

PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY: HOW AND WHY

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ABSTRACT

Agroforestry, Farm Forestry, Social Forestry, Community Forestry and more recently, Participatory Forestry have become catch words in the Forestry Sector of the developing countries since 1980. The main reason for this is that these words, whatever their meaning, very often attract donors or are donor driven. Thus they are loosely used, not fully understood and seldom put into practice.

If a forestry project is to be participatory, the users (beneficiaries), should come into focus right from the inception. They should participate and contribute freely at the initial discussion and arrive at decisions themselves without outside influence. The outsiders whether they are individuals or organizations, should play the role of a facilitator during the process. This process has to continue right through the project.

Participatory forestry does not mean wages or food for labour or voluntary labour for nursery and tree planting work. It also does not mean peasants giving their labour voluntarily to the State or foreign funded projects.

Participatory forestry means the active participation of users at the project preparation phase, implementation phase and finally at resource utilization phase. If this can be achieved, it is a fully fledged participatory forestry project.

This paper outlines the concept of participatory forestry and evaluate two case studies from the Upper Mahaweli Catchment.

1. INTRODUCTION

For more than a century in Sri Lanka, forestry has been of a classical nature where the main role of foresters involved the establishment of plantations and the management of natural and manmade forests. At the beginning of the century, it is said that Sri Lanka had a forest cover in excess of 70% of the total land area and the forest policy was formulated to develop the production of timber and other forest products - to cater for the local as well as foreign markets. Thus, the Sri Lankan foresters promoted conventional forestry principles and practices to meet these demands for nearly one hundred years. In the process, they brought land under afforestation and reforestation using introduced as well as existing tree species. They promoted natural regeneration without any kind of intervention (as in natural forests). However, in the 1980 an important element was incorporated into the forest

policy. This was to involve the local community in forestry programmes. Thus the policy stated *"to involve the local community in the development of private woodlots and forestry farms through a programme of social forestry."*

By this time many Asian, African and Latin American countries were contemplating the involvement of local communities in their forestry programmes. Local groups in some of these countries pioneered this concept in practice. On the other hand, most of these developing countries were donor dependent for their forestry programmes, and the donor specifically looked into the involvement of the local population in these forestry projects.

In conventional forestry, whether it is afforestation or reforestation or enrichment planting in natural forests, the range of species is rather narrow and confined only to forestry species of which high yielding timber species were dominant. In classical forest management, relatively large tracts of lands are covered, where trees are grown in long rotation periods and a limited number of products are obtained. The management is centralized and the objective is directed towards the needs of the country.

However, as this sudden transformation of classical forestry to social or community forestry occurred in these countries, including Sri Lanka, an unforeseen problem surfaced. In conventional forestry, interactions between foresters and the rural population have been limited to protection, policing and revenue collection. Hence, encouraging people's participation in forestry activities was relatively new to foresters. Thus reorientation of foresters to these new concepts became significantly important for the success of these community based forestry projects.

2. DEFINITIONS

It has been accepted for many decades that agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry were separate disciplines - forestry being seen as the least important. Hence forest lands were opened-up for agriculture and related activities over the years. In a move to reconcile this situation, sustained production of combined agroforestry systems was recognized by many people since the latter part of 1970s.

Agroforestry and Social Forestry

According to the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), agroforestry may be defined as:

A collective name for the various land use systems in which woody perennials are deliberately grown on the same piece of land as agricultural crops and/or animals; either in some form of spatial arrangement or in sequence. In such agroforestry systems the woody components interact ecologically and economically with the crops and/or animal component. The aim and rationale of agroforestry systems is to optimize positive interactions in order to obtain a higher total, a more diversified and/or a more sustainable production from the

available resources than is possible with other forms of land use; (Lundgren, 1982)

Originally the potential of agroforestry was based on the identification of the need to develop integrated land use systems, which can be used on marginal lands and are socially acceptable. The same social and ecological concern also led to the development of a related concept, social forestry. In many publications these two terms have been used almost as synonyms. In others some differences of the two concepts have been indicated. (Siew Tuan Chew, 1987)

These examples illustrate how the concepts of agroforestry and social forestry have been interpreted as referring to specific tree growing systems. Analytically, it would be much more better to use agroforestry as a descriptive term for a group of specific land use systems or practices as defined above. Social forestry should be used as a normative concept, referring to a group of specific forest management objectives, characterized by local participation and aiming at fulfilment of local needs for forest products and services (Wiersum, 1986)

The objectives of a specific social forestry project will be met by utilization of agroforestry techniques. But not all social forestry projects use agroforestry techniques. Sometimes the wood needs of local people may be best met by pure woodlots or by better management of the existing forest vegetation.

Table 1 - Differences between Agroforestry and Social Forestry

	OBJECTIVES	INTERVENTION STRATEGY
Agroforestry	Increase or sustain the production of a combination of crops Protect or restore productivity of cultivated land by increasing use of trees for these purposes.	Incorporate tree components into crop/livestock production systems in areas subject to soil erosion and environmental degradation. Encourage tree planting on individual farms.
Social Forestry	Increase supply of fuelwood and other wood products. Increase tree cover and reduce cutting of natural vegetation.	Establish small woodlot for communal use in areas where demand cannot be adequately met by natural vegetation without environmental degradation. Usually woodlot are established on public or communal lands.

Community Forestry

Community forestry and social forestry are nowadays probably the most commonly used terms. Many prefer community forestry because of the rather restrictive connotation of "Social", suggesting charitable and non-sustainable activities on the one hand and public involvement at the other (Laban, 1989). FAO (1978) has

adopted the following comprehensive definition of community forestry - it being an umbrella for a wide range of situations, objectives and strategies.

"..... any situation which intimately involves local people in a forest activity. It embraces a spectrum of situations ranging from woodlot in areas which are short of wood and other forest products for local needs, through the growing of trees at the farm level to provide cash crops and the processing of forest products at the house hold, artisan or small industry level to generate income; to the activities of forest dwelling communities. It excludes large scale industrial forestry and any other form of forestry which contributes to community development solely through employment and wages but it does include activities of forest industry enterprises and public forest services which encourage and assist forestry activities at the community level."

Table 2 - Community Forestry Systems

		CONTROL/ OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND TREE RESOURCES			
		COMMUNITY	EXTENDED FAMILY	PRIVATE	STATE
Responsibility for management of tree and land resources	Community	1	2	3	4
	Ext. Family	5	6	7	8
	Private	9	10	11	12
	States	13	14	15	16

KEY to Table 2

Management Systems

Characteristics of different Community Forestry Systems

- | | | |
|--|-----|--|
| Communal Forestry | 1. | Communal tree growing on communal lands |
| | 2. | Communal tree growing on family lands |
| | 3. | Tree growing on private lands organized by community institutions |
| | 4. | Public land allocated for communal forestry activities |
| Family Forestry | 5. | Family tree growing on communal lands |
| | 6. | Family tree growing on family lands |
| | 7. | Family tree growing on private lands |
| | 8. | Public land allocated for family forestry activities |
| Farm Forestry | 9. | Private tree growing on communal lands |
| | 10. | Private tree growing on family lands |
| | 11. | Privately managed tree farming, plantings around houses |
| | 12. | Public land allocation schemes for private tree growing |
| Publicly-managed forestry for local community development | 13. | Public plantings on communal land |
| | 14. | Public plantings on family lands |
| | 15. | Public plantings on private lands |
| | 16. | Publicly-managed schemes on public lands with social or environmental objectives |

Community forestry is not synonymous with agroforestry or communal forestry. Communal forestry is restricted to those activities in which a common interest of a community or group is dominant, use of common land with cooperative efforts benefit the target group. Community forestry has a broader notion and covers all those forestry or tree activities executed within the socio-economic environment of a community but not necessarily with a common interest. As such community forestry can include communal as well as farm forestry. Within the general concept of community forestry a certain number of different systems can be distinguish. The relevant distinction is based on the following two factors.

1. The degree of power or control people have over land;
2. The degree of responsibility people have for management of tree and land resources.

These two factors are utilized in Table 2, adopted from Wiersum (1987) and Laban (1989) to distinguish 16 such Community Forestry systems.

Participation

During the last few decades in many of the development projects, local people were seen as clients, intended beneficiaries, recipients or the target population. The participation of the people was passive and the blueprint of the development planning was done by outsiders. This went on until farming systems research (FSR) contributed a great deal by revealing that traditional farming systems are by no means static. It showed that rural people are capable of adopting their farming systems to changing conditions and have been doing so without, or even in the midst of, externally planned projects.

Simonazzi (1993) pointed out that this approach to rural development participation arose when many realized that :

1. It is not possible for outsiders to identify the needs of rural poor, unless the intended beneficiaries are actively involved;
2. Creating a sense of ownership and developing local institutions to ensure continuity when the external support is ceased is possible only if people find solutions to their problems.
3. The outsiders with technical know how should serve as catalysts or facilitators in the process and not as technical innovators.

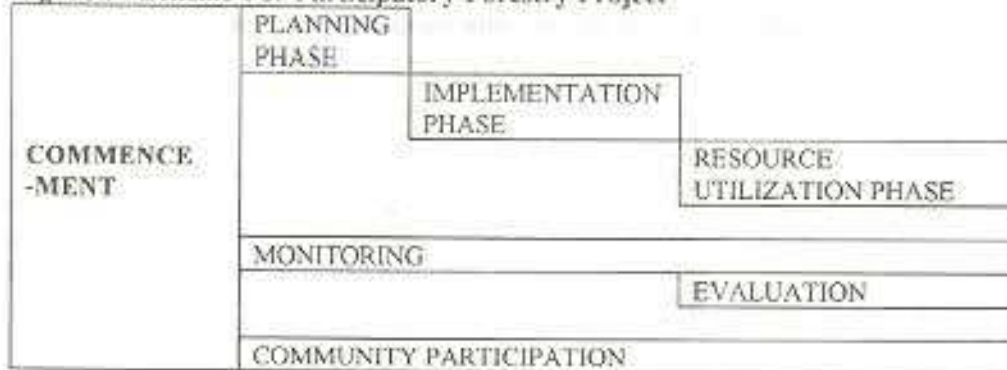
The range of peoples participation in development, from passive to increasingly active is reflected in the typology shown in Table 3.

A generalized scheme for participatory forestry projects is indicated in Figure 1 where community involvement is sought at every phase, planning, implementation and resource utilization. In addition a participatory monitoring and evaluation process is also important. This is the approach which should be introduced to make projects sustainable in the long run.

Table 3: A typology of participation: how people participate in development programmes and projects (Source : Pretty, 1993)

Typology	Components of each type
Passive participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
Participation in information giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to views. These agents define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources, eg. Labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls in this category, as farmers provide the fields but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.
Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to actions plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple objectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

Figure 1 Scheme For Participatory Forestry Project



3. CASE STUDIES FROM SRI LANKA

3.1 Case Study I - Dawatagahamadiththa

Introduction

The Dawatagahamadiththa village comes under the Kothmale Divisional Secretary. The village falls under the purview of Kotagepitiya North Grama Niladhari.

The Dawatagahamadiththa settlement was inhabited by the evacuees of Morape and Ranwantalawa villages who sacrificed their traditional lands for a worthy national need, the Kothmale reservoir. These people have been settled on approximately one acre of tea lands, mostly with new vegetatively propagated tea. The village is surrounded by degraded mana (*Cymbopogon confertiflorus*) grasslands owned by the state. The villagers in Kotagepitiya who walk uphill to the Dawatagahamadiththa for plucking tea and similar activities in the tea field, set fire to the grassland during the dry spells of the year, which clears the paths and makes it easy and safe for trekking uphill. Sometimes, even the tea bushes are burnt. The area above the settlement is a steep and barren mountain. Since there is no vegetation cover, the streams dry out shortly after the end of the rainy season. This settlement is located in the catchment of the Kothmale reservoir. Therefore, insignificant or even zero dry weather flow has a direct impact on the quantity of water that flows into the reservoir. Soil erosion and consequent reservoir sedimentation is another potential problem from poorly vegetated land.

Objectives

The Dawatagahamadiththa Environmental Committee (EC) has made these facts known to the entire community. Hence, the programme had the following objectives:

1. To prevent the damage caused by annual fires
2. To increase the tree cover on the barren land around the settlement to facilitate infiltration and to enhance dry weather flow in streams
3. To reduce soil erosion on these sloping landscapes
4. To enable the community to derive benefits from the forestry block

Implementation

Being aware of the problems in the area, the villagers got together, formed an environmental committee and elected the office bearers in January 1993. The assistance of the Upper Mahaweli Environment and Forest Conservation (UMEFC) Division field officer, who played the role of a facilitator, was sought in preparing a proposal which was then submitted to the UMEFC Office. Subsequently, a discussion was held at Dawatagahamaditlutha with the villagers and some of the issues raised were sorted out.

The main issues and solutions are given below:

ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
1. No knowledge of nursery techniques	A four day residential training on nursery management was given to two youth
2. Initial planting material for May 1993 till the nursery comes in to Production	Plants were provided
3. Fire hazards from Kotagepitiya villagers	A fire line was established with limited assistance
4. Benefits of forestry not known	A general awareness programme was conducted
5. Protection and care of plants	The land adjoining their tea lands were given as forestry blocks

Land Allocation

It was agreed to allocate half to one acre blocks for the forestry activity, after considering the availability of family labour for this kind of work. The lands were identified by the Environmental Committee (EC). The demarcation of lands and showing them to the villagers was done by a sub-committee of the EC. A few villagers were fortunate since they got some abandoned tea lands as their forestry block.

The officer who played the role of a facilitator closely monitored the progress of the process and helped in coordinating the activities.

Species Selection

Since most of the land was barren, establishing a quick cover was essential. Villagers were familiar with *Calliandra calothyrsus* which was introduced to this area by the Upper Mahaweli Watershed Management Project in 1989. By 1993 they had seen its performance in the area. Many have grown it in their home compounds. Hence *Calliandra calothyrsus* was their first choice as a tree species to establish a quick cover. Next they requested coffee, *Coffea arabica* (MEC selected variety) as a cash crop which would give them substantial income in the future. Since lands were considered to be degraded and a mixture of species thought to be appropriate, both *Calliandra calothyrsus* and *Acacia mangium* seedlings were supplied.

Plant Establishment

Initially 30 villagers participated in the project which covered approximately 20 acres. The villagers dug planting holes in the allotted block and did the planting. The spacing was 10' x 10' (approximately 1085 plants per hectare).

Maintenance and Care

A joint action programme was launched by the EC, with the able support of the participants. The individual blocks were nurtured and cared for by the villagers. A fire line was opened up covering the forestry blocks. The width of the fire line was 9.75 meters and it was 411.5 meters long. A total of Rs. 2006/- was paid to the EC since this was done jointly by the participants.

However, before the establishment of plants, an incentive scheme was proposed by the UMEFC Division. It prepared a document laying out the conditions of the programme, after consulting the EC. This was announced at an open meeting and consensus obtained. The document was circulated and signatures were taken. The officer-in-charge of the forestry programme of the UMEFC Division explained the incentive scheme to the villagers.

Incentive Scheme

1. 6 Months after planting Every surviving plant will be paid Rs.5
2. 12 Months after planting Every surviving plant will be paid Rs.5
3. 18 Months after planting Every surviving plant will be paid Rs.5

Thus a total of Rs.15 would have been paid for every surviving plant when it reached 18 months.

Utilization of Products

The villagers were given tree tenurial rights. Thus they have power to claim ownership of the trees. Also they have the responsibility to manage the trees and land resources. However, they did not have ownership of the land.

The main crop, coffee, is yet to bear its fruit (berry). However, the villagers collected seeds from *Calliandra spp.* trees and sold them to the UMEFC Division.

They also lopped the branches of these trees and used them as firewood. Thus they have direct access to the products.

Continuous Monitoring

At a discussion held at the village recently, another 20 villagers have shown an interest in joining this programme. Thus the EC has shown them the lands. The prospect of selling *Calliandra spp.* seed has attracted many towards the programme. A genuine interest has developed among the villagers and many are now aware of the direct and indirect benefits of tree planting.

3.2 Case Study 2 - Ethulgama - Medapathana

Introduction

The Ethulgama - Medapathana falls under the Patha Hewaheta Divisional Secretary. The village comes under the jurisdiction of Ethulgama Grama Niladari.

Ethulgama Medapathana is a denuded rocky area surrounded by the Medapathana Settlement and the Ethulgama village. A block of barren land belonging to the Ethulgama school and situated close to the Medapathana stream was released. This denuded rocky area is covered by mana grasses. Periodic burning of the grassland causes damage to the crops grown on the adjoining settlement. In addition, the degree of the slope accelerates soil erosion and the people settled below the road are constantly affected by displaced soil masses. "The People's Movement of Preventing Forest and Pathana Fires" of Hantane conceived the idea and mobilized the villagers into the tree planting activities.

Objectives

The Field Officer of the movement discussed the issues with the villagers and made them aware of the situation. An open meeting was held at the village school and the issues were discussed. The following objectives were identified.

1. To arrest the periodical burning
2. To replace the mana grasses by introducing useful tree species
3. To derive a substantial income from the seasonal crops, until the tree canopy covers the ground
4. To establish contour hedgerows to prevent soil erosion

Thus it was proposed and agreed to plant trees on the Medapathana reserve and maintain it. This would allow the villagers to keep watch against possible forest fires.

While caring and maintaining the plants, people are allowed to grow seasonal crops on these lands.

Implementation

The "People's Movement of Preventing Forest and Pathana Fires" identified the land for this project. It is approximately 8 acres in extent excluding the rocky area. The villagers participating in this project demarcated the blocks which they could plant with trees and cultivate seasonal crops. The Field Officer of the movement constantly monitored the progress of the activity.

The contribution of the Upper Mahaweli Environment and Forest Conservation Division was limited to providing technical assistance and planting material. To this effect UMEFC division Field Officers regularly visited the site and advised the

participants on various aspects such as contour marking, spacing and planting arrangements.

However, in addition, a group (including the villagers who participated in this activity), was taken on an exposure tour to UMEFC Division's demonstration farm at Doragala and UMWP assisted NLDB model farms at Mahaberiyatenna, to enhance their knowledge on organic agriculture, integrated farming and agroforestry systems.

The Field Officer of the movement played the role of catalyst and coordinator.

Species Selection

At the initial discussion held on October 1994, the villagers indicated the species they preferred. However, their request for some medicinal plants were not met at that time since those species were not available in the UMEFC nurseries.

The following species were provided as per their request. *Cassia spectabilis* (Kahakona), *Terminalia arjuna* (Kumbuk), *Alstonia macrophylla* (Hawarinuga), *Pterocarpus marsupium* (Gammalu), *Calliandra calothyrsus*, *Swietenia macrophylla* (Mahogany), *Semicarpus spp.* (Badulla), *Bambusa spp.* (Bamboo), *Pongamia pinnata* (Karanda), *Bauhinia racemosa* (Maïla), *Filicium decipiens* (Pihimbiya), *Syzygium jambos* (Jambu), *Citrus spp.* (Orange), *Psidium guajava* (Pera), *Nephelium spp.* (Rambutan), *Feronia limonia* (Divul).

Plant Establishment

The 8 acres were planted with trees and maintained by 8 villagers. The extent of land holding ranges from half to one and a half acres. The villagers did holing and planting in the allocated block of land using a spacing of 10' x 10' (approximately 1085 plants per hectare).

Maintenance and Care

The individual blocks were well maintained and cared for by the villagers since their seasonal crops were grown on these blocks. They preferred grasses as vegetative barriers on contours to check erosion. A few of them had cattle and were looking for improved grass species which UMEFC supplied from their demonstration farm at Pallekele.

Utilization

The villagers were given tree tenorial rights. Further, they were allowed to cultivate seasonal crops on the land. Thus they have derived substantial income from the seasonal crops. Also they cut the grass to feed their cattle. The tree species are yet to bear returns.

Continuous Monitoring

The "People's Movement of Preventing Forest and Pathana Fires" through their field officer monitor progress. The UMEFC Division's officials also inspect regularly and advise the villagers.

3.3 Observations on the Two Case Studies

In both of these cases the planning phase is over and the implementation phase is in progress. Also the resource utilization phase has commenced. Using the definitions of Pretty (1993) there is a high degree of active participation in Case I at every activity identified. Also in Case II, the trend is more towards the active side (Table 4).

Table 4 : Matrix for Assessment of the Degree of Participation
(Adopted from Pretty, 1993)

ACTIVITY TYPOLOGY	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	
1																			
2																			
3																			
4																			
5		*		*		*													*
6	*		*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7																			

KEY TO TYPOLOGY

1. Passive participation
2. Participation in information giving
3. Participation by consultation
4. Participation for material incentives
5. Functional participation
6. Interactive participation
7. Self mobilisation

KEY TO ACTIVITY

1. Problem identification
2. Solutions proposed/objectives defined
3. Identification of lands
4. Demarcation of lands
5. Species selection
6. Plant establishment
7. Maintenance and care
8. Utilization of products
9. Continuous monitoring

In Case I an organization from the village has emerged right from the inception. But such an organization was not seen in Case II. One possible reason may be that the group is small in number and they do not see the necessity for this. There is no hard and fast rule to state that an organization is required to manage the resources. Even without such a mechanism, people may form into groups to push forward their desired objectives as has been the practice in villages (in Sri Lanka) in the past.

In Case II, since the participants are deriving returns from their seasonal crops and banana their is hope for continuity. In Case I it is too early to predict since the main crop coffee is still not bearing. However, there is one villager who has earned nearly Rs.7,000 from selling his *Cathandra* seeds to the UMEFC Division. This is something which was not anticipated at the beginning of the programme and definitely would encourage and attract others to this programme.

4. AN APPROACH TO PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY

Participatory forestry development can be defined as a process by which people take an active and influential role in arriving at decisions that affect their lives in which forestry interventions are included. It is a difficult and long process which requires the stake holders' dedication and patience. The process enhances efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. It strengthens the locals by empowering them to negotiate with organizations. This participatory process would accommodate local knowledge, address perceived needs, bring officials under public scrutiny and hold them responsible for their activities.

As indicated in the ODAs Guide to aid Procedures , the process approach has the following characteristics.

- A) The outputs, immediate objective and overall objectives are not defined before the project but are revised and developed as the project proceeds.
- B) The local participants play key roles in the design, appraisal and implementation of the project.

Among the stake holders three groups can be recognized. They are the funding agency, implementing agency and the locals or the community. At the negotiating table, both the funding agency and the implementing agency would appear as being homogeneous, since they have predefined objectives, but the locals or the community would be heterogeneous leading to diversity in their objectives. Unless the diverse views and needs of the heterogeneous group are accommodated, attempts to obtain their participation will be futile. Hence, it is essential to differentiate the actors or the end users in terms of socio economic and cultural characteristics and in terms of gender. This should facilitate a more precise definition of problem situations and help establish priorities. Also, it would help to develop problem solving approaches relevant to specific situations.

There might be instances where the locals or the end users forward their objectives or their needs to the donors or the implementing agency. However, only a few cases would fall into this category. The majority would be ignorant and unenterprising. In such situations the development agencies (both GOs and NGOs) should take a leading role in identification and selection of such villages/areas, which are environmentally critical or could benefit from forestry components as possible interventions. It would not be an easy task for these agencies, unless they have competent, experienced, qualified personnel of varying disciplines who could work as a team during this participatory process. The process itself is lengthy and warrants the time and effort of a dedicated team.

In this participatory planning process the following steps are involved.

1. Identification/selection of villages/areas
2. Rapport building with the villagers
3. Informal inquiry and identifying social stars

4. Participatory problem analysis
5. Identification of solutions (objectives)
6. Prioritising objectives
7. Participatory development of work plan

Thus the practitioners of this process should be open minded and refrain from talking and teaching. Instead they should be very good listeners and learners. Further, instead of controlling, inducing and motivating, a healthier atmosphere oriented towards engaging, encouraging, enabling and empowering should be established. Such qualities of the facilitator would encourage a high degree of participation of the local people. This could be supplemented by presenting the core problem and the causes and effects of it, to the villagers. The donors, implementors or trainers should see the local villagers as actors, analysts and equal partners and not as clients, benefactors or recipients.

The key elements of this process approach, which is the newest alternative to the oldest blueprint approach can be summarised as follows:

- The key concept is participation
- The extension agent as facilitator
- The planning is flexible
- The technology development is a common effort
- Constant dialogue between insiders and outsiders

What has been described so far is the strategy of the extensionist in participatory forestry projects. The strategy has to be supplemented and supported by a necessary legal and institutional framework to address issues such as rights, claiming powers etc. The necessary policy formulations to adopt customary rules and formal legislation would enable recognition of the rights of participants. The policy formulations are also regularised to strengthen and recognize local level organizations and authority. Thus their claim-making powers are enhanced. A greater political commitment backed by budgetary provisions are vital ingredients for success.

5. THE NEED FOR PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY

The pressure on our natural forests and plantation forests has increased over the years. The forest cover which was 70% at the beginning of the century, had diminished to a low 20.3 by 1992. This has happened despite the amendments of the forest ordinance more than a dozen times and bringing in numerous regulatory measures to protect the forests.

The cost of maintenance and protection have also increased manifold. The Forest Department does not have the required number of personnel to protect and manage the forests vested with them. The prospects are rather gloomy with regard to injecting more personnel to the Forest Department. On the other hand forestry has always been given a lower priority compared to other spheres of development. Hence, the prospects of continuing donor support for forestry look rather bleak.

Forest management should expand its remit to include products from timber to other non-wood products. This would diversify the products and increase the returns per unit of land. Furthermore, villagers could be attracted towards forestry. The concept of timber production should give way to multiple use concepts.

Traditionally Sri Lankans were a forest dwelling community. They had a very good relationship with the forest. They protected it and utilized its products. They had norms of their own for protection and conservation. This affinity to forest was severed with the introduction of the Forest Ordinance. Villagers were taught to look differently. An essential source of resources was removed. The forests went up in flames. The streams dried up. The bird songs vanished. The humming of bees disappeared. Deserts were created. Alien species were brought in.

The time has come for a complete transformation - the villagers have to be trusted. Confidence in them is needed. They should be accommodated. Their participation is essential for the protection of forests in the future. This would build on indigenous knowledge and skills and better mutual understanding and respect would facilitate a two way learning process. It would also support activities according to local needs and aspirations, help them be accountable and instill the concept of sustainability.

6. CONCLUSIONS

It could be concluded that the case studies indicate two mechanisms which are in operation at the moment. It may not be possible to plant these elsewhere. Each case needs specific attention before mechanisms to increase the degree of participation are worked out.

Using Pretty's (1993) definition of participation, it has to be admitted that most of the forestry projects this country has embarked upon cannot be called participatory forestry projects. Unless the outsiders acknowledge the know-how, skills and ability of the insiders it is very difficult to increase the degree of participation. In this respect most of the state and non-government organizations in Sri Lanka have to reorient their staff. This is easier said than done. Reorientation towards the participatory approach would definitely take some time. This gestation period would shorten only if those in authority are frank enough and willing to accept this transformation.

In summing up, the following is recommended:

1. Analyze each case separately before mechanisms are worked out to increase the degree of participation.
2. Acknowledge the know-how and ability of the insiders when planning projects.
3. Reorient forestry sector personnel towards a participatory approach.

Finally, a quote from Dr. Theodore Panayotou's (Harvard University) keynote address to the NAREPP/IRD conference on the role of environmental economics in national development held on 14th May 1992, in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Ecological and environmental resources are almost by definition public goods which cannot and perhaps should not be enclosed and become the property of

individuals. But this should not be construed to mean that they should be open-access resources, 'everybody's and nobody's property'. Nor should it be presumed that ecological and environmental resources being by default state property, would be managed and conserved by the state.

The poor management record of the state and of state enterprises over less nebulous public property should be sufficient to dispel such illusions. The predicament of tropical forest resources is a case in point. Historically forest resources owned by individuals and communities, who not only enforced their ownership over the limited area they claimed, but also develop sophisticated systems of forest management, which today, with hindsight, we proclaim sustainable. In the last 50 years, following independence, most governments have unilaterally and without regard for customary or traditional rights of access, use and management, declared state property over the forest resources within their domain. While this was done in the name of national development and forest management for the public good, the results have been disastrous."

There is truth in Dr. Panayotou's remarks when one looks at the historical evolution of forest management practices and state policies in Sri Lanka, even though he was unearthing a global phenomenon.

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