

Title:

Impacts of co-management on women of Satchari National Park

Research location: Satchari National Park (SNP), Sylhet

Duration: 06 months

Introduction:

Co-management of protected area is a participatory approach to environment conservation that strengthens communities' capacity to build vibrant local economies-while protecting and enhancing their local natural resource system. By integrating ecological, social and economic components into the cohesive approaches to environment issues, co-management approaches give local residents both the opportunity and the responsibility to manage their natural resources in an effective way and to enjoy the benefits of that responsibility. Bangladesh has been frequently facing significant loss of natural resources over the last few decades. Just a simple declaration of protected areas is not enough to slow the pace of steady degrading. The reason for such consequence is non-cooperation from the local residents. They always see the project as alien. They firmly believe that set up of such project will put negative impact on their own livelihoods and on their own claims to ownership and use rights of these lands. Without the active involvement of local people, there is little chance for success of protected areas initiatives. To be successful, Bangladesh must design co-management models that take into account existing socio-economic conditions and prevailing ecological and legal limitations.

So as to engage local stakeholders as partners in the management of the protected areas, the forest department has undertaken a pilot project called 'Nishorgo Support Project'. The Nishorgo Support project has been working since 2004 on involving local stakeholders especially women around its live pilot sites. The nature of involvement of these stakeholders is called 'Co management. Co-management or collaborative management involves two or more social actors negotiating defining and guaranteeing amongst themselves fair share of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources. The purpose of the gender strategy is to help NSP to realize the goal of self-sustained conservation and protection forests in Bangladesh.

The men and women of local area, both ethnic minorities and rural villagers are work together towards conserving the forest. But in most cases women are deprived to do work frequently. 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 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.

Description of Satchari National Park:

Forest Type: Semi-evergreen mixed forest.

Geographical Location: Located Approximately 130-140 Km northeast of Dhaka n civil administration of Madhabpur/ Chunarughat Upazila, Hobijan District.

Forest administrative location: Beat: Satchari and Telmachara; Range: Satchari; Division: Sylhet Forest Division

History of establishment: Lawachara National Park (NP) is a part of the West Bhanugach Reserved Forest; The reserved forest was established through an order under the Forest Act. The current national park was established through a Gazette Notification (PBM (S-3) 7/96/367 on 07 July 1996). Further proposal was made for extension of the park as per recommendation of Forestry Master Plan (GoB 1992) and feasibility study carried out by FRR and DU (1996).

Area: 1760 ha

Flora & Fauna: 189 species are birds, 24 species are mammals, 18 species are reptiles and 6 species are amphibians

Accessibility & Visitor Infrastructure: Satchari Reserved Forest is located on the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway, between Teliapara and Srimangal and is easily accessible by Dhaka-Sylhet metalled road that criss-crossed the forest from east to west.

Priority Threats to the PA:

-  Illicit logging
-  Fuel wood/ building materials extraction
-  Sand harvesting

Research area

In Bangladesh traditional socio-cultural practices and poor state of local community identified as one of the obstacles to implement the conservation of protected area on sustainable basis. The integration of local inhabitants with activities of the project is one of the few means to enhance income generation and thereby reduce social threat to the project. Co-management approach for protected areas management has been tried in West Bengal State, India with good success rate. Nishorgo project has started such program from 2004 involving the local people as well.

Satchuri National Park is located in Located Approximately 130-140 Km northeast of Dhaka and civil administration of Madhabpur/ Chunarughat Upazila, Hobijan District covering an area of 1760 ha. There is one forest village located inside the Park boundaries, named Tipra Para, inhabited by members of the Tipra ethnic community. Tea estates on all sides surround the park, and there are no other settlements within a 5 km buffer zone. Other villages located within a 10 km radius will be included as potential study sites.

The present work will observe the project activities and their impact on the livelihood improvements and participation, gender awareness on forest user group especially women. Because women are moderately discriminated in case of employment in jobs, business etc.

Rationale of the Study:

Nishorgo conservation efforts will succeed only when local stakeholders perceive more value in conserving the protected areas than allowing them to be destroyed. The project team has worked with the Forest Department to put in place community patrols in the areas most in need of protection. Areas protected through such community patrols has started giving positive results. In most cases illegal felling almost ceased. Various studies on co-management of natural resources have been done. Some key works are as follows:

Common Property Resources (CPRs) made up about 12% of poor households' income; fuel and fodder were the most important. Poor people are being systematically excluded from customary access to CPRs, a key element in their livelihoods, at an alarming rate. The main causes of this exclusion are agricultural intensification, communization of CPRs, environmental degradation and population growth.

Projects promoting community-based management of natural resources frequently encourage local small holders to share flora, fauna or landforms with state agencies and / or private companies. In southern Africa the general model has collided with a bitter nature of land grabbing. The Zimbabwean project ignored territorial conflict and ultimately succumbed to it. (Mc Dermott 2001).

The Ukraine community has created environmentally significant sites and has prepared an environmental management plan for Znesinnya Park. The park has created seasonal employment for 25 people. Its long-term viability is ensured by a high degree of community commitment, and the dedication of the part of the city budget to the park program.

There has been not much research in our country in relation to co-management for protected area. Therefore, a research of this type is of immense importance in assessing the impact of such project on local community. Findings from this study will also throw some light regarding the expansion of such program in other regions of the country.

Research Objectives

The main focus of this study is to analyze the views of local women from two selected communities surrounding Satchuri National Park. The present study will examine the nature of involvement of these stakeholders under the 'co-management' activities undertaken by the Nishorgo Support Project in this location. My aim is to find out how the co-management approach works to motivate the local community to support the protected area. Considering all these aspects, the specific objectives of the study would be:

- To investigate the present situation of the participation women in NSP of SNP
- To analyze the impact of co-management through NSP on the livelihood of these women of the SNP.
- To make suggestions about the co-management for improving the quality of life of the women of the study area of SNP.

Research Methodology:

Both primary and secondary data and information would be used. Views will be taken from various stakeholders from different communities in and around the project area. The target or tentative working areas will be selected through prior discussion with Park officials, NSP staffs, staff at the local coordinating NGO for Satchuri (RDRS), and existing Co-Management Committee. Through this initial set of discussions I will select FUGs for interview. Primary data would be collected through Personal Observation and by interview on the basis of semi-structured questionnaire. Present study would focus on the livelihood of community and participation of women on the project. The secondary data would be collected consulting available relevant published and unpublished documents. Maximum 40 women will be asked to know the impacts on women of SNP from each of the community.

This research is based on two community of SNP. Each community has both FUG and Non-FUG. The interview will be taken from the head of the only FUG (female). The schedule of the interview will be one or one and half an hour of each person.

Research Questions:

Followed semi-structural questions will be explored during research work:

- How do women participate in the co-management of NSP of SNP
- What are the conditions of women in the community for membership of CMC?
- Are women participates in the IGA
- How, if at all, do women participate in the institution or organization?
- Are women of the institution or organization's main beneficiaries?
- How much benefit they get?
- How, where, when, and by whom are decisions made in the institution/household?
- How and among whom is consensus normally achieved?
- Who influences the decision-making process?
- Are women participates in the leadership of the institution, both formally and informally?
- Who has participated in the leadership in the past?
- What are conditions of outdoor mobility and access to credit and IGA?
- What could be the amount of workload upon the local women?

Checklist:

1. Household profile:

- Household member, sex, age, religion, ethnic group, health status, dependency status, residency status, roles in different livelihood activities.
- What is the Education status of household members?
- What land, water, livelihood or forest resource do different members use?
- What infrastructure do household members have access to and use (transport, marketing facilities, health services, water supply)?
- What are the earnings of the household from different sources (income-generating activities, Remittances)?
 - What links does the household have with other households or individuals in the community (Kinship, social group, membership of organizations, political contacts, patronage)?
 - What organizations, institutions and associations (societies, cooperatives, political parties, etc.)
 - Do household members participate in and what role do they play in them?
 - Who makes decisions about the use of natural and physical resources in the community?

- How are those decisions reached (what are the centers of decision-making)?
- What laws, rules and regulations affect the household?

2. Community Profile:

- What are the different activities that households in the community use to support their Livelihoods?
- Who is involved in those livelihood activities (men/women, young/old, different social and Economic groups) and how many people and households depend on them?
- How many people and households live in the community?
- What is the gender composition and age structure of the community?
- How long has the community been in existence and how was it founded?

3. Institutional Profile:

- What are the state objectives of the institution or organization regarding the women's' participation?
- Do leaders and community members sometimes disagree on the management of the institution or organization?
- What objectives and activities does the institution or organization have a mandate to achieve?
- How does the institution or organization achieve or try to achieve its objectives?
- How does it plan to achieve its objectives in the future?

Time frame of the research project:

The field works will be carried out as per the following schedule-

Activities	January	February	March	April	May	June
Revised Proposal						
Data collection						
Data documentation						
Report writing						

Scope and Limitations

In Bangladesh, socio-cultural values are very strong. So any new interventions from the outside events for their benefits are treated as negative to their existence. As a result in most cases they fail to realize the long-term positive impact to their livelihood. Nishorgo Support Project activities are the initiatives to change this attitude of the local people through involving local stakeholders at the designated project site. The present study will observe the project activities and impact of the project on community especially women. The study may be helpful for policy planners, researchers and action programme managers of the relevant fields during implementation of such protected area plan. The group of people under the study is quite small part of. Their views may not necessarily reflect the overall picture of the issue. But still the findings will be able to contribute significantly in implementing co-management activities for protected area.

Reference:

Mc Dermott, H.D., 2001. Cadastral politics: the making of community-based resource management in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

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