



Participatory Resource Inventory Training in Community Forestry
Thimura, Chitwan
January 2003



Introduction

In Nepal, community forestry policy has been practiced for two decades in line with the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS). Department of Forests (DoF) is only one responsible agency for handing over national forests or its part to local communities under the policy, often with support from a number of bi- and multi-lateral projects. Over 12,000 forest user groups (FUGs) are already working to manage more than 850,000 ha of forests as per the approved operational plan. Meanwhile, DOF has issued the Guidelines for forest inventory that have mandated every FUG to make detailed assessment of forest while preparing or revising the operational plan¹. A recent study by ForestAction and LFP entitled "inventory of community forests in Nepal: problems and opportunities" has revealed that this guidelines has created problems/issues and confusions in the field. In addition, the report analyzes that about 77 % of operational plans do not have resource inventory data, and a very few field staff of District Forest Offices (DFOs) have been trained to do resource inventory. Therefore, the decision of the government may reduce the rate of hand over process as well as discourage the amendment of operational plans. This necessitates adequate level of skills and knowledge in forest inventory on the part of forestry field workers. Obviously, many communities are waiting to get community forest just because of the lack of inventory services. Many FUGs, especially Terai, have approached to ForestAction for organizing the training. It is in this context that this 10 day training on "Participatory Resource Inventory in Community Forestry" was organized by ForestAction in collaboration with Environmental Resources Institute (ERI) on 5 –14 January 2003 at Thimura, Chitwan.

Objectives of the training were following:

- Understand the basic concept and framework of community forest management, particularly in relation to resource assessment,
- Understand surveying and mapping of the area of CF,
- Know the concept and strategies of forest blocking/forest stratification,
- Understand sampling, sample plot and forest resource inventory including legal provisions
- Practice forest resource inventory and analyze the information in relation to the demand of the community,
- Know how to incorporate forest inventory information into operational plan.
- Know the operational techniques of some forestry instruments

¹ In March 2000, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC) issued a circular to all DFOs and FUGs obliging CFUGs to undertake a detailed inventory of community forests while prescribing harvest levels of forest products in Operational Plans. In the same line, DOF has issued a directive on August 2000.

Participant

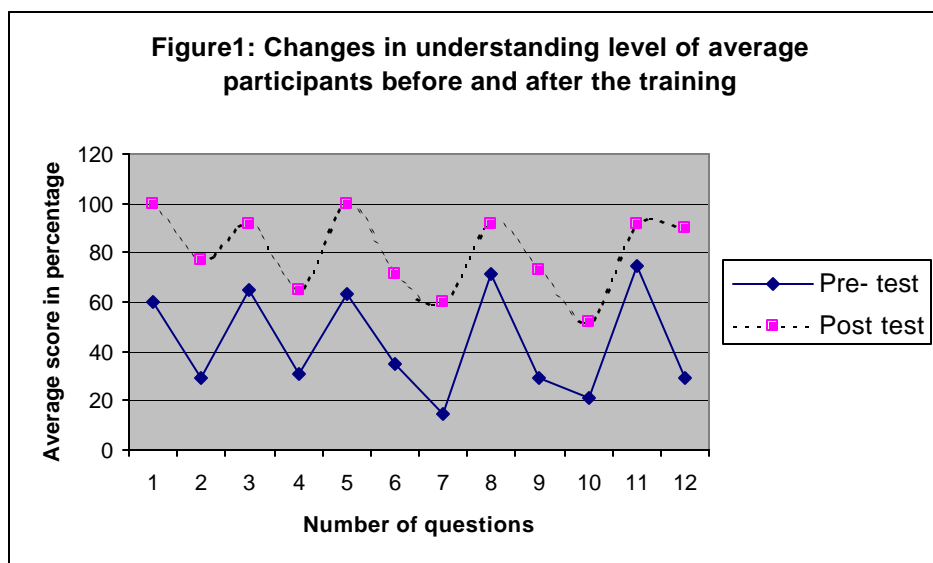
Participants came from six different FUGs of Nawalparasi and Chitwan districts, and Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) and self-funded individuals. There were thirteen participants all together. All participants were literate i.e. the ranging from completion of high school course to graduate levels, including two I.Sc. forestry holders.

Training Method

There were both theoretical and practical sessions. Over 50 % of the training period was given for practical exercises. Concepts and theories of forest inventory linked to the practical sessions. The training methodology comprised group works, classroom discussions, field exercises- boundary survey and resource assessment, coaching and providing handouts. The facilitators also encouraged and coached the participants who were mathematically weak.

Change in understanding level of participants

A simple test was taken assess participants' level of understanding on various training subject matters, using 12 simple questions. The same questionnaire was employed in both Pre- test and Post-test to analyze the changes in knowledge as a result of the training. The response of participants were broadly categorized into four grades such as D, C, B, and A means who knows less than 25% questions, knows about 25-50 % knows 50- 75%, and knows all questions respectively. The classroom performance, and learning attitude of the participants were also considered during the evaluation. It is clear from the figure 1 that understanding level of the participants significantly changed as a result of the training.



Learning from the training

Most of the participants have shown their confidence to conduct, analyze and prepare a map of forest for the purpose of inventory, plantation or identifying areas for cultivation of medicinal plants in community or protected forests. Similarly, they also gained confidence to conduct resource assessment

including collection of forest crops information (diameter, height, slope distance, number species, total seedlings) and analysis of the data of growing stock to determine mean annual increment, and annual allowable cut. They are now equipped to summarize the data in tabular form as required in operational plan. Therefore, this training is very successful in strengthening forest inventory related skills and knowledge of the participants.

Training was evaluated by the participants individually, indicating what they learnt as new things from the training and also the areas of improvement in future. Each of participants was asked to write key learning points and areas of improvement on each side of Metacard respectively. The summary of their evaluation is presented in following table:

Learning from the training	Areas of improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Concept of community forestry ➤ The government policy/ law of community forestry in Nepal ➤ Familiar with some key terms of forest resource inventory ➤ Survey data collection in the field, analyze and preparation of map ➤ Concept and ideas of forest resource inventory and calculation of MAI and AAC(or H) per ha as well as convert to total forest area ➤ Confidence in doing inventory in any forest in all localities ➤ Change in skill, attitude and knowledge ➤ Ideas of facilitation on conducting training as necessary ➤ Instruments handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use of Over-head Projector, which may convert the training hour much more effective and interesting ➤ The venue of training should be in suitable place with facilities such as telephone and transportation. ➤ Limited instruments especially compass, protectors. ➤ General medicines just for in case.

The training time period seems slightly longer for the Rangers level who have some working knowledge of surveying and mapping. It should preferably be planned for 8 days in future; however, the level of participants and nature of the field exercise areas are to be considered in determining the training period.

List of participant

<i>Name of participant</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Home address</i>
Bir Bahadur Thapa	Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), Jomsom	Gorkha
Dhruba Laudari	Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), Ghandruk	Damauli, Tanahun
Binod Dhakal	Satanchuli FUG, Ramnagar	B. M.- 1, Thimura, Chitwan
Deepak Neupane	Satanchuli FUG, Ramnagar	B. M.- 1, Ramnagar, Chitwan
Harendra Raj K.C.	Satanchuli FUG, Ramnagar	B. M.- 1, Ramnagar, Chitwan
Ram Bahadur Neupane	Satanchuli FUG, Ramnagar	B. M.- 1, Ramnagar, Chitwan
Gaura Devi Kanel	Sundari FUG, Amarapuri	Amaripuri VDC, Nawalparasi
Jeevan Kafle	Sundari FUG, Amarapuri	Amaripuri VDC, Nawalparasi
Padam Lal Sharma	Chautari FUG, Rajahar	Rajahar-8, Bartadi, Nawalparasi
Hari Krishna Khatiwada	Sishawar Buffer Zone FUG, Rajahar	Rajahar-3, Piprahar, Nawalparasi
Tara Nath Tiwari	Amar FUG, Dibyapuri	Dibyapuri VDC, Nawalparasi
Bimal Raj Basyal	Shankhadev Hasaura FUG, Shivmandir	Shivmandir VDC-9, Nawalparasi
Hom Prasad Dumre	Shankhadev Hasaura FUG, Shivmandir	Dhobad VDC-7, Nawalparasi

List of facilitator

Name	Designation	Organisation
Hari Raj Neupane	Course coordinator/ facilitator	Forest Resources Studies and Action Team (ForestAction) E- mail: forestaction@wlink.com.np
Anil Regmi	Facilitator	Consultant of ForestAction
Kamal Bhandari	Facilitator/manager	Forest Resources Studies and Action Team (ForestAction)
Shambhu Tiwari	Field facilitator	District Forest Office, Nawalparasi district