

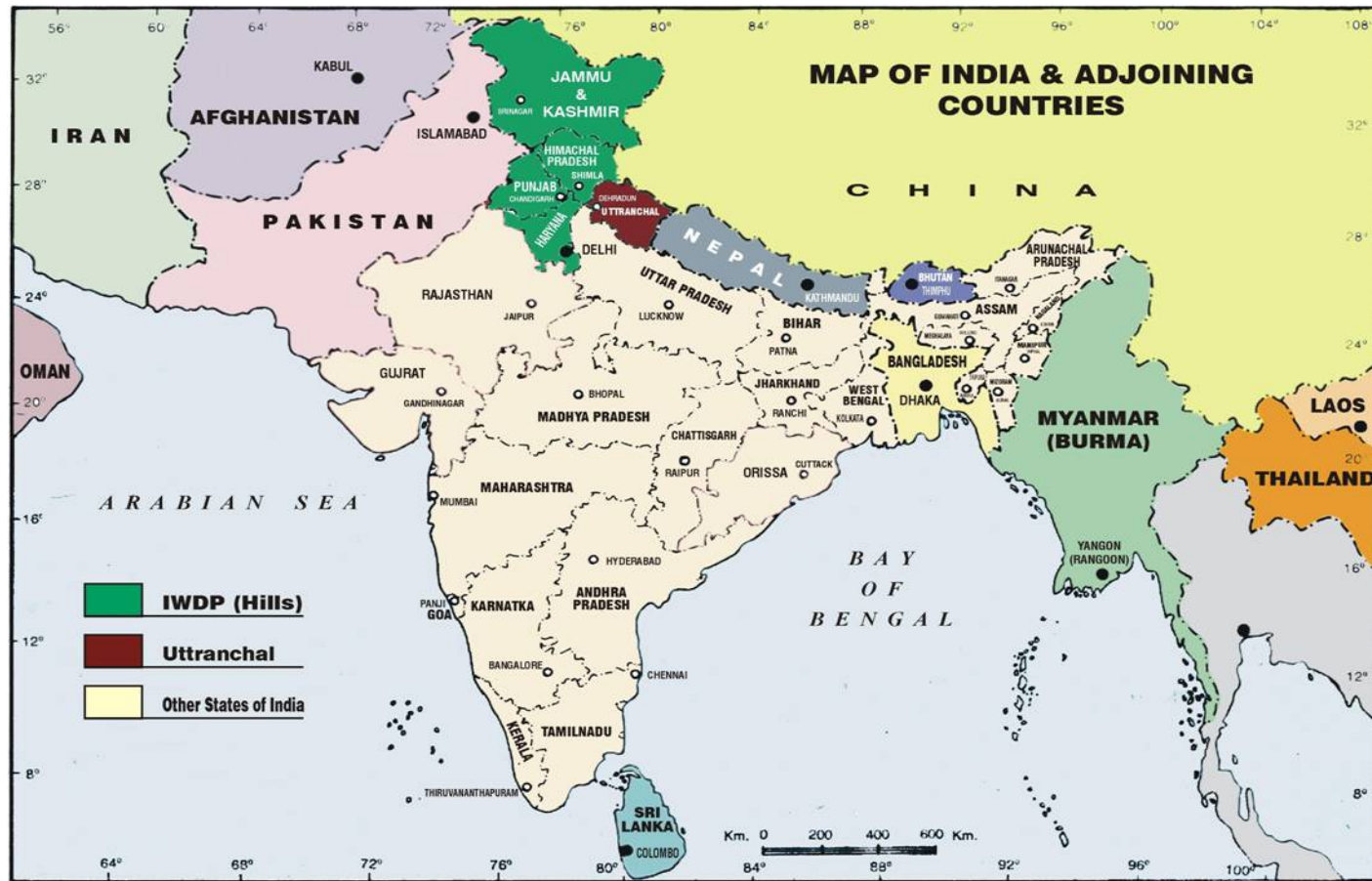
Social inclusion of Nomads and Marginal Groups in Watershed Development in Punjab, India

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Introduction

- **Integrated Watershed Development Project (Hills-II) being implemented in Shivalik hills of five States from 1999 to 2005**
- **The states are Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Uttaranchal**
- **In Punjab state project is being implemented in 17 subwatersheds covering an area of 94,000 ha and a population of 272,000 living in 283 villages.**

The Project States



The Shivalik Ecosystem

- **The Shivaliks lie in the foothills of the Himalayan range**
- **Altitude about 500 to 1,200 meters above msl.**
- **Average rainfall 1,116 mm but highly uneven**



- **Average maximum temperature 43 ° C during May –June ; minimum temperature below 1° C in January**
- **Water scarcity is common**



Project Objectives

- **Productivity improvement using evolving watershed treatment technologies and community participatory approaches**
- **Project expected to contribute significantly to decrease soil erosion, increase water availability**
- **Building capacity of community to take responsibility for maintaining the assets created**
- **Inclusion of Nomads/ Marginal groups; poverty alleviation**

Project Vision Statement regarding Tribals /Nomads:

- **Inclusion of most marginalized and least visible sections of society into the development process.**
- **Create an environment to harmonize the goal of NRM with improvement of quality of life through fulfillment of their felt needs**
- **To learn about their cultural uniqueness**
- **Attempt to learn from them in view of their long association with natural resource base**

Historical Context

- **Seasonal migration of Nomads from upper (Himachal Pradesh) to lower catchments (Punjab) for centuries**
- **During the British rule in the 19th Century ownership of foothills areas was transferred from local Kings to the Landlords who cleared large forest areas leading to erosion.**

- **Land Preservation Act (1900) to check erosion by imposing restrictions on grazing and cutting of trees**
- **Rights of Nomads for seasonal movement were recognized**
- **In post independent India (after 1947) increasing population pressure and other developmental activities put greater pressure on Natural Resources**
- **Symbiotic relationship between nomads and forest owners /landowners**

- **Nomads provide mammals meat and home spun shawls/blankets in return for right to settle and graze on land during their stay**
- **They pay transit fee for crossing into Punjab from Himachal Pradesh**
- **During the last 10 years a declining trend in migration has been observed .**
- **The Nomads leave their families behind when they migrate during winters; strong family and cultural ties; suffer from pangs of separation.**
- **The other tribe of nomads is ‘Gujjars’ who migrate with their families and are now settling down.**

Negotiated Agreements

- **Project had a series of sensitization and orientation sessions with nomads and villagers**
- **The nomads agreed to be member of Village Development Committees**
- **VDCs also glad to own them**
- **Dialogue for collective protection of Natural Resource base and forest regeneration**
- **Voluntarily contributed 20% of cost and 2% to VDC account**

Interventions to address needs of nomads

- Shelter to prevent death of off springs
- **Veterinary services for animals**
- Ponds/Fodder plots and silvipasture development

TAURPALINE SHEETS BEING GIVEN TO GADDIS BY VDC



VETERINARY AID TO GADDIS' ANIMALS



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- **In village Kakruhi another surprise learning experience has been the seasonal impact of nomads on the local poor**
- **At some places, their arrival threatens to cut short the biomass availability to the local poor who harbour resentment on this account**

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- **The conflict was resolved by giving the landless fodder demonstrations - on the lands, which they traditionally take on rent for cultivation**
- **This intervention strategy for nomads has triggered hunger for creative intervention and lateral thinking among the project staff**

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Progress So Far

- **Better understanding and coordination between Project, Locals and migrants**
- **More integration and acceptability of nomads or tribals, improvement in the quality of their life**
- **A change in the attitude of the forest deptt.**
- **Earlier local Forest Department was antagonistic and even hostile**

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- **They apprehended that positive intervention for nomads could result in “swarming” by the nomads**
- **Careful monitoring of the next season proved that this was a misplaced apprehension**
- **And now the forest department is an active partner in sharing of Joint Forest Management pilots involving Gujjars**

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- **The project is identifying impact of nomads' activities on local landless (social mapping)**
- **For better protection nomads changing strategy e.g. Change in size of deras discovered during social mapping**
- **More careful tree lopping due to MOUs with VDCs**
- **Social objectives of the project are being met and inclusion is taking place**
- **-contd-**

- **In totality, we have moved forward and action on the ground has been very tangible and satisfying**
- **Encouraging signals about social inclusion that need to be further explored to understand the evolving dynamics**
- **However, we need to monitor the activities of the stakeholders for some more time before definitive conclusions can be drawn**

Inclusion of other Marginal Groups

- Unless needs of the poor dependent on natural resources are met ecological sustainability would be in jeopardy
- The need for equity in the distribution of benefits among the weaker sections and women is well recognised
- The project is developing safety nets for poor, women & marginal groups through various interventions to augment their income

- **Efforts are being made to promote a range of activities among the rural poor for achieving sustainable livelihoods**
- **Some of the fields in which the poor have been trained are electricians, basket making, rope making, bee keeping, tailoring, embroidery, soccer ball making, lantana furniture making, soap making, and pickle making etc**
- **Forestry interventions designed in partnerships with rural communities have yielded fodder and commercial grasses on a regular basis**

Capacity Building



Vocational Training based on Forest Products



Rope Making



- **Many rural poor have taken up self employment activities such as livestock rearing and rope making due to increased availability of grasses.**
- **People's participation has enhanced the chances of sustainable forest management**
- **forestry interventions have not only protected infrastructure in the upper reaches but has also decreased soil loss and runoff;and improved ground water recharging**
- **An independent study has shown that poor benefit the most from Animal Husbandry**
- **Therefore livestock shelters & mangers are important interventions**

Cattle Shelters



Pisciculture



Women in Watershed Development

- **Women contribute about 36% of the family income**
- **SHGs have been formed with a view to mainstream women in watershed development**
- **The Groups have collected about Rs 0.9 million through savings**

- **SHGs taking loans from the banks and distributed among their members for procurement of raw material for income generating activities such as rope making, family businesses, etc**
- **In some villages women are asking for greater role in direct execution of works including tree plantation and nursery raising**

LESSONS LEARNT

- **Project period should be longer than five years for enhancing the social sustainability**
- **The first two years of the project may primarily be dedicated to staff reorientation and sensitization, community and staff capacity building**
- **Tools like natural resource maps and social resource maps should be intensively used during this period**
- **In the initial period mainly entry point activities and works of immediate relevance should be carried out**

Thank You

