



The World Bank's Common Property Resource Management Network

The World Bank's CPRNet Newsletter

Number 4, February 1999

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In this issue

Read about. New members of the CPRNet Adv. Committee, an upcoming CPRNet Seminar on 4 March, reports on workshops on human rights and on alternative means of access to land for the poor, an conference on property rights in fisheries, a new World Bank online publication, land reform in Bangladesh, the Urban Land Ceiling Act in India, the World Bank's new Comprehensive Development Framework, customary law and gender and design of projects, UNESCO summit on social equity goals and the rise of the environmental movement in India. Sources and contact information (URL and email) are given.

The correct name of the contact person for the FAO publication reviewed in Newsletter no 3 (January 1999) is Jon Lindsay, and the correct email is <Jon.Lindsay@fao.org>. Mea Culpa!

Lars T Soeftestad, Editor – LSoeftestad@worldbank.org

Membership and organizational issues

New members. Paul Chatterton (Cultural Ecology; Clovelly, Australia), Mersie Ejigu (Partnership for Environmental Sustainability in Africa; Kampala, Uganda & Washington DC, USA), M Saliem Fakir (IUCN-South Africa; Pretoria, South Africa), Janardan Khatri-Chhetri (Agricultural Projects Services Centre; Kathmandu, Nepal), Kinuthia Macharia (World Bank; Washington DC, USA), and Betsy A McGean (The Nature Conservancy; Arlington, Virginia, USA).

Advisory committee. Newsletter no 3 (January 1999) presented the Advisory Committee and its function, as well as a first batch of members. Here is a second batch of members (a complete list of members will appear in the next issue): Kirsten Ewers (Dept. of Natural Resources Management, Ramboll; Virum, Denmark), Paul A Francis (Africa Region, World Bank; on secondment with University of Manchester in Manchester, UK), Peter M Hansen (Resident Mission in Paraguay, World Bank; Asuncion, Paraguay), Ruth Meinzen-Dick (International Food Policy Research Institute; Washington DC, USA), Peter Riggs (Rockefeller Brothers Fund; New York, USA), and Buenafe U Solomon (Foundation for the Philippine Environment; Manila, Philippines).

Register of members. An updated Register of Members will be sent out in March. There are now more than 300 members. Approximately half the members are not World Bank staff, and they live in more than 40 countries in all continents.

Networking

Request for information about other groups or networks. CPRNet is interested in contributing to promoting and increasing global networking on issues related to CPRs and sustainable management of natural resources. Towards this I would appreciate receiving information about other groups or networks with a global, regional, and/or local focus, which might be interested in contact with, partnership with and/or become members of CPRNet.

Contact: Lars T Soeftestad – LSoeftestad@worldbank.org

Poverty and common property resources. Tony Beck, a Research Associate with Institute of Asian Research, University of British Colombia in Vancouver, Canada, is co-authoring a paper that will focus on CPRs and the poor in India and West Africa. He would appreciate hearing about any studies that address the connection between CPRs and poverty. I know that some of

you have been, or are, working on this. He would appreciate receiving references to such reports and published works as soon as possible.

Contact: Tony Beck – TBeck@interchange.ubc.ca

Changemakers web site on social entrepreneurship. Changemakers is an initiative of *Ashoka - Innovators for the Public* (a global non-profit organization) that focuses on the rapidly growing world of social entrepreneurship. Its mission is to provide inspiration, resources, and opportunities for those interested in social change throughout the world, and to empower visitors to its web site to participate in social change activities.

According to Changemakers, the major problem faced by social entrepreneurs is the lack of access to current relevant practices beyond their own area of expertise. Innovative leaders rarely have the time or incentive to document each stage of an unfolding idea and the principles that lead to success. Because of the lack of documentation, both the originators and others are unable to learn from, or feed into, new approaches in a timely fashion. Recording how these elements develop, analyzing what makes projects work across countries and subject matter areas and making that report available quickly to social change practitioners, funders and the media – is itself a vital service. Changemakers.net aims to provide that service.

The March 1999 edition of the Changemakers Journal is on traditional lands rights.

Contact: webmaster@changemakers.net

URLs: <http://www.changemakers.net>; <http://www.ashoka.org>

Conferences, seminars and workshops

Alternative means of access to land for the rural poor. Seminar by Alain de Janvry, Agricultural & Resources Economics, University of California at Berkeley, organized by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Washington DC, 30 October 1998.

The presentation discussed alternative means of access to land for the rural poor. These include inheritance, individualization of common property resources, the break up of collective farms, occupation and titling, land sales and land rental markets, and land reform programs. The presentation made the case that land rental markets with idiosyncratic contracts can be a very effective instrument. However, these markets have all too often been suppressed, and assistance to the design and enforcement of optimum rental contracts is usually lagging. Yet, this approach tends to be more effective than land sales markets which are typically hostile to the poor, and land reform programs that are in general excessively expensive to provide sufficient access to land for the rural poor.

[Ed. comment: Two relevant papers co-authored by Alain de Janvry can be requested from IADB. Include complete postal address.]

Contact: Alain de Janvry – Alain@are.berkeley.edu

Contact (for copies of papers): povunit@iadb

Human rights, A legal perspective. A seminar on this topic took place at the World Bank in Washington DC, USA, 22 February 1998. The objective of the seminar was to promote an understanding of the human rights' dimension of economic development for lawyers of the World Bank, and other staff of the World Bank and international financial institutions interested in the topic.

James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, made opening remarks, in which he traced the gradual evolution of the World Bank's mandate of addressing economic development towards a situation where a broader array of issues are increasingly accepted as being connected with economic development. He hoped that human rights, in due course, would be understood in this way.

To further underline this argument the overall epigram for the seminar was the following quote from James D. Wolfensohn's recent internal document "Comprehensive development framework": "Without the protection of human and property rights, and a comprehensive framework of laws, no equitable development is possible" (this argument is also found, in a different form, in his address to the Board of Governors at the 1998 Annual Meetings).

Contact: Teresa Genta-Fons – TGentaFons@worldbank.org

CPRNet seminar: Dynamics and impacts of land-use in Eastern Africa. Date: Thursday, 4 March; Time: 12:00 - 2:00 P.M.; Venue: 701 18 Street NW [J-building], Room J6-044, Washington DC.

Speakers and titles: (1) Dr. Helen Gichohi (African Conservation Center) – “Land-use change: Lack of policy support and its impact on natural resource management”, (2) Dr. Robin Reid (International Livestock Research Institute) – “A research tool to bring the best science to policy makers”, and (3) Dr. Joseph M Maitama (National Museum of Kenya) – Linking the best scientists and policy makers in East Africa to address land-use change issues.

Abstract: Several members of LUCID, a newly established interdisciplinary network of scientists studying the dynamics of land-use change in East Africa will give a lunchtime seminar on a range of topics pertinent to rural development and natural resource management. The speakers will discuss the findings of their on-going field research for more than ten years in Ethiopia and Kenya. These studies combine case studies and modeling skills to generalize the outcomes of interactions between biophysical and socio-economic processes across broader scales and over the longer term. Other members of LUCID who will be in attendance include: Professor Len Berry (University of Florida, Gainesville); Ms. Edna Wangui (PhD candidate, Michigan State University); Dr. Jenny Olson (World Wildlife Fund-USA), and Professor David Campbell (Michigan State University).

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Sponsors: Land Policy and Administration Thematic Group, Drylands Thematic Group, Common Property Resource Management Network (CPRNet), GEF and the Rural Development Family - Africa Region.

Contact: Shem E Migot-Adholla – SMigotAdholla@worldbank.org

Asia-Pacific region: Symposium on society and resource management. An International Symposium on Society and Resource Management (ISSRM) Symposium on “Application of Social Science to Resource Management in Asia-Pacific Region” will be in Brisbane, Australia, 7-10 July 1999. Themes include: Social and environmental assessment; Community participation in resource management; Environmental interpretation; Social science of parks and protected areas; Human-wildlife interactions; Integrated resource management; Watershed management and soil conservation; and Indigenous land and resource management.

The ISSRM is an interdisciplinary forum dedicated to the study of sustainable relationships between society and natural resources. There are common connections in the ways people and their society approach resource issues such as fisheries, forestry, agriculture, mining, wildlife, tourism, recreation and protected area management. However, more often than not, these issues have been discussed within disciplinary professional associations. Yet, to ensure effective long-term solutions to resource management problems, private and public land/resource managers must become as conversant with issues across these disciplinary boundaries as they are with their own resource management specialty. ISSRM was created to provide an interdisciplinary forum where professionals and practitioners alike could gather together in one place and explore a range of resource issues, their similarities and differences. ISSRM recognizes the importance of bringing together disciplines in the crucial task of integrating social, cultural, economic and environmental resource management objectives.

Contact: Sally Brown – Sally.Brown@uq.net.au
URL: <http://www.geosp.uq.edu.au/issrm99>

FishRights99 conference. Entitled “Use of Property Rights in Fisheries Management. Experiences & Implications of Rights-based Management Regimes for Sustainable Fisheries,” this conference will take place in Fremantle, Western Australia, 11-19 November 1999. The organizers are Fisheries Western Australia in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Dates: (1) Mini-course on rights-based fisheries management regimes (11-12 November), (2) Core conference (15-17 November), and (3) Concurrent themed workshop sessions (18-19 November). The following is taken from the “First Announcement and Call for Cases”:

Overview and objectives. World fisheries governance is rapidly evolving in response to modern imperatives both for improved environmental and natural resource management and for economic efficiency in an increasingly global economy. In re-examining the relationship between man and fishery resources, new forms of relations, more conducive to sustainability, are being conceived and tested.

Key questions we must ask are: Who should have access to the resources? What options are there for the form and the price of access rights? These difficult questions have very fundamental social, economic, and political implications – and it is unlikely that a unique solution would fit all situations. Thus it is vital to exchange information on these situations, on new fisheries governance and rights approaches, and on the difficulties and outcomes of their implementation.

This conference intends to contribute to this exchange by exploring the strategic, political, and operational issues of different forms of rights-based fisheries management worldwide.

Who should attend, and why? The conference should be of interest to all those concerned with improving the governance of fisheries at national, regional and global levels, whether in governments, fishery management agencies, the private sector or the civil society.

The mini-course will provide participants with a strong foundation about the variety of rights-based regimes. The core conference will offer first-hand information about various experiences. The workshops will provide the venues for sharing specific areas of common interest, including on: management of access rights, legal issues, administrative issues, institutional issues, and politic/community issues.

[Ed. comment: I would be interested in helping coordinate proposals for joint panel sessions for the core conference and for workshop sessions for the concurrent themed workshop sessions.]

Contact: petrconf@iinet.net.au
URL: <http://www.fishrights99.conf.au>

Tools

World Bank TODAY, The World Bank's daily online newspaper. 'World Bank TODAY' has gone live on the World Bank's external web site. Web users are now able to tap into selected stories posted on the new World Bank TODAY web site, which aims to carve an online niche as the World Bank's daily online news magazine. *World Bank TODAY* hopes to become an authoritative news source for the international development community – a lively and insightful look at what's happening at the World Bank and in the broader development arena.

World Bank TODAY feature stories will offer hotlinks to useful information on the World Bank's many external web pages, as well as to press releases, project summaries, and the media calendar. Another World Bank publication, *Week in Review*, will be available as a weekly email to external subscribers on request in English, French and Spanish.

Contact: Andrew Kircher (World Bank TODAY) – AKirchen@worldbank.org
Joelle Dehasse (*Week in Review*) – JDehasse@worldbank.org
URL (World Bank TODAY): <http://www.worldbank.org/html/today>

Information about conferences and events. How to find training events of conferences that address issues regarding rights to land or natural resources, and traditional or modern practices of managing natural resources? A good place to start is the ONE WORLD site. One World is a community of over 350 leading global justice organizations. The Diary section on this site contains details of meetings, events and conferences around the world.

Source: www.oneworld.org/index.html

News

Bangladesh: Asian Development Bank grant for land adm. reform. Asian Development Bank (ADB) has provided a 880,000 US dollars technical assistance grant to Bangladesh for land administration reform, reports UNB. The assistance came under an agreement signed between the Government of Bangladesh and ADB on November 8, according to an ADB press release.

It said the assistance would be utilized to analyze the existing legal and institutional arrangements and select a feasible combination of reforms to improve the efficiency of Bangladesh's land administration system. Other objectives include conducting a pilot study of

the use of aerial photogrammetry, preparing a justified investment programme to improve land administration system for implementation over five years. It will integrate technological innovations with legal and institutional reforms and stimulate high-level dialogue within the government to implement the formulated investment programme and resolve key policy issues of land administration.

The existing system of land administration, which dates from the British and Mogul empires, is complex and unable to respond adequately to the needs of modern, densely populated nation. It said an estimated 80 million land parcels are rapidly fragmenting due to transfer and inheritance. The current cumbersome land administration system needs to be replaced by simplified; transparent, and efficient land administration procedures that merit public confidence.

ADB said such a reformed land administration scheme would eventually lead to a reduction of land related litigation, facilitating improved property valuation and enhancing land tax revenue generation. It will also lower the taxation rates for land transfer and improve the efficiency of the functioning of the property markets by eliminating current distortion due to the uncertainties of land ownership. A major benefit to land owner will be the ability to use land as collateral to obtain bank financing to improve the productivity of land and quality of the housing stock. Currently, commercial banks do not accept land as collateral for loans due to uncertainties of ownership.

Source: Financial Express, 18 November 1998

India: Immediate impact unlikely on real estate. The repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling Act is not expected to have any immediate impact on real estate market as experts feel that the depressed property market may lead owners of the surplus land to hold on till the market improves.

With the scrapping of the Act as much as 2 lakh hectares of vacant land may now become available as this had remained frozen and been out of the market for over two decades on the ground that it was over and above the ceilings that had been prescribed under the Act. Consequently, the sudden availability of this additional land could lead to a further depression in land and property prices and this may act as a deterrent for the immediate sale of the surplus land.

A contra view, however, is that owners of surplus land, having faced the harassment that came with the enactment of the Urban Land Ceiling Act in 1976, would want to take the first opportunity to convert their holding into liquid assets. The expectation is that given the traumatic experience they had gone through during the past 22 years, the owners would be more than willing to sell their land, if not develop it themselves.

But here too, the experts feel that it would take some time before the land owners are convinced about Parliamentary sanction to this piece of legislation since only an Ordinance has been promulgated in this respect. "Till the Government gets the repeal of the Act through Parliament, land owners are not likely to be induced to move in this matter. Consequently, it may take some six to eight months before we see any tangible action in this respect," a leading property developer told The Hindu.

Another point emphasized by almost all connected with the real estate business is that the repeal of the Act alone would not be adequate to bring the surplus land into the market. Since the ownership and transactions in land and property is governed by a host of legislative 'hindrances' like high stamp duties and improper rental laws, the Government would also have to simplify them and make them attractive.

In this regard, the States' attitude would have a major bearing, as the Ordinance repealing the Act only means that the Centre has now given back to the States the power to legislate on urban land. If they desire, they could enact similar legislation for the urban centres under their control. But, the expectation is that they would rather come up with law that facilitates freer flow of land, in the light of the enormity of the housing shortage in every part of the country.

The rate of flow of land into the market and the consequent impact on the land prices would also depend upon factors, such as the demand-supply situation, though currently it is considered by keen watchers of the real estate market to be favorable for a greater and faster flow of land

into the market particularly in States like Maharashtra, where large tracts of vacant land remained locked in litigation relating to the various provisions of the Act. It thus remains to be seen how far the repeal of the Act would help in reaching the aim of increased land availability and consequently reduced land prices.

At the time of the enactment of the Act also, the main objective had been to ensure better availability of land, by preventing its concentration in the hands of a few persons, and to bring about its equitable distribution. At the implementation stage, however, the Act led to further restrictions in the supply of land to the market, as it was highly expropriatory in nature and did not provide for a mechanism to force the release of vacant land into the market through appropriate fiscal measures.

With the result, of the 2.2 lakh hectares of land that was estimated to be above the ceiling limits across the country, 90 per cent has remained locked up in litigations relating to some provision or the other of the Act.

Even the provision in the Act to exempt vacant land, in case the owner was genuinely interested in using the land for development, was of no use as too much discretionary powers were vested in the State Governments and the owners had to cross a large number of hurdles in the form of clearances and approvals. Over the years, several attempts had been made to see whether the legislation could be amended to correct the problems. But, they all came to naught as no consensus could be achieved since different States had different perceptions on the issue.

Source: The Hindu, 13 January 1999

World Bank: Comprehensive Development Framework. In October 1998, James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, outlined his vision for a comprehensive development strategy in a speech entitled *The Other Crisis*.

In January 1999 he followed this up with a document entitled “A proposal for a Comprehensive Development Framework” – A Discussion Draft. It draws upon ideas and work from across the development community. If applied, it would represent a radically different way for the World Bank to fulfill its development mandate. The framework focuses on a holistic approach to development, applied over a 10-15 year time frame, with the country in the driver’s seat and with strong partnerships among donors, civil society and the private sector. The proposal also seeks to put the social, structural and human aspects of development on a par with the more traditional macroeconomic analysis of countries.

The purpose of the paper is to provoke discussion and action. The World Bank’s partners are invited to give their input and guidance on this concept and its operational feasibility in the course of the coming eighteen months. Towards this a special web site has been established that, over the coming weeks and months, will be populated with documents, links, tools and resources for public debate. A public electronic discussion forum will be organized.

[Ed. comment: This discussion forum would be an exciting opportunity for *CPRNet* members to present key arguments relating to CPRs, including institutions, culture, social and environmental sustainability, partnerships and co-management. See also the following story.]

Contact: Marianne Haug – cdf@worldbank.org
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The World Bank’s holistic approach. One of the most important lessons to spring from the emerging market crises of the past two years is that there is more to life than macroeconomics. Sound monetary and fiscal policies may be vital to economic success, but good government, robust financial systems and effective social provision matters too – a holistic approach to promoting development.

World Bank President James Wolfensohn flagged this issue last autumn. “We have learned that there is a need for balance,” Wolfensohn is quoted as saying “We must take the financial, institutional and social together.”

Noble sentiments, which Wolfensohn has now followed up by circulating plans for a “comprehensive development framework” within the World Bank. He sees the development framework for a country as a balance sheet with two sides.

On the left is the familiar macroeconomic presentation, including the IMF’s Article IV health checks, plus national income accounts, balance of payments data, and other economic analyses.

“There is, however, a clear need for a second side which reflects more adequately an analytical framework that presents the structural, social and human aspects,” Wolfensohn is quoted as saying. This would help to ensure that these issues are given equal status to the macroeconomic one.

It is conventional wisdom now that development effort should be measured by outputs rather than inputs, but the holistic approach moves a step further: to outcomes. By looking at the development challenge as a whole, it will make it easier to identify policy problems that may be tougher to address in the short term but which if solved will break a logjam and allow success in other areas. If the new framework can help to achieve this, it will have been an experiment well worth trying.

[Ed. comment: See the previous story.]

Source: Financial Times (UK edition), 8 February 1999

Practices and projects

Customary law, gender and the design of development projects. On 14 January 1999, a seminar on “Customary Law, Gender and the Design of Development Projects” was organized with Robert Hunt, Professor of Anthropology at Brandeis University. The following summary of the seminar was prepared by J Michael Bamberger in the Gender Division in the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction & Economic Management Network.

Understanding benefit streams. A useful way to assess the gender impacts of development projects is to understand the complex access of different social groups to benefit streams from agriculture and other forms of exploitation of natural resources.

Example: In Senegal men traditionally are the fishermen. The fish are then bought by women who are responsible for the processing and marketing. When refrigeration units were introduced, the fish were collected directly from the boats by wholesalers, and women were cut out of the cycle.

Example: In Mexico, the construction of a dam involved cutting down *chico zapote* [which do not begin to produce fruit for 50 years and then continue to do so for 100 years] and mango trees [which do not start to produce fruit for 25 years]. In these communities trees are owned separately from the land on which they grow, and as many as 100 people may share benefits in the fruit from a particular orchard. The dam construction company initially proposed compensating farmers for the value of one year’s fruit - which resulted in the company being driven out of the community by a hail of stones!

Women’s access to benefit streams derives from two sources:

- Individually through employment. In many cultures wage-earning women will be expected to provision their children, and
- Communally through membership in a household. The rules for entry and exit from households are very complex (and vital to women). For example, Marty Chen has shown that young widows in India, including those with young children, may be extruded from the household.

It is also important to study the morality and rules for pooling of resources.

Example: Inuit households must have a male who is responsible for hunting and a female who is responsible for skinning animals and for overseeing direct distribution to the network of eligible recipients.

There are a number of Western assumptions about production and distribution of benefits that do not hold true in many developing countries. For example:

- People who work have a single vocation. This is not true in most developing countries,
- Males are the only cash earners of importance. Also generally not true,
- Income from males reaches all household members. Again not true, and
- Family income and resources are pooled. Very rarely true.

Example: In areas of Mexico in which irrigation had been implemented, it was possible to find very detailed information over a period of 30 years on the output of every irrigated plot; but it was not possible to obtain any information on total household income. Professor Hunt observed that in the irrigated areas it was always possible to observe a wide range of off-farm

activities (trucking, a variety of small businesses, food processing etc.); but the considerable income from these sources was not studied, documented or taken into consideration in overall project design.

It is important to study the rules governing pooling of production as well as consumption. Gambia was cited as an interesting example of gender division of labor and the rules governing production pooling.

The management of irrigation schemes illustrates the very complex nature of the management and use of scarce resources. In every country in the world irrigation projects are managed by men. The reason is that water is scarce and each household must fight to negotiate and then protect its allocation. In many cases this involves physical conflict.

Example: A study in Karnataka, India, identified a wide range of groups involved in the contested control of water. Groups included: farmers, engineers, state legislators (many of whom live in the irrigated areas), construction companies and water guards. The management of water was governed by a complex set of formal rules - none of which were ever followed. The engineers were not allowed to patrol the plots to supervise water distribution, and women lay down in the roads at night to prevent the engineers from entering the area while the allocation of water was being negotiated through the informal rules. Efforts to set up effective water users organizations never worked, but at the same time the rules of the informal organizational structures were strictly adhered to.

Males are highly visible in water management, but the important functions of women are harder to observe. They tend to be responsible for transporting water, harvesting and often food processing and marketing. As in the case of the previously cited Inuit hunting community, a male member is essential for a household to be able to operate an irrigated plot. There are complex benefit streams deriving from the plots and it is again essential to understand the rules governing distribution. However, very few families can make a living purely from their irrigated fields and it is necessary to understand the complex structure of household income.

Lessons for the design of projects. It is important to understand the partition of benefit streams before the start of the project and to understand the participation of benefit streams for women as individual wage earners and as household members. An assessment should then be made of how these benefit streams are likely to be affected by the project.

Professor Hunt felt that in most cases it will be possible to obtain a cost-effective estimate of these benefit streams through the use of rapid assessment methods. In a typical project it should be possible, using a woman familiar with farming in a particular region to obtain information on the rules governing access to, and the distribution of benefits in a period of about four weeks. Another four weeks should be sufficient to monitor the changes produced in these benefit streams as the project evolves. During the discussion, several speakers felt that the estimated eight weeks would be insufficient to conduct these assessments (even though they agreed that rapid assessment methods could be used).

It was suggested that it would be useful to document good practice in the use of rapid assessments to provide guidelines on how to do the studies and also how long they are likely to take.

It is very difficult to predict what the future will bring and consequently it is important to build in effective monitoring indicators, which will provide rapid feedback on any unexpected outcomes, or problems which need rapid actions to correct. There is a need for a steady flow of information on benefit streams accessible to women and other vulnerable groups.

In order to respond to the question "Does the project work?" it is necessary to continue studies over a much longer period than is normally done by the World Bank. The World Bank has also not invested in the kinds of capacity building required to ensure the availability of local monitoring capacity.

In most situations, giving compensation for loss of trees or other natural resources is usually not enough. The example of the Mexican dam construction was cited in which the cutting down of fruit trees cut off an expected 100-year stream of benefits. Project environments are also very dynamic so that it is difficult to forecast the long-term impacts on benefits.

The role of customary law. Professor Hunt suggested that in many situations statutory and customary law may have much less impact than local customs. One of the participants cautioned

that we should not assume that customary law is always beneficial to women. In many societies customary law tends to restrict women's economic opportunities and access to productive resources.

The commercialization of water. A participant asked if the commercialization of water is likely to be an effective way to increase women's access to water. Professor Hunt felt that water markets tend to have negative effects on vulnerable groups, including women. Commercialization tends to move control of water management from women to men. Men control cash, and also have more geographical mobility, which makes it easier for them to buy and sell water. Local irrigation organizations tend to be a more effective way to protect women's access to water.

Contact: Robert Hunt – Hunt@brandeis.edu & J Michael Bamberger – JBamberger@worldbank.org

Literature

Buck, Susan J. 1998. *The global commons. An introduction*. Washington DC: Island Press.

Goldman, Michael, ed. 1998. *Privatizing nature. Political struggles for the global commons*. London: Pluto Press.

Review: The concept of "the commons" as a device for controlling forests, land, rivers and natural resources first entered the political realm during the enclosure movement in pre-industrial Britain. As we approach the twenty-first century, new forms of enclosures and notions of private property are emerging – including water rights, biodiversity, gene pools of plants and humans, and multinational corporations' demands for free access to land for investment and exploitation; and the concept is beginning to be applied to areas like oceans and fisheries, Antarctica, outer space and the atmosphere.

Buck considers the unique physical, legal, management and policy problems associated with some of these areas. It is a clear and useful introduction to this emerging issue that spans international relations, international law, and environmental law and policy. Goldman's volume considers slightly different global commons, and focuses on the political aspects, emphasizing how global commons today provides a central metaphor for ecological politics. The contributors to this volume examines the reasons behind the political resurgence of the commons, and the widespread struggle to transform existing nature-society relations into ones that are non-exploitative, socially just, and ecologically healthy. The two volumes complement each other.

Stories

UNESCO: Upcoming summit to pursue social equity goals. UNESCO needs a programme that will protect and promote indigenous knowledge systems in science in the new millennium, scientists and scholars from 10 UNESCO member countries recommended at a conference in this Indian city.

Science in this century, they said at a meeting organized ahead of the UNESCO World Conference on Science, has not addressed the problems of the underprivileged in Asia, Africa and South America. Instead there are two worlds: the industrialized North and the impoverished South, speaker after speaker from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and other countries said last week in Bangalore. According to them, most scientific research this century has been monopolized by large private concerns like pharmaceutical giants that intensively tapped natural resources from developing countries rich in biological and natural wealth.

Indigenous knowledge systems that had for centuries used these resources in local systems are now losing out to scientific industry. The issue of intellectual property rights in a global economy is now a challenge confronting science, they reminded. The 186-member UNESCO, they said, must establish an international fund for conservation and promotion of these non-formal knowledge systems, particularly with strengthening the role of women in this process. The suggestions from the 49 participants were incorporated in the Bangalore Communiqué that will be assimilated in the Draft Declaration of UNESCO's upcoming World Conference on Science scheduled to be held in Bucharest in July.

The Bangalore conference on 'Science and Society' was the last of the preparatory meetings organized by UNESCO. Earlier meetings were held in Canada, France and Australia last year.

Dr. Ali Kazancigil, executive secretary of UNESCO's Social Sciences, Research and Policy at its headquarters in Paris, believed the Bangalore symposium to be of special importance as it represented perspectives from developing countries. The draft now recognizes the need for addressing the present inequities in science due to globalization. A global economy has put pressures on both natural resources and intellectual property regimes that have exacerbated rather than reduced inequalities. When asked if he felt that UNESCO's directives for social change through science would be implemented, Dr. Kazancigil said UNESCO can only bear upon the world community to follow certain policies, not pressure it to make laws in this regard. UNESCO's directives, he reminded, have however been used as a moral yardstick by the international community in the last 50 years of its existence.

Dr. Kazancigil was optimistic that UNESCO could now also bear upon its member states to follow a new social contract in science in the next millennium. Professor Madhav Gadgil of the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore cited the case of the Soliga tribe of south India whose knowledge of the *Phyllanthus emblica*, an indigenous tree with many known benefits, has proved to be far superior to its scientific documentation. Yet the Soligas knowledge was not recognized by formal science. Professor Gadgil said, "Science must develop a new contract of making such people partners in managing and monitoring nature."

Indian expert Dr. Smitu Kothari, member of IUCN's Ethics Committee and visiting Professor at Cornell University, USA, said instances of India's successful local community initiatives of ecological restoration needs to be recognized by national and international scientific and government institutions. He gave the example of 'Timbuctoo', a 32-acre area that is now a successful story of community effort for development in Andhra Pradesh, India. In eight years, Timbuctoo's initiatives of ecological regeneration has raised the water table, regenerated 250 species of plants without active planting measures and the state's government has now given the group 2,000 acres for similar regeneration efforts. Similar grassroots initiatives are also now a method of alternative technology in irrigation, power and social forestry schemes in the Himalayan kingdom Nepal, its scientists said.

In Sri Lanka, its largest NGO, the Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadhana Sangamaya, has pioneered the ethic of community effort through the traditional Buddhist philosophy of non-violence that has allowed all communities to participate. In fact local communities are "now conserving for public good at personal cost", said Indian agriculture scientist and UNESCO EcoTechnology Chair, M S Swaminathan. Studies conducted in India by the Foundation he heads, has numerous cases of village people, mainly women, who have perfectly preserved seeds that have indigenous genes. They rely on oral tradition to hand down their skills. Their rights to this knowledge are now threatened by globalization that has allowed science the access to gene research. Developing countries, including India, have been slow in drawing up their rights in preserving indigenous knowledge, he said.

Source: Inter Press Service, 5 February 1999

India: The meek fight for their inheritance. More than 50 years after India's struggle for independence ended in victory, another resistance struggle is being waged. Rural India is home to one of the largest, most dynamic and vocal environmental movements in the world.

Subsistence farmers, traditional fisher folk, tribal peoples (Adivasis), 'untouchables' (Dalits), sweatshop workers, women's groups and ordinary villagers are all vociferously opposing what new coalitions of environmental and social movements are calling the 'recolonisation' by global corporations and international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In many important protests and actions these "coalitions of the dispossessed" have deeply embarrassed state and national governments and made it difficult for transnational corporations to operate in the country. For all India's rapid modernization and growing middle classes, 60-70 per cent of the population, or more than 600 million people, are desperately poor and depend directly on the environment for survival. Environmentalism, they say, is not so much a luxury, as in the West, but a necessity.

"It is the life resource for the two-thirds majority of our population whose subsistence directly depends on the water, the forests and the land. It is about justice," says Thomas Kocherry, a leader of the National Fish Workers' Forum. The new coalitions have mostly emerged since 1992, when India launched its economic liberalization regime in the name of 'development' and 'globalization'. Activists argue that structural adjustment and neo-liberal reform have created wealth for a small elite, but deepened poverty for the vast majority and led to a rapid increase in the rate of destruction of natural resources. A 1997 Gallup poll suggested that two out of three Indians believe their standard of living has fallen or stagnated after five years of economic reform. Large corporations, welcomed into the country by a government keen for foreign investment, have faced extraordinary levels of community resistance and "Quit India" style campaigning. From the peasant farmers who gathered in huge numbers outside the Karnataka state government offices and laughed all day at their policies, to villagers who swore to drown if their river was dammed, to the fishing unions' strike that involved mass fasting and harbour blockades against industrial over fishing, the protest tactics are as diverse as the movement itself.

Among the largest of the coalitions are the National Alliance of Peoples' Movements (NAPM), formed from 200 grassroots organizations in 1993, and the Joint Forum of Indian People Against Globalisation (Jafip), formed in May 1998 by 55 member groups of farm and labourers' unions.

Their constituencies number millions and come from a whole range of backgrounds. Mostly inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, they are dedicated to non-violent civil disobedience and call for a development based on self-reliance and village-level democracy. As a result of the movement, illiterate peasant farmers in some regions are more likely to have heard of the WTO than the average Briton. Hundreds of thousands of farmers, labourers, tribal people and industrial workers from all over India gathered last year at a Jafip conference in Hyderabad, demanding that India withdraw from the WTO. The protest was sparked partly by 450 suicides of peasant farmers in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, which Jafip says were the result of WTO policies such as the removal of tariffs on edible oils.

The state police have responded harshly to the protests. Last month the charismatic 'Alternative Nobel Prize' winner, Medha Patkar, and 300 other members of the NAPM were arrested at Multai in Madhya Pradesh. They were calling for a peasant rights day to commemorate the 24 farmers killed by police at a peaceful protest in the city. Patkar says: "So-called modern technology has [created] dependency on pesticides and fertilisers, and on the market. They can't stand up against the corporate sector. Protests by farmers make the politicians agitated because, if the farmers rise up, that is 70 per cent of India's population."

Environmentalism Vandana Shiva has led the intellectual barrage against the patenting of traditional Indian seeds and plants by foreign corporations. "Patents on seeds would destroy 75 per cent of Indian livelihoods linked to the land and the free availability of and access to biodiversity," she says.

Farmers from all over India are now forming collective seed banks as a form of non co-operation with intellectual property rights regimes. Despite pressure on the Indian government from the WTO, protests against patents on seed and indigenous knowledge have twice prevented the Patent Amendment Act from being passed into law. The introduction of biotechnology has also led to huge protests. Karnataka state farmers, among others, burned fields planted with genetically modified crops during the "Cremate Monsanto" action last November.

Women are often at the forefront of the direct action protests, especially against the Narmada valley development project, which proposed to build 30 large, 135 medium and 3,000 small dams on the Narmada river and its tributaries. The latest dam protest is against the privately financed Maheshwar dam, which would submerge some 2,500 acres of land, displacing 2,200 families. Construction has been interrupted several times after thousands of villagers, the majority of them women, invaded the site.

One village woman who took part in the occupation said: "The government officials say we are backward people, uneducated people, but it is because of us, the backward and uneducated

women, that this country works.” The women have faced beatings, arrests and gang rape by police.

People’s movements in India have all documented serious cases of state repression. In a 1997 report Amnesty International said the restructuring of the global economy meant that the role of the state was undergoing a fundamental transformation “in which rights of people are frequently given less weight in public policy than the interests of capital”.

The report was based on the suppression of Indian protests against the Enron corporation’s plan to build India’s largest power plant in the western state of Maharashtra. The power it generates will cost three times as much as local electricity, and Enron is expected to have a profit margin of 37 percent.

Indian activists realize that communities around the world are facing similar pressures and issues. International networking is leading to some unprecedented North-South activism. This summer Indian farmers are planning to tour Europe as part of the People’s Global Action network and to meet with local campaigning groups to protest at the gates of global decision-makers and corporations.

The new environment movement may be increasing in size but it is by no means politically homogeneous. There is no single national structure to rival the main parties and there are serious divisions between activists – some of whom want to move into mainstream politics, and others who want to stay outside.

Nevertheless Patkar speaks for many: “Our vision for life is based on equality, simple living, and self-reliance at every level. Through reconstruction and self-action, communities can assert the right to their own resources and development planning. This is our hope for the future.”

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