

aspects of forestry being a very important one, involvement of social scientists during the preparation of operational plan is also suggested. The team emphasises the preparation of community forestry guidelines specifically for the terai and inner

terai.

The report which is the outcome of interactions done by a group of qualified and enthusiastic people with the experienced government and non-government professionals who

have served the Nepal's forestry sector since long, is expected to bring fruits in the future.

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Towards a new programme for Forestry Resource Management

In 1997, the International Development Agency (IDA) of the World Bank (WB) supported His Majesty's Government of Nepal to prepare a project proposal for the development of terai national forest, terai community forestry as well as biodiversity conservation in Nepal. And the task of making the proposal was given to the Forest Research and Survey Centre (FORESC) - a semi-autonomous government body. A group of experts selected from outside the FORESC took nearly one year to finalise this draft proposal which was handed over to the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation in August '98. Once implemented the present project is expected to make a significant contribution in Nepal's forestry resources management programme. The highlights of its basic concept are:

Holistic approach

The holistic approach that it has taken for forest management is indeed a welcome step. The project embraces the development of production forest, community forest, watershed management as well as biodiversity conservation, etc. This is expected to develop all subsectors at a time without hampering the other.

Coordination

Avoiding duplication through programme coordination at the

central level as well as at the district levels is one of its highlights. Also, this makes possible the use of a resource pool of a subsector by various other subsectors.

Peoples' participation

Emphasis given to the peoples' participation in national forest management is yet another good point of this programme. Through this local people could be involved as partners while preparing operational plans of production forests. Special involvement of women and the poor of the society is recommended to be put in the departmental guidelines.

The community and leasehold forestry programmes will also be given the responsibility of protecting the peripheral larger area of production forest. This will help control encroachment of the core national production forest.

Revolving fund

The one quarter of the revenue generated from the forestry resource is proposed to be put in a revolving fund to be used for the future forestry development activities.

Strengthening Regional and District Offices

The Technical Support Unit which is proposed to be

established in the high level regional forest offices will provide a technical know-how to the district forest offices in their endeavour of managing production forests, community forests and private forests. Strengthening of district forest offices will be done through the appointment of experts on related fields, for example, silviculturist for production forest management, social scientists in community forest management and agroforestry specialists in agroforestry, etc. The activities of Rangers who are over loaded, will be closely followed-up. Training of a large number of forest guards is emphasised. This is expected to relieve a certain portion of existing work load of rangers. All are aimed to bridge the gap of manpower currently existing in district offices.

Employment and income generation

Employment and income generating activities through the cultivation of medicinal plants and other non-timber forest products is emphasised in the current proposal. Establishment of demonstration plots of at least five species of potential NTFPs in each district is a positive step towards the promotion and sustainable use of this important, yet neglected area of forestry resource.

Some of the important activities proposed in the draft proposal

are:

Forage management

Experiences of successful forage production by Narayanpur Community Forests, Dang and other leasehold forestry groups will be shared amongst forest user groups with a view to tackle the short supply of fodder. Training on use of better quality fodder/grasses, fodder tree management and grazing management to the field staff and forest users are in the agenda.

Agroforestry training

Established demonstration plots on agroforestry will instigate the private tree entrepreneurs to incorporate understory crops in

their plantations, followed by training on agroforestry.

Biodiversity conservation

Establishment of district or community level forest reserves will help biodiversity conservation. This is also aimed at income generation through eco-tourism.

No programmes remain far from few shortfalls. The present draft proposal has also revealed a few weaknesses. For example, whereas the existing forest act does not permit any products of national forest to be taken by outsiders except the government, there is no legislative measure as to how the benefit from the state forest is shared amongst the local

community. The other important factor is the lack of any further incentives to the government employee who are in no position to support their daily minimum requirement.

Overall the draft proposal has shown a new commitment for the management of forestry resources of the country. And the interest of World Bank which is supporting the various sectors of Nepal's development including forestry (since the early 1970s) is a welcoming step.

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