

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry
Forest Department



Measuring Good Governance in Certified and Traditionally Managed
Community Forests at Nyaung Oo Township



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ညောင်ဦးမြို့နယ်အတွင်းရှိ သစ်တောဦးစီးဌာနမှ တည်ထောင်ထားသော အစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်
သစ်တောများနှင့် ဒေသခံပြည်သူများမှ မိရိုးဖလာအရ ထိန်းသိမ်းလာသော သစ်တောများ၏
ကောင်းမွန်သောစီမံအုပ်ချုပ်မှုကို လေ့လာခြင်း

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တွဲဖက်ပါမောက္ခ၊ သစ်တောတက္ကသိုလ်

ဒေါ်ခင်မာလွင်
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မဟာသိပ္ပံကျောင်းသူများ
သစ်တောတက္ကသိုလ်

စာတမ်းအကျဉ်းချုပ်

ရွာသားများ၏ သဘောထား ထင်မြင်ချက်အပေါ်တွင် အခြေခံ၍ ကောင်းမွန်သော သစ်တောအုပ်ချုပ်မှုနှင့် ဒေသခံပြည်သူ အစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောများ၏ အောင်မြင်မှုတို့ အကြားရှိ ဆက်သွယ်မှုကို ရှာဖွေဖော်ထုတ်ရန် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ထိုသို့ဖော်ထုတ်ပေးနိုင်မည် ဆိုပါက နိုင်ငံတော်၏ သစ်တောမူဝါဒ မူဘောင်နှင့် နိုင်ငံတကာ သစ်တောမူဝါဒ မူဘောင် တို့အား ချိတ်ဆက်ပေးနိုင်မည် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ကောင်းမွန်သော သစ်တော အုပ်ချုပ်မှုတွင် အဓိက ကဏ္ဍကြီး(၃)ခု၊ ကဏ္ဍခွဲ(၁၁)ခုရှိရာ ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင် သစ်တော အောင်မြင်ရန်မှာ ဖော်ပြပါကဏ္ဍခွဲ (၁၁)ခုလုံး ပါဝင်မှသာလျှင် အကောင်းဆုံး ဖြစ်မည်ဟု ဤစာတမ်းတွင် ကောက်ချက်ချထားပါသည်။ သို့သော် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတွင် ဒေသခံ ပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောများအား စီမံအုပ်ချုပ်ရာ၌ အထက်ပါကဏ္ဍကြီး(၃)ခု အနက် တတိယကဏ္ဍကြီး၏ ကဏ္ဍခွဲ(၃)ခုသာ လွှမ်းမိုးမှုရှိကြောင်း တွေ့ရှိရပါသည်။ ဤသုတေသန လုပ်ငန်း၏ ရလဒ်အရ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသည် အထက်ဖော်ပြပါ ကဏ္ဍခွဲ(၃)ခုအနက် သစ်တော ဥပဒေသက်ရောက်မှုနှင့် သစ်တောသယံဇာတများစီမံအုပ်ချုပ်မှု ကဏ္ဍခွဲများ၌ ကောင်းမွန်မှု ရှိသော်လည်း မြေပိုင်ဆိုင်မှုနှင့် အခွင့်အရေးဆိုင်ရာ စီမံအုပ်ချုပ်မှု ကဏ္ဍခွဲတွင် တိုးတက်မှု ရရှိအောင် ဆောင်ရွက်ရန် လိုအပ်သေးကြောင်းတွေ့ရှိရပါသည်။ ဤသုတေသနလုပ်ငန်း တွေ့ရှိချက်ကို အခြေခံ၍ တိုးတက်ရန် လိုအပ်နေသေးသော ကဏ္ဍများတွင် စဉ်ဆက်မပြတ် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်စေရန် ဗဟိုမှ စီမံအုပ်ချုပ်သောစနစ်အစား ဒေသခံ ပြည်သူများ၏ ဆန္ဒသဘောထားဖြင့် စီမံအုပ်ချုပ်သောစနစ် အသွင်သို့ ပြောင်းလဲကျင့်သုံးသင့်ကြောင်း အကြံပြုထားပါသည်။

Assessing Good Governance in Community and Traditionally Managed Forests in Nyaung Oo Township

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Abstract

This paper is based on empirical survey regarding forest governance. The research paper aims to explore the relationship between the three pillars of good governance and the success of community forest based on the indirect judgment of community forest user groups (CFUGs) and villagers. In doing so, it tries to link national forest policy framework with international one. The paper concluded that even though the model, which includes three pillars forest governance, is the best one, the influential ones or the ones currently governing community forests in Myanmar happens to be only three out of eleven components which composed pillar 3. The result of the research reveals that Myanmar is good at Forest law enforcement and Administration of forest resources and needs to improve Administration of land tenure and property rights. Moreover, it suggests a change from top down to bottom up approach so that the rest of the components also move to progressive development.

Keywords: governance, pillars, community forest, community forest user groups, framework

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Assessing Good Governance in Community and Traditionally Managed Forests in Nyaung Oo Township

1. Introduction

The current policy of the Union of Myanmar tries to explore measures on poverty eradication for rural people. Evaluation of the World Bank Group Experience with Managing Forest Resources for Sustainable Development (2013) reveals a shift in the forest sector by putting poverty alleviation and sustainable economic development on equal footing with conservation. World Bank also argues that poverty reduction depends on improvements in institutions and policies, based on a vision which goes beyond the role of government to include an active civil society (Brown, et al. 2002).

Good governance is deemed as one way of harnessing its potentiality to contribute in achieving the goal of poverty eradication and dominates today's development agenda. Governance is referred to the interaction of the institutions, organizations, instruments and processes through which a society has the opportunity to engage in making and implementing decisions (Lawrence and Molteno, 2012). In the case of community forestry, governance needs to ensure the contribution of optimal benefits to natural resources and natural resource users.

The quality of good governance determines whether forest resources are used efficiently, sustainably and equitably. Meanwhile, it directly influences whether Myanmar can achieve forest-related development goals. Poor forest governance underlines overall weakness in governance within the country. In fact, community governance should be dynamic, and evolved by combining with learning processes such as participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The research examines three fundamental pillars from Framework for Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance to highlight good governance as the bedrock on which sustainable economic development of the country, poverty reduction and environmental stability rests.

2. Background Assumptions

According to United Nation Development Program – UNDP reports in 2009-2010, poverty in Myanmar fell from 32% to 26%. However, poverty rate must be reduced by half in the period between 1990 and 2015 according to millennium development goal. This is why Myanmar's poverty rate must be reduced to 16% by 2014-2015. 76% of Myanmar's total population lived in the rural areas (Forest Department, 2014) and are mostly poor. As they have little or no prospect of other income generating opportunities or off-farm employment, forests and forest products are the only sources for the rural poor to survive that socio-economic environment by practicing either permanent agriculture or shifting cultivation.

Myanmar is at present in the middle of a dramatic series of governance and economic reforms that have the potential to create a more inclusive society. In this situation, forestry becomes the best development option in rural areas and it is giving a great opportunity to revitalize social forestry as a very promising strategy. Forest Department has been implementing integrated land use practices as a development solution to eradicate shifting

cultivation since 2002. Regarding forest dwellers who practice permanent cultivation and their land use, the Forest Department is implementing new initiatives starting from 2013. It has the plan to totally abrogate the religious and communal areas and paddy fields from the forest land. Regarding horticultural crop and long term agricultural crop lands, the Forest Department will, according to the current procedures, permit long term land leases to continue the process. Concerning with farm lands, the Forest Department will follow community forestry instructions and establish agroforestry based community forests.

Decisions on how land will be used, by whom and for what purposes could have far reaching consequences on the forest dwellers as well as environmental stability of Myanmar. Up to now, community forestry was not very successful in improving livelihoods. Thus, whether the change could enable CFUGs to use policies and practices effectively and efficiently to guide CF operations is still in question. Negative impacts could arise from the lack of good governance. Understanding the performance and compliance of CFUGs might help to identify opportunities and weaknesses. Forestry's experience shows that both 'bottom up' and 'top down' pressures may be needed to build public accountability (Brown, et al. 2002). Otherwise, force of circumstance will cause more encroachments which lead to further environmental instability and threaten the endeavors to develop economy of the nation.

3. Objectives

The general objective of the research is to explore the relationship between the three pillars of good governance and the success of community forestry based on the indirect judgment of community forest user groups (CFUGs) and villagers.

The specific objectives of the research are:

- To assess the activities of CFUGs from the aspect of community forestry instructions (Myanmar Forest Department) and forest governance (PROFOR);
- To find out most influencing pillars and components of forest governance currently enabling the success of community forestry in the opinion of villagers;
- To identify the weak pillars and components in the governance of community and traditionally managed forests so that they can be strengthened for sustainable development and viability of CFUGs.

4. Framework for Assessing Forest Governance

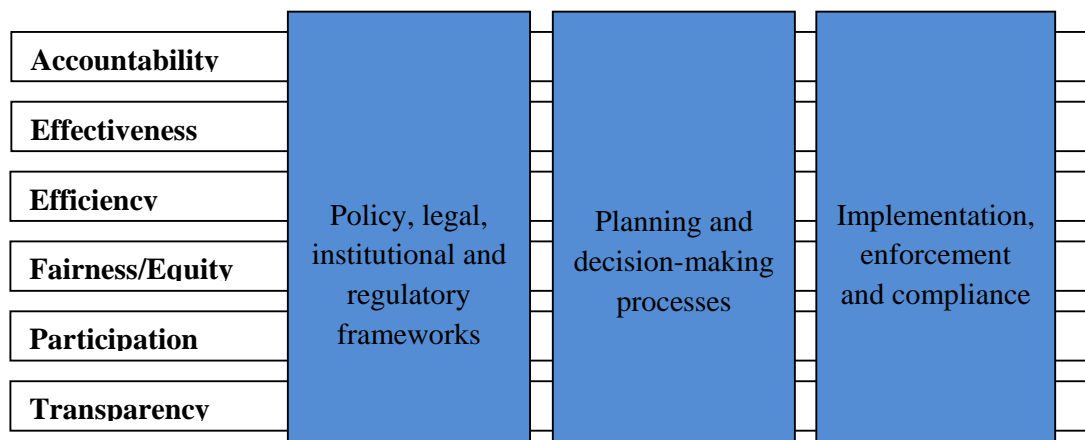


Figure 1: Pillars and principles of governance (PROFOR 2011)

The framework for assessing forest governance in this study is based on 2011 guidelines of FAO and the World Bank's Program on Forest (PROFOR). That framework facilitates description, diagnosis, monitoring, assessment and reporting of the state of governance in a country's forestry sector. It is intended to assist governmental and non-governmental actors interested in the characteristics and quality of forest governance in a particular country. It understands governance as both the context and the product of the interaction of a range of actors and stakeholders with diverse interests. The Framework stands on generally accepted pillars and principles of "good" forest governance (Figure 1).

In this research, 11 relevant components out of 13 key components from three pillars of the framework which represents fundamentals of forest governance were used as key variables to assess the forest governance in community forests.

These key variables are:

Pillar 1: Policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks

- 1.1 Forest-related policies and laws
- 1.2 Legal framework to support and protect land tenure, ownership and use rights
- 1.3 Concordance of broader development policies with forest policies
- 1.4 Institutional frameworks
- 1.5 Financial incentives, economic instruments and benefit sharing

Pillar 2: Planning and decision-making processes

- 2.1 Stakeholder participation
- 2.2 Transparency and accountability
- 2.3 Stakeholder capacity and action

Pillar 3: Implementation, enforcement and compliance

- 3.1 Administration of forest resources
- 3.2 Forest law enforcement
- 3.3 Administration of land tenure and property rights

5. Study Area

Nyaung Oo Township is selected purposively as surveyed area (Figure 2) due to the presence of both community and traditionally managed forests. Three villages for each type

of two different community forest initiatives are selected via quota sampling method. Depending on the situation, 20 to 25 households in each village were selected using simple random sampling (Table 1).

Table 1: Selected villages in Nyaung Oo Township

Name of Village	CF Area (acre)	Year of Establishment	Remark
Zee O	40	-	Traditionally managed
Chaung Shei	50	-	Traditionally managed
Nyaung Gyi	50	-	Traditionally managed
Myay Thin Twin	80	2003	FD initiated
Wet Lu	80	2003	FD initiated
War Khin Gyi	50	2003	FD initiated

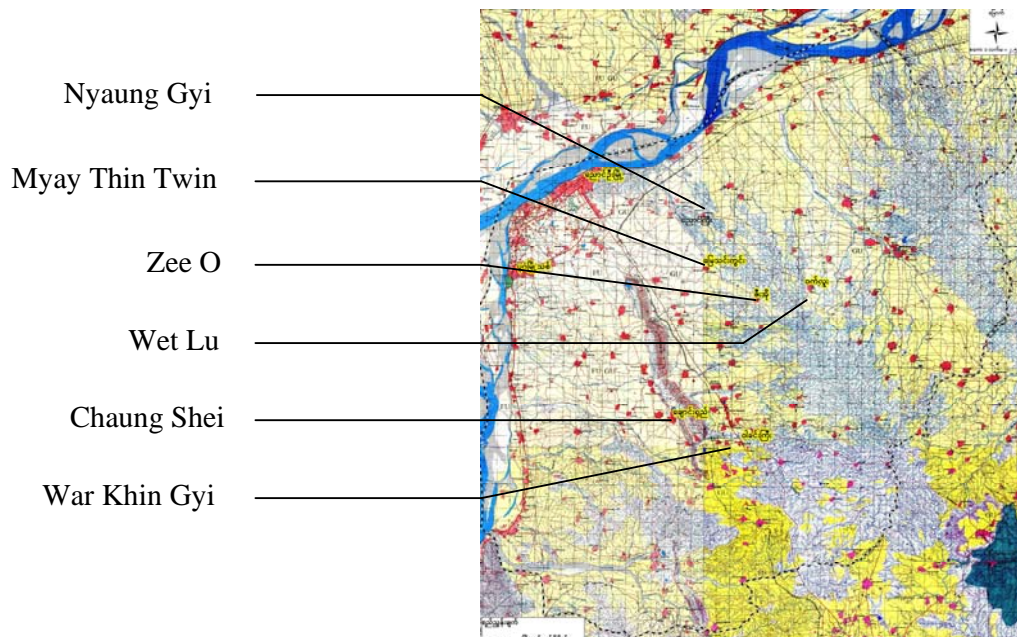


Figure 2: Map showing the studied villages in Nyaung Oo Township

6. Research Methodology

In order to assess the governance of community forests, survey questionnaire was developed into two portions. The first one was household questionnaire measuring specific indicators to provide empirical evidence of the levels of each component in the three pillars

of forest governance and the second part consisting of focus group questionnaire. The idea of the second portion was just to look at forest governance from multiple points of view to improve accuracy and to gain different opinions. The survey questionnaire was administered to 128 households from the six villages. Moreover, focus group questionnaire was administered to elders, village administrative committee, community forest management committee, Forest Department, women, and marginalized groups.

Survey questionnaires were developed and structured based on community forestry instructions and redeveloped again to fit in the relevant indicators of the selected components of the three pillars of the forest governance framework. Multiple linear regression with a stepwise variable selection method was used to explore the relationship between the three pillars of good governance and the success of community forest in the opinion of CFUG members. After performing a number of data compilation and reliability analyses by the research team, the following results were obtained: the model, which includes three pillars of forest governance, explains 59 per cent of the variance in the success of community forestry judged by the villagers. Of these three pillars, pillar 3 makes the largest unique contribution (Beta = .43) and the pillar 1 makes the least (Beta = .26).

7. Findings

The independent variables or the three pillars correlate substantially with the success of community forestry judged by the local villagers (.37, .58 and .67 respectively) (Table 2). On the other hand, the highest value of the correlation between each of the three pillars is .51, which is less than .7 as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) (Table 2).

Table 2 Correlations

		Success of CF	Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3
Pearson Correlation	Success of CF	1.000	.373	.575	.672
	Pillar 1	.373	1.000	.016	.243
	Pillar 2	.575	.016	1.000	.508
	Pillar 3	.672	.243	.508	1.000

Outliers, normality, linearity and independence of residuals are checked by Normal Probability Plot (Figure 3). In the Normal Probability Plot, the points clearly lie in a straight diagonal line from bottom left to top right suggesting no major deviations from normality. Outliers are also checked by inspecting the Mahalanobis distances produced by multiple regression program via running additional analysis. All the five highest values do not exceed the critical value for three independent variables, i.e. 16.27.

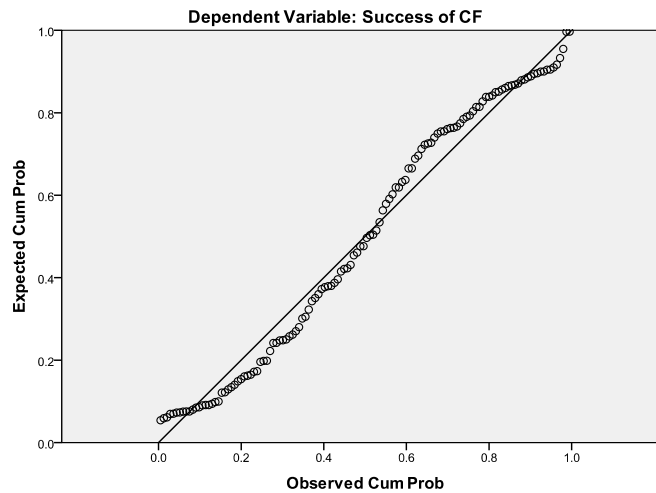


Fig. 3 Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual

R Square value suggests how much of the variance in the dependent variable (success of community forest) is explained by the regression model (Pallant 2001). Table 3 reveals which variables are included in the model at each step: the first step identifying the “best” one variable model and subsequent steps identifying the “best” two variables and three variables models. In this case, pillar 3 was found to be the single best variable (step 1), and pillar 2 as the next best variable (added the most after pillar 3). R Square value .45 developed by the best one variable model explains 45 per cent of the variance in the success of community forestry judged by the villagers. By adding pillar 2, it reaches up to 53 per cent and with all the three pillars, the model explains 59 per cent of the variance in the success of community forestry judged by the villagers.

Table 3 Model Summary of pillars ^d

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.672 ^a	.452	.448	.372
2	.725 ^b	.526	.518	.348
3	.768 ^c	.590	.580	.325

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Pillar 3
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Pillar 3, Pillar 2
- c. Predictors: (Constant), Pillar 3, Pillar 2, Pillar 1
- d. Dependent variable: Success of CF

To enable a comparative study on the contributions of the independent variables, the Beta column of standardized coefficient values of model 3 is also used (Table 4). The largest Beta coefficient is .43 which is pillar 3, implementation, enforcement and compliance, followed by pillar 2, planning and decision-making processes, with Beta value of .35. The Beta value for pillar 1, policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks, is the lowest (.26) indicating that it makes the least contribution.

Table 4 Coefficients

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		1.201	.232
	Pillar 3	.672	6.175	.000
2	(Constant)		-.975	.331
	Pillar 3	.512	7.161	.000
	Pillar 2	.315	4.410	.000
3	(Constant)		-4.171	.000
	Pillar 3	.429	6.175	.000
	Pillar 2	.354	5.254	.000
	Pillar 1	.264	4.408	.000

In order to identify the influential components, multiple linear regression was run again with the eleven components of the three pillars. It is found that component 3.2 or forest law enforcement is the single best variable influencing the success of community forestry. This is followed by component 3.1, administration of forest resources. By adding all three components, pillar 3 reaches up to 45 per cent of variance as seen in the above analysis of the three pillars. The last added independent variable happens to be component 1.4, institutional frameworks from pillar 1 and explains a total of 52 per cent of variance.

Table 4 Model Summary of components ^e

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.501 ^a	.251	.245	.435
2	.615 ^b	.378	.368	.398
3	.670 ^c	.449	.436	.376
4	.722 ^d	.521	.506	.352

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Component 3.2
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Component 3.2, Component 3.1
- c. Predictors: (Constant), Component 3.2, Component 3.1, Component 3.3
- d. Predictors: (Constant), Component 3.2, Component 3.1, Component 3.3, Component 1.4

e. Dependent variable: Success of CF

8. Discussion

The results of multiple linear regression exploring the relationship between the three pillars of good governance and the success of community forest in the opinion of CFUG members can be explained from two perspectives. The first one is the results from three pillars and the second perspective resulting from 11 key components.

It is unsurprising to see the inclusion of three pillars as the best development model as the success of community forest depends on these three pillars of good governance.

However, seeing pillar 3, implementation, enforcement and compliance as the “best” single variable model is shocking. In fact, the involvement of community and villagers in planning and decision-making process should be the most influencing factor for the success since the research is assessing the governance of community forestry.

At the “best” two variable model, pillar 2, planning and decision-making processes, becomes the next best variable by adding the most after pillar 3.

Thus, from single perspective, it seems that planning and decision-making processes are working well to some extent in community forestry. It is exciting and should be welcome assuming that villagers can exercise powers and responsibilities to make and implement decisions affecting natural resources and natural resource users.

Was it really so? The results from multiple linear regression of all the eleven key components of three pillars tell a different story.

In this case, forest law enforcement appears first followed by administration of forest resources and administration of land tenure and property rights. All these are from pillar 3. The last one following these three components is not from pillar 2. It is surprisingly from pillar 1 and happens to be institutional framework.

From this perspective, it may be concluded that even in pillar 3, forest law enforcement and administration of forest resources are the most influential ones with administration of land tenure and property rights to be the least to contribute in pillar 3. It clarifies that community forestry in Myanmar is regressive development.

None of the components under pillar 2, stakeholder participation, transparency and accountability and stakeholder capacity and action, comes out as influential ones explaining that although pillar 2 becomes strong after the compilation of three components under it, each individual component has not made any influential contributions to the success of the community forest.

It means that Myanmar still has works to do with stakeholder participation, transparency and accountability and stakeholder capacity and action to ensure the success of community forestry.

The last influencing one, institutional frameworks, is the least contributing component among four components selected by stepwise analysis. Data from empirical survey shows that it gains the score from Zee O village where forest-related mandates of the Forest Department and the community are clear, coincident and mutually supportive. This factor should be carefully considered in observing the results of the analysis.

To summarize the results, Myanmar is good at Forest law enforcement and Administration of forest resources, but it needs to improve Administration of land tenure and

property rights. It may need to change from top-down to bottom-up approach so that the rest of the components also contribute to progressive development.

9. Conclusion

Community forestry should be flexible to suit different conditions and actors and therefore have multiple variants. From that point of view, the representativeness of this research for community forests in the whole country is very limited. However, many community forestry approaches have been being applied like a blueprint by Forest Department. And from this aspect, it is believed that the research had covered a lot wider community groups. Moreover, even though it merely is an exploratory research, it tries to link national forest policy framework with international one.

The research has intended to assess and evaluate the performance of community forests and CFUGs instead of exposing the weaknesses that have happened in the past. It aims to assist in reviewing the already existing community forests and their governance so that strategy options for future community forestry initiatives can be developed and improved, and CFUGs become more viable. In such a way, forest policy regarding community forestry becomes concordance with broader development policies and can fit in the changing socio-political environment.

The research has pointed out that Myanmar was poor in facilitating community forestry. Instead, it had to administer the community forestry strictly in top down manner. It may be due to complex reasons. However, as mentioned by FAO in 2008, now is the time to empower local people for responsible, productive and sustainable management of local forest resources to meet their needs to stimulate local development. What Forest Department has to do is to facilitate in local institution building or strengthening. This will increase the capacity of the people, leads to perceptual changes and enable them to initiate action on their own in the future.

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