RELATING PARTNERSHIP AND POWER TO COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AID

Presentation to the
1991 Common Property Resource Conference
Winnipeg, Manitoba,
September 1991

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"What is settled by custom though it be not good, yet at least it is fit, and those things which have long gone together, are confederate within themselves; whereas new things piece not so well though they help by thier utility, yet they trouble by their inconformity"
(Francis Bacon)

Introduction

The management of common property forest resources in under-developed countries is becoming increasingly important. But, while most of the "management" is being done on paper or in discussions, the real "management" is being done "de-facto" by people living in or around the forests. As the professional managers collect their salaries, and the local people collect forest products, the forest daily diminishes. It is time for these two "managers" to communicate. This communication is possible through a partnership approach to development, where the power to make decisions is shared between the professional forester, the community members and the government institutions.

Common Property Management and Forestry Development

I assume that there is now agreement that common property resource management essentially means that affected and interested actors combine their expertise and experience to set and enforce rules that will result in common benefits for as many people as possible, as long as possible.

Unfortunately, early forestry development in under-developed countries seems to have been permeated with the belief that only governments were capable of managing forests.[1] In most countries, policy assistance from over-developed countries helped to remove the locus of control of the forests from local leadership and centralized it in the hands of the government forest services. There was little understanding of the traditional rules and structures which had previously been managing these resources. Time has demonstrated that centralized government structures are often incapable of enforcing the rules which they set, and local people are "de-facto" managing the forests. Local management frequently has vestiges of traditional management, depending on the distance from the urban centre where the government resides. But often the forest is now perceived as government property, and forest products a free good if one can avoid or compensate the forest guards. National governments are not willing to give up (legal) control, even though they in fact have lost control. Local people are not able to give up (illegal) control because their lives, especially if they are women or poor, depend on what the forests can offer in the way of bushmeat, medicinal plants, dead branches, fodder, raw resources for handicrafts, grazing land, berries, nuts, fuelwood and building poles.

When governments, forest services and forest guards cannot enforce the rules, and local people "de-facto" manage the forests with no rules, the impact on the forests is indeed tragic. There are no winners. Forest cover decreases, high potential land decreases, government revenues decrease, and local life-support resources decrease.

Exacerbating this situation, we now have development agencies, triggered by environmentalists in over-developed countries, concerned about "in-situ plant conservation" and preserving the forests in under-developed countries. Amongst many others, Richards (1989) does not defend the theory that "Eden should be preserved as an end in itself*. He has done some remarkable work in looking at the ways in which local people, living in or near-by the Gola Forest of Sierra Leone, have developed forest management practices which factor in genetic conservation.

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[1] The writings of Gill Shepard and Gunnar Poulson give a descriptive and well documented account of the history and impact of forest policies in Sudan and Somalia. However, it is believed that this scenario is not uncommon in other under-developed countries.

We have only recently begun to understand that local people in under-developed countries are the main actors in forest management. The development approaches are now catching up with this new understanding. These new approaches seek to reverse centralized decision-making and emphasize local participation in information gathering, needs assessment, information analysis, and monitoring and evaluation so that local people can make informed decisions. Even technology transfer by packages is being replaced with a "basket of choices". One of these new approaches which holds some hope of effective co-management of forests is the participatory (partnership) approach.

Participatory Approach to Development

In the wake of rumours and documentation of "mal-development" have come new (or revitalized) theories of development. Robert Chambers' (1984) publication, "Putting the Last First" was indeed a turning point, as it documented and described the problems created when "the last" are considered but not understood. Accepting Chambers proposition that we would do well to consider "the last", the question then was "how to do it?" This has been the topic of countless seminars, workshops, meetings and papers in the last few years. Oakley and Marsden (1984) have put together a general, but very pragmatic and descriptive work on this subject.

In forestry development we currently have three main types of approaches. The first is a exemplified by Training and Visitation (T&V), which is currently the most popular approach. With T&V, outsiders make all the decisions, and train insiders to carry out activities. Follow-up visits are made after the training to make sure that insiders[2] are doing it properly. The second type of approach is the Diagnosis and Design (D&D) which was developed at the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF). With D&D, outsiders consult with insiders, and then design a package for them, which generally turns out to be Lucaena leucocephala or Sesbania sesban alleycropping! The third type of approach can

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[2] Insiders arc those who identify themselves and are identified by others as belonging to a particular community. Outsiders are those who arc not identified as belonging to that particular community. "Us" and "Them" is used in the same way as insiders and outsiders.

generally be termed "participatory" or "partnership". It includes methodologies such as: Participatory Action Research (PAR); Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (PAME); and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) This approach seeks to include insiders in the process of their own development.

There is still a great deal of ambiguity over the definition of participation. People use the word and mean entirely different concepts. In the following (Table 1), I have tried to categorize and define the different "types" of participation currently in vogue. This has proved to be a useful way to determine what is really meant, especially when the word participatory is related to proposed or on-going activities.

Table 1: Definitions of "participation"

	Conventional Participation	Consultative Participation	Partnership Participation	Transforming Participation
Intent:	Does not challenge existing power structure	Seeks to reform existing power structure	Negotiates and promotes equity between parties.	Challenges power structure
Methods:	T& V	D & D	PAME;PRA	Political activism
Agenda:	Outsiders set agendas	Outsiders set agendas	Agendas set jointly by insiders and outsiders	Agendas set by challengers

In using the above range of definitions, people see and can discuss where they are practicing participation, and (more importantly) why they are there. For example, a fairly high official in forestry extension in Kenya saw that he had moved from "conventional" to "consultative" in the past five years. He felt that "consultative" participation was as far as government personnel could go at this time, given the existing political and cultural climate.

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I am most comfortable in the "partnership" form of participation. It is the basis for an approach I developed for the Community Forestry Unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 1990) called Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (PAME).
The methodological approach developed in PAME is not a blueprint but rather a "whole bunch" of ideas for practitioners of this approach. It is not perfect, nor has it been well tested; it is a beginning. It is designed for use by field staff (extentionists) and local people.

There are three parts to PAME: the idea, the methods and the tools. Figure 1 shows the way in which the three parts are interlinked.

·Figure 1: The Idea, Methods and Tools of PAME
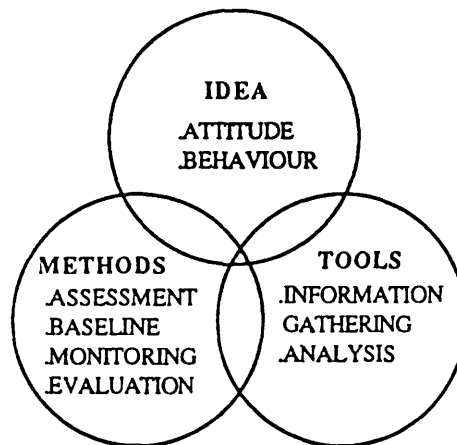
The Idea: The idea is basically an understanding of the benefits of a partnership, the attitude that is required to work within a partnership, and, if required, a change in communication patterns (from one-way to two-way). The idea also supports an equity of respect in the partnership, that together we can do what neither can alone.

The Methods: The methods, as developed in PAME are connected with the phases of a project. The assessment phase concerns the identification of the problems and the solutions and identifying common objectives and activities. Baselines concern additional information needed to assess activities and also to document starting points. Monitoring concerns the on-going information collection during implementation of activities, and evaluation the times when activities and/or objectives are critically examined.

The Tools: There are twenty-three information gathering tools currently described in PAME. These do not at all indicate an exhaustive list, but do describe many of the types of tools. When they have been tried in the field, there have been reports that they have had to be modified and adapted to match the situation. The tools are: group meetings; drawing and discussion; murals and posters; flannel boards; open-ended stories; unserialized posters; community case studies; historical mapping; semi-structured interviews; ranking, rating and sorting; community environmental assessment; survival surveys; participatory action research; maps and mapping; farmer's own records; nursery record books; community financial accounts; Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Limitations analysis; popular theatre; puppet theatre; community directed visual images; community directed tape recordings; and community directed video.

One of the problems experienced in implementation of this approach has been in allowing room for the "bottom-up" information to fit into the existing "top-down" project structure. When it has already been decided by outsiders who will do what, where, when, how much it will cost, and the physical targets expected, there is little flexibility. Unfortunately, we have found that when bottom-up interfaces with top-down, it is inevitably top-down that decides.

Five years ago, it was thought that we would always have to operate within the project strucure, but there are tangible signs that more flexibility in project design is possible.

We are now addressing the problem of top-down meeting bottom-up and the question of how to link and respect information flowing from the village level planning exercises to the overall planning framework of projects, which are by their nature heirarchical and top down. One of the keys to this may be found in the nature of power.

Partnership and Power

One of the important elements of partnership is that it is built upon and defined by particular relationships of power. These relationships can be seen as both personal and political. I will explore the personal relationships and discuss how these relate to the concept of partnership.

I am going to define (quite simply), three different relationships of power. One is where others make decisions for you about things which affect your live, without giving you a voice in the decision. This is called *no-power*. Another is where you make decisions for others without giving them a voice. This is called *power over*. The third is where decision-making is shared. This is called *shared power*.

Power over is created, justified, supported and maintained by factors such as education, sex, age, physical strength, money, weapons, position and fear. In development aid, as it is currently practiced, the relationships of power have mainly been heirarchical and *power-over*. A local (insider) problem is defined by outsiders, the solution identified, what activities will remedy the problem, how the activities will be carried out, and the indicators of success. In this relationship we all know our roles very well: outsiders have *power-over* and insiders have *no power*.

For those who have previously had *no-power;* the partnership approach provides opportunities for them to have a voice in deciding what activities they will conduct in their immediate environments. But doing this means that those who now have *power over* must work in the *shared power* mode.

There are many layers of *power over* that must recognize partnership as a legitimate approach and allow it to be practiced. The partnership approach might work well on the ground but not be able to go any further. Until those in positions of *power over* accept a different approach, there will be an invisible "glass ceiling" that will prevent partnership from having any relevance. A partnership approach to an activity involving setting rules for communal forest management must be supported by donor, regional, ministerial and government officials as well as local communities. The partnership approach must permeate the entire institutional systems, governments, academics and donor agencies.

A partnership approach means that the learning and teaching equation is reversed. This requires a change in the role of teacher *(power over)* and student *(no power)*. We, the so-called experts, learn from them, the local people (and vice-versa). They learn by presenting information and teaching us, we learn by open-minded listening. We may have a technology they find useful, but they must

decide on the costs, risks and proposed benefits of change, and evaluate any new technology in terms of their own indigenous technologies. We have to put our knowledge and categories and ideas in second place, in fact relinquish some of our *power over* in order to learn. Those of us with strong disciplinary training will find this difficult and it will require patience, sympathy and humour for this change in our behaviour.

A partnership approaches means that we must use local agendas. We must continually monitor our behaviour by asking ourselves the question: "Are they involved in our development agendas or are we involved in the agendas set by them?" Again, it comes down to who has the power to decide.

A partnership approach means that we must change our ideas about "legitimate" research. We are prone to setting up artificial environments or "islands of efficiency" to respond to our own (safe) controlled and controlling environments. We can live with appropriate imprecision and optimal ignorance, "not finding out more than is needed, not measuring more accurately than needed, and not trying to measure what does not need to be measured. (Chambers 1991). We should ask ourselves each time we begin research: "Are we doing legitimate research *(power over)* that is useless or "illegitimate" *(shared power)* research that is useful?"

Coming to terms with the issue of power is, I believe, the challenge that the partnership approach faces.

Resistance is often experienced, and dissuades practitioners of the partnership approach. Project managers might say: "I want numbers!" and research advisers might say: "do you call this legitimate research!" You may find your research grants disappear; you may be called naive and unprofessional. It should be clear to those who choose to embrace the *shared power* of partnership just what the personal and professional risks might be!

Partnership. Power and Common Property Resources: Nepal

I recently worked on a forestry project in the Terai area of Nepal. This project had a "panchayat" or "community forest" management component. 1 was to train foresters in participatory extention

methods, so they could provide what assistance was needed for communities to manage the lands held in common by law.

The training went well.   The forest extentionists worked with villagers for three months. A representative group was formed at the village level (women, landless, small and large landowners) and the foresters and the group together did an inventory, decided on harvesting (while protecting the sacred *ficus* trees from harvesting) and planting regimes, and developing ways to reduce illegal cutting. We got high marks for "reversing the learning and teaching process", for letting the agendas come from the community, for practicing *shared power* relationships with the community. It was a good plan, endorsed by both the foresters and the community.

Proudly we (the forestry extentionists, the villagers involved, and myself) took the plan to the project manager and the divisional forester. We were listened to for only a few minutes, and then told that a management plan was being drawn up by officials who were professionals, and the villagers would be informed in the next six months. We left the meeting feeling disillusioned, betrayed and angry.

(A management plan for community forests in the next district had strictly followed the rules of growth rates, mean annual increment, (monoculture) planting programmes and forest economics. But it had failed to take into account the illegal cutting, which was estimated to be larger than the annual allowable cut that had been set!)

In the lively discussions that followed we realized that the mistake was that I had not thought to "prepare the site" for the community forest management plan, by working first with the people in the institutions that could decide whether or not to consider the local plans. It taught me that *shared power* must be the model throughout the relevant institutions. Without that, no matter how worthwhile the communal plans, they would not be supported.

The Future for Partnership in Development

I am still hopeful that despite the problems that there are with implementation of the partnership approach, it will persist. I feel sure that we will discover ways to address the problem of power, so that shared power become insitutionalized. Change is in the wind.

There is an underground conspiracy that holds an element of partnership.

Many people, myself included, believe that we are currently in the throes of a paradigm shift, undergoing the painful but exciting process of a change in our world view. This shift will permeate our personal and professional lives, reaching and attacking our social, economic, religious and scientific belief systems. The partnership approach in development fits very well into the new paradigm (Table 2).

Table 2: Concepts of current "dominant" and "new" paradigms	
"Dominant" Paradigm	"New" Paradigm
Molecular Theory.................	Quantum Theory
Reductionist........................	Holistic
Specialization......................	Interdisciplinary
Individualistic.....................	Community
Stability.............................	Resilience
Certainty............................	Uncertainty
Product Oriented..................	Process Oriented
Top-down...........................	Partnership

There are three harbingers of a paradigm crisis (and impending paradigm shift) in international development generally, and forestry development in particular. One is the current unease brought about by information from evaluation and impact studies, that development strategies have failed to sustain any meaningful development. A number of publications such as: "Lords of Poverty" and "The Greening of Africa" have documented instances of mal-development. Second, in a crisis period the response will be many contenders for a "new" development paradigm. This is certainly the case in forestry development, where concepts such as multi-diciplinary, inter-sectoral and participation are being seriously explored. A third indicator of the paradigm crisis can be seen in the current radical and dramatic backlash to alternate development theories. Just one example of this is an invited presentation, "The Profession of Forestry Now and in the Year 2000" by Laurence Roche,

which was given at the 10th World Forestry Congress. Roche calls for a return to the basics of the "hard science" of forestry.

Rumours of changes are beginning to appear. I have been told that in one instance, in Indonesia, a working group of upper level forest service personnel was formed. Its only task was to respond to the bottom up forest management plans. In doing this task they are educating themselves, and visiting the villages when the plans are being made. In Nepal, population and state controls on forest land have expanded, and conflict between forest agencies and local communities over land, forest and tree access have increased. But in one instance that I know of (Gronow 1990) social scientists are working with foresters to shift from a para-military, technical orientation to a community organizing approach. Development agencies are beginning to allocate money to a programme which will develop project ideas with the communities.

It is time for the professional managers and the "de-facto" managers to communicate. There are methods and tools being developed, adapted and tried which can assist in co-management of common lands. In time, we will learn to foster institutional support for the partnership approach.

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