

Final Proposal

The Role of Women in Co-Management under Nishorgo Support Project at Two Neighboring Villages of Lawachara National Park

Submitted To:

Nishorgo Support Project
East-West Center

Submitted By:

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Introduction

It is now well conceived that without the active participation of local community people, success is very difficult to manage forest resources and conserve bio-diversity of Protected Areas (PA) declared recently by the authorities. There is a felt need to develop and replicate a co-management model for this purpose in Bangladesh like other parts of the world. To this end, in 2004, five pilot sites have been taken under the project Nishorgo implemented in collaboration with the USAID and GOB. After implementation of the project for few years at Lawachara National Park under Kamalgonj Upazila of Moulvibazar District following a new approach of co-management of forest resources and bio-diversity, it is useful to investigate experience and impact of the new approach.

Justification of the study

The plantation of Lawachara Park, notified in 1996 as per the Wildlife Preservation (amendment) Act 1974, has taken a structure very similar to natural forest and rich in floral and faunal diversity. The park consist of 460 species, of which 167 are plants, 4 amphibians, 6 reptiles, 246 birds, 20 mammals and 17 insects. This is one of the most popular breeding areas of the country and is the best park to enjoy Hoolock Gibbon.

However, as co-management is the new approach being implemented at five sites under the Nishorgo Support Project, the prevailing condition and attitude of the local people may not be made favorable for conceptualization and understanding of the new approach and perform accordingly for the common interest. On the other hand, success of the project towards sustainable management of forest resource largely depends on effective involvement of the local people. As we know women and men have different needs and priorities and have different specialized skills. Now a days the question of women's rights is viewed as a question of human rights as they represent half of humanity. When the role of women is incorrectly assumed or overlooked, achievement of development objectives can be delayed. Unless and until women are involved in forest management activities and decision making in a more meaningful way, the co-management approach cannot achieve its desired success. The local women should have an understanding of both the current co-management approach and future impact of the project on their livelihoods.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the role of women in co-management under Nishorgo Support Project at the neighboring villages of Lawachara National Park. My specific objectives are given below:

- i. To evaluate the participation of women in NSP co-management initiatives.
- ii. To identify the indicators of women's empowerment through the co-management approach.
- iii. To understand the extent of impact of the new management approach on women in the light of income and livelihoods.
- iv. To know the level of awareness of the women about the co-management of forest resources and bio-diversity.
- v. To identify the gender wise interaction with the forest.

Research Questions

1. How do women participate in the co- management council/committee?
2. How frequently men and women go to the forest to collect fuelwood?
3. Do women do contribute to forest conservation?
4. Do women take initiatives for reducing pressure on forest by using alternative sources of fuel?
5. How women can be benefited by different IGAs?
6. Do women work as tour guide?
7. Did co-management by NSP have an effect on livelihood, income or standard of living of women?
8. Did co-management by NSP affect decision making power of women?

Methodology

Site Selection

The study will be conducted in two villages under Kamalgonj Upazila of Moulvibazar District. The villages are Longurpar and Ballarpar. The main consideration for the selection of these areas are (i) co-management by NSP is acting, (ii) easily accessible and (iii) respondents are highly reliable.

Study Design

Stratified random sampling will be followed for drawing sample proportionately. About 24 females will be selected with consultation with the project personnel. About 4 Key Informant Interview and 2 FGD will be conducted with project personnel and community people following pre-designed checklist. Required project related information/documents would be collected and reviewed in the initial period.

The study will follow both quantitative and qualitative approach. Key personnel of the project and local councils/committees and community people (including influential people) will be intensively interviewed by using an interview guide. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the personnel of the project and local people will be organized. A survey will be conducted among the selected people of the project area covering those who are direct or indirectly involved in co-management and who are not involved in co-management activities. A well-designed semi-structured questionnaire will be administered for survey. Available related documents and reports will be reviewed. Relevant data from secondary sources will also be collected and analyzed.

From the household list collected from RDRS , a total of 24 households will be selected from the two villages. 12 households will be selected from Longurpar village where 6 households are active in NSP and 6 households are not active in NSP. From Ballarpar village, out of 12 households, 6 households will be selected from FUG and another 6 households will be selected from Non-FUG.

Data collection tools

Interview guide and checklist for both personal interview and FGD will be developed. A semi-structured questionnaire for sample survey will be designed following pre-testing at the field. Also a special format for recording other information will also be developed and used for further analysis.

Data entry, cleaning, analysis and reporting

Data may be entered into computer after completion of the survey. Before that entering data coding will be done. A data mask will be developed for the convenient of analysis. Both SPSS and Microsoft Excel will be used for the purpose.

Time frame

Activities	Months					
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Literature review	■					
Data collection		■	■	■		
Data analysis				■	■	
Report writing & presentation					■	■

References

1. Mollah & Kundu, August 2004, Site Level Field Appraisal for Protected Area Co-Management Lawchara National Park.
2. Nishorgo Support Project, Site Information Brochure, Lawachara National Park.
3. IUCN (The World Conservation Union), 1994, Protecting Nature, Regional Reviews of Protected Areas, IVth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, Caracas, Venezuela.