 1**). BRAC, Proshika, Caritas, and RDRS are among the more important NGOs involved in forestry programmes.

NGO INITIATIVES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES RESOURCES

Bangladesh possesses a large and extensive surface water system which is highly productive and suitable for aquaculture. But unfortunately, its potential is not fully utilized due to administrative, management, socioeconomic, and technical problems. To realize the potential of the existing water resource, NGOs undertook a massive programme aimed at developing aquaculture throughout the country with the help of their organized partner groups comprised of the landless and marginal farmers. Under this programme, NGOs motivated and assisted their partner groups

Table 1

| NGOs with a Programme on Natural Resource Management | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Name of the Programme | International | National | Local | TOTAL |
| Agriculture | 12 | 22 | 101 | 135 |
| Sericulture | 3 | 6 | 19 | 28 |
| Horticulture | - | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Fisheries | 7 | 15 | 96 | 118 |
| Social Forestry | 6 | 20 | 92 | 118 |
| Land Reform | - | 3 | 2 | 5 |



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
B A N G L A D E S H

to identify and take long term lease of government and private ponds for fish farming. Many of the ponds taken on lease were derelict and needed re-excavation before they could be used for fish farming. Thus, the members of the groups worked collectively to re-excavate the ponds to make them usable. The groups managed the ponds effectively. The production of fish in their ponds was much higher than the national average and they earned a significant income. Their success also encouraged other partner groups to undertake fish farming which has prompted re-excavation of ponds and effective utilization of other such water bodies.

Some NGOs, particularly the larger ones, have encouraged and assisted their partner groups to set up their own hatcheries to enhance their income. The NGOs not only provided credit and technical support but also trained the members in hatchery management and in other technical aspects of pisciculture. The spawn produced in hatcheries were usually developed into fingerlings in nursery ponds and then sold in the open market at a high margin of profit. It appears that the hatchery programme of NGOs has had significant success not only in generating income for the poor but also in increasing the supply of fingerlings, thus promoting pisciculture on a wider scale.

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has developed 56 hatcheries, while CARITAS has developed five. Many other NGOs have also undertaken hatchery development programme in recent years. With an increased number of hatcheries coming into operation the availability of spawners and fingerlings will also increase. This will not only reduce fishing of spawners and spawners from the rivers but will also assist in promoting pisciculture in the country.

A few NGOs also negotiated with the government on behalf of their partner groups to take lease of a few Baors covering an area of 1,300 hectares which are being used for fish farming by their partner groups. Management of Baors is complex and demands coordination among the groups involved in the scheme. The exact number of groups involved in the management of each Baor depends on the size of the Baor. To manage each hectare of the Baor, a small group of five to seven members is formed. Such groups are formed by drawing interested persons from the larger partner groups living along the Baor. All groups managing the Baor are provided with necessary training on management and techniques in fish farming and are periodically brought together in meetings for better coordination and management. The groups are also provided with credit by the NGOs through their primary groups

for fingerlings, cleaning, feeding, and purchasing fishing nets and boats. Each group releases a specified number of fingerlings every year but the management of the Baor is done collectively. Members are allowed to fish anywhere in the Baor but their catch must be above a certain size mutually agreed upon. To guard against any pilferage, the members of the groups maintain a continuous guard along the bank.

Besides promoting culture fisheries in ponds and Baors, some NGOs such as CODEC, Proshika, and Caritas, have also organized and assisted the poor fisherfolk living in the coastal areas of Chittagong, Noakhali, Bhola, Hatiya, and Barisal. The NGOs organized the fisherfolk in groups and provide credit to the groups to buy fishing implements. Through NGO intervention, the income of these fisherfolk has increased significantly which has drawn other fisherfolk to participate in the programme.

NGO INITIATIVES IN IRRIGATION AND WATER MANAGEMENT

NGOs have also made significant contributions to the promotion of irrigation and water management by the poor. The NGOs motivated their partner groups to undertake irrigation schemes and provided them with credit support to purchase irrigation pumps. The groups were also encouraged to sell water to farmers within the command areas of their irrigation schemes or in exchange for a certain portion of the crop. The landless partner groups eventually pay back the loan in full and become the owners of the equipment. Now, over 400 landless irrigation schemes sponsored by various NGOs are operating all over Bangladesh.

The irrigation scheme is usually managed by a small management committee set up by the larger group. The channels are made by the members of the groups, with the help of the land owners, with utmost care so that there is minimum water wastage. The management committee provides each farmer water as per the schedule, ensuring that every one gets enough water at the right time. Further, through the development of low-cost irrigation equipment, NGOs have encouraged and supported the marginal farmers to irrigate their land and earn significant income.

NGO INITIATIVES IN AGRICULTURE

According to ADAB roughly 135 NGOs are currently involved in agricultural programmes. (see **Table 1**) NGO initiatives in agriculture are confined to catalysing their partner groups to produce crop in owned and leased land, to intensify cropping through crop diversification, and to experiment with and introduce new crops. The primary objective of the agriculture programme of NGOs is not to achieve increased output but to protect and conserve the natural environment and natural resources for long term benefits and sustainability. NGOs provide necessary education and training to their groups and respond to their local agricultural problems with the help of

skilled agricultural workers.

Organic agriculture is one of the most innovative agricultural programmes undertaken by some NGOs. Organic agriculture refers to agricultural practices, such as the use of fertilizers from organic matters, and control of pests through an integrated management system.

Proshika has started a demonstration plot at its training center in Koitta and has experimental plots in Bogra, Manikgonj, Sirajgonj, Kishoregonj, Joydevpur, Madaripur, and Tangail districts. A comparative study undertaken by Proshika has shown that production of crop under organic agriculture is similar, if not more, than the production achieved through the use of chemical inputs. A similar attempt has also been made by another NGO, CCDB. Both CCDB and Proshika are providing training on the subject and have prepared training materials for dissemination among other NGOs.

NGO INITIATIVES IN THE PROTECTION OF THE COASTAL ECOSYSTEM

NGOs are also involved in protecting the coastal ecosystem by protesting against shrimp culture in some coastal areas. Shrimp culture is done with salt water which destroys the productive capacity of land and renders it unsuitable for crop cultivation. To protect land from salt water, the government has built embankments in coastal areas. In some places within the protected area, however, the rich undertake shrimp culture in their own land or on leased land and they cut the embankment to allow the salt water to enter the areas where shrimp farming is conducted. Such operation renders other plots of land in the area totally unproductive for crops other than shrimp culture. So the owners of such land are either forced to sell their land to the farm owner or lease it to him at a price which the farm owner offers (usually much below the return he would otherwise get from crop cultivation). In this situation, the poor are most affected. In areas where NGOs have organized the poor, development of such projects is challenged and obstructed by the organized poor. In some cases, confrontations have been bloody. Nevertheless, the collective actions of the poor have prevented the rich from undertaking shrimp culture in their areas and thereby have saved the coastal ecosystem from possible degeneration.

There are many other initiatives undertaken by NGOs which are not directly related to but have tangential effect on protection and management of natural resources in the country. ■

Case Study: PROSHIKA MANABIK UNNAYAN KENDRA

Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendra, known both locally and internationally as one of the largest and most successful NGOs in Bangladesh, was established in 1976. Since its inception, Proshika has been promoting participatory people-centered development. It seeks to bring the poor landless, marginal farmers, and other occupational rural workers of both sexes into the mainstream of the development process where the poor collectively identify their own needs and implement need-based programmes in consonance with their means and management capabilities. To enable the poor to participate effectively in the development process, Proshika organizes them in groups and provides them with the necessary orientation, education and training to enhance their social consciousness, technical and management skills, and competence. The role of Proshika throughout this process is that of a catalyst.

To reduce the dependence of the poor and to free them from the exploitative clutches of the vested interest groups, Proshika, from the very beginning, urges the poor to mobilize their own resources through savings. It encourages them to undertake income-generating activities so as to improve the quality of their lives. Presently Proshika is operating in 429 unions under 70 *upazilas* in 26 districts covering 3,415 villages. It has developed 49 Area Development centers to implement its programmes in these districts. As of June 1991, it has organized 23,252 groups, of which 50% are women's groups. Each group, is comprised of an average of 20 members.

Because the small groups are incapable of exhibiting any significant force against the onslaught of the local power structure individually, they are motivated to federate into larger structures at the village, union, *upazila* and development centre levels. As of June 1991, 2379 such federated structures have been formed at the village level, 254 at the union level and 25 at the *upazila* level. Each federated structure has an elected coordination committee and is responsible for its administration and management. The coordination committee at the village level consists of elected representatives from each primary group in the village. Similarly, the coordination committee at the union level consists of representatives from each village coordination committee and finally the coordination committee at



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
B A N G L A D E S H

upazila centre level consists of elected representatives from the union level coordination committees. The major programmes undertaken by Proshika include: organization of the poor, development education, employment and income generating activities, rural health infrastructure, social forestry, education, urban poor development, disaster management, and communications.

Forestry Programme

From the very beginning, environmental issues have figured prominently in the overall programme strategy of Proshika. Of the various environmental issues addressed by Proshika, deforestation occupies the central place and is considered the most critical issue due to its far reaching implications on the life of the people, in general, and on the poor, in particular. Deforestation, Proshika believes, spins off into other environmental problems such as floods, drought, desertification and soil erosion, all of which impinge on the survival of the poor. To solve this problem, Proshika worked towards making its target beneficiaries aware of the far reaching effects of deforestation. It encouraged them to undertake, individually and collectively, afforestation both in homesteads and in public land, and to protect the local forest resources, including the reserved forests owned by the government. Proshika's interventions in these areas were launched under the social forestry programme.

The social forestry programme was initiated in 1985 in Sirajgonj involving 17 organized groups totalling 340

members. Proshika negotiated the lease of 14 miles of *Upazila* Parishad roads for the beneficiaries for a period of five years and assisted them in planting fast growing fuel wood *Babla* intercropped with fast-growing crops like *Arahar* (a kind of pulse). Training on nursery and plantation skills and management was provided the group with assistance from the Forest Department of the Government. Following such training, seeds and other input were distributed by Proshika among its group members. Initially, such seeds were given free but were later distributed on interest bearing loans. While the groups were responsible for nurturing and protecting the plants, Proshika's assistance was confined to harvesting, marketing and mediating in cases of conflict between land owners and the groups. The result was remarkable. Some of the groups earned substantial incomes of as high as Taka 10,000 from the sale of *Arahar* and fuel wood. The rate of return calculated by Proshika was reported to be 500%.

The success in Sirajgonj prompted Proshika to expand the programme to all its Area Development Centres. Proshika also encouraged the beneficiaries to plant trees in homesteads and provided them with necessary technical training and support. To avoid shortages in seedlings and saplings, Proshika encouraged its groups to develop their own nurseries at the village level. Such nurseries not only supplied the required quantity of seedlings and saplings but also provided the groups with a significant income from their sales.

Protection of Sal Forests: An Experiment in Community-based Forest Management

The Sal forests are located in the districts of Dhaka, Tangail, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Dinajpur, and Rajshahi. According to the government estimate, roughly 300,000 acres of land are currently covered with sal forests. According to a recent estimate made by the UN/FAO, however, only 32% of this area is currently under tree cover. The rest has been lost due to encroachment or put to different uses.

Inhabitants. The original inhabitants of these forests were mainly tribal groups of whom the majority were the Garos. Other tribal groups were the Koches, the Mandra, and the Bangsi. Aside from these tribes, there are Bengalis who live on the periphery of the forest or on the deforested land. They moved in from the adjacent villages after the abolition of the Zamindari system in 1951 and took over the land which they considered as free land.

Forest Protection Programme. Proshika operates in the *upazilas* of Kaliakoir, Mirzapur, Sreepur and Sakhipur where large tracts of sal forests are fast depleting due to indiscriminate felling of trees by the timber traders in collusion with the government officials and local power elite. Proshika sought to stop this deforestation process. Hence, it started a programme to catalyse its target beneficiaries to undertake collective community actions to protect the forests and promote its natural regeneration.

The first initiative in forest protection was undertaken at the Bangshinagar village in Mirzapur *upazila* by male and female groups

who volunteered to protect approximately 40 acres of degraded forest land around their homesteads. The groups successfully demonstrated that forests could be protected and regenerated and that all barriers could be overcome through collective action and community development.

Subsequently, a large number of groups in different villages under the Area Development Centres of Mirzapur, Kaliakoir, Sakhipur and Sreepur undertook similar initiatives and succeeded in protecting and regenerating forests within their project areas. As of June 1991, roughly 1,505 acres of forest land were protected by the collective initiatives of 169 groups.

Management of Forest

Protection Plan. The organized groups of landless and marginal farmers of Proshika collectively decide on a forest protection plan through group meetings. Under the plan they take up a certain area of the degraded forest land for protection. The groups also share the plan with other members of the village and seek their support and cooperation. Since the programme has direct bearing on every one's survival, the non-members in the village also lend their support. The groups usually choose plots around their homesteads for easy supervision but gradually expand the coverage after gaining experience and management skills. The groups also put up signboards stating the names of the groups involved and the boundary of the area protected. The groups remain vigilant against timber theft and maintain a patrol system to prevent timber traders from felling trees or damaging the coppice. If proper protection is provided then the sal coppice regenerate quickly and

grow at the rate of 150-250 cm per year.

It has been observed that attacks by the vested interest groups are usually launched on the protected areas after two to three years, when the coppice have practically regenerated. The groups, during this period, intensify their guard by patrolling the forest in small groups of three to four people round the clock. The trees are thinned every year and the products are shared by all, including the non-members. The groups are happy to acquire a share of the intermediate products of thinning and pruning but they expect to get a share of the trees when these are ready for harvest in five to six years.

Problems Encountered. The poor protecting the forests suffered from the hostilities of timber traders, the landlords and other interest groups, including local government officials who have been benefiting from stolen forest timber. Systematic and well-planned attacks were launched by the interest groups in the protected areas to weaken the moral of the groups protecting the forests. In many instances, these resulted in physical confrontations followed by a number of court cases filed by the interest group against the poor. Consequently, the poor were severely harassed by the police.

In some cases, the landlords also prepared false deeds, bribed the revenue officials, and made their claims on lands protected by the group members. But the group members never granted them possession of the land.

Signboards were also stolen by the interest groups, thus causing significant financial loss to group members who had to pay Taka 300 - 400 for each signboard.

Perhaps the most serious problem faced by the group was the lack of any written government commitment to the benefit-sharing arrangements. This problem has created a sense of uncertainty among group members protecting the forests and has also discouraged other groups from undertaking similar initiatives in other areas. The forest department is still unwilling to enter into any written contractual agreement with the group members although it appreciates the work done. Proshika is pursuing the matter and expects to have some arrangement made in the future.

Sustainability. One question that is often posed is for how long can the forest protection activities be sustained. Based on the experiences gained from the field programmes it could be said with some degree of certainty that such activities can be sustained if certain conditions are met. First, the forest protection efforts by the poor at the community level will have to be recognized and encouraged by the government and necessary support and protection will have to be extended to them in their fight against timber traders and other vested interest groups. Second, a clear cut written contractual agreement has to be put into effect, spelling out in detail the benefit sharing arrangements. A forest act incorporating all the rights and privileges of the groups to protect, manage, and afforest government reserved forest lands should be promulgated. Such action by the government will encourage the poor at the community level to mobilize and protect the forest resources on a sustainable basis.

Lessons Learned. The poor are often blamed for destroying forest resources in the country.



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
B A N G L A D E S H

But Proshika's experiences in selected *upazilas* have demonstrated that such an allegation is far from true. They have proved, on the contrary, that the poor can become a viable force in the protection and regeneration of forest resources if they are organized and motivated through required education and training, and if an appropriate institutional structure is evolved which would ensure their participation in the development and management of forest resources.

Efforts should be made by the government to hand over their control of forest resources to the community on long term lease agreements. NGOs with expertise in community mobilization could be utilized to mobilize, educate and train the poor to enhance their social, managerial and technical skills.

**A Forest Protection
Activity of the Poor in
Paikpara Village**

Paikpara is a small village located in the Kaliakoir upazila of the Mymensingh district. The majority of the people in this village are landless and marginal farmers who earn their livelihood as wage labourers. Proshika organized these poor and catalysed them to develop their own organizations and undertake various income generating activities to improve their quality of life. The poor were struck by the rapid depletion of forest that was taking place around their village due to illegal felling of trees by the timber

traders and the local power elite. After a series of meetings among themselves, they agreed to put an end to this illegal act by protecting the forest.

Proshika provided them with moral support.

The vested interest groups who have been pilfering timber freely for so long were infuriated and outraged by the actions of the poor. They wanted to crush them. Thus, in September 1990, the local land owners and the timber traders attacked the protected area with their mercenaries, with tacit consent from the local government officials. The female group members tried to stop them but they were badly beaten. Two women were seriously injured. The news spread fast. Members from other groups, both male and female, quickly came forward and surrounded the culprits. A few of the culprits managed to escape but others were caught. A village court was set up in the evening and a trial was held in the presence of all the villagers. The culprits were found guilty. But they were let off without penalties since they pleaded mercy and promised not to come back.

Two weeks after this incident, they were back, this time with greater force. But the groups faced them with even greater courage. Many group members suffered injuries during the conflict. Proshika's central office was informed of the incident. Their officers immediately went to the area accompanied by a number of journalists from different newspapers. The incident received wide publicity and drew the attention of high government officials. On October 7, 1990, a month after the incident, the groups organized a conference with their members to

protest the assault. Members from other areas also attended, along with the local government officials. The gathering was large and the message was clear. Since then no further assaults have been launched by the vested interest groups. But the poor fear that unless government recognizes their activity and extends support to them, the incident will be repeated.

Policy Recommendations

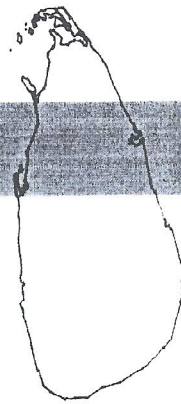
The following are the recommendations for government policy reform and NGO action:

1. Pervasive poverty is a stark reality for a vast majority of the poor in Bangladesh. Poverty exists due to the poor's lack of access to, and ownership and control of, productive assets and resources. Poverty pushes the poor to exploit and damage their immediate environment for survival. Their actions degenerate the resource base which in turn further aggravates their poverty situation. Thus, Government's interventions aimed at conservation, regeneration and management of natural resources must accompany efforts directed towards poverty alleviation. The government should also make necessary policy reforms to ensure the involvement of the community through active participation of people in all such interventions.
2. Ownership of land in Bangladesh is highly skewed. Concentration of land in the hands of non-farmers has resulted in its poor use and management. Government should undertake a radical land reform programme to give actual farmers the ownership and control of

land which will ensure its better use and management. The government should also ensure that the policy is implemented rigorously.

3. Conservation, regeneration, and proper management of forest resources demand community participation. Government, through legislation, should transfer its control over forest resources to local communities on long-term lease. Similar legislation could also be enacted to hand over government-owned water bodies to organized professional fisherfolk on long-term lease. This will ensure their proper use and management. The government in all cases should provide needed technical, financial, and administrative support.
4. NGOs have proven their competence in mobilizing the poor. Government should promote NGO action and encourage them to organize the poor, enhance consciousness about the negative effect of resource depletion, and engage the poor in the conservation and management of natural resources.
5. NGOs should develop a strategic plan for the conservation and management of natural resources. They should also position their institutional resources so as to make necessary interventions in areas which will ensure people's participation in natural resource management. ■





SRI LANKA

“SARVODAYA” IS SINHALESE FOR HOPE

Forest management for human benefit has reached a critical juncture in Sri Lanka at the closing of the 20th century. The clearing of forests for agriculture and human settlement has been going on at an accelerated pace since the period of the European occupation. The National Forest In-

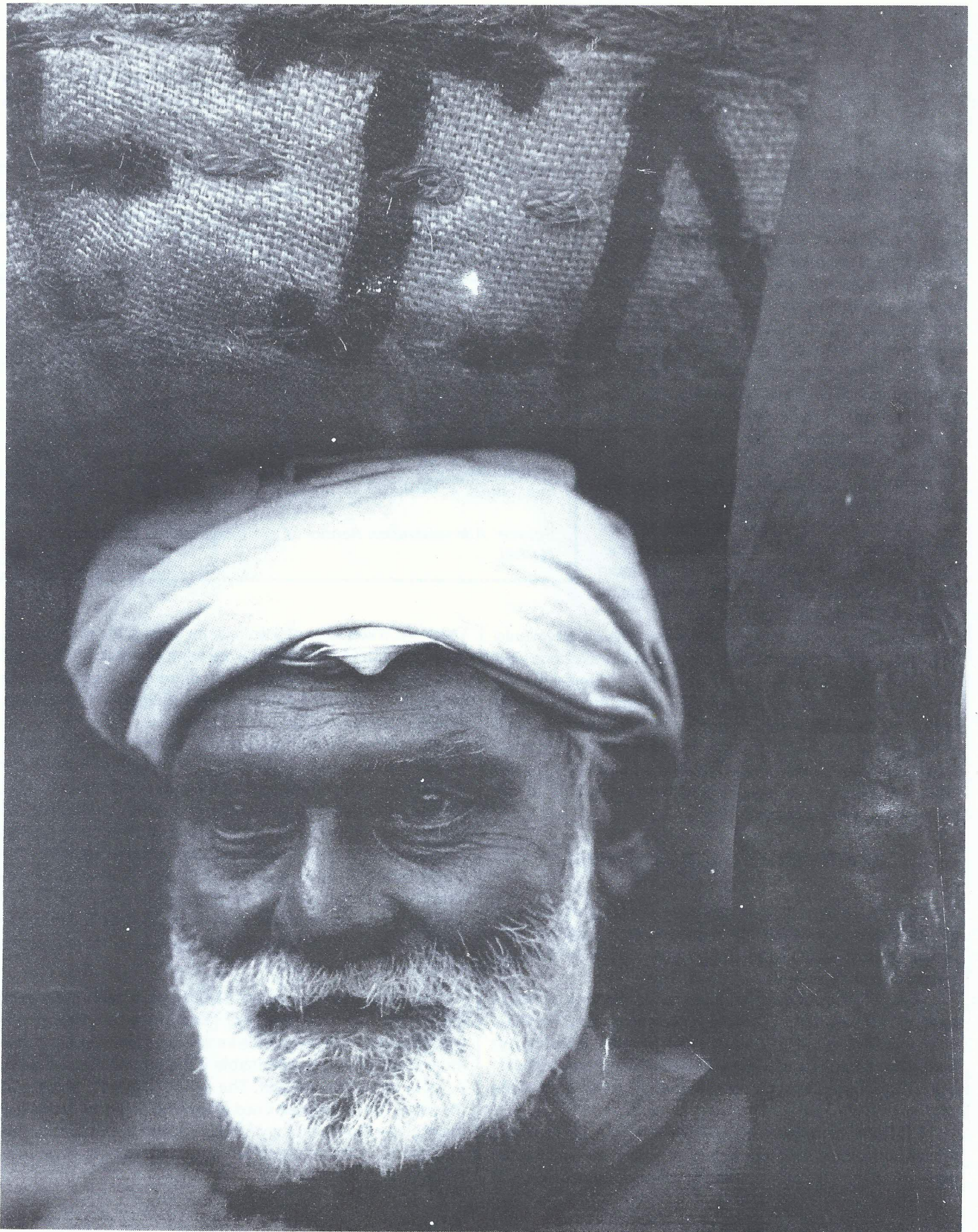
ventory (1982-1985) showed that the country's forest cover has been reduced from 2.9 million ha to 1.7 million ha over a period of 25 years, from 1956 to 1981, at a rate of 42,000 ha per annum.

Majority of the reduced forest areas, particularly in the dry zone, have been converted into low-productive scrublands and grasslands, which are neither environmentally nor economically beneficial.

The natural forests are heavily over-cut and need long rest periods in order to become fully productive again. Most of the plantations that have been established over the years are facing a multitude of problems. They are: the lack of proper silviculture management, burning, land encroachment, damage caused by elephants and cyclones, poor establishment (particularly in the dry zone), and terrorist and counter-terrorist operation (in some plantation forest areas). As such, it is predicted that after the year 2000, the shortage of fuelwood and industrial wood would reach a level that would place an excessive burden

In response to the rapid depletion of forest cover, the people's movements of Sri Lanka apply a holistic approach to community management of resources.

Paper presented on behalf of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement by **KUSUM SALGADO** for the Asian Development Forum, 4-6 February 1992, New Delhi, India





C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
S R I L A N K A

Tanamalvila, Maha Illuppallama and a few other areas, forestry research and extension in the dry zone has been very low key.

Both agro-forestry and mixed species silviculture need to be expanded and promoted in the future if the country is to keep up with its rapidly increasing fuelwood and timber needs.

on the national economy.

Wood resources from the non-forest sector, covering an area of 2.9 million ha or 45% of the land area, supplies 50% of industrial logs and 80% of the fuelwood used in the country. The non-forest sector includes areas occupied by the major plantation crops (tea, rubber and coconut), homestead gardens, and areas of mixed tree crops. According to surveys conducted under the Forestry Master Plan for Sri Lanka (1986), the existing areas of non-forest wood resources have the potential to produce about two million m³ of saw logs, 5.5 million m³ of fuelwood and 6.1 million tons of biomass fuel annually.

Most of the species grown by the people in their homesteads often have multiple uses and are selected by the people because of their "community friendliness" and economic value. These species, if maintained at an optimum level, are environmentally sustainable judging by their ability to minimize soil erosion.

Therefore, the future wood demands of the country would be almost entirely dependent on plantation forests of one kind or another. Judging by the output of the existing forest plantations and the obstacles that are met in raising them, new and innovative methods involving community participation need to be developed. The community has already provided more than half of the country's wood needs by themselves. Therefore, a programme of forestry which is acceptable to the community must be created.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

The current reforestation programme stems from years of forestry research and experience gained in monoculture cultivation of both exotic and indigenous species in different climatic zones (see **Table 1**).

There is a mixed reaction towards the planting of "reforestation" species, particularly the fast-growing ones. The environmentalists claim that gradual changes in the environment are likely to take place with large-scale planting of monocultures, while the foresters emphasize the multiplicity of uses of the species.

The statistics on forest land clearly show that the new land for future forestry development is available only in the dry zone. However, except for some small-scale pilot projects at

Table 1

Extent of forest land (ha) planted with different tree species by the Forest Department.

| | Lowland, Wet and Intermediate Zones | Upcountry | Dry Zone |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Teak | 23,275 | - | 44,958 |
| Pinus | 8,852 | 18,613 | - |
| Eucalyptus | 14,041 | 18,486 | 11,925 |
| Other exotics | 926 | 3,277 | 1,013 |
| Indigenous | 7,308 | 3,767 | 3,757 |
| Indigenous + exotics | 1,011 | 1,127 | - |

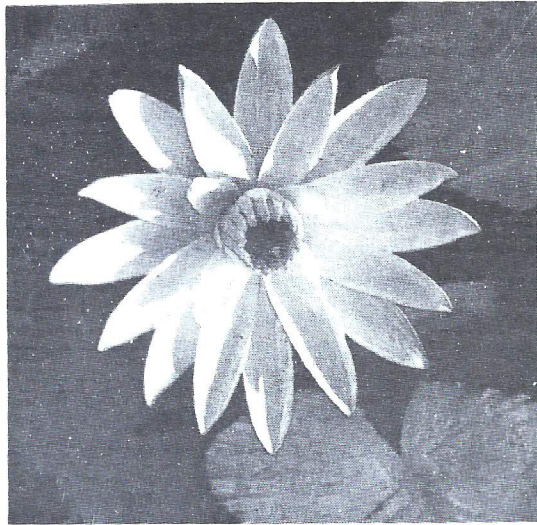
Source: Administration Report of the Conservator of Forests (1989).

Therefore, a well-planned strategy for large-scale reforestation with appropriate species in the dry zone needs to be launched with utmost urgency. Research programmes to support these have to be formulated and launched using already available, though scattered, research information.

Pioneering research done by the Forest Department on the growth performance of a variety of broad-leaved species (n=20) reveals that these species are not only fast-growing but are also fairly well-adapted to the more trying conditions of dry zone environments. Their mean establishment rate as monocultures is high (**Abeywardana, undated report**). The growth rates of these species analyzed in Abeywardana's report suggest that at least some could be tried out in trail plantations (by first understanding their ecology and by simulating the natural forest conditions in artificial mixed species trails).

Sri Lanka, being a small island with a high population density per unit area, does not have much room for single-purpose large-scale monoculture tree crop plantations. It is far more productive and sustainable if the plantations are multi-purpose and multi-sectoral. The mixed species plantation of the future has to be researched upon with an understanding of the ecology and the biology of the incumbent species selected.

Factors contributing to present-day problems have been identified as follows:



1. Lack of awareness of the magnitude of the problems;
2. Government policies that need revision and evaluation;
3. Underlying poverty that contributes directly and indirectly to the problems and creates a never-ending cycle;
4. Failure of planners to consider the inherent knowledge and skills of the peoples; and
5. Lack of involvement of the communities in development activities, in planning, and in implementation.

NATIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The Sri Lanka National Conservation Strategy spells out the essential ingredients of the Plan of Action for the Rational Utilization and Management of Natural Resources for Sustainable Growth. It provides for policies on the use and management of (1) Land; (2) Energy; (3) Mineral Resources; (4) Coastal and Marine Resources; (5) Genetic Resources; and (6) Living Aquatic Resources; together with guidelines for industry and programs to promote environmental education and disaster prevention and preparedness.

LAWS AND PROVISIONS ENACTED FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Sri Lanka has enacted nearly 40 statutes dealing directly with the conservation of the environment. An example is the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance. Furthermore, there are '60 statutes dealing indirectly with the subject of environment. One of these is the Urban Development Authority. The poor implementation of these laws, however, has resulted in the absence of adequate protection for the environment.

There is a lack of civic consciousness and discipline among the people. They do not dispose of their waste properly. They do not consider it their duty to protest, object, or report to the authorities practices which are harmful to the environment, except perhaps when it affects them personally. The lack of knowledge or awareness on the part of the officers also

impedes the effectiveness of environmental laws. Hence, the inadequacies of the laws are not brought to the attention of responsible authorities.

Let us take, for example, the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance. The last amendment to this law was made in 1970. The fines stipulated for offences have not been raised in pace with inflation. As a result, fines imposed on the poaching of crocodile and leopard skins, and ivory, are paltry compared to the windfall profit from their sale. The Felling of Trees (Control) Act which prohibits the felling of any tree gazetted by the Minister has had only one tree, the *Jak* tree, gazetted under it. This act seems to have faded into oblivion thereafter.

Antiquated laws and regulations have not been updated in response to economic and environmental developments, thus making some of the statutes obsolete. For example, the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance provides for the maintenance of a register of privately owned elephant tusks. To date, no such register has been regularly maintained.

Some carefully planned laws are being enacted and some amended. For instance, it is an offence to discharge waste without obtaining a license from the Central Environmental Authority (CEA). This is stipulated in the regulations of the National Environment Act of July 1990. Moreover, all property developers must submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before they can obtain a license or start a project. Recently, the CEA identified 5,000 industries without licences. Of these, 250 are hazards to the environment. Obviously, mechanisms to improve the implementation of environment laws have to be put in place.

Another disturbing aspect is the lack of coordination between various institutions with overlapping jurisdiction. A case in point is the EIA requirement contained in both the National Environment Act and the Coast Conservation Act. This has caused confusion in procedures for obtaining a license, and a shifting of burden and responsibility. Often, the protection of the environment suffers.





C O U N T R Y R E P O R T : S R I L A N K A

FORESTRY MASTER PLAN

Sri Lanka does not have an official forest policy. The main objective of the Forestry Master Plan (FMP) under the forest resources development project is to make Sri Lanka self-sufficient in wood and wood products while maintaining ecological balance.

According to the FMP, the only rational alternative to the present approach to forestry development is to manage the existing and new forests in such a way as to obtain maximum benefits without harming the soil and the environment. It further states that certain forest areas should be totally protected in national parks and reserves, and that new forest plantations be established to gain self-sufficiency in the supply of fuel wood and industrial wood, and to protect environmentally vulnerable areas.

The following measures have been proposed under the FMP: (1) Plantation Establishment; (2) Forest Management; (3) Development of Non-Forest Wood Resources; (4) Forest Fire Protection; (5) Prevention of Illegal Cutting; (6) Preservation of Natural Parks and Nature Reserves; (7) Wood Harvesting; (8) Development of Forest Industries; (9) Establishment of a national forestry commission and strengthening of the Forestry Planning Unit of the Ministry of Lands; (10) Manpower Training and Research.

Although the FMP has brought about some important forestry sector developments, it has been criticized for its recommendation of alleged environmentally unsustainable wood harvesting practices

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The land tenure system in Sri Lankan villages rested on a share basis.

The Sinhala word "*gama*," which is generally understood as "village" in the context of agriculture and land tenure, means a single state or a single field which contains various shares. A share denotes a section of the total field. A share, however, did not indicate a specific geographical area in the field or the estate. This can be understood better by examining how a new village, estate or field was established. A new estate was established when the shares in an old field or an estate were divided. This division had a limit which was dependent on population growth. The traditional method of resolving the problem of shrinking shares was to establish a new estate.

Traditionally, as an incentive to agricultural production, virgin land under cultivation was exempt from tax or any service due to the King during its first generation.

A typical Sri Lankan village, thus established, had four different land areas. First, there were the paddy (rice) fields which were the center of village agricultural activity. Second, were the gardens or homesteads (highland) where the peasants' residences were located and around which fruit trees and other permanent crops were grown. Third, were the areas reserved for shifting cultivation which was locally known as "reviewing" cultivation. This area was about 10 times that which was reserved for paddy cultivation. The reason for the extensive land area set apart for "reviewing" cultivation was the requirement that a land should lie fallow for a period, once between seven to 15 years (depending on its soil composition), to allow the soil to regain its fertility before re-cultivation. Finally, a certain area of the jungle was reserved as a necessary adjunct to the newly established village. This area furnished the village with its fuel requirements and was also the common pasture for the village cattle.

Once a new village was established, the paddy fields of the newly cultivated area were divided into shares, and cultivated in a system known as "alternation", which is a rotation of shares in the field. This system gives everyone in the group an equal chance of cultivating both "more fertile" and "less fertile" areas of the field. The system was based on the egalitarian principle that all the members holding shares in the village have equal rights.

Until the middle of the 19th century, Sri Lankan peasants had had sufficient land to pursue whatever form of cultivation they cared to engage in. It is true that some peasants lost traditional rights over the landholdings which traditionally belonged to them, and turned them over to the share-croppers. Moreover, some peasants had to switch from cultivating for consumption to cultivating for the market. But the fact remains that the peasant was never denied access to land in any part of the island, and had a choice, depending upon his ability and place of residence, to engage in any form of cultivation.

INDIGENOUS AGROFORESTRY SYSTEMS

To many people "agroforestry" is a modern scientific term denoting a new form of agriculture. What is less known is that agroforestry is as old as the hills.

The classic example of agroforestry in Sri Lanka is the **Kandyan Home Garden**, or Forest Garden, said to have been used "for several centuries" (Jacob and Alles 1987). This system is not restricted to the Kandy District but is also found in Matale, Kurunegala, and all over the mid-country region of Sri Lanka.

The Kandyan Home Garden (KHG) is accepted today as the most ecologically balanced type of agriculture. It is a classic example of an agroforestry system--the ideal form of land use which combines agriculture, forestry, and livestock.



It is a traditional system where a mixed cropping of trees yields timber, small wood, fuelwood, fodder, fruits, nuts, medicinal plants and crops. The entire system provides an ideal, healthy environment. In Kandyan gardens, trees are grown in a multi-tiered arrangement, terraced where necessary, and adjusted to the local topography.

This KHG system has been studied by ICRAF. Jacob and Alles distinguished nearly 30 crops or components in this system indicating a very high degree of crop combination and diversification. The most important trees are *artocarpus heterophyllus*, *cocos nucifera*, *coffee*, *piper nigrum* and *cocoa*. Some KHGs have three crops but in others it ranges from four to 15 crops which are randomly mixed.

Maximum utilization of space, both horizontally and vertically, is seen in the KHG system, and all plants have their own vertical and horizontal niches.

The gardens or farms are generally owner cultivated and the bigger the farm, the lesser the density of plants. Although mostly own labour is used to cultivate and manage a KHG, higher labor increases substantial operating cost (Rs. 1,200 / ha). Economically, the system is rather profitable.

With better management, the system has the potential for a high level of production and high return. The result will be a better life for KHG people. ■



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
S R I L A N K A

Case Study: THE SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement (SSM) is a mass movement that involves thousands of people as participants/beneficiaries. Its branches are spread out to around 8,000 villages and urban communities across the island. It is engaged in a large variety of activities which aim to improve the quality of life of the people. The number of people directly involved in Sarvodaya related activities may be as high as three million. This count includes men, women, and children.

There are around 40,000 full-time workers who give direction and organizational form to the movement. These workers are also responsible for the management of the activities of Sarvodaya.

A self-reliant community is one that is fully under the management of the villagers. To attain self-reliance, the community must undergo a development process which has five distinct stages. Each stage has its own corresponding tasks, goals and activities which are systematically laid out. It can be seen that the activities and responsibilities of the SSM groups in the community increase gradually with the establishment of the institutional struc-

tures. Sarvodaya's long experience in more than a few hundred communities has proven that, through this process, self-reliance can be realized.

Stage 1: Introductory Stage

Sarvodaya enters the community following an invitation from the residents. It introduces the technique and concept of *Shramadana* (sharing of labour) in order to bring the villagers together. A high degree of enthusiasm is generated but no concrete follow-up activities can be seen at this stage.

Stage 2: Group Formation Stage

Sarvodaya groups such as the children's group, the mothers' group, the youth group and the farmers' group are formed at this stage so that the motivated villagers can organize and participate in development activities.

The establishment of the Children's Services Centre also takes place at this stage through *Shramadana*. Functional leaders selected by the groups are sent to SSM's Development Educational Institutes for further training.

Stage 3: Need Satisfaction Stage

Sarvodaya's trained workers help maintain the high spirits and enthusiasm of the village groups.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Society is formed. Its registration with the government makes it independent in its decision-making. It is also given wide access to resources.

The village development plan is

introduced to satisfy the basic needs of the community. Income and employment generating programs are also set up in the villages but these are still not self-financing. However, since SSM sees a difference between self-reliance and self-financing, it can be said that the villages which belong to this stage are self-reliant in terms of development ideology, decision making, organizational structure, etc.

Stage 4: Self-Financing Stage

The villages which belong to this stage are self-financing as far as financial input is concerned. For instance, the villagers are able to pay the allowances of their full-time workers, meet travelling and transport costs, etc. through locally generated resources.

Stage 5: Surplus Stage

The villages in this stage are not only self-financing but are also in a position to help other villages. The last two stages can be considered hypothetical stages since SSM does not have that many villages belonging to them. However, the Movement believes it should make a concerted effort to help a third stage village progress to the fourth stage.

Sarvodaya views both the living and the non-living world as a totality. So, too, with mankind. Man is viewed in such a way as to bring his total personality into focus. The sole objective of Sarvodaya is to bring about the maximum awakening of an individual, a country and the entire world, spiritually, morally, culturally, socially, politically, and economically. We have analyzed this in detail at various stages, both conceptually and objectively, as total personality awakening, village awakening, village au-

tonomy, urban awakening, country awakening and universal awakening.

Mobilization of Community Strength

In a period of about three decades, we have gradually propagated this Welfare Society concept to about 8,000 villages in Sri Lanka. We have introduced diverse strategies and methodologies which translate this concept into people's activities. This includes strategic programmes in which all age groups can get organized. While attention has already been focused on the shortcomings of the existing law, we have cleared the way for the people to open their own door, to act for their own advantage, and to incorporate themselves as societies within the existing legal framework. The Sarvodaya Development Education effort has made it possible to enlighten the people, and to create community awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of the existing order, as well as the merits and demerits of the desired social order.

The Sarvodaya Agriculture Forestry and Environment Programme

The Sarvodaya Agriculture Forestry and Environment Programme (SAFE) programme is a five-year programme designed with 100% community and nearly 80% women's participation. It addresses several basic environment problems in the dry zone of Sri Lanka, namely:

1. Shifting Cultivation;
2. Annual Loss of Forest Cover;
3. Changing of Weather Patterns; and

4. Lack of water for agricultural purposes.

Its strategies are:

1. To harness the existing infrastructure of the Sarvodaya village base for effective implementation of agroforestry practices;
2. To mobilize the children's, youth, mothers' and farmers' groups to protect the environment;
3. To bridge the gap between the existing government and the people.

The SAFE programme is being implemented as a special project under the aegis of the Sarvodaya Women's Movement. Although the programme activities formally started in March 1990, much of the preparatory work had begun two years before.

The programme's field operations are based at the Sarvodaya Development Education Institute and farm at Tanamalvila, in the Moneragala District. There is an extended field programme in the Padaviya District, North Central province, coordinated by the Sarvodaya District centre at Sri Tissapura.

The uniqueness of this programme lies in the fact that it is a 100% women's project that harnesses the inherent closeness of women to their environment. Furthermore, it is the first time that a non-government organization has launched a long-term programme of this nature.

Aims and Objectives

1. To motivate village communities to participate in forest and environmental conservation through homestead agroforestry;

2. To raise community awareness; to make the people conscious of the urgent need for forest and environmental conservation through village extension programmes; and to eventually make these activities an integral part of their lives;
3. To engage the village women in the cultivation of medicinal herbs, and the preparation of home remedies for common ailments; to introduce them to the indigenous system of medicine; and to encourage them to participate in income-generating activities such as the collection and processing of herbal and forest produce;
4. To inform the women of the importance of energy conservation and to popularize fuel-saving technologies at the village level.

The Programme's Strategic Plan

The project covered 100 villages in the Moneragala, Hambantota and Padaviya districts, with 100 beneficiary families per village, and maintained an average of 200 acres (100 x 2 acres = 200) devoted to homestead agroforestry. Their activities included nursery raising, maintenance of community forests, and environmental conservation.

Twenty women conservation workers, 100 village level conservationists and 500 village level leaders were trained. On-site village level training were conducted for farmers, mothers, youth and children groups, as well as village level Sarvodaya full-time workers.

Each conservation worker was responsible for the supervision of



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
S R I L A N K A

the 25 villages in each district/ area up to the end of the third year. The conservationists were given basic training in Ecology/ Forestry and Silviculture, and were tasked to ensure the maintenance of homestead agroforestry plots, nurseries, etc. The project also assisted in the selection of the forest species and the raising of nurseries by providing limited inputs.

The project was phased out after a five-year-period.

Achievements

1. Eighty service villages have been identified, and included in the programme; the necessary training completed, surveys done, input distributed and nurseries raised.
2. Community awareness programmes have been completed and preparatory meetings held in readiness for the coming planting season. The necessary logistical support had been given by the project staff, while the relevant government authorities had extended their fullest cooperation by imparting technical knowledge and institutional support.
3. Village SAFE programme committees have been activated to direct and provide all support services needed by the conservationists to carry out the activities successfully and to ensure their continuity.

4. The two main field centres have raised plants to supplement what had been

produced at village level. The centre staff have maintained their readiness to launch the simultaneous action programme within the October-December 1991 period in all three districts.

We propose, therefore, that:

1. Networks among NGOs, and community or people's organizations at the local and national level be established, and that these be venues for exchange of expertise, information and resources in order to achieve common aims.
2. Networks among NGOs, and community or people's organizations of the countries

| District | No. of Plants Available | No. of Community Members Trained | No. of Communication Programmes |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Moneragala | 174,860 | 99 | 87 |
| Hambantota | 75,044 | 268 | 126 |
| Padaviya | 96,901 | 94 | 25 |
| | <u>346,805</u> | <u>461</u> | <u>238</u> |

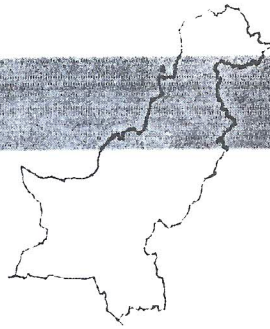
Action and Policy Recommendations

There are several critical areas for government policy reform which also serve as agenda for future NGO action. Hence, there should be an analysis of the following:

1. The existing government structures and the implementing arms of the state;
2. The inadequacies of legal enactments and state policies;
3. The advantages of NGOs over government;
4. The areas of possible collaboration and cooperation.

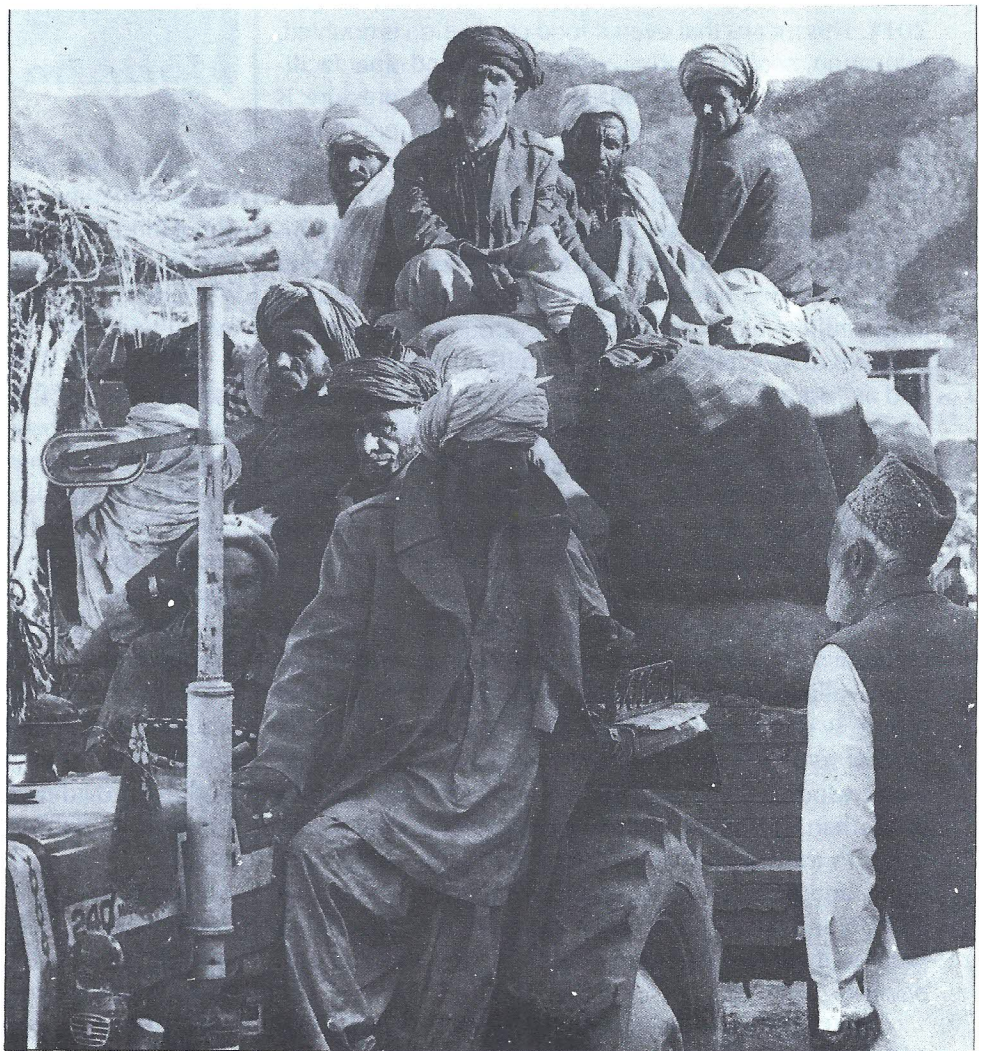
of South and Southeast Asia be encouraged and strengthened at the regional level, and that these, likewise, be venues for exchanging information, and sharing strategies and resources.

3. Cooperation among NGOs, and community or people's organizations at the global level be promoted and that joint programmes of action that will protect, restore and conserve tropical forests be created. ■



PAKISTAN

Community water management provides a link between the age-old castes which have long divided the society of Pakistan, facilitating not only social integration but the effective use of water resources.



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BONDED BY NEED



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
P A K I S T A N

Pakistan is blessed with rich land, water, and manpower resources, and these have been responsible for a commendable economic growth rate.

The increasing population, however, drastically negates development achievements. The population of Pakistan is presently 115 million. The rate of increase is 3.1% per annum. With the present growth rate, Pakistan's population is expected to double to 230 million by the year 2014. This means that even if food production is doubled, education, health, housing, water, power and other facilities would be undermined. Unemployment pressure is also rising as a consequence of the alarming population growth. In addition, declining resources have contributed to the accelerating rural-to-urban migration.

The total geographical area of Pakistan is 79.61 million hectares. The area suitable for agriculture is estimated to be 34 million hectares. The cultivated area consists of 20.1 million hectares comprising around 14.4 million hectares of irrigated land, and 5.7 million hectares classified as "Barani" or rainfed area. Pakistan is a river-borne country and almost all irrigated areas lie in the Indus plain. Only about one-third of the cultivated areas in Pakistan contains first class soil. The rest have relatively inferior soils which are subject to numerous problems, the causes of which include the twin menace of waterlogging and salinity.

To increase crop yield, it is important to have a constant and controlled water supply. At present, the farm-gate availability of water, after accounting for losses and runoff, is estimated at 119.62 MAF, consisting of 75.64 MAF of surface water resources and 43.98 MAF of ground water resources. The irrigation system in Pakistan operates at less than 50% overall efficiency. Most of the water losses occur in the watercourses, below the outlet, as delivery losses and field irrigation application losses. The scarce availability of water and water loss have to be hurdled in order to meet the water requirements of agricultural production.

Agriculture occupies a pivotal position in the economy of Pakistan. Its share in the gross domestic product has, however, fallen from 53% to 29% in the past four decades. The reason for this is that manufacturing, and other sectors were given greater priority after the independence of Pakistan.



Agriculture provides employment to 54% of the labor force. Agriculture and agriculture-based products account for about three-fourths of the total foreign exchange earnings from exports. They also provide raw materials to the major industries and consume 33% of industrial (finished) goods. Hence, agriculture is still the foundation of Pakistan's economy.

The growth in the agricultural sector from 1990 to 1991 is estimated at 5.1%. Major crops such as wheat, cotton, rice and sugarcane contribute largely to this growth. The overall economy is growing at an impressive rate of 6.5% a year. This analysis allows us to conclude that unless agriculture is given a central role in the country's development strategy, it will be difficult to improve the living standards of the majority of the country's population.

To meet the increasing food requirements of the burgeoning population, it is imperative to transform Pakistan's subsistence agriculture into science-based agriculture. This will require the adoption of suitable policy packages, diversification of crops, strengthening of supporting institutional framework by providing rural roads and electricity, and structural adjustments in the existing pattern of production and distribution.

Subsidies, taxes, and price support are the principal policy instruments available to Government. They are capable of influencing farmers' decisions. Sustained application of modern technology which requires greater investment in land and water resources improvement, and agricultural inputs, cannot be realized if the farmers are not assured of economic return.

The Government of Pakistan has been using these instruments to boost agriculture production. These include selective subsidies, support price for major crops, enhanced credit facilities, and extension of technical know-how.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The irrigation system in Pakistan is being managed exclusively by the Irrigation and Power Department. The department has two wings. One wing comprises engineers and technicians and is responsible for operation and maintenance. The other wing, comprising the deputy collector and crop accessing staff, makes an assessment of water charges based on the cooped area. The farmers are free to distribute the water on the command of tertiary systems called watercourses among themselves. In case of conflicts, the department officers are empowered to distribute the water among the shareholders of the common area. The authority to sanction water to a new area also lies with the department.

NEED FOR FARMERS' PARTICIPATION

The irrigation system was originally designed for 75% annual cropping intensity but has been raised to 120%. The landholdings of the farmers were generally above 25 acres in the initial stages of the systems' establishment but have now decreased to less than 12.5 acres for more than 74% of the farming community. Deterioration in the physical condition of the irrigation systems has occurred with the passage of time. The prevailing socio-political conditions have lowered the efficiency of operating functionaries while big land owners have monopolized the unauthorized use of water.

The above situation has created a sense of deprivation among the small landholders and their economic position is deteriorating day by day due to the short supply of water. The present distribution system has also become obsolete in terms of irrigation scheduling and based upon the water requirement of crops.

There is a demand for an increase in funds allocated to the management and maintenance of the system, the judicious distribution of water among all the shareholders, and the appropriate use of water. There is also a need for changes in the management of the irrigation system so as to make it more beneficial to the farming community.

PO/NGO INITIATIVES IN WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Water resources in Pakistan are managed by the community, and the public. Small-scale irrigation systems such as open wells, persian wheels, village tanks, small pumps, tubewells for groundwater use, tertiary surface irrigation systems below canal-outlet, and small facilities are operated, managed, and maintained at the community level by communal organizations, farmers' groups, water users' associations, and by individual farmers. The development, management, and maintenance of water resources at macro level are managed by the public sector. The public sector is responsible for the construction of dams, reservoirs, headworks, link canals, etc.





C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
P A K I S T A N

**Organizational
Strategy for
the Water
Users
Association**

The strategies

employed by the WUA are as follows:

1. Farmers are oriented in the formation of water users' associations.
2. Water users apply for watercourse improvement.
3. A preliminary meeting with farmers is held.
4. Water users organize into a WUA and apply for registration.
5. A registration number is issued to each WUA.
6. Watercourse improvement becomes a full-fledged construction project.
7. A survey of the watercourse is made.
8. A design for the watercourse is prepared and submitted by the WUA for approval.
9. Task committees are formulated: financial, labor, construction material management, quality and control, water control,
10. Provisions and incentives for full participation are instituted:
 - a. Strict and regular attendance;
 - b. Fines for absences;
 - c. Free food and cold drinks on days of heavy work;
 - d. Small Work Units;
 - e. Socials and celebrations.
11. Provisions are made for conflict

management.

12. The project is completed.

13. Post-completion activities are conducted.

**Accomplishments of
WUA in the Past 14
Years**

The WUA has benefited millions of farmers in the form of improved watercourses, precisely levelled fields, advanced irrigation technology, and a lasting relationship between the farmers. Statistics on the accomplishments of WUA are given below:

1. *No. of WUAs in Pakistan:* 1,700
2. *No. of WUAs in Punjab:* 14,747
3. *Membership of WUAs in Punjab:* 5,089,880
4. *Watercourses Improved by WUAs:* 12,449
5. *Length of Lining:* 10,876 km
6. *"Nakkas" Installed:* 4,028,347
7. *Culverts Constructed:* 34,583
8. *Buffalo Wallows:* 1,200
9. *Precisely Levelled Land:* 2,006,816 acres
10. *Irrigation Agronomy Plots:* 12,963
11. *Trained Manpower for Water Management:* 33,020
12. *Material Cost Contributed By WUAs:* Rs. 384 million
13. *Labour Cost Contributed By WUAs:* Rs. 488 million

After gaining administrative experience through the improvement of watercourses, the WUA has started to venture into agribusiness and sustainable agriculture development. The three areas in which considerable success has been achieved are in seed management, farm implements and irrigation equipment management, and tubewell irriga-

**Case Study:
THE WATER
USERS
ASSOCIATION**

Water loss in the watercourses was occurring at an alarming 30-40%. However, the cost of improving the watercourses through the traditional contractual system was too high. While the government seemed incapable of finding alternate arrangements for continuous water supply, conveying the material at site, and alignment of the watercourses, it did little to get the participation of the farmers in making the necessary improvements.

Hence, a "participatory development programme" was proposed by the USAID (which was financing the programme). The programme was first offered to the I and P Department, but the latter refused, saying it couldn't be done.

The same programme was then offered to the Agriculture Department. Being trained in working with the farmers, the challenge was accepted by the department. In 1977, an organization of five model water users associations, called Water Users Association (WUA), was initiated in five different districts of Punjab.

tion management.

1. **Seed Management.** WUA farmers organize themselves into seed management groups. Seeds from research stations and seed corporations are grown in their farms under the technical guidance of experts, and sold to other farmers.
2. **Farm Implements and Irrigation Equipment Management.** The farmers generate capital by selling shares to "implement pools" and collecting rent for the equipment provided them for demonstration purpose. They also invest the common fund into income-generating schemes such as defence saving certificates, purchase of pesticides, etc.
3. **Tubewell Irrigation Management.** The farmers joined hands in installing joint tubewells. The amount contributed to the capital cost is in accordance with the size of the landholding while the operation and maintenance costs are distributed according to the frequency of use of the tubewells. This system has become more popular in the areas where WUAs have been established for watercourse improvement. ■

IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY WATER MANAGEMENT

The participatory approach tried under WUAs and WUA federations will create economic, attitudinal and administrative impacts that maintain the momentum for sustainable agriculture. Different aspects are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

1. **Increase in Per Capita Income.** With the improved supply of irrigation water, conjunctive use of water, and conversion of farming into agricultural business, the per capita income will double.
2. **Distributional Equity.** Equitable distribution of water to all the shareholders of the land will result in the optimum use of land and water resources. This will lead to an increase in crop yield and farm income. The equal chances of growth in income will in turn create an equitable distribution of wealth.
3. **Resource Pooling.** The small farmers, by pooling meager resources, can greatly increase their income.
4. **Horizontal Expansion.** The experiences gained at ZNCT area will be applicable to most other areas since they have similar agro-climatic conditions and social setups. This will create a visible change in the per capita income of the country.
5. **Developing Linkages.** Organizing the farmers into WUAs at watercourse command levels, federating them at canal sub-command levels, and creating irrigation councils will tie up the entire farming community in economic and social links.

ATTITUDINAL IMPACT

1. **Sense of Solidarity.** The creation of organizations will create a sense of solidarity that will enable the people to face all sorts of challenges encountered by the nation.
2. **Democratic Values.** Democracy in Pakistan has been largely unsuccessful. One of the many reasons is unawareness on the part of the rural community of democratic values. The role played by the irrigation management associations will be helpful in developing democratic values and in effecting a change in the overall behaviour of the nation.
3. **Spirit of Cooperation.** The WUAs have created a spirit of cooperation at watercourse level. The ZNCT will enhance cooperation among different villages and its horizontal expansion will bring increased cooperation at the national level. This spirit of cooperation will also spread to the other spheres of life.
4. **Collective Spirit.** The increasing population and the weakening economic status are ruining the society at a very fast rate. The young generation is indulging in evil as a result of diversified thinking among different sections of the society. A collective spirit will save the coming generation from many evils.
5. **Creative Spirit.** The potential of human beings generally dies with lack of resources. Mutual cooperation nurtures the creative spirit of individuals, particularly those belonging to poor families, by creating a secure atmosphere and removing



C O U N T R Y R E P O R T : P A K I S T A N

anxiety over the availability of resources. This creative spirit is compatible with the participatory approach.

6. **Spirit of Collective Self-reliance.** Unfortunately, economic development and increased self-reliance have resulted in a big gap between the poor and the rich. The country as a whole is under heavy debt. There is a need to bring a change in the thinking of the young generation so that we can face the challenges of the 21st century collectively. Conversion of the diversified rural community into groups which have the spirit of collective self-reliance will be helpful if we wish to live respectably during the 21st century.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPACT

1. **Experience in Economic and Social Administration.** The Pakistani nation was governed by the British for a long time and a gap between the government and the governed was then created and maintained. The same principle was adopted by Pakistani bureaucracy resulting in lack of community participation in economic and social administration. The experience of the WUA has shown that the elected representatives of the community proved to be the best economists and administrators, and could manage the issues related to them effectively. The experience gained by the farmers will be useful when making economic and social decisions in other spheres of life.

2. **Generation of Internal Cadre.** The rural community may find it hard to believe that their own nominated representatives can make better judgements than judges appointed by the government. However, establishment of institutions that will create an internal cadre which will settle the issues, will enable the community to take part in national issues as well.

3. **Indigenous Momentum.** The farming community has been governed by feudal lords for centuries. Breaking the indigenous momentum of feudalism can happen by starting the organization at the bottom level and gradually moving it to national level. The farmers' institutions will help in slowing down this indigenous momentum.

CONSTRAINTS TO GROWTH

1. **Self-interest Over Community Benefits.** A farmer is inclined to work for his own interests rather than for the interest of others. For instance, if one has more than his fair share of

irrigation water, he will not work for equitable redistribution of water since this would not benefit him and instead be his loss.

2. **Weakening of Collective Power.** The vested interests of many public servants and feudal lords try to weaken the collective power of this unity. The representatives of the small farmers sometimes have to face very serious consequences.

3. **Difficulty in Gaining Resource Commitments from Local Groups.** The representatives of WUAs face great difficulty in getting resource commitments from local groups and the situation gets tougher with the expansion of farmers' institutions to federations and councils.

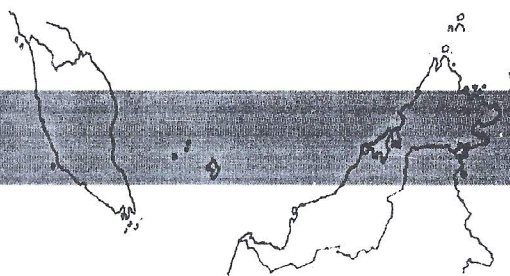
4. **Politicization of Farmers' Organizations.** Politics has always been a game played by two groups. These groups would sacrifice anything just to gain the support of the individuals. Since majority of the society is directly or indirectly involved in politics, it is feared that the irrigation federations may be politicized.

5. **The Old Social Culture.** The farming community has been divided into different groups, castes, and social systems since centuries. Creation of a water culture to replace those ties is important.

6. **Technocrats.** Due to the farmers' lack of technical know-how and the efforts of technocrats to keep an upper hand, farmers have to put up with intervention from technocrats. This is especially so when there is lack of cooperation from the irrigation bureaucracy, and if the design of the irrigation system is complicated.

7. **Financial and Commercial Intervention.** The shareholders of the watercourses have to face shortages of water due to a lack of alternate routes for the watercourses. Because of this, crops suffer. The possibility of financial loss, and damage to commercial links due to opposition from interested groups, cannot be ruled out. Under this situation, the members of the community start blaming their leaders. The farmers' institution has to be very strong so that it can withstand pressure from financial and commercial intervention. ■





MALAYSIA



PEOPLE ABOVE ALL

A core tenet of the NGO experience in Asia has been the empowerment and the strengthening of local communities in the conduct of economic and political activities. Much work has been done by NGOs to provide adequate basic services as well as husband deteriorating resource bases (e.g.

Although economic and social development figures prominently in the agenda of the Malaysian government, there is reason to believe that people's participation is necessary to ensure sustainable development.

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C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
M A L A Y S I A

forests, watersheds, coastal ecosystems energy resources etc...) available to the community."

The observation is very true in most Asian countries particularly in Bangladesh, the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan (to some extent), and now, Thailand. But generally, this is not so in Malaysia. This is due to three main reasons.

1. DEVELOPMENT IS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

2. MARKET DRIVEN AND EXPORT ORIENTED ECONOMY.

Malaysia's economy is closely integrated with the world economy. It is market driven and export oriented. Such an approach has increased per capita income and the wealth of the nation.

| | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Per Capita Income (M\$) | 5,065 | 5,559 | 6,206 |
| GNP Growth (%) | 8.9 | 8.8 | 10 |

This is excellent performance in the classical economic sense, but it has been accomplished at the expense of the environment. Let us examine this in the three main economic activities, namely: natural resources extraction, agricultural primary commodities and industrialization programme.

National Resource Extraction. Malaysia is the world's largest exporter of tin. As of 1990, it has approximately 253 operating tin mines. In addition, Malaysia has petroleum resources with 30 oil fields in operation: 18 in Sabah and Sarawak, and 12 in Peninsular Malaysia. With respect to forestry, a total of 20.1 million hectares, or 56.3% of Malaysia's land area, is used for forestry purposes.

It is projected that by the year 2000 the production of logs will fall to 5.68 million m³ from the 1990 figure of 35.1 million m³. This decrease in production is due in large part to the country's land use priorities where forestry is third, preceded by mining (first) and agriculture (second). Another factor is the inability of the natural resource base to sustain an ever demanding rate of growth.

This economic pattern of development leads to the following:

1. **Depletion of natural resources** with all its attendant consequences;

2. **Water shortages** in many parts of Malaysia due in particular to deforestation. Plantation crops and reforested areas have no ground cover to retain rainfall. As a result, rain tends to run off the land causing soil erosion, floods and drought in the dry season.

3. **Displacement** not only of plant and animal species but also of the native rural society and their source of livelihood.

Primary Agricultural Commodities. Malaysia is the world largest exporter of palm oil (55.8%) and rubber (30.1%). It also exports cocoa, pepper and pineapple. What is the implication of such an economic policy on the environment?

1. These are plantation crops. They are grown in huge estates. Although they are agricultural commodities they are monoculture crops and as such their cultivation has disturbed and continues to disturb the bio-diversity of the country's tropical ecology.

2. The palm oil and rubber industry are two major industries that contribute significantly to water pollution. Almost 90% of their effluent are discharged into water courses. This continues to be the biggest worry of the Department of Environment.

3. Because these are monoculture crops they cause the extinction of the natural pest control ability of the ecosystem. This gives rise to extraordinary pest problems (since pests thrive in a monoculture habitat) requiring the use of great amounts of pesticides, weedicides and fertilizers. The overuse of agro-chemicals in Malaysia has polluted all its rivers to various degrees, poisoning marine and aquatic life, including birds and other animals.

4. Although Malaysia exports many agricultural commodities, it is a net importer of foodstuff including rice. The reason for this is that very fertile and viable agricultural lands are devoted to cash crops rather than to food crops. This trend shows that countries are more interested in foreign exchange than in ensuring food security, particularly for the poorer sector of the population.

The cultivation of these primary commodities is virtually in the hands of the private sector and foreign investors rather than in the hands of the farmers and the rural community. This proves the point that it is not poverty that is the cause of environment degradation but the desire for more wealth and affluence.

Industrialization Plan. Since the government's decision to convert Malaysia into a Newly Industrialized Country (NIC), the country has seen much progress in the manufacturing area. At present, approximately one million Malaysians, or 17% of the population, are employed by the manufacturing component of the Malaysian industrial sector.

The guidelines for national industrialization have been laid out in the government approved Industrial Master Plan

(1986). Most of the industries are foreign investments, particularly from Japan, Taiwan, Korea and the U.S.

This development thrust has not come about without adverse effects to the environment and people of Malaysia. The effects have already been manifested in the following ways:

1. **Land Use.** Most industrial lands are prime agricultural lands which are being urbanized. This pushes agricultural activities backward, contributing to soil erosion, pollution and flooding.

2. **Water Pollution.** The increasing industrial growth is leading to greater water pollution. An inventory of significant pollution sources by the Department of Environment (DOE) indicates there are, at present, 2,626 industries identified as major potential water pollution sources in Malaysia. The coastal waters of Malaysia remain polluted with suspended solids, oil, grease and heavy metals and other river borne pollutants originating from industrial sites.

3. **Improper Disposal of Hazardous Chemicals.** There are more than 500 industries involved in the production of chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, industrial and agricultural chemicals, acids, poison and radioactive waste in Malaysia. However, to this day, Malaysia does not have suitable disposal facilities to handle the various categories of waste identified as potentially toxic or hazardous.

4. **Promotion of a Consumer Culture.** A consumer culture of waste is increasingly being promoted by business and industry. This is by far the most dangerous obstacle to attaining sustainable development. There is an increase in the use of private transport, thanks to Japan, which is causing both pollution and an increased use of fossil fuel in Malaysia.

In addition to that, Malaysians are rapidly joining the "throw-away" society. The use of plastics, packaging and detergents has increased by almost 500% in the last two years. Landfills are becoming very scarce. While waste is increasing, the ability to dispose of waste efficiently is not. This is due to financial constraints and the lack of suitable dumping sites.

3. IDLE LANDS AND LABOR SHORTAGE

The third reason (and a strange one) is not one of availability of resources but of how to get the community interested in managing the resources. The twin problem Malaysia faces today is the problem of idle lands and shortage of labor.

Thousands of hectares of land lie idle and unattended. The government's big problem is to make these lands productive. People are not cultivating and using these lands because investment and efforts are not commensurate with the prevailing labor and capital market situation.

In the area of employment, labor intensive industries (e.g. plantation, building) are in dire need of workers. So is the service industry. There is a great demand for nurses, housemaids and labourers. The demand has attracted immigrant labor from Indonesia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia and South Asia. The situation of

illegal immigrants has become a critical issue. A cabinet committee headed by the Deputy Prime Minister has been established to resolve this issue concerning foreign workers. The number of foreign workers in Malaysia is estimated at one million, almost 5% of the total population.

PO/NGO INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

There is an active and vibrant NGO community in Malaysia because of the problems of "freedom," "justice" and "commercialization and exploitation of natural resources." These public-interest groups can be divided into five categories.

1. Professional Organizations.

2. **Trade Unions and Cooperatives.** The National Union of Plantation Workers in Malaysia (NUPW), the largest single sector union, is very active in the area of use and abuse of pesticides, health, and environmental education.

3. **The Consumer Groups.** The most active NGO groups in Malaysia are the consumer groups. There are a total of 14 consumer groups in Malaysia with at least one in every state. The growth and vibrancy of these consumer groups are a direct reaction to the market and export-oriented economic approach as well as the over-commercialization of the consumer culture.

"Green-consumerism" or the "value for the environment" approach has now become the top agenda of not only the Malaysian consumer groups but of groups all over the world. One effective strategy of the consumer groups is to make use of the power of the consumer to change attitudes, policies and even legislation. The consumer groups have recognized that the consumer commands the buying vote on a product which is hazardous and ecologically disastrous. In theory, such an enterprise will have to fold up. The consumer groups "audit" and "monitor" to ensure that natural resources are not polluted, depleted or destroyed. But there is a need among these groups for a greater appreciation of a people-centered development and recognition of the efficacy of community-based natural resource management for development.

4. **The Environmental Societies.** The strongest advocates of environment protection and sustainable use of natural resources have been the environmental organizations. In Malaysia, we have six very active groups who are in the forefront of this struggle. They are:

1. *The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS)*, the oldest organization which was established in 1940. MNS was originally a group of scientists interested in studying the flora, fauna and ecology of the Malaysian Peninsula. The Malaysian Nature Journal published their findings. Later on, MNS began



C O U N T R Y R E P O R T : M A L A Y S I A

activities to expose the Malayan public to nature and to give them a chance to appreciate it. This grew into an interest in conservation and natural areas management, which eventually led to advocacy work;

2. *World Wildlife Fund*, a global scientific study and advocacy group, established in Malaysia in 1972. It later became known as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF);

3. *The Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia (EPSM)*, was established in 1974. It is a public member-oriented advocacy group. The purpose of EPSM, according to its president, Gurmit Singh, is to do "anything and everything to improve the quality of life of Malaysians". EPSM has also been involved in human rights, as well as environmental issues;

4. *The Center for Environment, Technology and Development Malaysia (CETDEM)*, is a non-profit company established in 1985 by the members of the Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia (EPSM). It is an independent training, research, consultancy and development organization, legally separated from EPSM. The overall purpose of CETDEM is to do research in areas of environment and development that have been neglected (or have been done but not disclosed to the public), to identify trouble areas that need government attention, to demonstrate the viability of environmentally sound alternatives in development, and to provide information and support to environmental groups;

5. *Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM)* was established in late 1977. SAM works closely with various affected communities throughout the country such as farmers whose crops are destroyed by pollution and pests, fishermen whose livelihood is threatened by depleted marine resources and encroachment of trawlers, estate workers whose health and safety are affected by the use of pesticides and toxic chemicals, villagers affected by development projects, indigenous/tribal communities whose lands are taken for timber exploitation, etc. SAM is the coordinator of the Asia-Pacific People's Environment Network (APPEN).

6. *Sustainable Development Network Malaysia (SUSDEN)*. SUSDEN is a new organization established in 1989 out of the initiative of the Management Institute for Social Change (MINSOC). It aims to promote people's participation in environmentally sustainable development.

5. Civic Societies. ■

Case Study: KOPERASI PEMBANGUNAN DESA (KPD)

One group that stands out in Malaysia is the Koperasi Pembangunan Desa (KPD), or the Rural Development Corporation for the state of Sabah. It undertakes development through a people-centered approach and by strengthening the capacity of the people to manage their own natural resources.



The Koperasi Pembangunan Desa was established in July 1976 as a government sponsored cooperative society. In 1978, it was converted into a Statutory Cooperative. It was created for the "sole aim of raising productivity and incomes of the rural population so that the

development of Sabah in particular, and that of Malaysia in general, becomes truly meaningful and beneficial to all."

In 1981, the KPD underwent another structural and organizational change, making it a project-implementing agency of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for the State of Sabah is the Chairman of KPD. This meant that the operations of KPD are bound by government procedures and control.

As provided for in its enactment, the functions of the KPD can be classified under six points, namely:

1. To undertake agricultural projects, with emphasis on in-situ development, so as to help create employment and to provide gainful economic opportunities for the rural communities;
2. To establish commercial model farms, either wholly owned, leased, or managed on joint-venture basis with smallholders;
3. To acquire land, to open up plantations (rubber, oil palm, cocoa and others) and to promote agricultural operations;

4. To undertake downstream processing and marketing. Even the importation and exportation of all agricultural and forest produce from all government, semi-government or government financed agencies will be among its functions;
5. To undertake and participate in industrial, commercial, trading and agricultural enterprises in and outside of the state; and,
6. To promote the delivery of basic social services (such as nutrition, health, population, environment, housing and education) to rural communities.



rural development work is insufficient and ineffective. This approach according to him must be supplemented and complemented by a people-centered approach. He organized a "Strategic Planning Workshop" for KPD which brought forth KPD's Grand Strategy for rural development.

KPD's Grand Strategy, according to Dr. Gunting, recognizes four prerequisites to promote rural development, namely:

1. First, there is a need to bridge the gap between the receiving system and the delivery system. The delivery system, that is, the agency involved in development, must recognize the strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, attitudes, skills and expectations of the target beneficiaries as the starting point of their intervention.
2. Second, help must be provided to improve the capacity of the people to absorb projects and programs intended for them. This stage is the "capacity building" and "social preparation" stage. It aims to help them make the transition from their "old way of life" to the "new way of life".
3. Third, the people must be taught to recognize opportuni-

ties in such endeavors, in themselves, in the community and in the environment for enhanced development. This is the "ah-ha" stage, or the "internalization and opportunity recognition" stage.

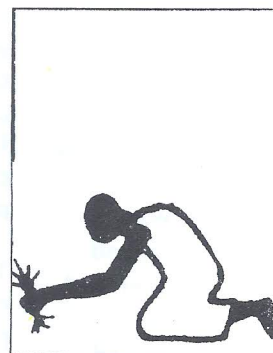
4. Fourth, the people must be enabled to choose the appropriate resources, develop and use the most capable organization, and to adopt the most effective intervention mechanism in order to successfully spawn and undertake enterprises for sustainable and progressive development. This is the "action" stage leading the people towards self-reliance.

The Grand Strategy of the KPD

Since its incorporation in 1977, KPD has conceived and implemented numerous development projects in various rural areas in Sabah. In spite of all these efforts, the impact of KPD's development initiatives has not been commensurate with the amount of investment made in terms of finances and resources. In the past, most of the KPD projects have only been able to impart technical and economic resources management skills but not organizational management and socio-political skills.

In recognition of the previous weaknesses and to reverse the decline of its rural development thrust, KPD formulated a new forward-looking and pro-active strategy, known as the KPD's Grand Strategy.

In October 1988, Dr. Richard Gunting became the General Manager of KPD. He recognized that pure economic intervention in

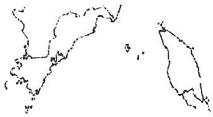


KPD at Work

To get a first-hand experience on the work of KPD in building the capability of the community to manage their

natural resources, this writer underwent a five-day field visit and social immersion in one of the project areas of KPD. The area visited was the Interior Region covering the four administrative districts of Tambunan, Keningau, Nabawan and Tenom. The researcher looked into five specific projects of KPD, namely:

1. Nabawan Fish Pond;
2. Passion Fruit Farming;
3. Tapioca Cultivation;
4. Hill Padi; and
5. Batu Punggol Community Eco-Tourism.

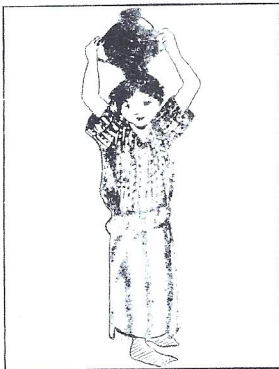


C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
M A L A Y S I A

**PROJECT 1:
Nabawan Fish Pond**

The project is located in Kampong Tiga, approximately 40 kilometers from the Keningau township. The village has about 97 households with an estimated 300 people living in 42 houses.

Before the primary jungle in the area was logged over and destroyed, the villagers in the Nabawan area obtained their daily needs (such as vegetable and meats) from the jungle and fish from the rivers. At the time, the rural folk could be considered at a stage of relative poverty.



When the jungle was logged over and destroyed, the habitat of the animals was also

destroyed. Wild game was reduced greatly while some of the animals retreated further to the interior.

Soil erosion and pollution of rivers became a problem.

The rural folk were considered to be in absolute poverty and their basic need was cash to buy the basic daily necessities such as food and clothing.

KPD was entrusted with the responsibility of developing 4.44 hectares of state land in Kampung Tiga into a fresh water fish project with the objective of raising the incomes of the villagers and providing their protein requirements.

The project was finally implemented late in 1980. The construction of the 24 ponds was completed in March 1982 and operations began in August of that same year. Later in 1991, two tube-wells were constructed and these provide constant water, even in drought.

PROJECT 2: Passion Fruit Contract Farming

Another approach used by the KPD to enable the community to make their idle land more productive, as well as to look after the regenerative capacity of farmland, was to encourage farmers to plant passion fruit as a supplementary crop and as part of an income generating project.

The KPD has a modern processing mill in Kota Kinabalu used for the processing of passion fruit into puree and juice. KPD also undertakes the packaging and marketing of the puree and juice.

Passion fruit contract farming in the Interior Region involves a total of 673 farmers.

**PROJECT 3:
Tapioca Cultivation**

The majority of the people living in this Interior Division are Muruts. Their main staple diet is *tapioca*. Likewise, their basic agricultural skills lie in *tapioca* and hill padi cultivation. Around the regions of Nabawan and in particular Sepulut, there is still a lot of land available for cultivation (including idle land).

The KPD has harnessed the people's agricultural skills and the natural resources available in order to develop the tapioca cultivation enterprise. This enables the community to increase their earning capacity.

The human resource development officer in the new arrangement is also the production and technical officer. Through its training and value formation system, the KPD has encouraged response and participation.



The KPD's approach is not merely "to teach people how to fish". Considered equally important is building their socio-political skills to ensure that they continue to have "access to the fishing ground." In addition, the KPD attempts to continually help the community add value to their products. In this case, a new *tapioca* factory costing half a million ringgits has just been constructed in Sepulut. It has a capacity to process about 40 tons a day and the community production is so scheduled as to ensure constant supply. At the start, the processing and marketing risks are borne by the KPD. Dr. Gunting, the general manager, hopes to build the capability of the community so that eventually it may completely take over the enterprise along with the risks and benefits.

In addition to this, the KPD, through its research and development unit, is looking into the regenerative capacity and fertility of the soil as a result of *tapioca* cultivation. Crop rotation and inter-cropping are being experimented to test how they affect the fertility as well as the regenerative capacity of the soil. These plans are meant to ensure the protection of the natural resources.

PROJECT 4: Hill Padi

Hill padi is another important component of the diet of the Murut community. It is grown through the practice of shifting cultivation. The KPD has, once again, harnessed this basic cultivation skill and has used the same approach as that in tapioca cultivation, where:

1. Production skills are upgraded;
2. Socio-political skills are taught so that the community can gain access to and control of resources;
3. Value is added to the product by providing drying and milling services and equipment; and
4. The community is expected to eventually manage marketing operations and undertake the risks involved.



Again, there has been an increase in overall participation as well as cooperation from the community.

PROJECT 5: Community Ecotourism - Batu Punggul

The Community Ecotourism of Batu Punggul is one of the most innovative income generating projects. It enables a community to manage its natural resources and at the same time acts as revenue source.

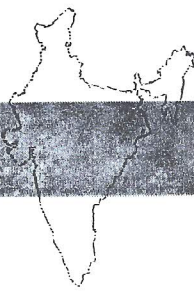
Batu Punggul is a place in the heart of Borneo, locked inside the Laban Valley. It is not accessible by road. A boat ride to Batu Punggul takes about 3 to 4 hours. Fourteen boats which belong to the villagers are for hire. The boatmen provide the transportation and act as tourist guides for a fee.

“The beauty of the place has to be seen to be believed,” said Dr. Gunting, when he made the arrangement for the researcher to visit the place. It was indeed an experience if only for its beauty. There is a limestone hill jutting up the vast jungle, canopied by more than 20 caves containing bats and other flora and fauna. There are several waterfalls, ample fishing grounds as

well as paths leading to the virgin forest of Borneo.

The KPD has built infrastructures which provide basic amenities to visitors of this jungle resort, but for a fee. There is a Murut-style long house, several chalets, bedding facilities, a provision store, a canteen plus camp sites and barbecue pits. The KPD is setting up stringent rules for the tourists, including limits to the occupancy capacity so as not to disturb the ecology. All these are managed and run by the community.

According to Dr. Gunting, the main reason for this development is to protect the fragile ecosystem of Batu Punggul. As it is, this ecosystem is threatened by logging. “I must provide an economic outlet and reason for the community to manage and sustain this ecosystem for its own benefit,” he continued. This is an excellent approach to protecting a fragile ecosystem and developing the capabilities of the community to manage their natural resources, earn an income, and give joy to the tourists. ■



INDIA

LESSONS FROM THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

There has been tremendous progress in the past four decades, (1951-present) of planned development. Production of food grains has increased from 51 million tons in 1950 to 176.22 million tons in 1991. Correspondingly, per capita per diem availability of food grains has increased from 395 grams in 1950 to 510 grams in 1991. Special poverty alleviation programs launched and pursued in the late seventies have helped in bringing down the incidence of poverty from 48.3 in 1977 to 29.9 in 1988.

There has been similar progress in the social service sector (e.g. health care and education) and in development of industries and infrastructure.

However, statistics based on all-India averages are highly misleading. Micro level realities show that although physical access to food grains has considerably increased as a result of food production, about half of the rural population is still unable to get two square meals a day. In terms of macro data, incidence of poverty may have been substantially reduced, but in terms of absolute numbers about 253 million Indians still live below the poverty line (Studies of AVARD reveal that there are still large areas in the country where 60-75% of the population live below the poverty line). In the states of Orissa and Bihar, the population below the poverty line is 45% and 41% respectively. Thus, a large section of the population, particularly in the rural areas is still deprived of the basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care and functional education.

Obviously, lack of full and gainful employment is at the root of widespread rural poverty. Low productivity and inefficient use of natural resources

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and social inequity are also largely responsible. Although only 3-5% are unemployed, 50-60% of the work force, with more women than men, underemployed and have low incomes.

As of now, India is also preoccupied with overcoming its macroeconomic crises which include an acute resource crunch and balance of payments problem. The country has entered the debt trap. New economic policies and reforms which focus on liberalization and globalization are part of the structural adjustment package prescribed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Adverse of the package on the poor in the form of anti-poverty programs are well known and need not be recounted.

In such a situation, community autonomy and action in natural resource management, despite the promise it holds as the most effective way out and the pressure provided by NGOs, has yet to attract attention and encouragement from the government.

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Traditionally, the Indian village was the basic unit of production and self-government. Village economy was agro-industrial in nature and organized so as to achieve self-sufficiency. Each village had an elected *panchayat* with executive as well as judicial powers. A larger *panchayat* presided over these village *panchayats*.

Families in each village community had rights and obligations which were determined and protected by strong customary law and established conventions. The village community used and managed its natural resources - land water and vegetation - in an equitable and sustainable manner. Land was distributed among the families by the *panchayat*. The agrarian system was based on cooperation and joint action where needed. Community assets, facilities, services and institutions were maintained through contributions (e.g. produce, in kind). Ethical values such as harmony, cooperation, sharing and justice were emphasized. Relatively rich natural resources and a wholesome climate facilitated adequate production and comfortable living.

Panchayats collected taxes out of the produce and paid the share of the king or ruler of the area on behalf of the village. The king respected the autonomy of the village communities and *panchayats* and seldom interfered with customary law.

Information available, although fragmentary in nature, reveals that there was an efficient system of self-government in villages and towns and the communities enjoyed autonomy. Thus, India was able to build and sustain a highly developed civilization that lasted for ages.

It must be underscored that the system of self-government and community-based resource management corresponded to ecological and cultural diversities - unity in diversity is often

emphasized about India. It is also pertinent to mention that the landlord system was absent in India. The individual peasant was the absolute owner of his patch of land, a custom that implies the primacy and supremacy of autonomous village communities.

The traditional system of village self-governance continued for centuries until it was disrupted by external invaders. However, pre-British Afghan and Mughal rulers did not interfere much with old customs and conventions nor did they introduce any fundamental changes in Indian life. Nevertheless, conflicts and subjugation and the increasing centralization of government slowly lessened the respect given to customary law.

During the Mughal period (1526-1757), Emperor Akbar attempted comprehensive reforms in the land revenue system. He tried to strike a balance between the welfare of the peasant and the revenues of the government. During the period, land revenue formed the backbone of government's finance. To achieve a steady flow of funds, Akbar addressed various issues related to the land revenue system such as ownership of land, rate of revenue, mode of assessment and enforcement, clean and timely collection with minimum coercion, remissions due to crop failures and recovery of arrears. He conceded that the peasant was the true proprietor of his holding and that the king had a right to demand a tax, but only for performing the duty of protecting the peasant and promoting his welfare. He tried to be benevolent so that the peasantry will be happy and content and loyal to the crown.

Succeeding Mughal emperors kept the land revenue system introduced by Akbar, making only marginal changes. Oppression, exploitation and corruption of local collection officials increased, however, and heavy tax demands became unbearable. The lot of the peasants worsened over the years.

In the British period (1757-1947), drastic changes were made and a complicated system of government controlled natural resource management and revenue system patterned after the West introduced. These changes disrupted the indigenous system of village self-government and resource management as well as the economic and social structure of India.

The new land revenue system was basically of two types: the *Zamindari* system and the *Ryotwari* system. A third type called *Mahalwari* was a modified version of the *Zamindari* system.

The main features of the *Zamindari* system were as follows:

1. *Zamindars* or landlords were recognized as owners of the land, but subordinate to the government.
2. Cultivators were reduced to the status of tenant.
3. Under the permanent settlement, the *zamindars* were responsible for collecting from cultivators a fixed rent to the government.
4. The cultivators were deprived of their customary right to use the pasture and forest lands, homestead plots, irrigation canals, fisheries and for protection against the raise of rent.



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
I N D I A

The Permanent Settlement was first introduced by the then Governor general, Lord Cornwallis, in 1793 AD to ensure guaranteed stability of state income. Zamindars were asked to pay the government 10/11th of the rent collected from the peasants. The decision to grant proprietary rights to *zamindars* was partly the result of the misunderstanding based on the landlord system prevailing in England, and partly on political, financial and administrative expediency.

In all the systems, excessive land revenue paid to the government was as high as 33 to 55%. In permanent settlement *zamindari* areas, it shot up to 60% - 45% paid to government and 15% retained by intermediary *zamindars*.

In the process, British colonial rulers, lured by forest wealth, took over the forests claiming better forest management and extinguished the traditional rights of the local people.

The natural resource management system introduced by British rulers had adverse effects on the local social, economic and political structure. It disrupted the entire traditional economy which included agriculture, industry and trade.

Agriculture declined as peasants were heavily taxed and their freedom taken away. Community autonomy and village self-government became a thing of the past and traditional local initiative, enterprise and investment in agricultural development were crippled.

Issues on community-based natural resource management in India became quite complicated during the colonial rule. Fast and sweeping changes since 1947 have added new dimensions to the problem. The main issues may be listed as follows:

1. Restoration of community autonomy and village self-government;
2. Restructuring of agrarian relations and natural resource use to achieve an egalitarian social structure;
3. Adequate access of the rural poor to natural resources;
4. Abolition of the exploitative and oppressive *zamindari* system;
5. Efficient and sustainable use and management of natural resources to meet the people's present and future needs;
6. Consolidation of land holdings;
7. Need-based development mechanisms and support systems;
8. Land records and revenue structure;
9. Legislation related to land and other natural resources;
10. Rectifying disoriented community thinking, especially of the elite.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

India on the whole is rich in legislation. The laws enacted and enforced include the following:

1. Abolition of *Zamindari* so as to eliminate intermediaries;
2. Ceiling on land holdings to abolish uneven distribution of land and redistribute ceiling-surplus land among the landless;
3. Tenancy reforms to ensure security of tenure for peasants, regulation of rent and ownership;
4. Regulation of share-cropping to safeguard the interest of the share-croppers;
5. Protection against alienation of land belonging to weaker sections such as scheduled castes and tribes;
6. Consolidation of fragmented landholdings;
7. Provision of homestead to the landless households;
8. Statutory minimum wages for agricultural labor;
9. Providing government land to the landless on a long-term tree-lease.

Lately, central government has initiated certain steps to involve people, communities and NGOs in wasteland development as well as the conservation, regeneration and management of forests. Establishment and restructuring of the National Wastelands Development Board, programs such as social forestry and village wood lots, adoption of the national Forest Policy Resolution 1988 and issuing of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests Circular dated 1 June 1990 on involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies in the regeneration of degraded forest lands may be mentioned in this regard.

Governmental responses through enabling legislation, policies, and mechanisms have improved the situation considerably compared to that prevailing under British rule. However, far more remains to be done.

Community autonomy and village self-government has yet to be restored except in a few tribal states such as Nagalan, Mizoram and Meghalaya where the traditional system was retained. Thus, even during the post-independence period the government continues to follow British laws which have destroyed the traditional system of community-based management. About one-third of India's land and her entire water resources are owned by the government. Private individual ownership of the rest of the land and the direct link of the individual peasants with the government, bypassing the community, has created a situation in which there is hardly any room for the community to play any significant role except in case of common property resources which have been largely misappropriated and encroached upon by influential individuals.

As a result, village communities have lost interest in the management of their ecosystems. For real freedom and a new social order to emerge, one that will include community action

and popular participation, no less than Mahatma Gandhi had advised that power be distributed among the 700,000 villages. However, this recommendation was ignored; the makers of the constitution drafted a make-believe provision for the village *panchayats* in the non-justiciable part of the Constitution of India. Although the current government's initiative to provide a constitutional basis for effective democratic decentralization and *Panchayat raj* has yet to achieve results, this is nonetheless a step in the right direction.

Second, despite legislation and efforts to enforce laws to redistribute ceiling-surplus land among the landless, distribution is still highly uneven. Centralized government control and management, complicated laws and procedures and corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy bring about land-related disputes, litigation and strife in the community. Vested interests in natural resources must be totally removed.

PO/NGO INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The initiatives and responses of India's vibrant NGO sector have successfully promoted community-based natural resource management. Largely people-centered and/or community-based, these initiatives are large in number, wide in spread and diverse in strategy.

The responses of non-government organizations (NGO) in the post-independence period can be discussed in two broad categories: social movements and community-based action.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

India has been witnessing a series of social movements and struggles on the vital issues of land reform, agrarian relations and natural resource management within the framework of a "new social order." A few significant ones are briefly discussed below:

Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement. A Gandhian movement led by Vinoba Bhave, it began with the Bhoodan movement on 18 April 1951. The focus of the movement was the redistribution by landholders of *Bhoodan* (land gift) among the landless. Its leaders say that redistribution was primarily intended to generate fellowship and harmony in the community. Though in principle one-sixth of the land should be donated to the landless, in practice, a lesser area is being parcelled out.

A total of 47,83,821 acres of land were given as gifts across the country. Of this, 16,88,498 acres have been distributed among 7,09,209 poor households, mostly to scheduled castes and tribes. This achievement compares well with government's earlier redistribution of ceiling-surplus land. In Bihar, where the movement's goals were intensely pursued and achievements were high, a late 1960s survey revealed that about 75% of the beneficiaries of *Bhoodan* were in possession

of the land while only less than 20% of the beneficiaries of land distributed by the government were able to gain possession.

By 1957, the Bhoodan Movement had branched into the *Gramdan* (village gift) movement. Declared were 149,000 *Gramdans* covering the same number of villages, settlements and hamlets. However, follow-up, confirmation and operationalization have been extremely poor, and as a result 91% of *Gramdans* still remain at the initial stage of paper pledging.

Gramdan does not mean "gift of the village," but "gift for the village"- a fine yet vital distinction. To make *Gramdan* widely acceptable, three conditions were created:

1. The title of ownership of village land should be vested on the village assembly (*Gram Sabha*) and 1/20th of the land held by each constituent household transferred to the village assembly for redistribution (while each landholder retains possession and tenancy rights over the remaining 19/20th).

2. Each constituent household should contribute 1/40th of its agricultural production and 1/30th of labor and cash income to the common village fund (*Gram-Kosh*).

3. There should be a village assembly (*Gram Sabha*) comprising adult men and women and having unanimously elected office-bearers and an Executive Committee.

For a *Gramdan* to be declared, at least 75% of the households (including landholders holding a minimum of 51% of the land held by co-villagers) are required to sign a pledge to join the *Gramdan* and accept its conditions.

The government was sympathetic to the movement. Many of the state governments accorded legal recognition to Bhoodan land redistribution and *Gramdan* by enacting laws such as the Bhoodan Act and the *Gramdan* Act. To facilitate handling of the massive task of land redistribution, State Bhoodan Committees also received financial and official support from the state governments. However, the governments did not address fundamental issues such as facilitating the functioning of village assemblies as effective units of village self-governments, a concept provided by the *Gramdan* Act and the Sarvodaya philosophy.

If translated into practice, *Gramdan* would have established effective village self-government and a community-based natural resource use. But apart from small gains in pockets where there was intensive follow-up, the movement failed to achieve its larger objective of creating a new social order. It gradually fizzled out in the 1970s with the passing away of its great leaders, Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan.

Nevertheless, the movement left a deep impact and provided valuable lessons on the vital issues of self-government and community-based natural resource management as well as social change. Village assemblies backed by legislation of the *Gramdan* Act do offer a workable model of a community level people's organization. Furthermore, it became obvious



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
I N D I A

that persuasion alone is not adequate and that an organized and peaceful pressure by the rural poor is necessary to restructure agrarian relations. Finally, the experience showed that greater social preparedness and stronger people's movements are prerequisites to real progress towards a new social order.

Naxalite Movement. Although a Marxist political movement, the Naxalite movement is extremely relevant to the present discussion because of its unique position and impact on the issues of land and agrarian relations and natural resource use within the framework of social change.

The Naxalite Movement is named after its place of origin: Naxalbari in Gopivallabhpur (West Bengal). It was launched in the late 1960s and spearheaded by the Communist Party of India with violent revolution and social change as its aims. Strategy-wise, it started with the physical annihilation of class enemies such as big landholders, money-lenders, police-informers and political opponents - a move which created panic in society and government. It tried to sensitize and organize the rural poor (the landless agricultural laborers, scheduled castes and tribes) into a revolutionary uprising which would break the existing exploitative and oppressive socio-economic structure and create a new egalitarian order.

Aside from West Bengal, the movement brought under its influence a few other pockets such as Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh and Sahar (district Bhojpur) and Musahri (district Muzaffarpur) in Bihar. It attracted the bright and brilliant youth disgusted with the existing system and inspired by the ideology of the movement. The movement waned during the 1970s because of inner conflicts and splits in the political group, inadequacies of strategy, lack of class-based mass support in highly stratified Indian society and ruthless suppression by the government.

Naxalites have now made considerable progress in regenerating their movement and enhancing areas of influence in such states as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Orissa. In many of these areas, the government finds it difficult to meet the challenge of the movement.

The movement has facilitated access of the rural poor and tribals to the natural resources, particularly land, commons and forests; it has also checked their exploitation and oppression by building organized resistance and action and using violence when necessary. However, its prime goals of revolution and a new social order have not been realized.

Nevertheless, the movement has made vital contributions to debate and action on issues relating to land and agrarian reforms and access of the poor to natural resources as well as on the wider issues of poverty eradication and social change. It has also generated tremendous pressure on the government and society, eliciting vital responses on land and agrarian reforms and anti-poverty measures. Lastly, it has generated among the poor awareness of their rights and the self-confidence to fight for these rights - a warning to the government and the rich that the poor can no longer be taken for granted.

Chipko Movement. Chipko literally means embracing or hugging. The movement was named as such because in 1974 local women organized themselves and embraced trees to save them from felling by forest contractors.

Beginning in the early 1970s in Garhwal Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh State, the Chipko movement has since gained worldwide acclaim as an important ecological movement. This movement to save forests emerged from the alarming signals of rapid destabilization of fragile Himalayan ecology. In the process, it has addressed wide-ranging cultural, social, economic and ecological issues in the area. Furthermore, it has evolved its own world view of ecology.

Of great relevance is the extremely successful afforestation program organized and spearheaded by the movement and local NGO: Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM) in Gopeshwar. Because of the far greater stake of women, DGSM has organized an informal village level institution of women, the *Mahila Mangal Dal*, consisting of a woman member from each household in the village. These *Dals* have slowly taken possession and management of the community lands in the respective villages. Highly increased fodder, fuel and small timber from these community forests are shared equally among the constituent households in the village. *Mahila Mangal Dals*, *Van Panchayats* (village forest councils), statutory *Gram Panchayats* and DGSM have been able to work together for shared concerns and the common good as a result of the action and awareness generated by the movement.

Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). Narmada Bachao Andolan is an internationally known movement to save Narmada spearheaded by an informal all-India strategic network of social activists and NGOs. It resists the multi-purpose Narmada Valley Development Project under which two large dams, Sardar Sarovar in Gujarat and Indira Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, will be constructed on the Narmada river along with eight other larger dams, 300 medium-sized dams and 3,000 small dams on the valley. Narmada river is the lifeline of the valley. Now, the focus of the movement is to stop the construction of the World Bank-financed Sardar Sarovar Project. The basic issues related are: who benefits from the project, to what extent, at whose and what cost and for how long?

An important issue raised by the NBA is the inalienable rights of the people and communities to their natural resources. The movement has generated forceful debate and has deeply

influenced thinking on growth-centered development policies. It has also enhanced the prospects of proper resettlement and rehabilitation of the people and communities displaced by mega-dams and projects.

There are a number of other movements on similar issues across the country. These include one against the World Bank-financed Suvernakha Projects (Chandil dam) in Bihar and another against Baliapal firing range in Orissa.

These movements have been extremely effective in generating awareness and action on people-centered development. They have facilitated efficient and equitable management of natural resources in ways appropriate to the country's ecological and cultural diversities.

Bodh Gaya Bhoomi Andolan. The Bodh Gaya land movement started in the late 1970s and continued for about a decade. It was a movement comprising landless agricultural laborers drawn from 42 villages in four blocks of Gaya district in Bihar, and spearheaded by a social activist youth organization called Kshatra Yuva Sangharsg Vahini (KYSV). The movement was committed to peaceful and democratic means. The basic issue it addressed was the redistribution of some 9,000 acres (about 3,600 hectares) of ceiling surplus land held by Bodh Gaya Matt, a Hindu monastery which evaded ceiling laws of the state.

Labor-peasant committees (Mazdoor-Kisan Samitis) were organized and networked at the area level. With Vahini and local leadership as vanguards, there were tremendous popular participation and peaceful action. Women were in the forefront of the struggle. Alongside the basic issues of land, issues such as gender equity, prohibition, freedom from superstition, and rights of the poor to live with dignity were raised and addressed by the movement.

In the late 1980s the movement concluded with considerable success. The ceiling-surplus land of the Matt was acquired by the government and redistributed among the landless households. Moreover, the poor laborers freed themselves from feudal control, exploitation and oppression of the Matt and its managers and agents. Notwithstanding inadequacies and the premature conclusion of the movement, its achievements and success against formidable odds are vital to social justice and social change, the deprivation and exploitation of the rural poor being major hurdles to the country's progress.

Ganga Mukti Andolan. The Ganga liberation movement started in the early 1980s and achieved its major objectives in the later part of the decade. The movement was launched to abolish *Panidari* or the waterlord system on a stretch of 80 km of the Ganga river in Bhagalpur district of Bihar. The *Panidari* of two rich waterlords continued because of a ruling of the higher court that claimed that *Zamindari* (landlord system) abolition laws earlier enacted by government did not apply to the waterlord system.

The two waterlords collected an annual water revenue of 30 to 40 million rupees from about 40,000 fisherfolk drawn from 60 villages situated along the river apart from various other forms of exploitation and oppression. As in the Bodh Gaya movement, the social activist youth organization, the KYSV, spearheaded the movement and organized the fisherfolk into a water labor association (*Jal Shramik Sangh*). Awareness and pressure generated by the movement resulted in necessary legislation by the State government; the *Panidari* has since been abolished, liberating the fisherfolk from the control, exploitation and oppression of the intermediary waterlords and their managers and agents.

COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION

Non-governmental community-based action on natural resource management have had equally rich experience in diverse cases across the country. A few of these cases are discussed below.

Community-based Water Management. In India, the starting point of community-based natural resource management is not land or trees, but water. Accordingly, the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD), an NGO, organized community-based action on water management for irrigation in three areas in Bihar:

1. Pratappur block in Hazaribagh (now Chatra) district during 1968-1972;
2. Musahriblock in Muzaffarpur district during 1972-1982;
3. Jamui block in Munger (now Jamui) district during 1972-1982.

Through community effort, each area was able to procure implements and build infrastructure for irrigation. Availability of irrigation facilitated double and triple cropping and substantially increased agricultural production. It also enhanced employment in intensive agriculture providing much needed food security and an improved quality of life. The most vital outcome, however, was the initiative made in setting up equitable water management as opposed to an exploitative irrigation system which is individually owned and which provides uneven distribution of water.

Pani Panchayat. The *Pani Panchayat* or water council is another community-based water management system. It evolved from the initiative of Gram Gaurav Pratisthan (GGP) in Pune district (Maharashtra), an NGO that aimed to facilitate efficient harvest and equitable sharing of scarce water resources. Schemes of *Pani Panchayat* are based on the principle that:

1. A group of people share equitably on a per capita basis;
2. The people in the group do not grow or use water for high water consuming crops such as sugarcane;
3. Water rights are made non-transferrable;
4. People contribute 20% of the scheme's cost; and



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
I N D I A

5. Water rights are made available even to landless families.

Each *Pani Panchayat* consists of marginal farmers, landless laborers and scheduled castes in a village. The council plans, executes and manages its own irrigation schemes with the assistance of GGP. In 1986, 51 schemes were already functioning, providing irrigation for 1500 hectares of land and benefitting 1800 families. These families have been able to eradicate their poverty through increased employment on their land and a greater food security. Moreover, highly successful community action has strengthened their self-confidence.

The work has since progressed, moving on to sustainable ecosystem planning and development with the village as basic unit. These successful efforts have facilitated food production through an appropriate cropping pattern, grasslands development, tree cover on barren lands and zero water run-off.

The concept of *Pani Panchayat* has spread steadily. A similar initiative under the dedicated leadership of Anna Hazare, a social activist based in Ralegaon Shindi village of Maharashtra, has produced equally commendable results. Starting with micro-watershed planning and irrigation, the initiative now includes a holistic approach to village ecosystem planning and development. Achievements include a shared water supply for domestic and irrigation use, sustainable village ecosystems, increased agricultural production and income, employment, education, health care and sanitation, renewable energy in the form of biogas plants and reconciliation of village disputes.

Sukhomajri. Sukhomajri, a small village in Ambala district of Haryana State, has been successful in its efforts towards community-based micro-watershed development. The village is located in the fragile foothill zone of Shivalik range of western Himalayas. Assisted by a non-governmental development agency, the villagers organized themselves into a Water Users Association (WUA) consisting of one member from each of the 56 households in the village. A small water reservoir was built on a flood-prone stream. Through community forum, the WUA agreed upon the following principles:

1. Water from the reservoir must be shared equally irrespective of size of landholdings;
2. WUA members must protect the vegetation in the reservoir's catchment area from open grazing;
3. Beneficiaries must pay for the water used for agriculture so as to create a common fund for the village;

4. The WUA shall manage and maintain the water harvesting facility and distribution system.

As a result, vegetation in the degraded forest land forming the catching area was regenerated and a sustainable micro-system established. Household incomes have increased considerably. Assured irrigation from the reservoir helped triple agricultural production while the grass and fodder from the forest area facilitated stall-fed buffalo rearing and increased its production of milk. All this was achieved through community-based natural resource management and improvement.

Rope-makers of Sharanpur. In this case, community-based action and social movement combined to empower the rope-makers of Ghad area in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh and to enable them to regain their traditional rights to use and sustain a natural resource - *Bhabbar* grass.

A large section of the rural poor in Ghad survives by rope-making, using *Bhabbar* as raw material. However, as a result of anti-people forest policies of the government, *Bhabbar* has gradually become scarce and too costly for the poor rope-makers and their access to it has been highly restricted. They are also harassed by forest officials in various ways. A major part of *Bhabbar* harvest is sold through contractors and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation to paper mills at much cheaper rates. Hence the rope-makers' struggle for their right and survival.

In 1982-1983, with the intervention and assistance of a local social activist NGO, Vikalp, rope-makers organized themselves into community-based cooperatives (*Baan Utpadak Samitis*) with the following objectives:

1. to assure a supply of raw material (*Bhabbar*) at fair prices;
2. to assure marketing of rope (*Baan*) produced; and
3. to upgrade skills so as to improve productivity, remove drudgery, enhance marketability of products and raise incomes.

Due to continuing hurdles, the rope-makers organized themselves into an area level organization, *Ghad Kshetriya Mazdoor Morcha* or *ghad* area labor front, and started a social movement in 1986. Their charter of 29 demands included adequate educational, health care, transport and communication facilities along with the main demands relating to *Bhabbar* grass and traditional rights of access to forests.

After about a year's struggle, rope-makers were able to regain some of their traditional rights to collect forest produce such as special rights for the people of 81 scheduled villages (*Haqdari Ravanna*) and general rights for the residents of all villages (*Aam Ravanna*). But this recognition lasted only one season. Hence the struggle continues.

Chakriya Vikas Pranali (CVP). *Chakriya Vikas Pranali* (CVP), or cyclic system of development, is based on a unique and promising concept of an efficient community-based natu-

ral resource management system drafted by a social and development activist, P.R. Mishra, who was actively involved in the Sukhomajri initiative. He has been experimenting with this concept in ground areas and refining it in the hilly areas of Palamau district of South Bihar. He has established an NGO called Society of Hill Resource Management School (SHRMS) and built up a team of workers to spearhead CVP. There is also a strong support group for CVP.

Starting in 1986 with one village named Bhusaria, CVP has now reached about 28 villages, 23 of which are located in Palamu district and three of the remaining five in the neighboring district of Aurangabad and two in Buxar. CVP seeks to blend modern science and technology with traditional wisdom in order to promote multi-layered multi-cropping based on symbiosis between different species of plants. It seeks to optimise sustainable management and use of the entire natural resource base of the village which includes land, water, vegetation, sunshine, air and human resources.

A small village or hamlet is selected as the basic unit under CVP. An effective *Sahayogi Samaj*, a community based on cooperation and sharing, is constituted in the unit. Available land in the village is gathered into a block. Likewise, willing village workers are pooled. Workers joining a CVP are called "resource students" (*Sadhan Vidyarthi*) because their work combines manual and intellectual tasks and action research. Accordingly, these students are paid stipends, not wages. Thus, human resources and creativity are effectively developed and dignity and self-satisfaction in the work is instilled.

Initially, investment is mobilized from outside funding agencies, governmental as well as non-governmental, indigenous as well as foreign. However, the multi-layered multi-cropping cycle is planned and implemented in a way that will generate resources for stipends and further development within the system.

CVP seeks to make optimum use of every unit of land and to conserve its resources. The village community pledges to achieve zero run-off, prohibiting even a drop of water to go to waste. It also practices "social fencing", completely stopping open grazing, but instead promotes stall-feeding of livestock. The pooled land is shaped and developed scientifically by building ridges, plots and harvesting structures such as tanks and check dams or reservoirs. So far only wasteland and degraded land in the villages have been pooled and successfully covered under CVP. Hence, CVP focuses on the main tree crops for timber, fruits, fuel and fodder along with grasses, root and tuber crops, vegetables, legumes and short duration fruits such as papayas planted in-between, depending on agro-climatic and socio-economic conditions.

CVP has introduced a unique and equitable system of income sharing where: 30% is equally shared among resource students and teachers; 30% goes to the land owners pro rata; 30% goes to the village development fund for further investment; the remaining 10% goes to the village welfare fund to

support educational and health care services.

Each village unit under CVP is expected to achieve self-reliance after seven years and to start repayment of the initial investment. Each resource student is expected to plant and care for 3,000 trees apart from other plantations and crops. The project promises a high level of income to students, land holders and the village community in general. Conservation of water and soil, use of organic manures and symbiosis in the scientifically designed crop-mix ensure sustainable use and management of natural resources while optimizing production and income.

CVP has an open system with regard to accounts and holds a social audit. Each village community reconciles its disputes locally as they arise. Attitudinal changes and physical development are monitored closely to make adjustments when required so that the system moves forward and grows in harmony with nature.

Thus, CVP addresses social, cultural, economic, political, environmental and moral issues and problems via a holistic approach. In other land and agrarian reform movements in India where goals are reached either through legislation and pressure, through non-violent means and persuasion (Bhoodan-Gramdan movement), through violence and coercion (Naxalite movement) or through a combination of pressure and persuasion (Bodh Gaya Bhoomi Andolan), the focus has been on transfer and redistribution of ownership of land and in certain cases on redistribution of limited income and not on adequate follow-up.

In this respect, CVP improves upon the above responses and has potential for sustainable development through community-based natural resource management, ensuring high incomes and better quality of life for rural communities. The impact of CVP in villages where it has been in operation for the past four to five years, successful natural resource management, biomass regeneration and human resource development have to be seen to be believed. In the process, multifarious dimensions of development will continue to unfold and must hence be addressed in a creative and innovative manner.

LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

Basic lessons emerging from post-independence governmental and non-governmental responses on multidimensional issues involved in community-based natural resource management in India are briefly discussed below.

COMMUNITY-BASED MANAGEMENT

An assortment of experiences in the context of the overall Indian situation makes a convincing case for community-based natural resource management. The essential elements of successful management are outlined as follows:



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
I N D I A

Village Microecosystem-Based Management. Village microecosystem-based development is suitable to the Indian context. It takes into account ecological and social dynamics and diversities of each microsystem. It is at this level and scale that people and communities participate and contribute directly.

Management assumes different forms and borrows various types of water harvesting devices, land shaping, vegetation and crop planning with varying emphases on crop lands, grazing lands or tree lands depending on the nature of the village ecosystem.

It may take time to reach holistic village ecosystem management. However, there are tremendous resources available: water and micro watersheds, degraded commons, degraded government land and privately owned degraded land and wasteland.

A village ecosystem-based natural resource management will be integrated into the management plan of a larger ecosystem as part of a bottom-up development process. This will ultimately lead to the national resource management plan.

A Cohesive Village/Hamlet Level People's Organization
Cohesive and homogeneous small village or hamlet level people's organizations based on shared concerns, perceptions, interests and objectives are essential to facilitating popular participation with minimum conflict. Such an organization will provide a workable forum where the community can make decisions and formulate management plans based on its needs, priorities and perceptions as well as reconcile disputes and resolve conflicts.

About 75% of Indian villages have populations of less than 1,000 persons or 200 households each. Thus, they readily offer manageable units. Larger Indian villages are also generally clustered into small cohesive hamlets. Hence, there can be hamlet level people's organizations in larger villages.

In the village level, people's participation is direct rather than indirect (*i.e.* through elected representatives and small executive bodies). Experience shows that direct participation works better and is far more equitable, effective and less conflict-prone. This decentralization is essential for building a fuller democracy.

Community level organizations must also be linked together on shared concerns. Based on experience, though, it would be expedient to let these basic units remain as people's organizations outside of the government's statutory structure

so that they will be able to effectively perform their functions of voluntary participation and vigilance.

Efficiency, Equity and Sustainability. To succeed, a village ecosystem and community-based and participatory resource management must combine efficiency, equity and sustainability. This implies regenerating and harnessing the natural resource base to optimize biomass production, ensuring equitable sharing to meet the basic needs of the participating households and adopting environmentally sound systems of natural resource management. This kind of natural resource management will ensure not only environmental sustainability, but also social, economic and political sustainability.

Technology. As seen in various grassroots experiences, the basic elements needed for equitable and sustainable resource management already exist in Indian tradition. They only have to be renewed and modernized by blending them with appropriate modern technologies in order to enhance efficiency, productivity and sustainability to meet present and future challenges. India has adequate capability, but innovations and improvements need to be intensified and expanded to cope with fast changes taking place.

Initial Investment. Adequate resources are required for initial investment in community-based natural resource management. Initial investment may be raised from governmental and non-governmental sources, indigenous as well as foreign, but a greater amount is needed. After the change in government policies, one which will favor community-based resource management, substantial resources from the outlay of the national plan will be released and made available; it can be supplemented by resources channeled through NGOs. Each community will have to generate its own resources within its system in order to achieve self-reliance within a reasonable period.

Policy Support. Community-based natural resources management requires a tremendous amount of policy support for smooth and speedy functioning. It also requires appropriate legislative measures, changes in official policies and programs and radical restructuring of the existing archaic system.

Sustained NGO Support. The critical role of NGOs in promoting and facilitating community-based natural resource management can hardly be overemphasized. The support extended by NGOs to community organizations should include capability building, technical and promotional support and resource raising as well as effective policy advocacy. NGO support should be made available to the community organizations on a long-term basis to facilitate continuity and self-reliance. NGOs must also assist in creating innovations, generating alternatives and monitoring the effects of development.

Appropriate adjustments should be made in the process. NGOs also play a critical role in soliciting support from educational and research institutions.

Networking. Today, adequate networking between organizations is lacking. Networking is extremely vital for strength and progress. It is also essential to generate awareness and pressure for structural changes through policy advocacy and social movements. NGOs have a critical role to play in promoting and facilitating networking.

COMPULSIONS AND OPTIONS

Extreme ecological and cultural diversities, vast degradation of natural resources and rapidly increasing biomass needs for survival pose formidable challenges. These needs can be met only by harnessing the energy, creativity, ingenuity and active participation of the people. Community-based natural resource management is the best option available.

STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Notwithstanding the success stories, community-based natural resource management is easier said than done because it faces structural constraints. These constraints arise from government's policies and control, centralized planning and development, inequities entrenched in the private ownership and control of land, and the overall social, economic and political structure. As mentioned earlier, the existing natural resource management system in India is archaic and alien and therefore totally inappropriate to meet even the present needs and challenges, more so of the 21st century.

Nevertheless, there are a number of silver linings that if properly harnessed can greatly facilitate transformation towards community-based resource management. First, the Constitution's (22nd) Amendment for effective democratic decentralization and *Panchayat Raj* in rural India is a step in the right direction. If there is corresponding legislation by various state governments establishing *Panchayat Raj*, the constitution will greatly restructure Indian polity and usher in welcome changes. However, provision for the *Gram Sabha* in the Constitutional Amendment will be effective only if it is operationalized in such a way that the *Gram Sabha* conforms to the village or hamlet level people's organization. A critical issue which must be addressed is genuine devolution of powers, responsibilities and resources to *Panchayat Raj* institutions. It is expected that this limited yet vital change, once in place and operation, will generate awareness and pressure from below to effect genuine democratic decentralization.

Second, the 8th Five Year Plan says, "In the process of development, people must operate and the Government must cooperate." It underlines the proactive role of the people and the enabling role of the government. It seeks to rectify the existing situations. If acted upon, especially after effective democratic decentralization, it will facilitate community-based

natural resource management and overall rural development through the considerable resources made available to the *Panchayat Raj* institutions.

Third, water and micro watersheds, degraded commons, degraded government lands, and privately owned degraded wastelands can provide the groundwork for community management. Such forward looking beginnings will lead to holistic village microecosystem management.

Lastly, a forceful lobby and sustained policy advocacy is a prerequisite to overcoming structural constraints where possible. It calls for sustained and regular NGO-Government dialogue through multi-point multi-level mechanisms which still have to be created. However, drastic restructuring of the system can be effected only through forceful social movements, a few of which have been discussed earlier.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

As is well known, popular social movements are an integral part of the democratic process because they generate awareness and pressure to change. Accordingly, social movements are an integral part of the strategy to push for community-based natural resource management, especially in areas where more radical changes are called for. As effectively demonstrated by Mahatma Gandhi and post-independence movements, in a democratic system, movements can both be peaceful and democratic. Generally speaking, there is a consensus across non-party Indian NGOs and social activists favoring peaceful and democratic means in their struggles for change.

Multiplication and networking of initiatives will contribute greatly to the quality, effectiveness and success of social movements by bringing into play the dynamics of peaceful social change through mass-based popular participation. Isolated local initiatives and social movements need to be interlinked into larger movements to generate adequate awareness and pressure for change at the state and national level.

APPROPRIATE INDIAN FRAMEWORK

At this stage, it is pertinent to reiterate the appropriate framework of community-based natural resource management emerging from post-independence experiences and history. The development framework must, in essence, be grounded in the traditional system, but adapted to the present needs and challenges. Thus, it would have the basic elements of community autonomy and village self-government as well as efficient, equitable and sustainable natural resource management. A deeper participatory democracy with genuine devolution of powers, responsibilities and resources to people enabling them to shape their destinies is imperative. The framework must be flexible and fitted to the ecological and cultural diversities. It should be within the broader framework of a "new people-centred polity" and a "new social order."

POLICY AND ACTION

Policy and action on community-based natural resource management in India, as emergent from the preceding discussions and especially from the NGOs' point of view, is outlined below.

1. The goal is countrywide community-based natural resource management within the "appropriate Indian framework". NGOs must work more vigorously for new policies and restructure the existing system in order to achieve this goal.

2. Strategies to achieve this goal are as follows:

a. Proven NGO initiatives of community-based natural resource management should be replicated, refined and multiplied across the country in order to intensify and expand effective grassroots action.

b. There should be multi-level networking of community initiatives, strengthened through a process of mutual friendship, cooperation and interaction. The levels of networking may be district, sub-state, state, zonal or inner state and national.

c. Successful community-based action interlinked in multi-level networks should be used to generate awareness and pressure for effective policy advocacy. Constructive dynamics of peaceful social change, facilitating larger and more effective management are envisaged.

d. Where necessary, strategic networking may also be pursued for peaceful democratic struggles and social movements which will generate awareness and pressure for more radical changes.

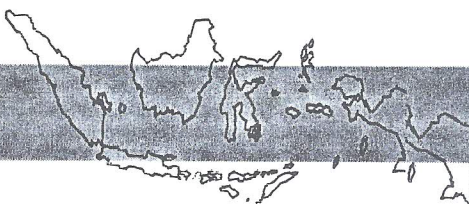
e. NGOs should work with communities as promoters and facilitators. To strengthen policy advocacy, they should also push for multi-point multi-level NGO-Government mechanisms in the form of regular dialogue on community-based resource management and other development policies and issues. However, NGOs need to be united and well prepared in order to be effective.

f. The Constitution (22nd) Amendment which provides for effective decentralization and the 8th Five Year Plan (1992-1997) which seeks greater proactive popular participation are among the readily available grounds for action. NGOs should work together to bring the above amendment to its logical conclusion and establish *Panchayat Raj* institutions in the country. Then NGOs should work for proactive involvement of these institutions and people in implementing the Five Year Plan according to local needs, priorities and perceptions.

g. Community level people's organizations, *Panchayat Raj* institutions and local NGOs should work in tandem to intensify, refine and expand effective community-based natural resource management.

h. Apart from using their own organs of communication, NGOs' effective alliance with media will be extremely helpful in disseminating information and generating awareness and pressure for change.

i. A long-term strategy of sustained development action and struggle, however, is called for. ■



INDONESIA

LAND AS A BASIC RESOURCE FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

Land has always been a hotly contested item in Indonesia. Especially in recent years when land has become a strategic economic resource, disputes over land ownership in Indonesia have become highly complex and occasionally heated.

A number of interest groups stake claims to this resource: farmers, industries, timber enterprises, housing enterprises, dam construction projects, government departments, such as those involved in transmigration, industry, housing, agriculture, forestry, public construction, and transport and energy.

Land related problems are further exacerbated by the following unresolved issues:

1. There is unequal distribution of land. In Java, for example, many are landless or near landless while a few own thousands of hectares of land.
2. The long term direction of development is not yet clear.
3. The lack of a community participation mechanism hinders popular resolution of the land problems.
4. Contradiction between traditional and national laws concerning ownership in several locations remains a stumbling block.
5. Until now, there is no clear government/national policy on land use, laws, and mechanisms.

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C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
I N D O N E S I A

Case Study: CIMACAN FARMERS STRUGGLE TO KEEP THEIR LAND

*It is morning in Rarahan Kampung * of Cimacan village in the Kabupaten of Cianjur, West Java. A throng of villagers has crowded onto the veranda of Bpk. Dudu Masduki's home. Their faces are marked by profound sorrow. From a distance, it is difficult to tell the cause of such grief. Only as Bpk. Masduki begins to speak do we learn of the disaster that has befallen the villagers. For the past several days, the farmers of Rarahan have been on a hunger strike. They are famished, of course. But "it's not just that we are hungry," explains Suko, one of the crowd of villagers squatting on the verandah. "We are grieved and frustrated half to death." What's behind all this?*

In 1987, the provincial government of West Java announced plans to develop a golf course in the Kabupaten of Cianjur. Following a field survey by the provincial government, in cooperation with the Cianjur kecamatan government, the land around Cimacan village was identified as the most appropriate site for the golf course. Involved were 35 ha of land already under cultivation.

This area had been cultivated by the farmers of Rarahan kampung since 1943. Part of an estate held by Georges Jean Marie Wakey under erpacht (right to use) UP No. 10, it was declared as unencumbered public land by Gubernatorial Decree No. GB 21/BA on February 21, 1954. At present, at least 287 households, or 2,987 farmers, are cultivating it.

Following the choice of the land in question as site for the planned golf course, the village head of Cimacan, supposedly to resolve the dispute between the developer and the farmers, declared the land as wholly owned by the village and officially at his disposal. Then, without consult-

* Kampung describes a small neighborhood which together with other neighborhoods makes up a village (desa or kelurahan). Typically each kampung is led by an informal neighborhood (Kepala Rumah Tangga or Kepala R.T.) elected by neighborhood resident. The village head (Kepala Desa or Bpk/Ibu Lurah) on the other hand is a government appointed official who reports to the next administrative unit leader at the sub-district of kecamatan level. Each district or kabupaten is in turn made up of several kecamatan, and is again administered by an appointed head, the Bupati (District head, also commonly known as Regent). At the top of this administrative hierarchy is the provincial governor (Gubernur Daerah).

ing the farmers, he signed an agreement renting out the land for 30 years to developer P.T. Bandung Asri Mulya (BAM). The farmers, on the other hand, were asked to accept Rp. 30 per squaremeter as compensation for their displacement.

Such compensation in exchange for the farmers' land could hardly be called a just settlement. Rp. 30 is not even enough to buy a cigarette in Indonesia. Of course, the farmers refused to settle. They were one in denouncing the arbitrary settlement of the dispute. They felt that their rights and interests were scornfully disregarded. "It is our self-respect that's being trampled on," remarked one of the farmers. However, they also agreed that if it couldn't be helped, they would sell their land but only at its fair market value so that they could purchase new fields at a reasonable distance from their homes.

In the meantime, before the dispute could be resolved, the developer started work on the golf course amid objections from the villagers. Officials of P.T. BAM would send their men to the village to terrorize and intimidate the residents. Those who openly refused compensation were accused of being criminals, former members of the Indonesia Communist Party, or citizens disloyal to the New Order Government.

In desperation, the farmers wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs Rudini. They requested that their claim to the land be recognized. If, however, they should be forced to give up their land in the public interest, they asked that they be given fair compensation. The compensation being offered to them, they emphasized, is much too low to be acceptable.

A similar letter was sent to the spokesperson of the DPR/MPR (People's Representative Council, the legislative body of Indonesia) and to the vice president of the republic.

Upon receiving the farmers' petition on August 8, 1988, the MPR/DPR spokesperson wrote to the Internal Affairs Minister, expressing hope that the Minister would be able to settle the problem according to existing laws. Even before this letter was sent, however, the Minister had himself contacted the Governor of West Java with a written request that the village head of Cimacan be sure to arrange a reasonable compensation price for the land before renting it out to another party. No resolution of the issue came of it. In fact, local officials instead resumed their pressure tactics. Together with some workers from P.T. BAM, these officials went to the village and started tearing out the crops. This happened just one week from harvest time.

While both the farmers' outrage and the pressure being exerted on them grew, the dispute received public attention when the villagers of the Rarahan compound in Cimacan wrote to several newspapers in Jakarta.

The publicity this action generated prompted Minister Rudini to order the Cianjur *Bupati* to stop all work on the golf course until the issue of compensation could be settled. Rudini also asked the *Bupati* to review the 30-year rental agreement between the village head and P.T. BAM. The rental agreement, so went the Minister's instructions, should be sure to prevent any suffering for the farmers in the long run.

Rudini's words were a great relief to the villagers. While Rudini admitted that the Cibodas area had been slated as a tourist area, he criticized the methods being used to make the land available for the golf course project. Rudini commented the issue of compensation should be settled fairly and at a price which truly reflects the current market value of the land in question.

Change of Mind

Shortly after, Minister Rudini met with the Cimacan village head, R. Arfini, in the nearby town of Ciloto. At this meeting, the Minister reneged on his original stand on the matter, giving instead his approval for the golf course construction to continue. No conflict of interest seemed to him to exist between the village leadership, P.T. BAM, and the Rarahan farmers. Quite the contrary, Rudini added, building a golf course facility in the area would help to increase the surrounding community's income as well. Following the meeting, work on the golf course resumed.

The Minister's decision was a big blow to the farmers in their quest for justice. The meeting in effect spelled the capitulation of the people of Cibodas to powerful interests represented by P.T. BAM.

The Minister's decision did little to resolve the tense situation in Cimacan; if anything, the waters have become even muddier. Besides protesting the Minister's decision, the farmers also pointed out that only government officials, P.T. BAM representatives, and the Cimacan village head were present at the meeting with the Minister. Representatives from the farmers were not invited. Consequently, the villagers argued, Minister Rudini has heard only one side of the story, and has thus made a decision which

unfairly excludes the interests of the farmers.

Believing that their rights had been ignored in the Ciloto meeting, a large group of Rarahan villagers went directly to see Rudini at the Department of Internal Affairs in Jakarta. Unfortunately, they were unable to see him.

This did not dissuade the farmers from continuing their struggle. Recognizing that their fate is not simply a matter of luck, about 150 of them returned to their fields to re-plant and cultivate their crops. At the same time, workers for P.T. BAM, then in official control of the site, also resumed construction work on the golf course.

At the Limits

"We can't stand being out of work and doing nothing any longer, especially as the village officials have kept up their pressure against us to accept their meager compensation. After all, we have to eat, don't we, not to mention pay for our children's school in Bandung?" cried some of the villagers.

Before beginning to cultivate their land again, the villagers posted a declaration of their resolve: *"We live off this land... Let us go on living as farmers"* read their poster. The villagers also set up a number of small red and white flags and held a prayer reading together. No speeches were made, no special ceremony conducted. Yet, in spite of its spontaneity, the villagers' action appeared calm and considered.

After prayers were read, the first farmers began to dig into their fields. Slowly they were joined by more and more villagers, old and



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
I N D O N E S I A

young, men and women, clearing weeds, moving stones, turning over soil. In one day, the fields were ready to plant.

There has been some speculation as to who inspired the farmers to come together and replant their fields. A closer look at the group involved reveals that a few NGO members have stood by the farmers from the beginning. It was these NGO organizers, for example, who took the initiative to invite reporters to the scene.

Acting on their own

"But we aren't the ones telling people what to do here," noted one of the NGO representatives present. *"The farmers have been acting and showing solidarity completely on their own. We are only bystanders."*

Following the farmers' move back to their fields, the Chief of Sectoral Police in nearby Pacet summoned eight of the farmers to his office, charging them with violating Article 551 by entering protected property without permission. Two of those called answered the summons and showed up at the Chief's Office personally, while the other six refused, claiming they were not part of the group of 150 villagers who had returned to the disputed fields.

To the two farmers, the Chief proposed that a new dialogue between the local village leadership and the village residents be initi-

ated. While the farmers agreed to this proposal, their legal counsel, Sunyati. SH, argued that the meeting should take place on the land the villagers had just replanted, rather than back in the police office

as the Chief of Police suggested.

The police also asked the villagers to stop their activities on the disputed fields. So far, however, the farmers have refused this request, suspecting the Chief's initial proposal to have been insincere to begin with, and refusing to recognize the Chief's request as an order. Explains Hendaridi of the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute in Jakarta, *"The police have little authority to get involved in matters of land dispute."* Moreover, *"The farmers have stated emphatically that they would not stop working their fields."*

Meetings between P.T. BAM, the local village officials, and the farmers have taken place, with little result. The farmers remain firm in their demand that their land not be converted into a golf course. At the very least, the farmers request fair monetary compensation or new land within reasonable distance from their homes.

Notwithstanding the gravity of the farmers' situation, in many ways we can also say that the actions of the elite interest groups in Indonesia seem more humane than what we often see in countries like India and Pakistan, where powerholders and the wealthy shut out the lower classes from reaping the benefits of development. Here, our government has approached the problem more cautiously and appears to have expressed its willingness to resolve the conflict by mutual agreement between the parties involved. Moreover, the Cimacan community

appears already well aware of its rights and interests. It is this consciousness that has inspired these farmers not to give up their land so easily. Their bargaining position is becoming stronger over time, and deceiving them of their rightful due will not be easy. In some ways, this situation has become an indicator of the dynamic state of our democracy today.

PO/NGO INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

At least four to five million families in Java are estimated to be landless or nearly landless, in the sense that they make their living primarily from agriculture, but do so almost entirely by working on the land of others while themselves owning at most the land on which their house stands plus very limited "pekarangan" land (garden plot).

Existing alternatives to address the serious problem of landlessness in Java, including transmigration to the outer islands, non-agricultural job creation, and traditional land reform granting full-size parcels, will not be able to deal with all or even most of the problem. Transmigration, while it has resettled some landless families, is extremely expensive and raises collateral environmental problems. Non-agricultural job creation can have an impact on the landless, but it is unlikely to catch up with the annual increase in the working age population of Java. Traditional land reform, primarily under the Agrarian Law of 1960 has shown very little progress, and, given the limited availability of land in Java, the prospects for giving full-size parcels to most of the landless are not good. Even using the highest estimate available--9 million cultivated ha in Java--to provide an ideal parcel averaging 1/2 ha to all or nearly all of the 4 to 5 million landless and nearly landless families in rural Java would require the acquisition and redistribution of approximately one-quarter of Java's cultivated land.

Fortunately, however, it may not be necessary to rely exclusively on such measures in order to bring substantial benefits to the great majority of landless and nearly landless families in Java. An alternative program may be possible--the "land asset endowment" program--in which minimum holdings of at least 200 m² are guaranteed to every agricultural family in Java. To benefit the same 4 to 5 million families who presently own land assets below that minimum, this alternative program would require a total of approximately 100,000 ha, comprising just over 1 per cent of the cultivated land in Java.

Virtually all of the needed land, moreover, could be obtained from land which has been *tanah bengkok*, that is, village salary land already owned by the government. Although appropriate compensation for any lost land use would be paid, the eventual cost would be orders-of-magnitude less than in a traditional land reform program distributing full-size holdings.

Hak pakai, or 25-year renewable use rights would be granted to each landless family on these small plots, with the understanding that the rights could be renewed for another 25 years. If successful, such a pilot project could then lay the groundwork for a general distribution of small plots to the landless and near-landless in East Java.

The pilot project is to be undertaken in two villages of East

Java, one lowland and the other upland, representing the principal ecological and topographic zones.

There will be a small credit component within the project (Rp. 23,8 million or \$12,300). Several features of the project would help ensure that these loan funds are not decapitalized and that repayments will be made by beneficiaries. Extension agents will provide agricultural advice to optimize use of the loan resource.

The individual loans will be quite small--Rp. 20,000 for each holder of 200 m². However, on a per-hectare basis it represents a rather intensive credit facility of Rp. 1,000,000. The expected average net return from 200 m² is at least Rp. 200,000 which should ensure ample cash flow to repay these small loans; and techniques, such as joint small-group responsibility for each beneficiary's loan, will be explored and used as necessary. Market rates of interest will be charged.

No special or unusual technology is to be used. Standard surveying techniques will be utilized in laying out the 200 m² plots. Normal agricultural techniques, employing inputs readily available locally, will be utilized by the beneficiaries.

Also, since the vast majority of the beneficiary families are underemployed and have unutilized labor resource, it is expected that the unpaid family labor that is applied to the 200 m² plots will be incremental - that is, that it will not decrease the family labor applied to salaried work or other productive pursuits - and thus will have zero opportunity cost.

There is a societal benefit to this project in that the incremental stream of income will be going to the most-disadvantaged group in village society. There is a further societal benefit--difficult to assign a cash value to--in the opportunities for redress for the project beneficiaries' grievances.

The Director General of Rural Community Development in the Ministry of Home Affairs, who assisted in developing the project plan, believes it to be realistic and socially sound. The design of the project has taken into account that the use of *tanah bengkok* as village salary land is being ended in East Java; that the new beneficiary of such lands, the village itself, would be fully compensated for lost revenue from renting out of such land through an endowment fund established under the project that would yield a similar flow of revenue; that the plots to be distributed, while sufficient to provide a significant increment vis-a-vis the present nutrition and income of landless and nearly landless families, would be small enough so as not to arouse any jealousy in non-beneficiaries who already have land; and that the project will work closely with the village head in each of the two pilot villages.

Regarding effects on the environment, only a positive impact is expected. The *tanah bengkok* which is to be distributed under this project, has, in its now discontinued function as village salary land, generally been rented out on short-term lease. Upland Agriculture and Conservation Projects have observed that a significant portion of this land, though basically



C O U N T R Y
R E P O R T :
I N D O N E S I A

of good quality, has been "mined" and environmentally degraded by such short-term leases, seeking to maximize their short-term profit on land in which they have no long-term stake. Nor do short-term lessees-- in East Java or in other societies around the world--normally invest in sweat equity or long-term improvements on land in which they may well not be present long enough to recoup the cost of investments plus a profit. In contrast, the beneficiaries of the project who receive these lands will get *hak pakai* or 25 year renewable use rights which could be renewed for another 25 years. Such holders will have a long-term stake in the land, with every prospect that any "mining" of the land will cease, and that, moreover, sweat equity and long-term improvements on the quality and productivity of the land will for the first time be attractive to the cultivators. The nature and extent of such improvements made in the first 2.5 to 3 years by the new holders will, of course, be the subject of a follow-up survey.

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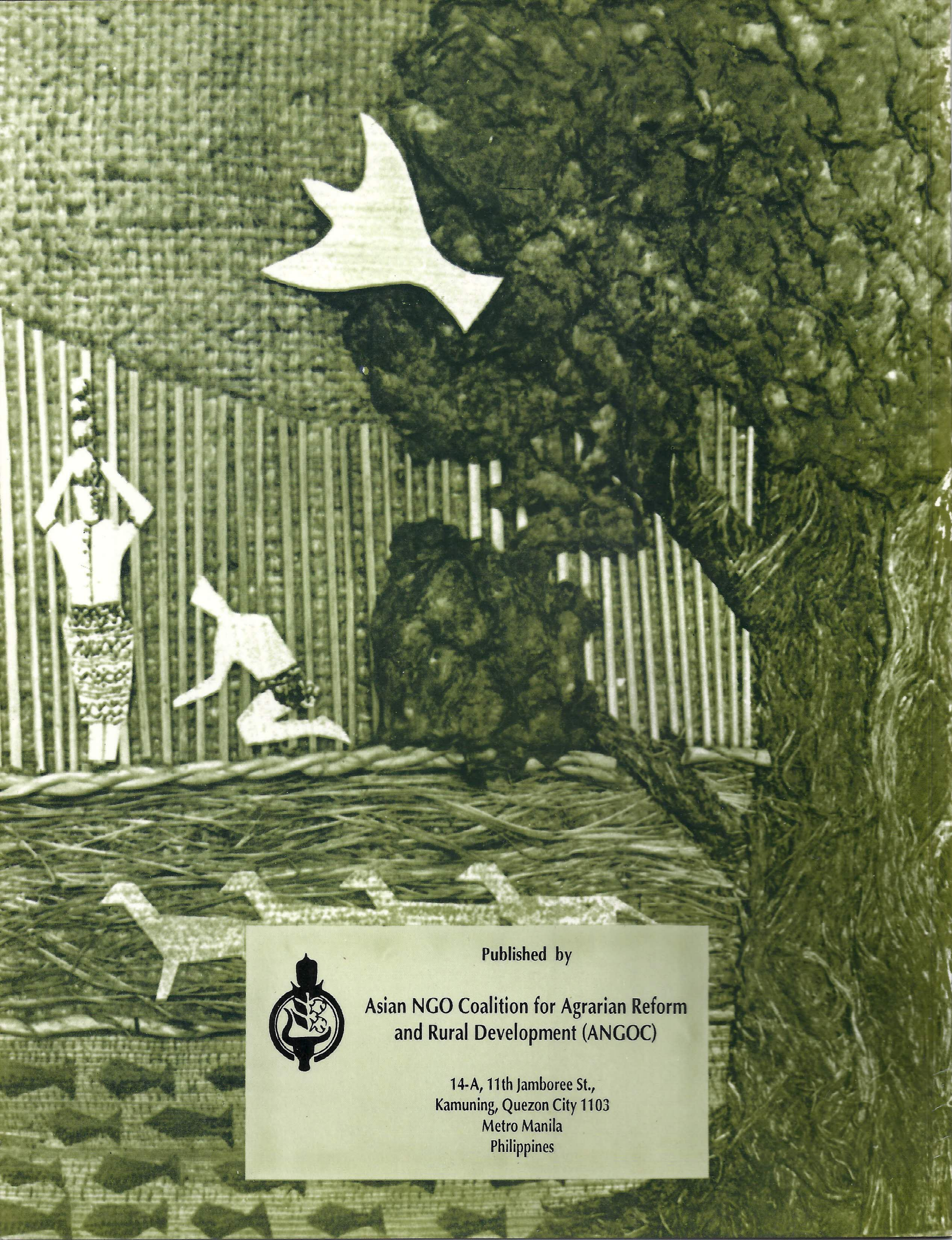
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