

Constraints in Policy and Legislation With Respect to the Performance of Co-management Initiatives within Chunoti Wildlife Sanctuary.

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Introduction

National Forest Policy 1994, Forestry Sector Master Plan (1995-2015) and management plans are the main policy documents while the Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) (Amendment) Act, 1974 and Government Orders are the main legislations for the Protected Area management in the country. Chunoti Wildlife Sanctuary is managed under these policy directives and legal framework. There are directives neither in the National Forest Policy 1994 nor in the Forestry Sector Master Plan regarding co-management in the Protected Areas. Similar situation exists in previous management plans and prevailing law. Again the declaration of Protected Areas under the existing Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) (Amendment) Act, 1974 failed to stop the loss of biodiversity, principally because of people living in and around these areas have perceived Protected Area to be a direct threat to their own livelihoods and to their own claims to ownership and use rights of these lands. Without clear legal framework for active involvement of these local people, there is a little chance for success of Protected Area management in Bangladesh. “Co-management in Protected Areas of Bangladesh” has been introduced by the Forest Department under the Nishorgo Support Project in 2004. To make this initiative as a successful expedition prevailing constraints in the policy and legislation need to be identified. The approach of co-management in Protected Areas has been a fundamental recommendation of the past two World Parks Congresses, and is actively advocated by the IUCN.

There are five pilot sites under this project covering all the three categories of Protected Areas, as defined in the Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) (Amendment) Act, 1974. But due to limitation of time and cost, proposed study area has been confined in the Chunoti Wildlife Sanctuary only.

Justification

Government policy and legislation for co-management of Protected Areas are crucially important to determine biodiversity management and its beneficiaries and stakeholders. They provide the foundation for long-term equitable and sustainable relations between government and local communities in Protected Areas. To ensure this, a thorough study on the Government policy and legislation with respect to the performance of co-management in Protected Areas has been proposed.

Hypothesis:

Government policy and legislation constrain the adoption of co-management within Protected Areas of Bangladesh.

Research Questions

Since the co-management entails the social dimensions in the conservation issues of the Protected Areas, a number of research questions may be raised in this study. But due to limitation of time and cost of the study, only three research questions are considered here as mentioned below:

- Q. 1 How do the policy document and legislation reflect the objectives of co-management as seen by the criteria fixed for this study?
- Q. 2 How do the members of Co-management Council and Co-management Committee see constraints in policy and legislative documents?
- Q. 3 What are the aspirations of Forest User Groups about co-management and how are these aspirations constrained by policy and legislation?

Methodology:

The study will be completed in two phases. Primary and secondary data will be collected in the first phase while data analysis and report writing will be completed in the second phase. A rough analytical exercise will be carried out for two months to prepare the draft report and then final report will be prepared in a month long Write-Shop to be held during July-August 2007.

Existing Government Forest Policy 1994, Forestry Sector Master Plan, Management Plan and laws, acts and Government order will be reviewed critically with respect to the objectives of co-management by following criteria fixed for this study. Available other related literatures will be reviewed and if required Forest Department and Nishorgo Support Project Office will be visited for collection of official documents as secondary data sources.

For Primary data collection, field visit will be organized at Chunoti Wildlife Sanctuary to interview the members of both the Co-management Council and Co-management Committee using semi structured questionnaires. A total of 10 members represented by 2 persons from each of 5 categories of members of any one of the Co-management Councils and 10 members represented by 1 persons from each of 10 categories of members of any one of the Co-management Committee will be interviewed. Effort will be made to create participatory environment during interview. Questionnaires for this interview will be prepared following predefined criteria based on variables of blueprint and learning process approaches adapted by David Korten (Pimbert 1995).

In order to find the aspirations of the Forest User Groups about co-management and how are these constrained by policy and legislation, an open-ended questionnaire survey will be carried out. Household information, human capital, physical capital, financial capital, social capital, vulnerability context and institutions of the Forest User Groups will be studied to understand their household livelihood strategy following checklist prepared by Messer (2003). There are a total of 24 Stakeholder groups, 19 of which are identified as primary stakeholder groups. Based on these primary stakeholder groups a number of Forest User Group was formed in the Chunoti Wildlife Sanctuary. Out of these Forest User Groups only those Forest User Groups having most and least stakes on the sanctuary

will be selected for interviewed. Randomly selected 5 (five) members from each of these Forest User Groups will be interviewed.

Simple and multivariate statistical analysis will be carried out if necessary. Text, table, maps and pictures of the report will be organized following standard editing of the paper. During the study necessary guidance and supervisory advice will be taken from the supervisor.

Timeline:

Considering the time limit of six months for field work, following tentative timeline has been proposed for this study: (1) Literature review for collection of secondary information: 120 days; (2) Preparation of survey schedule and questionnaires: 20 days; (3) Field visit and primary data collection 90 days; (4) Data analysis and draft report writing: 60 days; and (5) Write-Shop for final report writing: 30 days.

Activities	1st Phase				2nd Phase		
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Literature Review	██████████						
Preparation of Survey Schedule	██████						
Preparation of Questionnaires	██████						
Interview of the members of the Co-management Council		██████					
Interview of the members of the Co-management Committee			██████				
Questionnaire Survey of the Forest User Groups				██████			
Data Analysis and Draft Report Writing					██████	██████	
Final Report Writing and Submission during WriteShop							██████

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