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SOCIAL FORESTRY NETWORK

MICROPLANNING FOR SOCIAL FORESTRY: A DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM DESIGNED FOR KARNATAKA SOCIAL FORESTRY PROJECT, INDIA

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by

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Introduction

Social forestry as a concept is not new. It has been well established for centuries in many countries in continental Europe (Klose, 1985) and in the first half of this century many countries under colonial rule (had a forest service whose main functions were establishment of protection forests and the creation of "village forest areas" or "urban fuelwood areas". (Nyasaland, 1926-1963). In the last thirty years, ideas of development through industrialization led to a change in the activities of forest services resulting in concentration on industrial plantations. No resources were made available for "community" forestry either by aid agencies or even by most national governments.

The World Forestry Congress in 1978 focussed attention on the impending crisis resulting from this change of focus and in the same year FAO published a paper on Forestry in Rural Development {FAO 1978) in which Community Forestry was defined as:

> "...any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity. It embraces a spectrum of situations ranging from woodlots 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 household, 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".

P D Hardcastle lectures at the Oxford Forestry Institute, UK. The microplanning system described in this article was developed by the author whilst working for ODA/World Bank in Karnataka, India in response to an initiative by Mr R H Kemp of ODA, London. The work relied heavily on collaboration of colleagues in both development organizations and the Karnataka Forest Department. Special acknowledgement is due to Dr A K Banerjee of the World Bank Office, New Delhi, who also conducted field evaluation of the system. Microplanning has been incorporated into the Project Implementation Manual published by the Karnataka Forest Department and subsequently adopted by many other states in India. Members of the Network may obtain copies of the Micrpplanning draft, including the data collection and analysis forms, from the author. The views and opinions in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of OFI or ODI.

In the last decade, considerable resources have been made available for social forestry largely through bilateral and international agencies and the greatest concentration of these have been in India. There have been many initiatives by NGOs but although these are numerous they are nearly always very localised. The resources needed for social forestry worldwide are massive and the only source of resources on the scale needed is the major donors. Politically, donors work through governments and governments work through bureaucracies. Whether it is the forest department or a new social forestry department is irrelevant, the department's function is to utilize the resources available to meet the needs of the rural people for social forestry. The implementing department thus has a classic management task;

> "...the direction of an enterprise, through planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of its human and material resources, towards the achievement of a predetermined objective". (Hopf, 1942)

However, in social forestry, some of the principal resources eg land and frequently labour are held by individuals and not by the implementing departments. Furthermore the objectives of the implementing department may not be those of the communities at which the work is aimed.

Many proponents of Social Forestry believe in a "bottom-up" planning process. This approach starts from the level of the community and ensures that the plans meet the needs and perceptions of the community. It is an approach used by many NGOs and on a small scale has much to recommend it. Unfortunately, when dealing with Social Forestry needs at state level where huge resources are required, the "bottom-up" approach becomes unworkable and the resulting plan will bear little resemblance to the strategy set by the political process (Hussey 1982).

On the other side of this coin, state bureaucracies often believe in a "top down" planning process. Targets are set from the centre and the

plans at each level are derived from the level above, thus keeping the enterprise (hopefully) moving along the lines laid down by policy makers. Unless the information available to planners about operating conditions and constraints is accurate and up-to-date, the plans can quickly degenerate into little more than arbitrary targets.

This type of approach creates problems for the implementers, dissatisfaction amongst the recipients, and very often abysmal inefficiency in the use of resources. Theoretically, the large organization with economy of scale can establish an individual tree for perhaps one quarter of the cost of the NGO. But if three out of four trees are the wrong species, or in the wrong place, that gain is wasted (cost figures are based on examples from NGO and international agency reports). However, by putting increased information gathered at field level into plans which are set from the top down the "gap" between people's needs and projects' actions can be narrowed or even obviated. One technique for doing this is that of microplanning.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that resources are limited. It is thus never possible to meet all the social forestry needs of all communities immediately. The purpose of microplanning is to identify the demand of the specific communities, for various products of social forestry; to determine the supply of those various products and hence the shortfall for the various social groups in the community; to ascertain the willingness and the capacity of the individuals and the community to engage in social forestry; to feed all this information upwards to the social forestry planners and finally to produce and implement a social forestry plan, acceptable to the community within the resource constraints of the implementing agency. Microplanning is based on the needs of the rural population being the driving force for social forestry and the role of the implementer being to enable those needs to be met as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

The Microplanning Process

1. **Identify target village.**
2. **Prepare community profile covering:**

Location and physical factors; population by social groups; livestock; community land resources; existing social forestry activities; other development work.

3. Conduct individual interviews to determine the priority needs, and attitudes towards social forestry activities. Major products to be covered are:

   fuel employment timber, poles and bamboo
   fodder green manure.

4. Compile needs summary sheet:

   Identifies most critical needs for the various social groups.

5. Prepare summary of level of interest in social forestry.

   Identifies target groups for extension and provides information on likely success of different social forestry systems.

6. Identify appropriate system using table of efficiency and effectiveness for the products required and the target groups (see Table 1 page 14).

7. Formulate programme of activities including extension work.

8. Using technical manual, determine appropriate technical system for each segment of the programme.

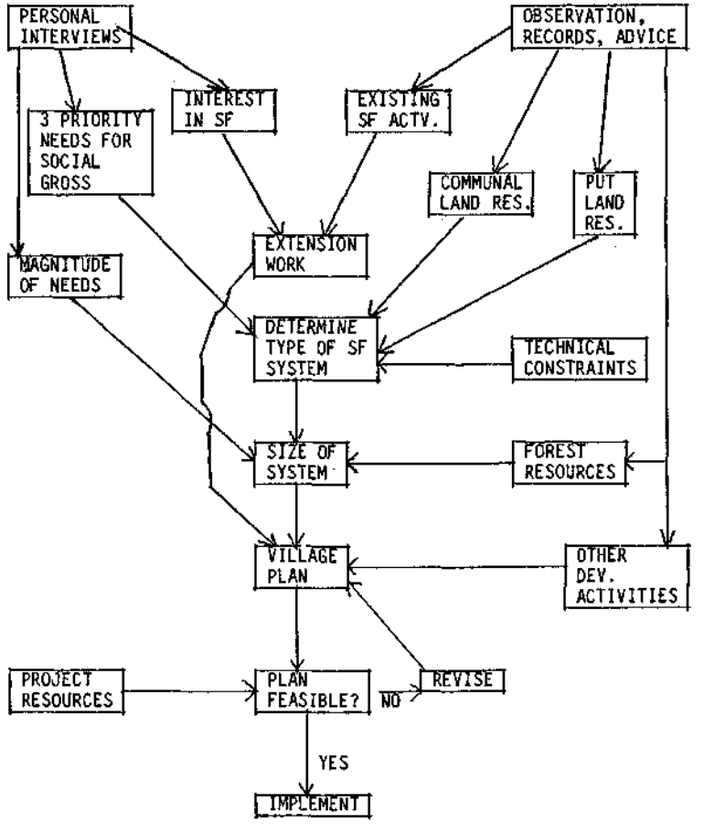
9. Check amalgamated programme at range level and at district level in terms of broad target and resources.

10. Adjust and revise where necessary.

11. Finalize programme in terms of areas, numbers and locations.

12. Implement, monitor and report.

MICROPLANNING



Selection of target comnunities

There is no magic formula for selecting target villages. As the whole basis of the project is the interest of individuals and communities, this should form the selection criterion. Information on the level of interest should be available to the Range Forest Officer through his own knowledge, as well as from field extension workers, motivators and from people in other government departments and voluntary agencies.

The most appropriate administrative unit is the village which has its own committee and on average, some 500-2,000 members. Above the village committee is the mandal pachayat. A mandal normally encompasses some 20-25 villages. The selected village should be agreed by the mandal panchayat to ensure cooperation. Initially one or two villages per mandal should be selected, with a programme for encompassing the other villages at a later date. The reason for working with villages rather than mandals, to allow microplanning to be performed, needs explaining to the mandal panchayat. Ultimately all the village microplans will be linked into a mandal forestry plan, but this could take 5-10 years. Unless cooperation with the mandal panchayat is achieved, there is no point in continuing.

Data collection through observation and personal interviews

With any village community, there is a range of social groups. The prescribed categories are;-

a) Marginal, small and large farmers, classified according to their land holding.

Classification of farmers according to land holding size (ha)

Category	Area of dryland	Area of irrigated land
Marginal	<2.4 ha	>0.8 ha
Small	2.4-6.1 ha	0.8-2.0 ha
Large	>6.1 ha	<2.0 ha

b) Poor landless who have no cultivable land but who may collect grass, fuel and minor forest products for local sale. Their activities are very fragile and can easily be destroyed.

c) Rural artisans such as carpenters or basket weavers.

d) Nomadic or semi-nomadic people who use grazing areas for part of the year.

e) Traders in wood, fodder or other forest products, either trading locally or trading outside the area of the village.

In addition, there are cross groupings such as religious groups who may have sacred areas. Even if the group is a minority, its interest in eg burial areas, must be respected.

Other groups in addition to the formal panchayat council, could be farmers' associations, youth clubs, women's groups, and voluntary organisations.

Community profile

The community profile records physical and demographic information, available from census records, as well as information on other development activities. The success of community projects in a village is a good guide to the likely success of community forestry activities. The community profile also records any existing community forestry, details when it was established, whether it is under community management etc, and gives information on private (farm) forestry in the community. The profile also includes an estimate of land resources, both individual and community. In India, detailed maps and a land holding register are available for each community. Where this information is not so readily available, alternative methodology such as sketch maps or air photographs would have to be employed. The information on private land holdings can be obtained by multiplying up the findings from the individual interviews with members of each social group.

The consultation process

Before visiting the village, the interviewer should determine what information can be obtained on population, green card holders (scheduled castes and tribals), livestock numbers, etc. Other departments and agencies should be consulted whenever possible.

The style of approach to the village is of great importance. It is essential to remember that social forestry is an enabling process and not a directing one. A low key approach, open minded attitude and willingness to listen are essential ingredients of this.

On visiting the village, the basic structure should be determined through discussion with the village chairman and the administrative clerks. This should provide information on the proportion of people in each social group, the land holding size and the religious and secular organizations. The village officials should have information on community land. It is essential to check that the boundaries are not disputed by adjacent villages.

The clear definition of community land is essential. It is unlikely that villagers will understand cadastral maps, and a sketch plan with identifiable, recognised land marks, eg rock out-crops, streams, large trees etc will have to be prepared. This can be traced from the base maps and annotated. By using overlays, alternative schemes can be discussed, and eventually an on-site village meeting should be held before the plan is implemented. At this meeting, staff can be stationed around the area so that everyone clearly sees the impact of the proposal.

The selection of interviewees is a difficult task. It is important not to meet only people recommended by officials; a range of opinion is required. It is not really feasible at this stage to use a formal social survey sampling technique. Guidance on selecting representative interviewees should be sought from the motivator or extension worker who knows the locality as well as from the officials.

During the process of consultation, the interviewer must talk to between two and four members of each of the social groups. The aim should be to talk to 15-20 people altogether with representatives from each group in the proportion that each group bears to the total population. Efforts should be made also to talk to representatives of each of the religious and secular groups. The sample must include both men and women in equal numbers in each category.

Interviewers should converse with interviewees, not run through a questionnaire, and should focus the conversation onto forest products, needs and supplies. It is important to determine attitudes and avoid leading questions. For example, everyone will agree that communal woodlots would be good providing they do not have to give up anything. The questions should be phrased to take account of this by making reference to specific areas used by the interviewee.

A check list for interviewers to work from is in the appendix. The interview is written up on a standard form which gives details of the interviewee, their land holding and its usage. It also records information on the major sources of forest products and the interviewee's perception of the supply situation. A most important section is that which records the interviewees desire for employment and seasonal availability.

Following the interview, the interviewer then notes on the record form the three top priority products for the interviewee and, subjectively, the interviewee's attitude towards social forestry, interest in community, group or individual activities and the level of understanding of the inputs needed.

Following the completion of the interviews, the information is summarised as described in the next two sections.

Compilation of the supply and demand situation for major groups of forest products by social groups

The first step is to determine the major products which are going to be required eg fuel, fodder and employment. An attempt should be made to quantify the demand for each category of product using the information from the interviews.

The quantified demand is compared with the subjectively assessed supply situation to determine priorities and the size of programme needed. The aim should be to meet at least 10-15% of the total requirement for at least one product.

The interview details should also make clear which groups use which communal areas and hence need to be considered in any plans for the

area.

Assessment of interest in social forestry programmes

If Social Forestry is to be introduced into a community it is, of course, essential that there is agreement and consensus for any communal project and that people understand the costs and the benefits. The key is extension, the level and intensity of which must be geared towards the needs of the community. For example, the T and V system is for a back-up service to those already involved in forestry, whilst the use of films, puppet shows and meetings is to generate interest. It is likely that different social groups in the community will have differing priorities and for this reason, a separate record must be kept for each group.

The results of the interest survey should be compared with the results of the observational survey on the supply situation. Where there is a mismatch, ie, limited supply but little interest, then the extension programme should be focussed on this. By determining which groups in the community are reluctant, the extension programme can be targeted on to these particular groups. Where interest is already adequate, extension should concentrate on technical support and advice. By maintaining strong contact with the T and V section of the agricultural extension service, it may well be possible to reinforce the message of forestry extension and to provide support for those already engaged in social forestry.

Preparation of the village summary

Using the information on needs and on interest in social forestry programmes an appropriate system can be selected by referring to Table 1, 'summary of efficiency and effectiveness of social forestry systems' and the key given below.

Which forest products are needed?

If it is	Fuel	then Go to 1
If it is	Fodder	then Go to 2
If it is	Shade/Shelter	then Go to 3
If it is	MFP	then Go to 4
If it is	Timber and poles	then Go to 5

1. Shortage felt by all social groups?	Investigate community woodlots on Gomal/C&D or Foreshore areas. If feasible, check inputs required. Include fuelwood species in FF nursery stock. Go to 6.
or	
Shortage felt mainly by landless/small farmers?	Investigate rehabilitation, group farm forestry supplemented by homestead trees and tree tenure systems. Go to 6.
2. Shortage felt by all social groups?	Investigate communal woodlots on Gomal/C&D land and foreshores. If communal woodlots are planned for fuel, include fodder species and consider grass/fodder plants as inter-row crops with wider spacing of main crop. Include agroforestry and homestead tree species in nursery stock. Go to 6.
or	
Shortage felt mainly for landless/small farmers?	Investigate provision of homestead/agroforestry trees. If land is available for tree tenure or group farm forestry use it. Investigate small community lots (see above) and possibility of using secular groups. Go to 6
3. Shortage felt by all social groups?	Investigate road/track canal side plantings (consider tree

or	tenure which has additional benefits) and homestead/agro-forestry trees. Go to 6.
Shortage felt mainly by landless/small farmers?	Investigate supply of trees for homestead/agroforestry planting. Go to 6.
4. Shortage felt by social groups?	Investigate agroforestry/ homestead trees and possibilities of rehabilitation. Include appropriate species in mixtures on any communal project. Go to 6.
or	
Shortage felt mainly by landless/small farmers	Investigate agroforestry homestead trees and tree tenure, possibly combined with rehabilitation. Go to 6.
5. Shortage felt by all social groups?	Include timber/pole species in woodlot either on Gomal/C&D or foreshore areas. Go to 6.
or	
Shortage felt mainly by landless/small farmers?	Include timber/pole species in distribution of homestead tree or roadside planting or, if land is available, tree tenure. Investigate small scale community woodlots, possibly involving secular groups. Go to 6.

6. Having decided on the most appropriate technical systems, it is essential to determine their acceptability. The following points need to be considered for the various groups of systems and these are amplified in a series of checklists.

Community based systems

Does community agreement exist? If it does, then no further action is needed and the system can be implemented. If it does not then determine whether a response is likely from intensive extension. Pursue this course then implement the system. Otherwise keep up lower level extension work and recheck in one year. Group or individually based systems may give motivation through example and are useful when community-wide agreement proves impossible.

Group based systems

Are land resources available for the group from state land? If not, then does community agreement exist to allocate land to the groups? If not then pursue extension and alternative schemes such as pasture improvement of communal grazing in return for the land given up.

Does the group have the interest and knowledge to pursue the scheme, if appropriate with aid from extension workers and voluntary workers? If not then this must be provided. If this is not possible, delay implementation until it is available.

Individual based systems

Do the individuals have the interest and knowledge to implement the proposals? If not can this be achieved quickly by extension input. If it cannot, then maintain contact and reassess in one year.

If social forestry is to succeed, then its products must be identifiable.

Table 1

SUMMARY OF EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL FORESTRY SYSTEMS

SYSTEM	EFFICIENCY FOR PRODUCTION OF							EFFECTIVENESS FOR TARGET GROUPS						COMMENTS
	FUEL	FODDER	POLES	SHADE/SHELTR	MINOR F.P.	TIMBER	PULPWOOD	LANDLESS	SMALL	FARMERS MARGNL	LARGE	URBAN POPLN	INDUSTRIAL	
A. INDIVIDUAL/GROUP SYSTEMS														
1. INDIVIDUAL FARM FORESTRY	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	Require unused land to be effective, can be very remunerative, bringing in a cash crop. Creates some employment initially. Reduces grazing land and land bank. May need technological and marketing help.
2. GROUP FARM FORESTRY	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	1	0	1	1	Requires unused public land, creates employment and allows benefits to accrue directly to the poorest. Requires high level of extension input.
3. TREE TENURE	2	3	2	1	2	1	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	Can be used in most systems, especially useful in strip planting or rehabilitation, a small scale version.
4. HOMESTEAD TREES	2	3	1	2	2	1	0	3	2	1	1	0	0	Most effective if correct species selected. Creates produce at point of use. Does not usually cause decline in crop yields.
5. AGROFORESTRY	2	2	1	3	3	1	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	Most effective for small quantities of produce of different types. Need not reduce crop yields significantly. Does not require idle land.
6. KISSAN* NURSERIES								2	3	3	2	0	1	Can be efficient creator of employment. Requires high level of extension input and organisation for landless group.
B. COMMUNITY BASED SYSTEMS														
7. COMMUNITY WOODLOT-EGMAL A & C AND D	3	2	3	0	1	3	0	1	2	1	1	2	0	Gives concentrated production, requires some produce movement. Can generate employment. Produces residues. Requires Community agreement. Removes grazing/collection area initially. Longterm fertility? Water?
8. COMMUNITY WOODLOT-TANK FORESHORES	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	Gives fairly concentrated production, requires some produce movement can generate employment. Requires community consent. Removes some grazing, especially initially. Restricted species choice. Water? Provides tangible results quickly. Requires individual tree protection. Usually requires community consent. Creates minimal employment. Provides verge and bank stability.
9. STRIP PLANTING	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	
10. REHABILITATION OF FOREST/PLANTATIONS	3	2	3	1	2	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	Requires some residual components of a defined forest. Must have community agreement. Usually slow, can provide wide diversity of products. Valuable in soil/water conservation area. Can be linked to tree tenure.
C. LARGE SCALE SYSTEMS														
11. EXTENSIVE PLANTATION	3	1	3	0	1	3	3	1	0	0	0	3	3	Gives concentrated production, requires transport to users, produces useful residues. May generate some employment. Requires substantial blocks of land. Removes grazing/collection area. Long term fertility? Water? Only of indirect benefit.

* Private individuals growing nursery stock under contract. 3 = Highly efficient → 0 = Inefficient/inappropriate; 3 = Highly effective → 0 = Ineffective/inappropriate

For this reason, systems which give early returns are essential. Examples are the introduction of grazing either between the trees in a woodlot or in a compensatory area of improved grazing to make up for land surrendered to trees. Cash for community projects and employment are useful indirect benefits.

Early returns become more important the poorer people are. Very frequently, the provision of these early returns may mean that the final crop returns are somewhat reduced. However, this can be well justified if it helps the community or the individual to accept social forestry proposals. The early returns can be achieved either from the system itself, early cutting or interplanting for example, or by creating separate areas of, for example, improved pasture as part of the whole development.

The inclusion of such ideas often means moving away from traditional forestry practice. This is perfectly acceptable and the question to be considered must always be 'what do the beneficiaries need and when do they need it?' It is important to remember that social forestry is usually concerned with a range of products and the creation of flexible production systems which need not be completely 'tree-based'. People will only invest their land and labour in a system which in their view will yield returns which are more valuable than that investment. Very poor people need to have some return in one or two years.

In community projects the benefits must be large enough for those involved to see the results. A 5 ha fuelwood lot in a village of 3,000 people would give everyone a small handful of fuel after 8 years. However, if a cash crop were used, it would yield sufficient to pay for a school roof or some similar communal need. This type of approach may be an effective way of starting communal projects. The benefits do not have to be in forest produce used in the community. Obviously, the project should not be used to establish large scale cash crops on communal lands but equally communal projects which do not provide at least 10% of the community's needs are probably too small to be of value.

Once the consultation process has been completed and preliminary plans formulated, a village meeting must be held to discuss the plan and identify the level of support. This village meeting is essential as it provides an opportunity for people to ask questions and to have their fears discussed. There is no point in trying to force social forestry on unwilling people, they have to be persuaded of its benefits. It may be necessary to conduct several meetings to answer all the points.

The final stage of the process is completed by estimating production from the schemes proposed. The plans for the various communities are then drawn together at range level and submitted to district level. The recursive process of comparing available resources, human, technical and financial with needs is completed to give a defined rolling programme. This is shown schematically on figure 1. The Karnataka Project Implementation Manual (KFD, 1986a) includes a series of standard formats for amalgamating and summarising the programme at range level or district level.

How long does microplanning take?

At first sight? microplanning appears to be a very time consuming task. However, Dr A K Banerjee submitted to the Project Implementation Manual discussion meeting in Bangalore in May 1986, copies of microplans for one village in Karnataka and one in West Bengal. On the basis of the time taken by the team to collect the information, the meeting prepared the timetable shown in figure 2.

Concluding remarks

The system of microplanning described in this article was developed under particular circumstances and parts of it are specific to that area (Karnataka, India). However, two main themes in the process are repeatable anywhere. The first emphasised by Chambers (1983) in respect of Rapid Rural Appraisal is to make maximum use of existing information, in this case principally information on landholdings and demographic structure. The second is to make maximum use of the staff who have most contact with the target population, in this case field

motivators and extension workers, to provide information on people's perceptions. In the case of Karnataka, the project includes provision for 3,000 motivators, 400 extension workers and almost 600 foresters (technical certificate holders) allocated to 156 range forest officers (diploma holders) (KFD, 1986b).

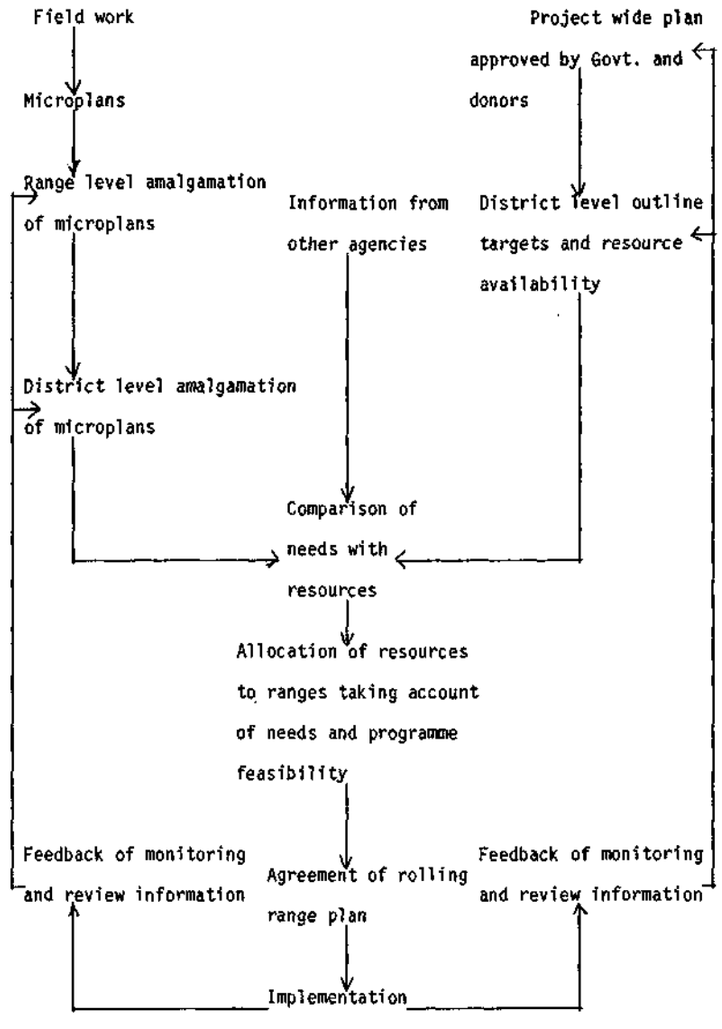
This staff is spread across 14 districts encompassing about 7,000 villages, giving an average load to the staff as follows.

Grade	No	No of village/staff member
RFO	156	48
Forester	580	13
Extension worker	394	7.5
Motivator	3,000	2.5

The availability of these field staff is an important component of the microplanning concept. However, as the bulk of the staff involved in the process will have had only limited training opportunities, the process has been designed to work on a series of standard forms supported by checklists and a detailed guide. An example of a checklist is given in the appendix together with a list of standard forms.

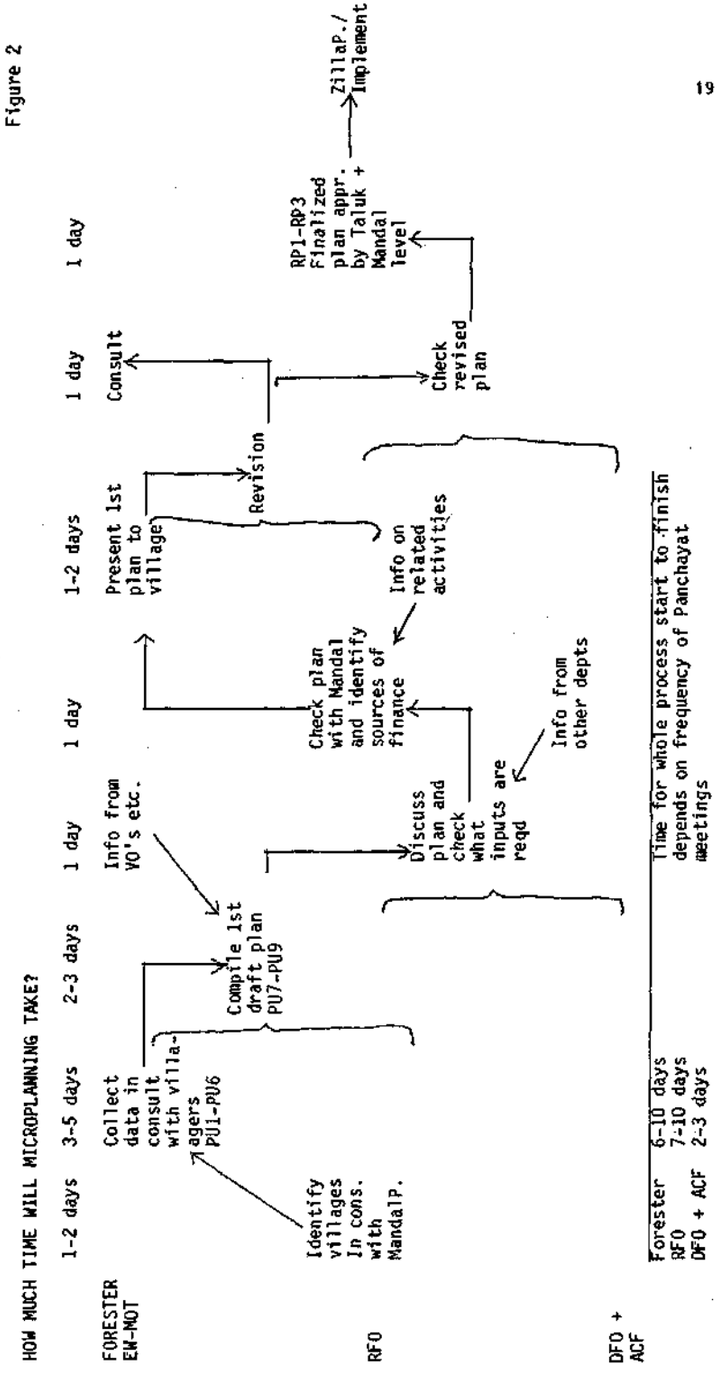
There is no reason why with appropriate modifications, the microplanning system described here cannot be used to aid planning of any social forestry project. Copies of the standard forms and the instructions for their completion are available on request from the author.

Figure 1



Note*
This chart is based on a 3 tier administrative structure Range → District → State

Figure 2



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APPENDIX

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWERS

CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITY BASED PLOT

LIST OF STANDARD FORMS FOR MICROPLANNING

Checklist for Interviewers

1. Does the villager get his minimum daily requirement of i) fuel, ii) fodder, iii) green manure, iv) small timber etc?

2. Ascertain from where and how the villager meets his requirements of i) fuel, ii) fodder, iii) green manure, iv) bamboo, v) small timber, vi) poles etc.

3. Does the villager grow any trees in his farm land, either on barren lands or with his agricultural crops?

4.' Does the villager benefit at present from community land eg Gomal, tank foreshore, etc?

5. Ascertain the primary and secondary needs of the villager.

6. Is the villager interestd in developing both the community land and his own land to meet his requirements of fuel, fodder etc? If not, why not?

Checklist for community based plot

1. How do the objectives of this plot meet the project objectives?

2. What is the level of community agreement?

3. What could be the impact of non-agreement? Is the non-agreement specific to social, political, geographical groups. What adverse agencies could affect the plot (eg grazing, fire, vandalism); what assurances have been made against these; is there any similar scheme, how effective has it been?

4. Which individuals/social groups have to give up what? Which individuals/social groups will gain what? Tabular statement of potential losses and gains.

5. If there is a discrepancy, which way is the transfer of benefits, what is the benefit profile across the social groups?

6. How will the benefits be allocated, is the system already proven in this community?

7. What safeguards have been built in to prevent abuse?

8. Does the community understand precisely what inputs it must make, what it will lose, what it will gain and how long it will be before the benefits accrue?

9. Are there any opportunities for earlier returns? Could the system give direct benefits to people who have incurred personal opportunity costs?

10. Is the technical prescription proven, is there significant risk of failure, if so has this been explained?

11. Is the target sensible, should it be reduced/phased over several years?

This checklist to be retained in the PU register.

List of standard forms for microplanning

PU1	Map and location of village
PU2	Community profile
PU3	Worksheet for recording interview data (multiple)
PU4	Worksheet for quantification of demand for forest products
PU5	Worksheet for quantification of demand for employment
PU6	Supply and demand summary sheet
PU7	Assessment of interest in social forestry programmes
PU8	Summary sheet - needs, programme; extension work
PU9	Anticipated production from community woodlots
PU10	Kissan nursery farmers
PU11-PU13	Planning unit register; physical information, area statement History sheets
RP1	Model summary format
RP2	Kissan nurseries
RP3	Summary of activities for community.

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