



GENDER AND CONSERVATION: STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CO-MANAGEMENT AT NSP SITES

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GENDER AND CONSERVATION: STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CO-MANAGEMENT AT NSP SITES

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Acronyms

BS	:	Block Supervisor
CODEC	:	Community Development Centre
FD	:	Forest Department
IEC	:	Information, Education and Communication
IRG	:	International Resource Group
MoU	:	Memorandum of Understanding
NSP	:	Nishorgo Support Project
RDRS	:	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service
RMP	:	Road Maintenance Programme
SDFO	:	Sub Divisional Forest Officer
UP	:	Union Parishad
VDP	:	Village Defense Party
VGD	:	Vulnerable Group Development

Glossary

Salish	An informal, traditional system of mediation used to settle marital and land disputes outside the court.
Shaliskar	Mediators who conduct shalish. Generally, local elected representatives, school teachers, NGO workers, religious leaders, etc.
Hilla	Intervening marriage often imposed in cases where the husband orally divorces the wife impulsively repents and wants to take her back. Although in practice in some places, it has no legal foundation in Bangladesh.
Fatwa	Arabic for opinion by a person learned in Shariah. In Bangladesh villages, persons who have no legal authority pronounce it; they do not clarify an ambiguous legal situation but weigh up evidence, which traditionally was never a function of a fatwa giver. Increasingly, fatwas are being used to bolster the authority of the shalish. Some punitive fatwas have been issued against women for being divorced, for working with NGOs or even working outside the home. Some punishments are inhuman, such as, flogging, buried up to waist and stoned to death, beating with shoes, etc.
.Village Court/	Any party to the dispute may in the prescribed manner and on payment of the prescribed fee, apply to the ordinance 1976 Chairman of the Union Parishad concerned for the constitution of a village court for trial of a case. Constituted by a chairman and two members. It has no powers to pass a sentence of imprisonment, but may order the accused to pay to the aggrieved person compensation of an amount not exceeding five thousand take.
Madrassa	Islamic religious School
Upazila	Second tier of local Government
Union Parishad	First tier of Local Government
Purdah	A form of dress or behaviour to conceal women from public view.
Saontal	An ethnic community
Tipra	Ain ethnic community
Chakma	An ethnic community

Khasia	An ethnic community
Uttan Boitank	A meeting on a day to day issue of the participants that can be held on a informal basis at the yeard of one of the participants.
Talak	Divorce in Islam
Burkah	Form of dress that wears by muslim women
Focal Point	A person who will be responsible for gender issue at NSP office level.
Point person	A person who will be responsible for gender issue at village level
Moulavi	A Islamic religions leader

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Executive Summary

The Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) is an attempt to work with and support the Forestry Department of the Government of Bangladesh in preserving what remains of the wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas in Bangladesh through five identified sites: Lawachara National Park, Satchari Reserve Forest, Rema Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary and Teknaf Game Reserve. The purpose of this gender strategy is to help NSP to further and more fully realize the goal of self-sustained conservation and protection of wildlife and forests in Bangladesh. This will be accomplished by identifying how to effectively engage all the segments of the communities in and around the forest protected areas in conservation efforts and thereby increase awareness of and respect for natural resources. By engaging men, women, and children in various stakeholder groups in activities related to the forest and conservation, the goals jointly determined by the Forest Department and NSP can be achieved. We believe that integrating a gender perspective into every aspect of the Nishorgo Support Project's work will help to maximize the potential of the various stakeholders as conservationists and protectors of the forest, and we will be able to substantially increase the efficacy of the Project itself. By providing NSP and partner organization staff with a clear and well-formulated gender strategy, the staff can understand the necessity of gender in implementing conservation efforts and work more effectively with the stakeholders.

In order to accomplish the goal of engaging communities as a whole in conservation efforts, we determined that we first had to identify the stakeholders related to the forest. Armed with a concept of the relevant stakeholders, and especially women, it was important to come to an understanding of the conditions in which women live in these areas, and in particular to have a grasp of their relationship to the forests and to the destruction and conservation of these forests. With a clearer idea of the lives of the various strata of the population, and of their concepts of the world around them, we were able to identify ways in which we may be able to engage these people and tailor information related to conservation to suit their needs and abilities.

The research for this strategy was conducted over a period of six weeks. The team members visited Lawachora, Shatchari and Rema Kalenga in the north, and Teknaf and Chunati in the south. The team gathered its information through informal discussions conducted in Bangla with village women and village men in single-sex or mixed groups, NGO workers, NSP/CODEC Field Staff, Forest Department Rangers and employees, Union Parishad members and civil society

Aside from the distance between the five identified wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas, there are multiple factors which lead us to believe that site-specific recommendations are necessary in order to successfully implement the Nishorgo Support Project, to address the unique problems faced and incorporate regional assets in each of these areas.

The Lawachara Wildlife Sanctuary is noteworthy for its many ethnic minorities. The men, women and children of these minority groups are often harassed and discriminated against when they leave their villages and interact with Bengali people in surrounding towns. This makes it difficult for ethnic minorities to move away from their traditional occupation of betel leaf cultivation. Betel leaf cultivation used to coexist well with the natural forest, but the current extent of cultivation is adding to the degradation of the forest. There are extreme levels of poverty surrounding the sanctuary which makes the rural villagers completely dependent on the forest for their income mainly generated by

illegally felling trees (men's work) and collecting fuel wood for household (women and children) or commercial consumption (mainly men) which contributes significantly to the degradation of the forest. The men and women of the area, both ethnic minorities and rural villagers are willing to work towards conserving their forest, their most valuable resource, but they simply do not know how or where to start. One of the first steps is to involve women—especially since they have expressed such interest—especially women Union Parishad members, in forest conservation by creating women's groups and providing them with training in environment and forest conservation with large components in gender relations and legal rights. Women who have knowledge and the ability to participate in activities will be better positioned to collaborate in conservation efforts. Women also tend to be the ones who bear the heaviest burden of poverty, and so in conjunction with the previous recommendation, alternative income generation projects as well as alternative energy sources, and skills development would help to alleviate the dependence of the poorest segment of the population on the forest.

Satchari Reserve Forest has the greatest area of untouched, first growth forest in the area. There have been extensive, successful plantation efforts by the Forest Department. But the surrounding tea estates exploit the local population of poor men and women who do not own the farmland they live and work on for cheap labor. The villages are somewhat isolated and have limited access to resources. The village areas of the forest are quite barren. Most of the easily accessible resources such as household fuel wood have been used up. The villagers are left in a precarious situation because the forest, the resource they depend on, is inaccessible to them, and they have no means to get new materials. Because of limited access to resources, government, Union Parishad and civil society should be engaged to cooperate with one another and with the local communities to support conservation efforts that will involve and affect both women and men by raising awareness, and also by ensuring access for *all* community members to services such as welfare, pension, health and educational facilities.

Rema Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, the last of the northern sites, is very isolated and remote. The ethnic group in the area, the Tipra, lives in the forest and is therefore entirely dependent on it for their livelihood. The government has granted some of the forestland to the Tipra to live on. They have cleared some of it for farming rice and other grains. Men are responsible for agricultural endeavors including farming, and for collecting most resources directly from the forest. Women are responsible for the tasks closer to the home such as care of the animals, textile weaving, cooking, child rearing, water and fuel gathering. To help them to alleviate the pressure they are putting on the forest, they need to be provided with better access to resources. Women especially need access to health care, as there are many local superstitions about prenatal and birthing medicine. Children need access to education that will improve their opportunities in the future and alleviate some of the societal reliance on the forest.

In the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, there is very little forest remaining but the site continues to exist in order to maintain an elephant corridor. The women in this area are essentially restricted to the home and to the traditional roles of wife and mother. Few of them even engage in home-based income generating activities, which would provide some relief for the forest. Forest conservation is seen almost exclusively as a male domain, and yet the Union Parishad and other government entities, as well as NGOs, are less interested in forest conservation. In order to address these particular obstacles and to gain access to the women, the religious structure—through mosques, madrasas and religious leadership—needs to be addressed as the most effective conservation programming and activities will have to take place through them as it is through these

institutions that NSP will be most able to reach women, girl and boy children. Once this base level of cooperation has been established, NSP can proceed to involve and encourage women to take part in income generating activities and to develop them as a resource for forest conservation through furthering their education and improving their access to resources.

The final site, Teknaf Game Reserve, is also a conservative area. In this area, men, women and children are all involved in the degradation of the forest. Given these circumstances, it is especially important to work through the religious leaders and institutions and gain their trust and support as otherwise no programming or activity will ever take hold. And initially, it is by gaining the support of the prominent men that NSP staff will be able to gain access to the women. There are, however, several active and energetic women Union Parishad members who, along with other women community leaders, could be developed and trained in forest conservation with components in gender relations and leadership skills, and could provide support and encouragement, as well as be examples and role models, to women of lower social strata.

Within the site-specific recommendations, there are some over-arching themes, which form the crux of this strategy. Women's groups and trainings for women and other identified stakeholders are also essential in developing a knowledge base that can be disseminated by influential and willing stakeholders themselves. This will also provide a foundation for women to become more engaged in alternative income generating activities as well as encouraging the use of alternative energy sources, and alleviate the pressure placed on the forest by subsistence extraction, which greatly affects village women and children. Additionally, it is particularly important to promote, foster and facilitate regular dialogue between community leaders in government, UP, NGOs and villages related to the needs of men, women and children in the community and how these groups may relate to forest conservation.

This is a broad and brief sketch that will be fleshed out in the following sections of the report. Our hope is that through these recommendations, NSP will be able to create greater awareness among stakeholders with regards to conservation and the role that each subgroup of men, women and children can play in conservation efforts.

1. INTRODUCTIONS and Context

The Nishorgo Program aims to protect and conserve Bangladesh's forests and biodiversity for future generations. At the heart of Nishorgo is a focus on building partnerships between the Forest Department and key local and national stakeholders that can assist in conservation efforts.

Under its partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, USAID is providing targeted technical support to aspects of the Nishorgo Program through the Nishorgo Support Project. The Nishorgo Support Project works closely with the Forest Department and key conservation stakeholders to develop and implement a co-management approach to help conserve the country's large tracts of Protected Areas, where partnerships for conservation are essential. In Bangladesh, co-management "actors" include the Forest Department as legal custodian of protected forest areas, and the local and national stakeholders that have a role in conservation management. The Project is working at five initial pilot sites to begin adapting a Protected Area co-management approach for Bangladesh. Initial sites include Lawachara National Park, Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary and Satchari Reserve Forest (proposed as a new Wildlife Sanctuary), Teknaf Game Reserve and Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary.

The key actors for the Nishorgo Support Project are the local and national stakeholders who are both male and female. Understanding their situation, needs and interests is essential for building partnerships with the forest department to help conserve the Protected Areas. The majority of stakeholders who come forward to assist in conservation are men whereas women, who make up 50% of the community, are excluded from participating due to social and religious constraints. To help promote the active participation of women, understanding the dynamics of the relationship between the two sexes is essential in order to mobilize them towards conservation. This need for understanding is the reason for the current study on Gender Relations. The objective of the study is to outline activities that will encourage and promote women in conservation in concert with the other stakeholders. We believe that the mobilization of women in conservation, alongside the efforts of men, would double up the current conservation endeavors. Our goal is to see women and men working together in a combined effort to protect what belongs to them.

2. Goals and Objectives of the Gender Strategies

The overall *goal* of this strategy is to incorporate gender into NSP and conservation in order to maximize the conservation efforts of all parts of the population, men, women and children, towards the end goal of providing greater protection and conservation to the protected areas.

In order to achieve the above-stated goal, the following *objectives* were identified:

1. Provide a clear concept of the gender breakdown of key forest-related stakeholders and their interactions with the forests, including issues of access and of control over resources in the five protected areas
2. Provide strategies for engaging women and enabling them to become full actors in conservation, based on how women's present roles interact with the management of the protected areas in a co-management framework
3. Provide a clear rationale for NSP staff as to the necessity of gender and of its implementation in conservation efforts
4. Provide site-specific implementation strategies and clear direction to the NSP implementing team at the field level in how to engage local women so as to maximize the impact of NSP efforts in improved protected area conservation.
5. Synthesize the site-level implementation strategies for gender into a number of general operational strategies that apply to all sites.

3. Methodology

An interactive and consultative planning meeting was organized on 22nd December 2004 at the IRG office to discuss the logistics of the proposed gender research. The issues were: date and time for field visits, scheduling of the meetings with stakeholders, accessibility and mobility in the different areas, and potential key members of the team. The meeting was attended by a Gender Specialist, field implementation partners (RDRS, CODEC) IRG staff and one Peace Corps Volunteer. The meeting provided an opportunity to prepare field visit schedule, decide and agree to the approach for field visits and areas to address. We were unable, however, to stay on schedule due the frequency of hartals during this time period, which caused us to change dates at least three times. We were finally able to start for the Srimongal field visit on February 8th and stayed until February 14th, 2005. The Cox's Bazaar field visit ran from February 25th to March 2nd, 2005.

The objectives identified for the field visits are as follows:

1. Meet with key members of the PRA and RRA teams who interact with women at each site
2. Learn and understand the position of women and their livelihoods in the protected areas
3. Analyze women's roles in both forest degradation and conservation
4. Share experiences and ideas with the stakeholders, especially women's groups, to find ways to ensure women's participation in forest conservation through identifying strategies for engaging women in forest conservation
5. Analyze effective means of engaging and interacting with women in a way that helps to achieve the project goal.

In order to achieve these objectives, we employed three types of qualitative research (all of which also incorporated participant observation): focus group discussions, general group discussions and brainstorming. We met with staff members of RDRS and CODEC, staff members of the Forestry Department, members of locally-elected bodies such as Union Parishads, staff members of NGOs, ethnic minority communities (Tipra, Khasia and Chakma), members of civil society and others.

To get at the above-stated research objectives, we asked a number of questions pertaining to the position of women and of the roles of men, women and children in forest depletion and conversely, in forest conservation. Some of the topics frequently discussed were: attitude towards women; mobility of women; marriage age; consent; polygamy; oral

divorce and fatwa; access to resources and control over resources by men and women; old age security; hospital facilities; access to educational facilities; access to IGA and credit; access to decision-making at the community level; role of women UP members in UP activities and in community; conflict resolution process; power structure; current conservation activities and who participates in them; gender breakdown of forest destruction and depletion activities; participation of NGOs, government and Forestry Department in conservation efforts. The information obtained from these questions was supplemented by our observations of interactions between men and women of different social classes during the discussions.

With the above observations, we had constructed the draft version of this report. The report was comprehensive and very candid in order to reflect the findings and conclusions we had drawn from our experience at the field with the stakeholders and the staff. One of our limitations as consultant and the rest of the team working away from the field was that we had been able to capture a snap shot of the scene. So with our completed draft, we went back to the field to share our findings with the field staff to equilibrate our findings with their interpersonal and work experience. Also the draft was shared with the Dhaka office to get their views. All this had only enriched the report.

4. Definition of Terms

In order to understand the relevance of applying a gender strategy to the conservation efforts of the Nishorgo Support Project, it is important to first have an understanding of what gender means and of a few basic gender concepts. Gender is a field of study unto itself, with the practical goal of creating a more equal world. This is not, however, the intention of gender in this particular strategy. The following concepts are important insofar as they provide guidelines for understanding the gendered implementations suggested in this document. It is far more important to understand that our goal is to identify gender-related steps couched in conservation, determined according to what the identified areas and their cultures are willing to accept and absorb at this point in time.



Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological or physical construction of men and women. Gender refers to the social and cultural definitions of men and women, having to do with how we think, how we feel, and what we believe we can and cannot do because of socially defined concepts of masculinity and femininity, which vary from culture to culture. Gender relates to the position of women and men in relation to one another, and therefore refers not only to women or men but to the relationship between them, their society or community, and the way it is socially constructed. Examples of functions based on sex are men's ability to impregnate and women's ability to give birth and breast feed. By contrast, child rearing is a gendered role since both men and women can assume the duties of child rearing.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are reflected in activities ascribed to men and women on the basis of perceived differences and reinforced through the gender division of labor. Socialization begins at the earliest stages of life through the identification of specific characteristics as being male or female, a process, which occurs in all cultures.

Gender roles¹ can be categorized into four types: reproductive, productive, community managing and constituency political. The nature and extent of individuals' involvement with each role reflects the gender division of labor in a particular place at a particular time.

Reproductive Role: All work and activities involving childbearing and rearing and the care of other family members and dependents i.e. care of the workforce past, present, and future. These activities are usually carried out in order to reproduce and care for the household. Bangladeshi women, the majority of the workforce, primarily assume a reproductive role.

Productive Role: Work done for pay in cash, kind and/or services. It includes anything with a potential exchange or value, whether for market or home use. It is often disguised as reproductive work when done by women.

Community Managing Role: Activities undertaken without pay at the community level to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources for family needs such as water, health care and education. This unpaid work is undertaken in "free" time. When done by women it is often seen as an extension of the reproductive role and consequently accorded less value.

Constituency Political Role: Unpaid work for community benefit. In other words, activities undertaken at the community level within the framework of national or local politics, such as local government activities, and village level decision making. This is generally accorded great status either directly or indirectly, and women are often excluded from this public sphere.

Gender Needs

Gender needs are distinct from needs in general because they arise from gender roles: the gender division of labor, and the consequent implications with regard to restricted access to resources and unequal power relations. Because they have different roles in society, women and men have different needs. It is useful to distinguish between two types of needs: practical gender needs and strategic gender needs.²

Practical Gender Needs: These are needs women and men have which arise from their gender roles. They have to do with immediate perceived needs, which are easy to identify, such as health care, employment, water, and food. Addressing practical gender needs makes it possible for men and women to carry out existing gender roles more easily or effectively without challenging the roles. Practical gender needs tend to be short-term, easy to identify, basic needs, and are more **material** than **ideological**.

Strategic Gender Needs: These are needs women and men identify because of unequal relations and therefore imply change in relationships of power and control between women and men. Strategic gender needs identified by women arises from their recognition of and challenge to their subordinate position in relation to men in their society. For example, equal access to employment, equal pay and equal legal rights. Strategic gender needs identified by men arise from men's recognition and challenge to their exclusion from domains which customary male roles impose and which contribute to the perpetuation of women's subordination, for example sharing childcare. Strategic

¹ Caroline Moser defined the triple role of women as reproductive, productive and community managing. Later in *Gender Planning and Development Theory, Practice and Training*, Published by Routledge, London, 1993. She distinguishes community management from community politics.

² DPU Gender Planning Team, on cit.; Caroline Moser "Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs". *World Development*. Vol 17, No. 11 (1989).

gender needs are context-specific and less visible than practical gender needs. Addressing them is a long-term endeavor because it involves changes in attitudes, ideology, behavior and power structures.

Molyneux³ observes that as women's practical gender needs are addressed, their ability to articulate their strategic gender interests increases. This gender strategy employs an adapted version of these concepts that assumes both practical gender needs and strategic gender needs co-exist, relate to both women and men, and is identifiable by both.

Empowerment

To empower women means to provide women with the opportunity to attain greater power and control over their own lives, and involves raising awareness, developing confidence in oneself, broadening opportunities and greater access to and control over resources. Empowerment comes from within; women empower themselves. The instruments used to further the empowerment of women must simplify the process of communicating their needs and priorities, and promote a more active role in advancing these interests and needs. Some of the most important instruments for empowerment are information and networks. Women's empowerment does not occur in a vacuum.

Men must also be incorporated in the process of change, an idea endorsed by those who advocate women's empowerment. It is important to determine potential repercussions that women's empowerment may have on men, as well as the effects this may have on their attitudes and behavior. Nevertheless, the empowerment of women should not be considered a game of addition and subtraction, in which gains for women translate into losses for men. It is important to identify and make known the benefits women's empowerment has for society in general and for men in particular.

Equality and Equity

Equality has several main key terms. The term 'equal opportunity' refers to a situation in which women and men have equal opportunities for intellectual, physical and emotional fulfillment, and the ability to reach the life goals they have set for themselves and develop their potential without distinction of gender, sex, age, religion or ethnic group. Equal Treatment presupposes the right to the same social conditions of security, remuneration and working conditions for both women and men. And finally, equal rights refer to a truly egalitarian situation in which women and men share equal economic, political, civil cultural and social rights.

Equity, in slight contrast, involves access to equal opportunity and the development of basic capacity. It requires eliminating all barriers to economic and political opportunities and access to education and basic services, such that people (men and women of all ages, conditions and positions) can enjoy these opportunities and benefit from them. Equity implies participation by all people in processes of development and the application of a gender perspective in all activities.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming gender means paying constant attention to equality between women and men as part of the policies, strategies and interventions for development. Mainstreaming not only means ensuring that women participate in a previously established development program but also guaranteeing that women as well as men participate in defining objectives and in planning so that development actions satisfy the priorities and needs of

³ Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua." *Feminist Studies* Vol. 11. No.-2 (1985).

women and men. It requires making an assessment of the impact development interventions could have on women and men in all areas of social development. This assessment should be performed before any important decisions are made concerning goals, strategies and distribution of resources. As a consequence, it is essential to look at equality in relation to the analyses, policies, planning processes and institutional practices that establish the overall conditions for development.

Power

The powers of domination are social, group, and personal, making it possible to alienate, exploit and oppress others. They are evidenced in processes with interwoven forms of interviewing in the life of others from a place of superiority (value, hierarchy, and authority). Powers of domination are a set of capacities that permit one to control the lives of others, expropriate their goods, subordinate them, and direct their existence. Domination implies having the capacity to judge, punish and finally pardon.

Relations of domination are characterized by dependence. By occupying hierarchical positions and superior ranks, those with powers of domination in turn become the possessors of truth, reason and force.

Gender systems can be comprehended through the way they distribute power. In the patriarchal system, asymmetric relations are established between men and women, and the male gender and men are assured of a monopoly on powers of domination. The female gender and women remain subjugated. Consequently, men can regulate, direct and control women with almost no questions asked. Men make the rules and women are supposed to follow them. As judges, men can evaluate women's deeds, conduct and thoughts; they can discriminate against them, find them guilty and even pardon them. They employ social and personal criticism to judge women and can coerce them in diverse ways using the laws, and even criticism and love, as well as through suppression of goods and violence. These are all different types of social control, which maintain the current status quo.

In patriarchal societies power relations include those between the genders (men over women) and within genders (among men and among women). Both are conditioned by other factors, such as the race, ethnic group, age group, and social class to which the individual belongs.

5. Northern Sites

5.1 Lawachara National Park

The Lawachara National Park is a part of the West Bhanugach Reserved Forest and located in Kamalgonj Union of Kamalgonj Upazila in the district of Moulavibazar. The park is under the jurisdiction of Moulavibazar Forest Range under Sylhet Forest Division. There about 18 villages, of which two are located inside and the rest are located outside of forest area.

The people of Lawachara National Park are very diverse. There are Tipra people who are Hindu, Kashia people who are Christian, and many Bengali people, migrants from other areas in Bangladesh, and also native born who are mostly Muslim. There are a number of indigenous people who work on the surrounding tea estates too. They are a very marginalized group because they have no organization among themselves and are discouraged from seeking services, education, or anything from the tea estates themselves. There are many NGOs operating in the area such as BRAC, ASA, HEED Bangladesh, and RDRS/NSP, etc. All government departments are present in the area. There is a UP presence but there is little interaction between UP and the Forest Department. Most villages mistrust the FD, and the lack of communication between the FD and UP makes for ignorance among UPs about what the FD does, and what conservation measures are underway. The area is very hilly. There are many tea estates in the area, either bordering or in the vicinity of the forest. There is gas production in the area, which is currently controversial in terms of conservation efforts. The forest is being degraded rapidly. On our visit we saw only one monkey and a few birds.



Observations of Villages

We visited five villages whose inhabitants interact with Lawachara National Park, three Bengali Muslim villages, a Tipra village and a Kashia village, which is inside the Protected Area. In all but one of the Bengali villages, Dakkhin Baligaon, we met with mixed groups of both women and men. In Baligaon we spoke to a women's group. Men were present but did not participate in the meeting. The villages, for the most part, share similar problems. They have very similar obstacles to conservation efforts, and gender

equality. The Kashia village is a little different because of its ethnicity and culture. All people depend completely on the forest for their livelihoods. Men illegally fell trees either individually for familial income, or on gangs hired by outsiders like furniture makers. Since men serve as Forest Guards for the FD there is some contradictory behavior where the local men could serve on their unpaid guard duty one day and go out felling the next. Felling at varying degree is practiced by the Lawachara villagers. If they don't fell big trees their other options are to work for meager sums as day laborers in tea estates or as betel nut leaf harvesters. Women and children collect smaller trees for firewood. They use the wood both for their own daily consumption to cook or heat with. They also cut and bundle the wood to sell commercially as firewood.

The Kashia and Tipra peoples share many concerns about the treatment of the forest and believe that their own interaction with the forest is less invasive and destructive than other stakeholders. The Kashia's main income is generated by their betel nut leaf cultivation. Plantation of betel nut leaf used to impact the forest minimally but as demand for betel nut leaf has grown, farming betel nut leaf has grown until it is adding to the degradation of the forest. Other resources are extracted from the forest by a wide range of people from wild honey to home building materials. But as the materials have gotten used up, people have had a harder time accessing the resources and have not found ways to replace those resources, leaving some villages in very poor condition. The FD is of the opinion that the poorest people should be allowed to use the forest to fulfill their needs since they are poor and have no other resources. There is no recognition that this attitude is counter to conservation efforts. The FD has not considered alternatives to this situation like helping villagers generate some income through homestead plantation, co-management techniques, etc.

All the women we spoke to in all the Lawachara villages shared the opinion that if they had some other form of income they would be better able and more willing to protect the forest, and to nurture it but they are denied the chance because of the belief system that women are inferior and have no role in conservation or work in the forest. Women have a double work burden completing all the reproductive work as well as often working outside the home to generate income. There is no sharing of household duties by men and women. Women therefore have no recreational time and are excluded from religious ceremonies (although Khasia women gets little chance) or other celebrations. Women are expected to defer to men in all ways due to the belief that men perform more and harder work, which often leaves women malnourished and unhealthy because they have abstained from eating when there is not enough food. There is almost total exclusion of women in decision-making processes and dispute resolution. There is also a high level of violence against women such as oral divorce, wife beating, early marriage and polygamy. There is almost no awareness about or access to information about women's rights. Women are continually discouraged from education, finding good jobs, or going against any cultural norms. Women's opinions are not listened too and women are never asked for their consent or opinion about any issues, especially marriages or use of personal resources.

Obstacles

1. Gender inequality and discrimination.
2. The people depend completely on the forest for income generation.
3. There is too little access to government services including Social Welfare, education, and health care.
4. There is little access to Union Parishad for dispute resolution and other services.
5. Access to NGOs is minimal.

6. There is minimal dialogue between the FD and the people. The FD has as yet not shared information on how they could cooperatively conserve the forest, what measures they could take to combat the degradation.

Recommendations

1. Form of women's groups where none exist.
2. With the FD, train formed and existing women's groups in alternative energy sources, homestead plantation and conservation techniques that can alleviate dependency and degradation of the forest.
3. Form networks of women's groups for information sharing and cooperation of efforts in conservation or alternative income generation.
4. Encourage women UP members to take part in local forest conservation activities.
5. Encourage villagers to seek the help of their local UP and demand the benefits their UP has to give them either.
6. Encourage women's groups and village men to participate in projects with NGOs.
7. Encourage women to be involved in alternative income generating activities

Implementations

1. NSP field staff actively recruit and organize women into groups, electing a Point Person who will serve as a liaison between NSP and the village, and who will be the active part of the network of women's groups in the area for information sharing, cooperative efforts, further trainings, etc
2. NSP staff facilitates Uthan Baithok at villages where FD can meet the people, create relationships, and teach conservation techniques that are beneficial such as home gardens or plantations
3. NSP facilitates meeting of all women's groups Point Persons to create the network of women's groups
4. Create greater awareness among men, women and children villagers about what the UP is and how it can be used and accessed
5. At women's group network meetings invite NGOs to explain what they do and offer participation in projects to the women, as well as let them know how men and children can be involved.



The Kashia Punji operates essentially in the same way that Bengali Muslim villages do. Culturally women are allowed a free reign. They are allowed to go where ever and do what ever they want to do with prior discussion with their male family members. They are treated as equals in informal conversation and they speak up and say what they think. Traditionally women are the property owners as the Kashia are a matriarchal society, but this is a formality and men actually control all property and make all decisions about it. Men make all key decisions and exclude women from their decision-making processes. Outside their community, they are isolated and are often harassed.

Kashia women participate in all income generation except large tree felling. They are involved in the betel nut leaf farming in plantation, harvesting, processing and selling. They deal with the non-Kashia middlemen who come to the village to buy the leaves and then sell them at a marked up price in town. They gather firewood for personal consumption. Plus, they do all the household work including child rearing, cooking, cleaning, minimal livestock rearing, water fetching, etc. Women also serve as teachers at the local mission primary school when school is in session. Kashia men participate in income generation in betel leaf plantation, and harvesting. Kashia men do not share any HH responsibilities but they have more access to service occupations and other jobs outside the Kashia village. There is a belief system that the workmen and women do is unequal. Even the women downplay the amount of work they do and don't recognize that they have a double or sometimes triple burden of work performing all the house hold duties as well as harvesting their betel nut leaf crop, and handling the sales and management of the crop. Because women have less time to harvest and process the crop, they feel they do less work than men and that the work they do is less important. Women defer to men and treat them with reverence in the household.

The main obstacle to improving their quality of life that Kashia women face is the harassment they receive from Bengali Muslims whenever they leave their village. This discourages Kashia women from seeking higher education or from looking for jobs in non-Kashia society. The Kashia have a very symbiotic relationship with the forest. Their betel nut leaf cultivation is the most actively degrading activity the Kashia do in the forest. They feel their firewood extraction is minimal compared to that of non-Kashia people. The Kashia feel that the way they live inside the forest is sustainable and non-degrading. They feel that the threat to the forest comes from the people who live outside it, the people who have come from other places and only extract from the forest and do not protect it. They call the outsiders thieves who steal the trees and resources of the forest. Everyone we spoke to at Kashia Punji, especially the women, felt very protective of the forest and wanted to do whatever possible to conserve it. Kashia people have very little trust of the FD.

“If I were a forest guard I would take my knife and cut the thieves! I would not let them cut the trees and they would be scared of me because I am fierce. I am not scared of the thieves because they would not hurt a woman, a mother, and a sister. They would not harm me because they would be scared of a woman with a knife. I would protect the forest!” Baby, a Kashia woman.

Obstacles

1. There is a gross imbalance in the belief that women's work is less valuable than men's.
2. There is minimal education and no secondary or higher education
3. NGOs and government services are unavailable
4. The Kashia depend 100% on the forest and its resources and have no other source of income. They feel threatened that their resource is being depleted by outsiders

Recommendations

Follow the recommendations for the other villages but also:

1. Raise awareness about gender inequality in women's group and among men
2. Involve FD in teaching conservation methods that can cooperate with betel nut leaf harvesting, and that can generate alternative forms of income
3. Encourage Kashia to seek out NGOs and to cooperate with them in income generating projects, conservation projects, etc

Implementations

1. NSP cooperates with Kashia women's group to raise awareness about women's issues and disseminate information throughout Kashai Punji to men and children about gender equality
2. NSP field workers organize Uthan Boitok with FD and other NGOs at Kashia Punji to raise awareness about forest conservation and to teach methods for alternative income generation and lessened dependency on the forest.
3. Identify some women in each village who can be responsible for forest conservation by cooperating with the FD, other NGOs and who can teach the people in her village about FD conservation efforts.
4. NSP facilitates Uthan Boitok with UP to raise awareness about Kashia issues on the part of the UP, and to raise awareness about services available to the Kashia from the UP including health care, education, dispute resolution, etc

Observations on Union Parishad

On the wall of the Komolganj Union Parishad hung a poster that said, "This UP will take the complaint of violence against women and will solve it." Indeed most of the issues the UPs in this area face are violence against women including wife beating, oral divorce, desertion, polygamy, and rape. They also handle land disputes, and quarrels about livestock. The members handle claims by discussing the issue and trying to solve it amicably. It is claimed that women have equal status as members of UPs although it is common that women members do not feel they have equal status and that they are often treated with disrespect. Women members are generally not considered equal members as their positions have been held by a mandate from the federal government. They are totally excluded from discussions since it is Bengali culture for women to defer to men and for juniors to defer to seniors. The opinions of women, when voiced, are not heeded. Women are not encouraged to attend the meetings. Sometimes they are not informed when meetings are taking place. Women's work on the UP is generally viewed as inferior to that of men's. There has been no dialogue with FD in conservation matters or at all. In fact, the FD and the UP do not cooperate in any way. The UP is very mistrusting and skeptical about all FD activities. There has been no dialogue with constituents about forest conservation. The UP has not given as many resources such as VGDs and other welfare subsidies as it has to offer. The UPs have not formed its

standing committees on various issues including conservation and forest co-management, and therefore have not been carrying out many of their duties. They do not visit their constituents except during their campaigns.

Obstacles

1. Gender prejudice and discrimination
2. Lack of interaction with FD
3. No knowledge of or motivation to participate in conservation efforts
4. Lack of interaction with constituency in field

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness about gender issues among all UP members including men and women members, and the chairman
2. Improve relations a cooperation between UP and FD especially about conservation issues
3. Raise UP awareness about constituent issues
4. Involve women UP members in cooperation with FD and constituency in conservation efforts

Implementations

1. Gender awareness training for all UP members, secretary and Chairman
2. Leadership and empowerment training for women UP members
3. Activate women UP member to take part in dispute resolution process and build capacity to settle dispute amicably

5.2 Satchari Reserve Forest

The Satchari Reserved Forest is situated in the Paikpara Union of Chunarughat Upazila in the district of Habigonj. The forest is under the jurisdiction of Satchari Forest Range under Sylhet Forest Division and is divided into two forest beats, namely Stachari forest beat and Telmachara forest beat. Satchari Reserved Forest stands on the Dhaka-Sylhet and is about 130-140 km northeast of Dhaka, between Teliapara and Srimongal. There is one forest village located within the Reserved Forest. This is a tribal community, the Tripura tribe, and has about 20 HHs. The adjacent areas are covered by Tea estates, coffee, and rubber and rice fields. The other settlements that have stakes with the reserve are located about 3-8 km away from the reserve. In the northwester parts of the forest is bordered by Raghunandan reserved forest. The southern boundary of the forest is bounded by Indian border line.

The population of Satchari Reserve Forest is almost entirely Bengali Muslims and Hindus with one ethnic group of Tipra people. The presence of tea gardens is much more apparent as the tea gardens completely surround the forest, are responsible to a great deal for the degradation through illegal felling and by allowing the trafficking of illegally felled trees through their back roads. The tea gardens employ many of the local men and women as day laborers. Although Satchari Reserve Forest has the greatest area of “pure forest” or undisturbed, first growth forest, and the FD has some plantation sites, the villages have depleted the forest around them. Apart of working in the field and tea gardens as labors, men are also involved in the fuel wood collection and illegal felling. Women must hire themselves out mostly as tea garden laborers because there are too few available resources to sustain a household like fuelwood, without outside income. There is little wildlife left in the forest, although we saw one monkey during our field visit, and we got to ride one domesticated elephant. The tourism and recreational potential is significant if the facilities of the nearby town of Chunarghat and Madhupur are improved. Also Satchari Reserve Forest’s close proximity to the high profile Srimongal town gives it an added leverage.



Observations on Village

The livelihood of the women in Baghbari is made up of three main activities. All women are responsible for all the reproductive work of their respective households. About half of the women also work outside the home, therefore taking on a double burden. They either gather fuel wood in the forest or work as tea garden day laborers or as maidservants in other households. Many women have minimal experience working with livestock, mainly poultry. Men work seasonally in the tea gardens or in the surrounding fields, which they do not own. All men rely on the forest as their main source of income from either fuel wood or felled trees. Men and women are both involved in the extraction of the medicinal plants from the forest.

Marriage practices follow the same as in the majority of other Muslim villages. It was reported that girls marry between 18 and 23, and boys between the ages of 20 and 30. The practices of oral divorce and polygamy are as prevalent in the Satchari Reserve Forest area as in other Bengali Muslim areas in the North. Most children, boys and girls, are sent to the local primary school, but not to the local high school although one is accessible. The cost is too high for most villagers to bear. There is no initiative to raise this issue with the UP or with any other local authorities.

Local resources are completely inaccessible. They had no access to the VGD cards or any other type of assistance. Rarely do the women, who usually take responsibility for health concerns, go to the government hospital although one is nearby, and only rarely do they go to the HEED hospital. The government hospital does charge patient for the care they give, but a only a minimal fee, and the women think they will not be able to bear that cost either. Baghbari operates under a “Gram Sharkar” power structure. The village government handles problems of family matters including wife beating, oral divorce, desertion, etc., by discussing and trying to solve amicably. The all male Gram Sharkar does not discuss or address the problem of unemployment, low education, land rights or forest conservation.

This particular village is a very vulnerable village. The women are malnourished, and the children have sores from vitamin deficiency. We spoke to 18 women and 6 men in this village; only one woman had finished high school. There is a prevailing feeling of helplessness among the villagers. The villagers are dependent on the forest as they collect fuel wood and medicinal plants for commercial and subsistence use as well as earn money by illegal felling for the moneymen. They also collect fruits seasonally. The depletion of the forest weighs heavily on the local collective conscience, but no one knows what they can do as individuals or as families or other groups to conserve the precious resource that sustains them.

Obstacles

1. Local people heavily dependant on forest for income and HH resources
2. Women under double burden to sustain households with minimal help from men or available resources
3. Lack of awareness about gender issues, available government services, conservation efforts
4. Limited access to health care, education, other services

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness about gender inequality and imbalance of labor among villagers
2. Cooperate with FD to identify some conservation efforts that could generate income for the villagers and decrease their dependency on the forest resources

3. Raise awareness about local NGOs and encourage participation in their projects
4. Increase knowledge base about what services are available, government, health care, etc.

Implementations

1. Form women's groups where none exist
2. Identify one Point Person from each group for networking among women's groups and to serve as liaison between women's group and NSP to better facilitate cooperation with NGOs and FD
3. NSP increase access to information for women by disseminating information about local services and NGOs at women's group meetings or through other media
4. Motivate the women to voice against illegal felling within their household and community

Observations on Union Parishad

The meeting with the Deorgach UP included 7 members of their union (2 women, 2 men and the chairman,) 2 teachers, some elders from the society, one representative of the local ethnic people, businessmen, farmers, and some women CARE Road Management Program workers. There were 8 women present and 14 men. Most of the social problems identified in the area spring from poverty. The problems include oral divorce, land disputes, and verbal harassment of schoolgirls.

Women do not have a high participation level in UP activities like school committee meetings or guardian meetings, and are not invited or encouraged to attend such activities. Women UP members do participate in UP group discussions and are given equal respect when they speak, even if their opinions are not taken into as much account as men's opinions. Girls are doing well in the local high school. Their marks are higher than boys. On the official register there about is 50% male and 50% female registration, but on the daily registers girls have a higher attendance rate. At the high school one in 12 teachers is female. There are no women on the school committee.

The RMP workers, who are essentially day laborers on an NGO project, discussed their hardships. They say that they receive less pay than men for equal work specially when they work, as has laborer. These women bear all of their household costs and the men they work with have fewer expenses. There is less work available to women outside the home, and even if they do find work, they still do all the reproductive work in their households as well. The highly seasonal nature of available work makes long-term stability difficult. They attend UP meetings regularly but they do not discuss their problems, voice their opinion nor make any demands. This UP has had no interaction with the FD and no dialogue about conservation. The chairman, when asked, said that he has no plan for UP action in forest conservation, and that he has not even thought about it.

Obstacles

1. Lack of awareness about gender issues and actual state of women in the constituency
2. No cooperation with FD or knowledge about conservation efforts
3. Lack of women's participation in civil activities even though there's some support for women

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness of gender issues among UP members, willing civil society members and group heads
2. UP and FD cooperate on conservation efforts, especially in engaging constituents to get involved
3. Encourage women to participate in UP and civil society activities
4. Invite the union based government officials such as in health, BS, VDP for the sharing meetings

Implementations

1. NSP facilitate gender training for UP, civil society and group members
2. NSP facilitate meeting between FD and UP to discuss conservation efforts, and make some action plan for cooperative conservation
3. Invite women to join school committees, attend guardian meetings and other activities within civil society
4. Activate women UP members as Community Promoters for forest conservation processes

5.3 Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary

The Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the Gazipur and Ranigaon Unions of Chunarughat Upazila in the district of Habigonj. There is one forest village, inhabited by Tipra tribe, located within the sanctuary. However, there are another villages, which stands at the boundary between the reserved forest and the wildlife sanctuary. Most of those are inhabited by tribal community.

Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary is the most remote of the three forests we visited. The remoteness has cut off the inhabitants from all services including health care, education, agricultural techniques, water sanitation, social welfare, markets, and government and UP activities. The remoteness has encouraged a self-sustaining existence for the people although they lack education to the point of complete illiteracy. They are totally dependant on the forest for its various useful resources that they could not survive with out it. The women in the rural areas are very malnourished because they lack knowledge about nutrition and access to vegetables, which they cannot grow themselves, and because when enough food is not available for the whole family women defer their portions to their husbands and children.

There is no infrastructure to speak of in this area. The roads are all unpaved. There is no electricity except from the few solar panels that can afford to buy. There is absolutely no access to any resources except from the forest and the land, which is not even owned its inhabitants, but by the government. The women are skilled in hand weaving of garments and livestock rearing. They have linkage with India through kinship ties. They have extensive knowledge about how to live symbiotically in the forest, to use it without degrading it. They are very eager to improve their quality of life but they feel discriminated against and marginalized by the local governing systems.



Observations on Villages

We visited two villages at this park. In the first village, Shonbari, we sat with a women's group comprised of 16 women. Most were Tipra but there were also some Orang people. There were also about 5 men in attendance. In Debrabari, we sat with 13 women and 5 men including the Head Man. The ethnicity is more strictly Tipra, but there were a few

Orang and Telegu village members. These villages are on government owned land inside the forest area. It is considered a “forest village” by the government. The livelihood is 100% dependant on the forest. Men are day laborers, which means they go into the forest to extract various resources especially for timber and some fuel wood. Men plant seeds and harvest crops on the cleared land during farming seasons. Women also do day labor out side the home in other households, collecting fuel wood and occasionally planting seeds in the paddy fields. Women are responsible for all the household work in their own households. This includes child rearing, water and fuel wood fetching, limited livestock rearing, home gardening, and administering of natural medicines. These are extracted from the forests and are prepared in the home.

Early marriage is practiced. Girls marry at age 12 and men marry before 30. Boys begin day labor around age 10-12. There is no divorce. The Tipra are primarily Hindu and follow Hindu marriage practices. Husbands are revered and referred to as deities. Wife beating is common and accepted as totally normal. There is close to no recreation due to lack of electricity. The Head Man of Debrabari did own a solar panel and so was able to listen to music. There is no school in close proximity to either village and so children are not sent. The cost of attending a government school is unbearable for most people. This issue has not been taken to the local authorities. There is only one NGO in the area we have visited though other NGO are present elsewhere. There is no interaction with the UP or other government and no services are available. The people in this area feel that they are discriminated against at the UP because they are an ethnic minority. They feel they have been marginalized and that their lack of access to resources is due to the fact that no one cares about them and everyone figures they take care of themselves in their remoteness. The FD requires men to perform forest guard duty in return for their land grants but either party takes no other conservation or cooperation measures. Women have absolutely no contact with the FD, the local government or anyone outside the villages. The power structure of the villages is completely male dominated and hence the decisions are taken by the men. The governing system works on a Head Man system. A committee that excludes women settles the disputes. These villages are wholly self sustaining with tube wells or spring well water, hand woven garments, cultivation of all vegetables and livestock and use of forest resources. But their remoteness and isolation perpetuate their utter poverty. Both women and men are malnourished and totally unaware of how to raise their quality of life or that of their villages.

Obstacles

1. Gender inequality and imbalance of labor
2. Remoteness and lack of infrastructure that cut off from resources
3. Very limited access to govt. and other services
4. Absence of education and lack of any but traditional skills
5. Very limited NGO intervention
6. Bias against or perceived bias against ethnic people from UP
7. Total dependence on Forest land and Forest
8. Partial access to goods or markets

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness about gender issues, health, social welfare, education etc
2. Find alternative ways for rural villages to access government, markets and other services
3. Raise awareness among rural villagers about what NGOs are in the vicinity and how they can participate with those projects
4. Sensitize UP about ethnic villagers issues

Implementations

1. Form women's groups where none exist and identify Point Person to serve as liaison between NSP and group, and to network with other women's groups in the area
2. Open dialogue with Forest department to share information about traditional and nontraditional conservation measures, and to generate some alternative resources like improved home gardens to lessen dependence on forest
3. Involvement of whole community in cooperation with NGOs and possible alternative income generation
4. Work with UP to invent alternative accesses to services like have floating teachers and doctors go to the villages instead of sending villagers to distant central locations

Observations on Union Parishad and Civil Society

The Kalenga Government Primary graciously hosted a meeting for NSP, the Kalenga UP, and members of local gram sharkars, local businessmen, and some ethnic headmen. There were one woman and fourteen men in attendance. The consensus was that the main problems in the area are poverty and remoteness. Many people spoke about the discrimination against women when probed about the different problems facing men and women. One man went on in detail about how many ethnic women receive no education, are discouraged from seeking medical care, and do not even see male doctors during child birth due to superstition. There is awareness that violence against women is high in the forms of oral divorce, polygamy and rape. About eighty percent of marriages are registered. The UP aims to solve marriage and other disputes amicably through discussion and consensus.

There is no interaction between the FD and UP or any other civil society groups and no one has any idea of what conservation efforts are in effect, or what conservation efforts they could participate in. The one woman UP member didn't speak much although she had some support among the meeting attendees to do so. When asked she said she thought women in the area needed a lot of help to better their quality of life, but she didn't know what to do to help them. The people at this meeting obviously cared very much about their forest and the lives their forest sustained. They had many ideas about cooperating with the FD in conservation and income generating efforts. They were eager to use some of the local human resources like knowledge about medicinal plants in the forest and weaving skills to better all the people's quality of life.

Obstacles

1. Lack of awareness on gender issues
2. Lack of knowledge about what FD conservation efforts are in affect or how to participate
3. Inability to reach constitutes due to remoteness and road problems
4. Lack of Commitment to conserve forest

Recommendations

1. Encourage civil society members, including UP members, to act on awareness to better life quality of women in the area
2. Encourage cooperation with FD on conservation efforts and possible alternative income generation measures

3. Encourage UP members and any civil society members interested, like goods salesmen or textile traders, to go out to villages to make services available to villagers
4. Involve women UP members as Community Promoters for forest conversation activities
5. Motivate UP to take initiatives for improving infrastructure development

Implementations

1. NSP facilitate trainings on gender issues and how to overcome them in rural settings for UP members and interested civil society members
2. NSP facilitate meeting with UP and FD to discuss conservation efforts and possible alternative income generation cooperation
3. NSP take tours in small groups of UP members, FD staff, interested civil society members to visit villages and meet with women's groups and men villagers to see what kind of alternative access to services can be devised
4. Provide an intensive training to women UP members on Gender and forest conservation and develop them as Community Promoters and utilize them as much as possible

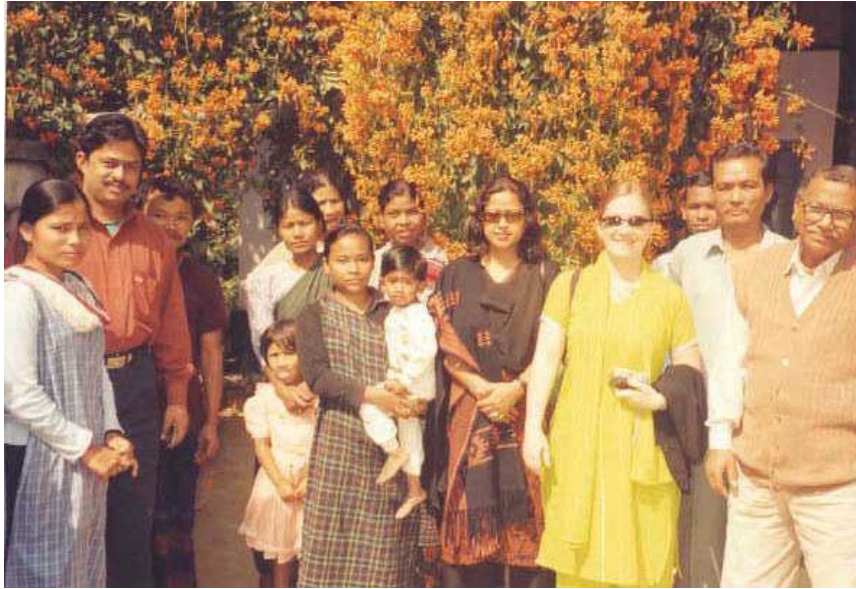
5.4 Observations on Staff of NSP (North)

Among the senior staff of NSP Srimongal, there are nine men and one woman. There are 12 field organizers of them 5 are women. So far 32 groups have been organized to cooperate with the NSP and 19 of them are women's groups. We learned that the staff has had minimum gender related training during one 5-day orientation, but most of what was taught has been forgotten or was not understood. We got to know the staff members pretty well over our stay and during our visits to the forest areas. In telling us about the work they do and by watching them in action, we could tell that the staff does very difficult work. We heard many stories about the difficulty of transportation and communication in the forest areas and among the village people. In general, the staff did not address many gender issues and seemed apathetic towards this project at first because they could not see where gender fit into the work they are doing. It was noted that among the majority of the male staff the attitude and treatment towards women was often insensitive. Even in recounting field stories, there was a lack of awareness about women's issues and feelings. The prevailing prejudice was that women are not capable of doing work in the forest because women cannot cope with many of the hardships that arise such as flood waters, being stranded, walking for long distances. We did hear from the group the feeling that women must be incorporated in conservation projects because women are more likely to protect the trees. It was apparent that due to the lack of understanding about what gender is and how gender is incorporated in all aspects of life, the staff could contradict themselves in their apathy towards a gender project and their admitting that women must be incorporated in conservation efforts.

Some of the gender related issues that occur in the Srimongal area are i) the exclusion of women from dispute resolution and decision making, ii) limited participation of women in social or religious activities, iii) discouraging girls to attend iv) certain superstitions and cultural beliefs disallowing equal health benefits to men and women, v) family and society interfere with women's choice of dress, vi) polygamy, vii) early marriage, viii) no consent of girls in marriage, ix) marital rape, x) sexual harassment of women from day employers, xi) unequal wages for men and women, xii) restricted mobility of women, especially ethnic women to leave their villages, xiii) very limited access for women to information, xiv) poor nutrition in women and children. A feeling of insecurity is prevalent among the women and girls.

Staff of NSP Srimongal went further to discuss achieving gender equity in conservation through i) ensuring alternative sources of income, ii) heightening awareness and motivation for conservation efforts among women, iii) getting them alternative energy options don't require forest fuel wood for fuel, iv) improving education system and access to education, v) contracting women for social forestry, vi) ensuring women's participation on social committees and in conservation issues/cooperation, homestead planting, dike plantation, roadside plantation, vii) FD to recruit more female staff at the field level, viii) NGOs employ more women for reinforcing positive incentives ix) ensuring equal participation of men and women.

To check what the other NGOs are doing in relation to Gender, we visited the Komalganj BRAC office where we spoke with a few lower level office employees. The general discussion at the BRAC-TARC office centered around the area's problem with ethnic discrimination, and the lack of encouragement of girls. In a class of 20 paralegals, there was one girl.



Obstacles

1. There is a gender inequality among the staff – both in numbers and attitude
2. Staff is unaware of many gender issues and has the tendency to be insensitive to women staff members.
3. Little motivated to work on the issue of gender in conservation.
4. Poor understanding of gender issues hence incapability to address the matter
5. Limitation in task coordination among the staff due to miscommunication
6. Other NGOs have no involvement in forest conservation and are only minimally involved in alternative income generation

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness among NSP staff about gender issues, gender in conservation, and the specific gender issues facing the people of this area
2. Encourage NSP staffs to incorporate what they know about gender already into how they treat their coworkers and how they behave among the people they work for
3. Encourage other NGOs to cooperate with NSP on similar or overlapping projects, and to communicate either in a forum or by some means about what projects they have and how they could cooperate
4. NSP should come to a consensus in how they could encourage and support their female colleagues and the women they work with to be more active in bettering their life and work environment, in accessing resources, information and community participation.

Implementations

1. Hold intensive trainings on gender issues, gender in the work place, gender in conservation, etc
2. With the participation of the staff, an Action Plan can be made on Gender to be followed within the office and at the project sites

3. Facilitate an NGO forum with the FD to create a communication network for sharing information and for cooperation on different projects
4. Encourage the women to take part in daily interaction with project participants; coworkers and all women NGO workers interact with.

5.5 Observations on Forest Department

At the Srimongal FD Resource office, we spoke with SDFO. He insisted that the majority of HH surrounding and inside the forest is 100% dependant on the forest and the income it generates. He disclosed that when people can't pay off the micro loans granted by NGOs they cut trees. He believes that the situation is so dire that people need to cut the trees just to be able to eat. He thinks the general infrastructure and poverty level of the people needs to be improved before any real conservation will take place, or before any specific gender related issues can be addressed. He also thinks that the awareness about forest issues in Bangladesh at large is poor and greater awareness among the general public will help conservation efforts. In his view the gender situation is the same as in all Bangladesh, which means women are treated the same in this area as in the rest of the country. He says that ethnic women stay in the ethnic areas and don't interact outside of them, so their treatment is specific to each group and is isolated. There are about 300 members of his staff and one of these is female, a typist. He says that working in the nurseries and forest is a male practice because women are incapable of that kind of heavy work. He has had limited gender training during refresher courses in Forest Management.

Obstacles

1. FD has very limited awareness about gender issues, or how they affect conservation
2. FD holds belief that forest is the given resource of the poor and their cutting it down should be allowed since they have no other means to survive
3. FD has little motivation to help poorest people develop alternative forms of income generation that can help forest conservation
4. Lack of initiatives to involve Local Community Leaders/ UP for forest conservation process

Recommendations

1. Raise gender awareness among all FD staff and especially address the capability and acceptableness of women performing forest work
2. Encourage FD to help forest villagers generate income through conservation measures such as home gardening and homestead plantation etc
3. Change the stereotype that the poorest villagers are helpless and can do nothing but fell trees for income
4. Encourage FD to better relations with society at large by cooperating with UPs, civil society and villagers
5. Establish network with NGO who are working in the area and encourage them to work on forest conservation
6. Arrange opinion sharing meeting with NGO, civil society and others on forest conservation on a regular basis

Implementation

1. Facilitate gender training for all FD staff
2. Facilitate FD meetings with villages and host trainings FD gives on conservation methods that can generate income
3. Facilitate FD meetings with villages that will better the relations between FD and the people
4. Hold meetings with FD and all community leaders including UPs, Gram Sarkars and media to make public their actions and outline their goals for conservation
5. Hold opinion sharing meeting with NGO on a regular basis and encourage them to work on forest conservation
6. Recruit women staff and assist them to work on forest conservation

6. Southern Sites

6.1 Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary

The Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary is a tropical semi-evergreen forest in Bangladesh, situated at about 70 km south of Chittagong city on the west side of Chittagong – Cox’s Bazar Highway. The sanctuary embraces partly 7 unions (namely, Chunati, Adhunagar, Harbang, Puichari, Banskhali, Borohatia, Toitong) of Banskhali and Lohagara Upazila of Chittagong District and Chokoria Upazila of Cox’s Bazar District. There are 7 mouzas, divided into 15 villages and further divided into about 70% settlements (locally called para). Of the paras, about 48% is located inside and at the edge of the forest and the rest are located outside, but adjacent and nearby the forest.

Illegal tree felling and collection of bamboo has not stopped. Local men and women are carrying out other illegal resource extraction activities. This may be attributed partly to the deteriorating of law, lack of skilled and adequate human power to protect the forest from illegal felling and other degrading activities. There is a negotiated arrangement between some FD staff and the local people that allows the people to fell trees if they pay the FD a bribe (People opinion). There is no mechanism for consulting the local people in implementing and designing a conservation co-management program. The local power structure remains the central issue to the management of the sanctuary. There are about 84 local influential people, who actually have influence in the locality. There are several other outsiders who also have minimal influence on the local people and their activities. There are 6 brickfields in and around Chunati Sanctuary area that are owned by very influential people.

The area is religiously conservative and patriarchal. The attitude towards women is suppressive. Most of the cases, women are confined to their household activity and are excluded from major decisions. Women’s movement to distant places is undertaken after the consent from a male family member. Rural women are engaged in the field, as domestic help and fuel wood collection for subsistence and commercial purpose. Literacy is lower in women than in men. Dowry is practiced under the name of ‘gift’.

Observations on Villages

Two meetings with women’s groups were held in the villages in Chunati and Harbang unions. Dowry, illiteracy, wife abuse, and religious bindings are very common. The marriage age is 18 for girls with some case of early marriages at 12 to 14 years. The women have a very low self esteem, thinking that they are burden for men and that their work is not as valuable as men’s. Household chores are not considered work because they do not generate income. They say that women’s tasks are more complicated than a man doing a routine job of a day laborer at the brickfield or felling tress, for instance. Wife beating is practiced mostly among the poor but is socially discouraged and punitive measures can be sought. The women have no community activity apart from voting at the UP election. They do not go to the forest to collect fuel wood. Men encourage women to leave the household and work outside for the extra income. Even seeking medical attention is discouraged when the women needs to travel far from home. In the village shalish, no women come to participate in the trial. If there is a woman involved in the trial, she only attends when asked by the men. If the women want to observe, they can do so away from the main session. The UP member rarely comes to the village and villagers do not know what services are available to them from the UP. There is minimal NGO activity in the area. The women are very concerned about their children’s

education. There is one school in Aziznagar, which is far off that the children, boys and girls, attend.

Though the meeting was for the women group, many men from the village were present. The men were very domineering and when they addressed the women they were dismissive and stern. The women wanted to be more progressive and participate in more income generating activities to have more power over their lives and their families' future. They are wholly unaware of the FD conservation efforts. They consented to have their pictures taken which showed degree of independence.

Obstacles

1. Gender inequality and discrimination due to religion and tradition
2. Dependence on the forest for livelihoods and subsistence fuel wood
3. Limited access to government services education, and health care
4. Lack of NGO interventions to alleviate the villagers' dependency from the forest
5. Distrust of the FD motives and ignorance of conservation efforts

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness about gender issues
2. Find alternate forms of income generation
3. Raise awareness of services that are available in the area, including government services, NGOs, and FD conservation efforts
4. Develop a more positive relationship with the FD for future cooperation

Implementations

1. NSP create women's groups where none exist and identify Point Person who can disseminate information to women in the group, act as liaison between NSP and group, and be a part of a network of other women's groups
2. Hold Uthan Boitok with village and FD for relationship building and to discuss conservation methods that may generate income
3. Hold Uthan Boitok with village and UP about what services are available and how they can be accessed

Observations on Union Parishads

We visited the two Union Parishads of Chunati and Harbang unions. The socio-economic conditions of both the unions are similar. Some interesting differences in gender dynamics exist, however, between the Union Parishads.

Discussions at both UPs began with a run down of the kinds of disputes they resolve, the typical marrying age, dowries, oral divorce, education, polygamy, land disputes etc. The disputes were discussed in terms of women being either the problem or the victim. Women are called to shalish only if they are involved with the case. According to religion, woman can own land but in this area they do not. Dowry is strongly discouraged but it is still practiced under the name of 'gift'.



The Chunati UP male members presented information that was skewed to put the UP in the best light, and to generate support for their point of view. The men acted in sexist and chauvinistic manner in their approach to gender issues. They were totally insensitive and did not believe that woman had any problems worth discussing. There was an issue of a 'bad woman' case where the woman caught fire but there was never any explanation as to why the woman was considered "bad." The UP members then legitimized polygamy by saying that it benefits women. When the woman UP member spoke the men would either listen just to criticize or ignore her or talk to the person next to them in a show of extreme disrespect.

All the Harbang UP members were present including the three women members. The UP members appeared proactive and enthusiastic. The women had adequate power to exercise her duties effectively with support from the UP chairman and fellow members. The chairman gave the woman member authority to resolve several cases. On one occasion, an accused wife was given a punishment from the women UP member. The husband was asked to beat his wife in front of the people. The wife was accused of speaking to another man. For shalish, the people come to the members house or go to the UP. Men and women constituents come to woman members for shalish. Most of the members talked about the potentials and shortcomings of their wards and what they can do to help the matter. There was a clear distrust of some of the FD officials. There is no great motivation for conservation among the UP members. Several of them are brickfield owners and conservation conflicts with their businesses. There is also the feeling that the forest's resources belong to the poor people who have no other means of sustaining their lives. The UP does not provide welfare services to their constituents such as VGD cards.

Obstacles

1. Lack of awareness about gender issues
2. No cooperation with FD or knowledge about conservation efforts
3. Unequal feeling of responsibility for forest between UP
4. Lack of commitment for forest conservation

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness about gender issues
2. Raise awareness about conservation concerns
3. Encourage cooperation with FD on conservation efforts
4. Raise level of one UP to match feelings of responsibility for forest in the other
5. Encourage women UP members to be proactive in conservation efforts

Implementations

1. Hold gender trainings for all UP members in both UPs
2. Invite FD to UP meetings to promote conservation and disseminate information about ongoing conservation efforts
3. Make incentives of conservation known to both UPs to encourage them to participate actively in conservation

6.2 Teknaf Game Reserve

The Teknaf Game Reserve (TGR) is situated in the Teknaf peninsula in the southeastern parts of Bangladesh and bordered on the east by Naf River and on the west by the Bay of Bengal. The reserve includes 5 unions of Teknaf Upazila, namely, Baharchara, Hnilla, Sabrang, Teknaf and Whykong and part of Zaliapalong Union of Ukhia Upazila of the Cox's Bazar district.

The majority of people in Teknaf Game Reserve are Bengali Muslims. There are, however, a number of Chakma and Rakhain villages, as well as a sizeable population of Rohingya, Burmese refugees, who live primarily in refugee camps sponsored by UNHCR.

Teknaf is a conservative area. A large number of the prominent leaders and government officials have high religious standing, combining the position of imam or moulvi with their government work. They often have the backing of prominent and well-placed political officials. All of the main NGOs (ASA, BRAC) are present in the area, but they explain that their work is hampered by the level of religious conservatism and fundamentalism, as well as by the inaccessibility of certain areas and villages. This religiosity, combined with the regional culture manifests itself through the oppression of women. Women stay in the home practicing purda, and when they do venture outside they wear burkha. Majority of the young girls wear burkha when they go to school and madrasa or anywhere outside the home. When asked, the women say that it is their own choice. The vast majority of women do not engage in activities or any sort of income generation outside of the home, though there are a limited number who have obtained loans for small-scale animal husbandry such as ducks, chickens and goats. There are a very few who have homestead gardens, and these are primarily tribal women.

With regards to the forest and conservation efforts, there are several differing opinions as to who does the most damage. It was commonly stated, however, that men, women and children all participate in felling trees during the day, while men alone cut the trees at night. It also seems that the Forestry Department is uniformly seen as corrupt, demanding bribes in order to allow the villagers to go in and cut the trees (Peoples opinion). The villagers saw the Forestry Department doing very little to conserve the forest.

The villagers have little faith in government structures such as the Union Parishads, in part because they have very little contact with and extremely limited access to these structures. They vote but the members only come to the villages during election time, and beyond that do little to help their constituencies. The Union Parishads themselves explained that the majority of the disputes they manage are related to polygamy, abandonment cases, violence against women (though there were attempts to conceal this fact), and oral divorce. They had little to do with forest conservation, but a number of them were willing and interested in getting more involved in the effort. It was often stated that the poor people have a right, in a way, to cut the forest because they have no other means of obtaining an income.

Observations on Villages

Villages in this area are remote and access to them is difficult. Their livelihoods are dependent on the natural resources around them, in other words the sea and the forest. The forest is a source of income for most people. According to the Chakma people, it is the Muslims who cut the trees and degrade the forest, including Muslim women and children. During the day, fuel wood extraction is carried out by mostly women, and children and few men. At night, it is the men who cut the big trees for commercial use. In addition, some of the FD officials also accept bribes as opined by the local people

(no doubt to supplement their low salaries). Large number of Muslims comes daily for timber and fuel wood.



The poorest people feel that they have very few, if any, alternatives to cutting down the trees in the forest, and they receive unspoken support from the government structures to do this. They have limited access to government services such as pension or welfare, health care and educational institutions. There are places where the NGOs have been unable to penetrate. Religion has a very strong hold on most villages, and the village leaders maintain their grips by enforcing the law according to the Islam. Gender roles are very strictly defined in the Islam and women are expected to maintain purdah, wearing burkha if they must leave the house they are expected to obey their husbands at all times. If they do not, they are labeled “bad women.” Very few women have any sort of non-household based income, and the number of women who receive loans for gardens or small-scale husbandry is low. Polygamy is widespread, and is practiced by some prominent community leaders. Most of the child marriage is accepted and many girls are married between the ages of 12-14 or when they reach puberty. There are a number of cases where husbands abandon their wives, and oral divorce (talaq) is common. In general, the levels of education and literacy are only 6%, and even lower for women.

In the tribal villages the circumstances are somewhat different from those of Muslim villages, which is a great asset. In the Chakma village of Shukna Amtoli, most of the men gain their incomes from gardens or small-scale fisheries. Most of their wives are housewives, but they are often engaged in garden work near the home. Both boys and girls go to school (though more boys than girls, and boys study further), even though this requires a lot of effort, as they have to walk to school due to poor transportation facilities. Girls get married at 20, boys at 20 to 25 years of age. They are monogamous, and the divorce rate is low. The Chakma hold the forest in very high regard. They say that they suffer greatly at the hands of the Muslims in the villages around them. The following is an explanation of the main problems experienced by the Chakma people in their own words:

“We have very few disputes, and those that come up are dealt with in the village. We do have disputes with Muslims. The Muslims fight with us and take our land, but the

chairman of the UP favors them so we have a very difficult situation. The Muslims from nearby also come and cut trees from our village. They say we will cut and do Jum, so they cut. They physically harass us. There is no justice from the UP. The Muslims are from elsewhere. The indigenous people are the Burmese, and they have lived well. But the Muslims come from outside and harass us. They have money and power. They abuse our women. We are simple people. They are outsiders; they tease our women in the bazaar or temple, and disturb our religious ceremonies by making noise and throwing stones. We built a temple and they damaged it. They let their animals into our temple. The Muslims do not disturb the girls when they are going to school, but the girls are young; the older girls don't go. Two girls have been taken and forced into marriage."

No Chakma have become UP members, but they all go to vote. Only one person has received VGD. The headman receives pension welfare. None of the UP members come to see them. The Chakma believe this is because the UPs favor Muslims and discriminate against them. Even the woman member doesn't come. If they have property disputes, they go to the police. The NGOs don't come to their village, either.

The Chakma men seemed to be genuinely concerned about the state of the forest, stating that, "Pahar is our wealth. We belong here. Even though our income is from our fields, our lifestyle and culture are the forest hills." This concern is apparently not generated by economic interest but out of a feeling that the forest was part of their lives in a more spiritual way. They were clearly very disturbed and distraught by their treatment at the hands of the neighboring Muslims and felt powerless and hopeless with regard to their situation. Throughout the meeting, Bengali (Muslim) boys, girls and men were walking up and down the path carrying large bundles of wood which served to support what the Chakma were telling us.

Obstacles specific to Chakma

1. Harassment and abuse from Muslims in surrounding villages
2. Muslims cut down forests and take their land
3. Women have some home based contribution through gardens, etc, could do more
4. School is very far away for children and girls do not feel safe traveling to and from school
5. Feel helpless in protecting the forest
6. Cannot exercise religious/cultural rights freely, and these include their relationship with the forest
7. UP favors Muslims

General obstacles

1. Forestry department accepts bribes, is corrupt (peoples opinion)
2. Very few women have any income sources, home-based or otherwise
3. Women are restricted to their homes and are expected to remain obedient to their husbands at all times
4. Remote locations which leads to isolation and limited resources from government or NGOs
5. Great religious conservatism
6. Low levels of education for all villagers, but particularly among women
7. Dependence of Muslim families on income from cutting down trees in the forest

Recommendations for the Chakma

1. Form women's groups for Chakma women and provide training on gender and conservation; identify a Point Person to serve as a liaison between NSP and the group, be part of a women's groups network, and who can disseminate information to the group; allow them a forum for sharing their indigenous knowledge with others.
2. Encourage Forestry Department to work with Chakma men and women, to seek their advice, employ and/or utilize the Chakma knowledge

General recommendations

1. Visit villages and hold Uthan Boithok with NSP, FD and UP to discuss forest conservation and potential roles women may have in protecting the forest.
2. Create women's groups where none exist.
3. Encourage villagers, to seek out resources from NGOs, UP and other government organizations, especially encourage men to seek out resources for their families
4. Work through the religious structures (such as madrasas, mosques, temple) and leaders, to promote environmental science and conservation values in religion
5. Help villagers identify alternative sources of income for both men and women, and to identify alternative energy sources for their homes

Implementations

1. Arrange a dialogue session with the Forestry Department and the villages to facilitate information exchange as well as fostering greater respect for one another.
2. CODEC will provide assistance to the user groups to participate in the projects of other NGOs.
3. CODEC staff will bring respective UP Chairman and members, to the villages and hold a dialogue session on forest conservation and accessing resources and identify possible conservation methods that can generate income, with a special focus on the role women can play.
4. CODEC will work with educational institutions to bring conservation into the curriculum either through religious or secular studies
5. Ensure equitable participation of women in every committee

Observations on the NGO Meeting by NSP

Many of the NGO workers agreed that Teknaf is a very conservative area, and that women are less progressive since they practice such strict purda. Men have decision-making capacity and women do not. Polygamy is prevalent, 8 out of 10 men practice polygamy without the consent of their first wives. The NGO members confirmed that there are women members in the Union Parishad, but no one really knew anything about the work they do. They said that there are more madrasas than schools in Teknaf One NGO participant suggested that there should be an NGO coordination meeting for the 20-22 NGOs in the Teknaf area to understand who is doing what and how they can work together. He explained that there are a lot of villagers in Teknaf now and involving the villagers would be helpful because they are already having forest-based knowledge

There was absence of conformity among the NSP staff and the meeting objectives were ambiguous, which created a discordant atmosphere. The other NGOs were confused about their possible roles in the forest conservation objective to Nishorgo. Gender equity and general respect was absent among the entire NGO representative. No local women's organizations were represented at the meeting. At one point, the Ranger even went so far as to tell one of the women in the room that she should not speak because she was junior

to him and she was a woman so she did not know anything. The ranger contradicted his own position as a forest conserver when he defended the people who cut down the trees he is being paid to protect:

“It’s not their fault, it’s natural for the people of the country, and also the cutters are the refugees from Burma (the Roinga) and vulnerable groups but not usually the local people. What would they eat? People need wood for lots of things.”

Power dynamics were played out among all the men during the meeting. They would not listen to one another, and insisted on speaking even when they had very little knowledge of the topic.



Obstacles

1. Lack of knowledge about Nishorgo support project
2. No understanding of how the NGOs can work together
3. High level of gender discrimination among NGO workers and lack of gender awareness
4. Complete lack of mutual respect, and women’s opinions were not heeded

Recommendations

1. Create greater gender awareness among the NGO workers in Teknaf
2. Create greater awareness among NGOs workers in Teknaf of goals and mission of Nishorgo
3. Provide/create a forum that is conducive to the exchange of knowledge and information among NGOs, and allows them to see how they can work together to accomplish their individual NGO missions and goals;
4. Gender sensitivity training of the NGO community, in particular the senior officials.
5. Ensure that gender and conservation are on the agendas for the NGO meeting and that they overlap with the Union Parishad. Review gender situations in every meeting and identify women’s roles in forest conservation
6. Determine the roles of NGOs in forest conservation
7. Ensure the participation of local women-headed NGOs, as well as civil society organizations such as teachers associations and Press club, in NGO meetings.
8. Encourage other organizations to hire more local women.

Implementations

1. NGO field workers will set up meetings with other NGOs working in Teknaf to discuss their work and that of the other NGO. This will be done with all NGOs in the region
2. Set up a meeting with speaking time limits and a clear agenda: that is to establish a forum for exchange of information and ideas related to NGO work in Teknaf. Set up a meeting timetable and identify a reliable and available meeting place. Draw up a contract for a member that explain the duties and responsibilities of members of the forum and identifies the goal/s of this level of cooperation. Ensure female participation by insisting that half of the participant/members are female.
3. Hold a gender sensitivity training for the NGO community, and/or encourage each individual NGO to undergo a gender sensitivity training.
4. Communicate with local women's organizations and encourage them to participate in the NGO meeting. Among NGOs, collect and share existing gender strategies and gender-related training modules and materials, posters, etc, and delegate the responsibility of either streamlining the materials or developing new trainings as needed

Observations on Union Parishads



Visiting the Union Parishads illustrated the level of religious conservatism. For the Union Parishads we visited, both of the chairmen were members of Jamat-i-Islam, and a number of the other members and respected community leaders were imams or moulvis, and heads of madrasas. In one village, at the end of the UP session, the moulvi chairman and several of the senior men refused to have their picture taken with the women on the NSP team. At one particular Union Parishad, much of the information we were able to gather was contradictory and suggested that we were not being given an accurate picture of the village and community. This impression was also reinforced by information provided by a man who pulled a team member aside and told her about the level of conservatism demanded by the chairman through the continuing isolation of the village from any outside influences ranging from television to NGOs. This suggests an attempt by the chairman and other religious leaders to maintain control over their communities. There was, however, a genuine concern for the forest and several members also offered

suggestions for what they could do to help protect it, in addition to supplying information on what they are already doing.

When visiting Baharchara Union Parishad, one man said that the land from Cox's Bazaar to Teknaf used to all be forest. This area, the Gorjon belt, was originally created during the British period, but now only a few stands remain. The beat officer formed a forest conservation committee and tried to save the forest before the NGOs came, but it didn't help. Now the people are hopeful. The committee has existed for 2 years and 8 months and started with 15 members. The committee meets once a month, more frequently if necessary, at the beat office on a Friday at 2pm but special meetings can be called at any time. It was said that the woman UP member is involved, though this did not appear to be true. Of the three female wards, there is only one woman UP member. There are no women on the committee; they said it's difficult to involve them. In the case of illegal felling, the committee member's rush to the location with beat officer. It is a very difficult job so they don't involve women, but if the activities are extended, then they might be involved, but right now the locals would not listen to a woman. They explained that the illegal felling happens at night, so those who are nearby form a group and go to the forest. The committee motivates the people who do the cutting and they are among us so we involve them or their relatives in the committee. If they still don't listen, then we go to the police. They also stated that the people of Neela are professional fellers. They are hired and with very little assistance, they fell the trees. So the locals hire them. The locals then inform the fellers if anyone comes. The poor settlers and the guardians of the fellers were brought to a meeting and were seriously warned and scolded. Since then, there has been more control. Cutting trees used to be a source of income, but not now. The Forestry Department has issued warrants, so they can't cut trees anymore. Instead people become thieves, and rob houses. There have been 20-30 warrant cases, but the men got released and continue their activities. Holbonia Para has most of the tree fellers.

The beat officer explained that the reason this area is different from other areas is because: transportation is dependent on the tide; education is very backward; and it is a very conservative area, very patriarchal. Women cannot do anything without the permission of their father or husband because it "goes against Islam."

In addition to the obstacles identified above, some people have electricity, but not everyone. Men do not have any leisure time. Life is lived according to the tide, so work is scattered. Women work in fields, which means small crops such as betel leaves and vegetable farming.

Women are behind in education; there are no high schools and few primary schools. The nearest primary school is 6 miles away. People want to educate their children but the environment is not conducive to learning. There are two teachers but the community only ever sees one at a time, and there are 6 classes, "How can two teachers deal with 6 classes when one is absent? These are poor conditions."

Women are also hindered by a lack of mobility, for example burkha, not allowed to attend public meetings, and cannot go to many areas. There is one woman involved in work under CARE, but there is no social environment for further involvement. One man explained, "We are very backward. No communication, no education, so no jobs." The chairman said that BRAC is doing work elsewhere but not in Baharchara. He spoke to them in the beginning but they did not follow up and the training never happened. He seemed to be suggesting that there was nothing they could do about this.

The Gram Adalat is held on Thursdays and the most common adjudications are related to property, loans and disputes—which are usually related to divorce. There are also domestic disputes, but this information was reluctantly divulged. Child marriage takes place, when girls are between 12 and 14 years, but again this is denied and then eventually reluctantly admitted. There is a great deal of misinformation presented about the circumstances they the Union Parishad deals with. They told a few stories about cases brought to them, disputes between husband and wife, and how they dealt with them. The situations described had to do with husbands having affairs or abandoning their wives, and what the wives could do. The woman member in particular explained some of the cases that have come to her. They deal with shalish at the UP office, and also receive complaints in their homes. They also have Gram Adalat at the UP, which mostly deals with abuse of women. The main issues that the Whykong UP deals with are dowry, the birth/death rate, and child marriage. Child marriage is 90% Muslim and 10% other. They insist that they have 100% marriage registration. For cases related to women, the women usually come with a guardian. Cases of divorce and polygamy have to be dealt with through the UP according to a law established in 1961 Muslim Family Law Ordinance.

The members stated that 90% of women are obedient to their husbands and 10% are not. Women could have had an effect on the forest but since we (meaning men) don't have any effect, how could they?

There are 20 villages and the marriages are registered. It seems important to note that the UP is situated in Mathabhanga ward, which is very remote, and households are very far apart so communication is difficult. If people want a second marriage, they need the UP's permission. Child marriage and polygamy are both very common, as is divorce. The Burmese also come, get married and have children, then disappear. The chairman tries to avoid discussing dowry. Shalish takes place in the village, by the members. Though there is a government-mandated allotment for women on the Union Parishad, in one of the Union Parishads, this mandate is ignored.

In Whykong Union Parishad, the members explained that poor women go to the forest every day to collect firewood. There are no natural resources in this area, no alternative fuel sources, so they have no choice. The woman UP member also said that they do it for income. She said that both men and women destroy the forest, but women do more, and children also help by cutting the small easy trees. Every year, thousands of smaller trees are cut for subsistence. The poor men also cut the trees, but if there were another option, they would choose it because cutting trees is hard work. The men cut the big trees, and these are used to make furniture. It is the social elites who are the biggest contributors to deforestation. For the villagers living in the forest, their population is increasing and they are not doing anything. They cut their own trees, they don't let anyone else. They have to cut from far away so that people can't tell. The UP members said that they don't know much about the Forestry Department, mainly that it does exist and that it is corrupt. They do know that people have to pay to cut the trees and that it's hidden by people going far into the forest. They also suggested that if women were allowed, they would protect the forest. People didn't understand before the value of the forest, but they are starting to understand now. Even so, an older man said that as long as people are hungry, we wouldn't be able to protect the forest. So they take the risk because they have no other source of income. For those who aren't hungry, it has to do with demand and being able to pay for things, like a daughter's dowry.

It was suggested that education could make a difference in deforestation. Education can help to conserve the forest. For example, a man cuts trees, but his wife is put on the

committee for awareness, so she can motivate her husband to not cut trees. They have a forestry program with men, but do not make the budget public. There are a small number of women who work out of their homes, and a number who have loans for small-scale husbandry. The woman UP member said that the women members are limited in what they can do by themselves, but they are ok when with other UP members; the group approach works.

Obstacles (those pertaining to a specific UP are identified as such):

1. There are no women on the forest protection committee formed by the local forest officer (a personal initiative) in Baharchara, though it is an asset that the forest protection committee does exist
2. There is an extreme level of fundamentalism
3. No NGOs are currently working in Baharchara
4. There is only one school that is inadequate, and many madrasas
5. Baharchara is very isolated, and transportation is difficult especially when tide is high. Heavy Muslim influence, conservative area
6. Class and gender issues with regards to cutting trees, how to address low, middle and upper class tree fellers and their different reasons
7. Women UP members unable to operate fully when alone
8. People are resistant to ideas of alternative fuel systems

Recommendations (Baharchara recommendations noted first)

1. Ensure the participation of women on the Baharchara forest protection committee
2. Ensure NGO participation in Baharchara area.
3. Work through girls' and boys' madrasas. Approach conservation efforts through religious structures
4. Empower women UP members as change makers
5. Encourage and support programs and projects that develop women's small-scale income generation projects
6. Encourage and help to establish guidelines for group work in the UP, and through the existing forest protection committee
7. Provide training on conservation to UP members with large components on gender and legal rights.
8. Include women UP members on forest conservation council and co-management committee.

With regards to implementation, Baharchara Union has some specific points tailored to their particular situation. The implementations intended for Baharchara Union are identified below before the more general implementations.

Implementations

1. Baharchara: in order to ensure the participation of women on the forest protection committee, the particular brand of religious law practiced in Baharchara will have to be addressed. This would mean in particular, spending more time speaking and working with the chairman to understand the structure and underpinnings of his beliefs that would allow us to know what would be an appropriate and effective approach to ensuring female participation. It may be that one of his higher-ups would have to be approached and spoken to, in an attempt to influence the moulvi himself, keeping in mind and being sure to express that the goal is not the advancement of women but the protection of the forest, and in order to achieve this goal—due to the serious levels of deforestation and destruction—the whole

community must be involved. The chairman should also be encouraged to allow NGOs to work in Baharchara, citing the same reasons.

2. Baharchara: it seems that some NGOs do not work in Baharchara partly due to the religious conservatism, and also because it is difficult to get to Baharchara. Other NGOs need to be approached and encouraged to go to Baharchara, especially once the NGO forum has been established.
3. Baharchara: arrange a dialogue session between the existing forest protection committee and NSP staff and field organizers, and provide support as needed to nurture the committee.
4. Encourage establishing an environmental science and forest conservation program for children that teaches them about the forest, about conservation and perhaps even gives them their own responsibilities toward the forest or a particular tree. Ensure that both boys and girls are included in the program in equal numbers, and maybe even require parental participation through some sort of PTA (Parent Teacher Association). It is possible that this would bring out the women. Identify higher-level influential religious leaders/ political officials and set up meetings with them to see if that is an avenue that can be utilized. In the meantime, establish programs through the mosques and madrasas as mentioned above. Perhaps even set up an environmental/conservation training for the imams, etc, who provide Holy Koran tutoring services through the homes.
5. Ensure women UP member participation in the dispute resolution process by providing the women with training in dispute resolution, gender relations, leadership skills, legal rights and forest conservation
6. Include women UP members in co-management committee and Forest Conservation Council
7. Facilitate income-generation programs, skills development trainings, encourage home-based income projects for women, school programs for children
8. Facilitate a meeting between UPs to discuss the forest and the role of women in conservation, and create a structure, which facilitates this goal. Establish accountability to ensure that actions will be maintained.
9. Arrange a dialogue session for women community leaders and UP regarding forest conservation. Develop women UP members and other influential women with family support as community promoters and to speak to middle and lower class women about conservation and their role in it.
10. Form a group of women firewood collectors, discuss legal implications, futures subsistence implications, and social and livelihood implications, and provide a case study from the northern sites. Involve them in alternative income generation activities in association with other NGOs.

6.3 Observations on Staff of NSP (South)

The staff of the various offices was encouraged to give their suggestions as to what they thought would work in their area, with regards to creating and implementing an effective gender strategy. One person, the office head, suggested accelerating the program through the co-management committee. The other staff members did not support this idea. They offered variations: it would be better to have stakeholder representation to ensure women's participation. You could have a user group member, a committee and a council. They said, however, that even with 50:50, men would still dominate. The main suggestion was that any work done in this region must address the religious institutions due to the level of religious conservatism. Women here are bound by the religious laws in their rights, and domestically. Another suggestion was to work with the men first. If we can change their views, then we can work with the women. Women who are in positions of power should also be motivated to work for women in general. And where women can participate, provide capacity-building training. Where women cannot participate, go through the madrasas since there are a lot of girls' madrasas now. It is very important to understand the religious, cultural and social structures here, or you won't be able to help them.

The staff members for the most part were willing to discuss gender and how it influences their work, in other words forest conservation. A number of them had received at least some sort of minimal gender training, and one staff member in particular seemed to be quite knowledgeable as well as seeing the need for and being interested in implementing a gender strategy. They began a larger discussion of how to make women feel more welcome and comfortable in their own office. The head of the office has some issues with working with women.

Obstacles

1. Male-majority staff (2 female staff member)
2. Office dynamics and outside/field work and relationships affected by personalities of staff members
3. Lack of gender and rights awareness, and of confidence regarding women's role in forest conservation, which leads to no understanding of how these could support NSP work.
4. Lack of respect for each other
5. Lack of a clear understanding about NSP project goals

Chunati, Whykong and Cox's Bazaar office recommendations

1. Recruit, hire and train more female staff all level
2. Organize gender sensitivity training for all staff members
3. Establish or reassert the primacy of an internal harassment and gender policy for NSP, which includes guidelines and consequences for violating the policy.
4. Initiate discussion on gender issues at field office level on a regular basis

Implementations

1. Recruit, hire and train more female staff
2. Determine the most productive units for training (field office level?) and set up the trainings. The training should include a component that explicitly states the reasons for why gender sensitivity is necessary in order to further the goal of forest conservation (namely, full community involvement). Trainings should be given

- periodically to ensure that all new staff receives training, and perhaps that older staff receive refreshers.
3. The policy should be viewed in terms of a tool that will facilitate the main goals and objectives of NSP, and as such must be taken seriously and enforced accordingly. There should be a procedure for reporting incidents and inappropriate behavior through a cooperative effort with NSP, CODEC, RDRS and partners, and this policy should be explained and discussed at gender sensitivity trainings.
 4. Staff will discuss gender issues in working areas and in own office field areas, in the monthly staff meeting with a formalized agenda and prepare an action plan to reduce gender discrimination. Staff will write minutes and use the monthly meeting checklist, which they will submit to their supervisor, in order to ensure that they are following the gender strategy.
 5. Provide training on women's rights, legal issues, advocacy skills and why this is relevant to their work in forest conservation
 6. Develop monitoring, follow-up and evaluation tools to keep track of women's participation in the forest conservation process, using an outside expert if needed.
 7. Develop explicit punitive measures for sexual and/or verbal harassment
 8. Create a Code of Conduct on paper incorporating the following implementation suggestions
 9. Develop at least one gender trainer for each site by providing advanced training.
 10. Provide advocacy skills training for them to negotiate with the stakeholders for cooperation
 11. Develop monitoring tools and monitor women's participation in forest conservation
 12. Arrange the meeting of Gender point persons on a monthly basis and review the forest conservation situation and prepare further action plan
 13. Maintain close liaisons with the Union Parishad and attend monthly meetings of the UP, Standing Committee and Gram Sarker and discuss forest conservation issues and role of women in forest conservation.

6.4 Observations on the Forest Department

There are 9 Rangers. The ACF said it wasn't possible for women to be in the field. The women that are involved tend to be involved in the nurseries, because regulations are that 50% of the people working in nurseries have to be women. They are involved in planting, gardening and harvesting. They cannot participate so much in the harvesting, though. There used to be a forest committee with eleven members, but female involvement was very low. With regards to training, he said there have been different types of trainings offered, but no gender trainings. He explained that he had a gender training once, but it was not related to the forestry department.

Furniture shops and brickfields are the main problem facing the forests. There are many illegal brickfields in and around the forest, and that requires different stakeholders: UP, foresters, land ministry, and so on. He mentions that the women from Whykong UP are relatively active. They have to work together to stop the brickfields. The fuel wood for the brickfields comes from the forest. They say that half of the fuel is charcoal, but it is very doubtful. The products of the forest can be used for energy but the brickfields and sawmills are causing mass destruction.

The ACF said, "We agree to plant and pay for the trees, we just want the community to patrol them. If they are very poor, we can even help them financially. But the poor don't think of the benefit after ten years. They need food every day, and there the NGOs can support them with their daily livelihood and with alternative incomes."

There was, however, a clear lack of respect for women and limited support for women in the Forest Department, due to the belief that women are less capable of completing this type of work well.

Obstacles

1. High level of sexism among forestry department rangers
2. No women involved in forestry department in Cox's Bazaar
3. Brickfields

Recommendations

1. Organize gender sensitivity training, perhaps alongside the NSP staff
2. Ensure that Forest Department staff works consistently with women NSP staff members, initially also in conjunction with male NSP staff members to lend credibility and support. Continue discussions with high forestry department officials in attempt to change their mindsets
3. Determine whom exactly (which families) runs the brickfields and then how the problem can be addressed
4. Utilize the active women UP members as change makers

Implementations

1. Gender sensitivity training
2. Of course, this is contingent on NSP hiring more female staff. Create a staff structure for meetings and interaction with the forestry department. Always have a woman staff member in attendance, and give her equal speaking time.
3. Arrange a discussion meeting with civil society and leading government officials in order to sensitize government officials and police to the importance of conservation as well as the implications of conservation
4. Include Forest Department in women UP members' training

7. Overall Recommendations and Action Plans

Resources are allocated, tasks and responsibilities are assigned, value is given and power is mobilized along gender lines, and all of these factors play a role in forest conservation as well, which therefore means that gender must *also* be significant in forest conservation. Indeed, we have found that it is. In this study we found that women are generally excluded from many activities related to forest conservation, an area which is particularly relevant to their own lives and which they seem to care about to varying degrees. A participatory project like NSP, concerning a sector in which women are major actors or have the potential to contribute significantly, needs to be particularly sensitive to gender disparities and to address the constraints which prevent women from participating as equals. It is based on this premise that we made the previously given site-specific recommendations, and that we have pulled together the overarching recommendations into one section here. This project emphasizes the involvement of women in forest conservation, and the recommendations below are designed to ensure the involvement and efficacy of women in the three primary groups that will benefit from the Project: stakeholders, NSP staff and Forest Department staff.

7.1 Recommendations for Stakeholders:

- Environmental science and conservation programs in schools, colleges and madrasas
- Formation of women's and men's groups
- Trainings for various stakeholders in forest conservation with larger components in gender relations, legal rights, good governance, skills development, leadership skills (according to stakeholder set, eg UP members, women UP members, village women, village men, village children, Forest Department, NGO workers, women NGO workers, DC/SP and other leading government officials, Muslim or ethnic minorities)
- Alternative income generation and house-hold based income generation projects for women
- Identification and support of alternative energy sources on the part of NSP towards stakeholders
- Advocacy and awareness programs through modern and traditional media to sensitize people and communities to various and diverse roles of different stakeholders can play in forest conservation
- Encourage education for all, but especially for girls and women
- Promote, foster, and facilitate regular dialogue between community leaders with government officials, UP, NGOs and villages related to community (men, women and children's) needs and forest conservation
- Organize separate women's groups as local organizations and develop the women's skills and competencies with regard to forest conservation
- Create space for women in male dominated governing groups such as Gram Sarkar and other decision-making groups
- Facilitate changes in traditionally gender-biased practices related to the environment and the forest
- Organize meetings with women and men separately and then mixed group to initiate discussions on the environment and forest conservation
- Communicate with all-women organizations; organize and encourage them to take part in forest conservation

7.2 Recommendations for NSP staff

1. Ensure at least 1/3 or equitable membership of women's groups in forest conservation councils and co-management committees.
2. Provide training to women UP members on forest conservation and alternative dispute resolution process and develop them as Community Promoter
3. Promote a network of women's groups in each protected area and work with the network to activate them for forest conservation
4. Build alliances between women's groups and other local organizations with conservation as the central theme
5. Develop capacity of NSP staff to carry out gender analysis.
6. Arrange intensive gender training for NSP staff with follow-up, and ensure that all training across the agency is gender sensitive.
7. Apply gender analysis at all stages of policy and program work, including planning, implementation, impact assessment and development of measurable gender indicators
8. Create alternative income generating activities and increase awareness about alternative energy sources for women that will assist in reducing dependency on forest
9. Prioritize gender sensitivity in all terms of reference, including TORs for external consultants
10. Address the causes of gender imbalances in staff throughout the agency and set targets for recruitment, retention and promotion of staff accordingly, particularly women in senior positions
11. Develop strategies for reaching those targets, including affirmative action, sexual harassment policies, safe and secure transport and accommodation when travelling, particularly for women staff
12. Gender sensitive language and images will be used in all internal and external communications
13. Whenever possible, women's and girls' voices will be heard in the first person to ensure that women are being empowered to speak for themselves.
14. Ensure that women and men are proportionately represented during press briefings and other public relations activities.
15. Facilitate dialogue among staff on gender issues through workshops and seminars
16. Constitute recruitment boards with equal numbers of men and women
17. Give preference to a woman candidate over a male candidate when both are equally qualified until such time as a gender balance in staff has been attained, and then in order to maintain that balance.
18. Include a gender dimension in all finance guidelines, instructions and policies
19. Every women staff member will be entitled to receive paid maternity leave
20. Paid paternity leave should be granted to male staff member on the birth of his own child subject to guarantee that he will assist his spouse during that time.
21. Male staff members will be subject to immediate dismissal if it is proved he physically or mentally abuses or rapes a female staff member.
22. Ensure separate toilets for female and male staff
23. Take into account the reduced mobility of female staff during menstruation, pregnancy and up to four months after childbirth
24. Allow an additional half an hour to female staff to breastfeed the baby for a period of up to six months.

25. More equitable structure and support within NSP, CODEC, RDRS and partner organizations which includes an internal gender and harassment policy, in order to ensure that gender strategy can be implemented in the field.
26. Development of monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure that internal and external gender strategies is being implemented in the field.
27. Ensure that project staff takes responsibility for incorporating gender into program work and activities
28. Gender materials/ modules and relevant documents needs to be published in Bangla

7.3 Recommendations for Forest Department

1. Encourage the Forestry Department to increase the number of women staff members in the field and create support for them
2. Hold trainings that are co-led by the Forestry Department for all stakeholders in forest conservation including the components of gender, human rights, and legal issues
3. Encourage businessmen involved in deforestation to redirect their practices to cooperate with conservation efforts

7.4 Action Plan for all NSP Staff

1. Identify the stereotypes of and raise awareness about women's and men's capacities and discuss how they influence us in supervising staff, in assigning responsibility and in managing natural resources
2. Be able to describe how gender issues relate to one's job responsibilities and how gender can be incorporated into the execution of those responsibilities
3. In each meeting discuss NSP's gender strategy and sexual harassment polices so that all staff are conversant with these
4. Refrain from any comments or gestures that indicate prejudicial views of female staff.
5. In each field office and central office, ask female staff what changes would make it more female friendly and implement the feasible recommendations.
6. Participate in gender sensitivity training and provide feedback on its values and relevance to forest conservation

7.5 Action Plan for Field Organizer of NSP

1. Develop at the village group level female gender point persons and provide them with advance gender training
2. Communicate with these gender point persons on a regular basis to learn more about gender issues, and when there is a gender grievance or harassment issue to resolve
3. Keep in touch with organizational Gender Focal Point Persons and update them regularly about women's situations and women's roles in forest conservation
4. Observe any field level misbehavior regarding gender-related challenges, negotiate and report to Gender Focal Point Person
5. Acquire the skills and knowledge required to effectively promote gender issues with stakeholders.

6. Build rapport with local elites and religious leaders in order to promote women's participation in forest conservation
7. Develop formal networks of women UP members, other contestants for the women UP member posts and other women professionals to take part in forest conservation.

7.6 Action Plan for Management staff of NSP

1. Select a staff member as a Gender Focal Point Person and provide her adequate Gender relations training.
2. Determine mandate of Gender Focal Point Person and give her sufficient time to carry it out.
3. Provide adequate time for staff to participate in gender sensitivity workshops, trainings and relevant events.
4. On field visits, raise gender issues with staff and spend time with Gender Focal Point Person.
5. Monitor results of gender strategy and share with staff and implement recommendations
6. Ensure that project staffs are using gender strategy guidelines as a basis for implementation.
7. Integrate gender strategy principles into MOU with forest conservation council and all documents of co-management committee.
8. Raise public awareness on forest conservation and importance of women's participation in forest conservation through popular theatre and other folk media.
9. Involve Union Parishad and Upazilla administration heavily to ensure women's participation in forest conservation

7.7 Action Plan for Gender Focal Point /Gender Trainers of NSP

1. Maintain regular contact with the village /group level Gender Point Persons on all issues regarding gender and forest conservation
2. Stay up to date on latest gender information and policy issues, nationally and internationally
3. Organize and conduct monthly meeting of village/group level Gender Point Persons and analyze the situation of women respective area as well as role of women in forest conservation activities
4. Counsel staff members with regard to gender issues or violations, maintaining confidentiality.
5. Prepare report on women's situations and the role of women in forest conservation on a quarterly basis and submit it to the Project Coordinator.
6. Work with staff and potential stakeholders to initiate open forums of mixed and single sex groups to discuss women's potential for forest conservation.
7. Monitor the office environment to ensure that it is female friendly and recommend improvements where necessary.

8. Develop a mechanism for monitoring implementation of gender strategy and carry out. Assist in conducting annual review of gender strategy.
9. Develop modules for gender sensitivity workshops, Train Community Promoters to provide resources and assess results.
10. Assist to carry out annual plan for competency building of women stakeholders with management.
11. Arrange local workshops to discuss how women's control over forest resources and access to forest conservation help alleviate poverty.
12. Review existing IEC materials to ensure that they are gender sensitive

8. Expected Outcomes/Indicators

The following indicators have been organized to correspond with the objectives stated at the beginning of this report. The indicators serve to illustrate the efficacy of the objectives. The idea is that an increase in the areas outlined by the indicators will demonstrate that the objectives have been successfully implemented.

Objective 1: provide a clear concept of the gender breakdown of key forest-related stakeholders and their interactions with the forests, including issues of access and of control over resources in the five protected areas

1. 20% decrease in number of women collecting fuel wood from the forest.
2. 20% increase in number of women in forest conservation councils and co-management committees
3. 5% increase in number of people who believe women and men have the capacity to perform similar types of work with regards to forest conservation.
4. 20% increase in the number of women who handle information about forest conservation at both the home and community levels.

Objective 2: provide strategies for engaging women and enabling them to become full actors in conservation, based on how women's present roles interact with the management of the protected areas in a co-management framework

1. 20% increase in the number of women trained in forest conservation.
2. 5% increase in the number of women in the community who train other women.
3. 20% increase in the number of women trained in organizing and leadership.
4. 5% increase in the number of women trained to hold positions of power or decision-making.
5. 5% increase in the number of self sustaining women group

Objective 3: Provide a clear rationale for NSP staff as to the necessity of gender and of its implementation in conservation efforts

1. 90% NSP staff will be made aware of gender relation's analysis.
2. 30% increase in women occupying management positions in NSP.

Objective 4: provide site-specific implementation strategies and clear direction to the NSP implementing team at the field level in how to engage local women so as to maximize the impact of NSP efforts in improved protected area conservation.

1. 25% increase in the number of women who *participate* in successful alternative income generating projects
2. 5% increase in the number of successful alternative income generating projects *led* by women.
3. 20% increase in the number of women who have accepted and started to use alternative energy sources in their homes.

Objective 5: synthesize the site-level implementation strategies for gender into a number of general operational strategies that apply to all sites.

1. 10% increase in the number of women who have control over resources and income that belong to them.
2. Increased acceptance on the part of both women and men participating in forest conservation process.

9. Conclusion

The end-goal of this study is improved conservation in the five identified Protected Areas of Lawachara National Park, Satchari Reserve Forest, Rema Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary and Teknaf Game Reserve. In order to achieve this goal, we need to engage as much of the population as possible, and to that end a gender lens has been employed in order to determine site-specific recommendations as well as to identify the overarching factors affecting local involvement in all the protected areas and how these factors can be approached. Throughout this report, we have done our best to identify concrete tactics for incorporating local populations into this conservation effort. They are our greatest resource. In order to effectively utilize this resource, we must move beyond fifty percent of the population, beyond just men. That means women, and children where possible to institute long-term behavior change. We need to educate these men, women and children on environmental issues, income and energy alternatives, and broader concepts of conservation. With this information and with NSP and FD support, these men, women and children in and around the protected areas will be better equipped to identify the methods they think suit them and their families best, and to carry out relevant conservation activities. This is, however, only a gender issue insofar as it necessitates identifying the different ways in which each group can be incorporated. The greater issue is mobilizing the available resources, which clearly include people as the most powerful, to protect what is a part of the country's heritage and what rightfully belongs to the communities in and around the forests. We hope to empower these communities—and this means by empowering *all* community members—to empower themselves in an effort to protect their most valuable resource, the forest.

Due to time limit, we could not visit all the villages of the Protected Area hence some recommendations had been based on validated assumptions. The strategies are flexible and should be updated with progress in work.

10. References

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Appendix

Code of Conduct for NSP staff:

NSP as a project demands that its staff adheres to its values and follows a Code of Conduct in keeping with the credibility and image of the project and which is permissible in the existing context. To reinforce this NSP will:

- Encourage an egalitarian, open and participatory environment and discourage a culture of silence and fear. Women's voices will be given due importance in meetings and decision-making.
- Incorporate gender sensitivity as a component of staff performance evaluations.
- Monitor centers and identify those, which have adopted good gender practices as role models.
- Recognize women's work and achievements, and challenge sexism at the individual as well as the institutional level.
- Ensure an environment free from sexual harassment (including physical, verbal and non-verbal) by adopting a strict policy for dealing with cases of sexual harassment with appropriate punitive action.
- Appoint a gender focal person already on the NSP staff for dealing with sexual harassment and other gender -related problems. Develop clear procedures to be followed by this person to protect both the victim and accused. Counseling support will be part of the process, and strict confidentiality will be maintained.
- Make each member within the organization (regardless of rank and seniority) accountable for his/her actions if they contradict the measures laid down in this policy.

Definition of Sexual Harassment: Any unwelcome words or actions of a sexual nature, sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behavior as, physical contact and advances, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography, and sexual demands, whether by words or actions.

Handling of Sexual Harassment cases:

1. Consult with the gender focal person or Gender Coordinator whether this constitutes sexual harassment if in doubt and how to proceed.
2. Inform your supervisor or Gender focal person or gender coordinator and get their assistance to put the complaint into writing and forwarding it.
3. Submit a written complaint directly to the supervisor or the gender coordinator
4. Complaint should be made as early as possible, preferably within one month of the harassment.

Handling of Sexual Harassment cases by the supervisor:

1. Consult with Gender Focal person or Gender Coordinator as soon as informed by the staff concerned or through other source.
2. Assist the concerned staff/victims to bring the complaint forward in writing. Forward a copy to the gender coordinator.
3. Complaint should be handled with utmost confidentiality and forwarded to the gender coordinator or focal person immediately upon receiving the complaint. Unnecessary delay constitutes an act of gross negligence.
4. No attempts should be made to mitigate or negotiate before a proper investigation is conducted.

Assist in investigation and follow-up process