Changing Approaches to Forest Management In HK-H Countries: Polices, Issues and the Way Forward

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Outline of the Presentation

• Background and Context
• Traditional Approach to Forest Management
• New Perspectives in Forest Management
• Changing Paradigm of Com. Forest Mgmt./Jt. Forest Mgmt. in South Asia
• Key Policy Issues
• Emerging Challenges & Opportunities
• Policy Making Process & the Way Forward
Background & Context

• Forests and range lands - the important means of livelihoods.
• Besides economic benefits, forests protect watersheds, conserve biological diversity, sequestrate carbon, stabilize climate and balance ecosystem.
• The well-being of people, especially Mt. community depend largely on the richness and diversity of forest resources.
• Sustainable development needs sustainable use & management of forest resources.
Traditional Approach to FM (1)

• FM in South Asia had their origins in colonial system
• Even Nepal & Bhutan that were not colonized, initially copied the colonial system of nationalization and bureaucratization of forests
• Until 1970s most of the countries followed the traditional approach—management of forest through centralized bureaucracy under command & control
• In traditional FM
  – Focus remained on silvicultural management
  – Forests were considered as sources of revenue rather than means of peoples livelihood
  – People were considered as outsiders and their access was controlled through varying rules & regulations
Traditional Approach to FM (2)

- Historical evidence shows that the general Scientific Management could neither protect forest nor improve the livelihood of tribal people
- Forest has been degraded severely in most of the HK-H countries
- The degradation of forests has accelerated soil erosion, land degradation, & exacerbated the environmental hazards
New Perspectives on FM

• Now widely realized that Govt. alone cannot protect the forests - combined efforts of the people & the government are needed

• While Hardin, considered people as selfish & ‘Tragedy’ is inevitable in CPRs, social scientists are discovering ‘Magic’ in collective action and collective choice.

• Growing evidence suggest that Collective Actions guided by clear rules, regulations & sanctions can protect forest & improve livelihoods
Types of CF/JFM Policies in South Asia

- **Regulatory Policy** – Existing policies and rules need critical review & rationalization;

- **Fiscal Policy**: Fiscal incentives for wise use, best practices, Producer Co-ops. & Community enterprises.;

- **Institutional Policy**: Community or Participatory Forest Management is an improvement on the old practices but policies regarding enterprise development and marketing also need to be in place;

- **Marketing & Trade Policy**: Registration, Source /Quality Certification & Transport rules still unclear.
Changing Approaches to FM in South Asia

• Most countries are gradually moving from centralized to participatory approaches of FM
• CF occupies a central place in FM in Nepal. JFM has emerged as an effective tool to regenerate forest in India. Since 1979, Bhutan has been pursuing SF/PFM
• In Nepal, about one-fourth of the forests—more than one million HHs—is managed by 14,000 FUGs
Changing Approaches to FM in South Asia

- In India, about 14 million ha of forestland is managed by village forest communities in collaboration with Forest Department involving about 75 million people.
- In Bhutan, 23 CF managing more than 2,000 ha of forest land benefiting more than 1,000 households.
- Vast experiences gathered in Nepal, India & Bhutan can be valuable for other countries of Asia & elsewhere.
Emerging Challenges (1)

- CBFM is broadly accepted at policy level, its effective implementation is however weak.
- Positive attitude of forestry staff: It needs to be supportive; beneficiaries need to be empowered.
- Participatory management, is social capital development through multi-stakeholder consultations.
- Economic benefits and secured tenure influences successful CFM; Decision making authority needs to be devolved at local/community level.
Emerging Challenges (2)

- Governments must **transfer adequate powers to local bodies** to make their own rules & regulations.
- **Share of benefits** to local users have to be significant and must not be captured by local elites.
- Poor and weaker citizens must see their quality of life, economic stability & social equity improve.
- Forest quality and productivity should improve along with peoples’ livelihoods.
- **Policy & institutional** arrangements should target poorest of the poor, women, & disadvantaged groups and improve their capabilities to develop and manage forests.
Emerging Policy Issues (1)

- CBFM should not be restricted to degraded forests only.
- CBFM cannot succeed without a firm legal basis.
- CBFM practices vary from country to country and region to region based on social and ecological systems.
- CBFM requires a minimum common framework.
- CBFM-based Forest committees require greater authority or power to be effective.
- Forest protection committees be given a larger share in timber revenue.
Emerging Policy Issues (3)

• Regulations requiring Govt. permits for extraction, cultivation, transport, use & export of NTFPs are largely ineffective.

• Legal production, processing marketing and enterprise dev. of forest products promotes forest development and conservation
Expected Outputs & Outcomes of CBFM

• Well intended, locally-informed and enterprise oriented policies, rules and practices;
• Consolidation and sharing of CBFM wise practices at local, national & global levels;
• Sustainable livelihoods of poor, marginalized, especially women; & local farmers/ growers & collectors;
• Practice of coordinated & multi-stakeholder-participated consultations at all levels at all times on key policy issues.
ICIMOD’s COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

INNOVATIONS

Increased Productivity of Mountain Resources

Technological

Institutional

Policy

Poverty Reduction

Food Security

Environmental Sustainability
Conclusion

• Lack of policy harmonization, coordination and weak implementation leads to failure in harnessing full potential of Forestry sector.

• Therefore, it is important to improve the policy and institutional environment to:
  – promote forest product/services management & efficiency,
  – Forest conservation and sustainable livelihoods,
  – Public-private-civil society partnership,
  – Participation of local forest dependent men & women.