

Community-Based Approaches to Local Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in Northeast India

Presented by
Dr. Vincent Darlong
NERCORMP

(a joint project of IFAD & GoI/DoNER/NEC)

In collaboration with
Community Forestry Alliance in Northeast India
(a project of Community Forestry International)

Consultation Workshop for the Study on "Natural Resources, Water and the Environment Nexus for Development and Growth in Northeast India", New Delhi, June 26-27, 2006

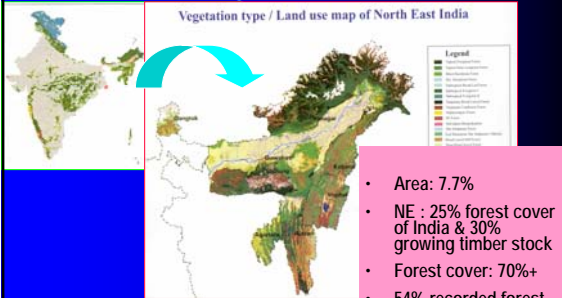
Objectives of Presentation

To share the CBNRM experiences, approaches or strategies and lessons learned from two ongoing projects in Northeast India, viz.

- (a) **North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP)** [a joint project of International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and Government of India in the Ministry of DoNER, NEC]
- (b) **Community Forestry Alliance in Northeast India (CFANED)** [a project of Community Forestry International]

Northeast India

Vegetation type / Land use map of North East India



- Area: 7.7%
- NE : 25% forest cover of India & 30% growing timber stock
- Forest cover: 70%+
- 54% recorded forest under community/private
- 6. Ethnic groups: 262+

Characteristics of NE for CBNRM

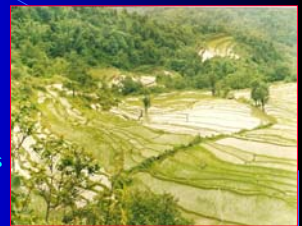
- **Indigenous CBNRM**, such as local community forestry system and river reserve system are traditional.
- **Very high percentage of recorded forest under community or private control facilitating CBNRM.**
- **Recognized under modern Indian Law: Constitutional privilege (Article 371), Autonomous District Council Acts besides Unclassed forests, Anchal Forest Reserves, Village Forest Reserves, etc.**
- **Existence Traditional Village Institutions and governance system for NRM (eg., unbroken tradition of indigenous community forestry system, etc.)**

CBNRM Success Stories

- **CBNRM : Water management**
- **CBNRM : Community forestry management (CFM)**
- **CBNRM: Biodiversity conservation**
- **CBNRM: Jhum (Shifting Cultivation) Management**

CBNRM: Water Resource Management

- **Minor Irrigation**
 - Terrace Development
 - Paddy-cum-fish culture
 - Catchment Protection
 - Double cropping
 - Off-season cropping
 - MI Management Committees
 - Conflict management
- **Village Drinking Water Supply (with home garden, off-season vegetables, etc.)**
- **Community Fishery Development (with catchment protection)**



Terraced field with minor irrigation (not seen) in Ukhrul District, Manipur

CBNRM: Community Forestry Management

- CBOs (LWC, SHGs) & trainings
- CFM boundary demarcation & jhum area determination
- Vegetation enumeration
- SHGs Bank linkages for IGAs
- Regulations for NTFPs & Working Schemes
- Documentation of customary laws & practices
- At Makhhan village in Manipur: CFANEI promoting minor irrigation, terrace development, jhum regulations, forest fire prevention, etc.



CBNRM: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

- In Khasi Hills, Meghalaya: CFANEI promoting Sacred Grove conservation and regeneration network for Eco-tourism & livelihoods, etc.
- Outside CFANEI: YMA Reserves in Mizoram, Village Wildlife Sanctuaries in Nagaland (CCAs with potentials for CBNRM)



Mawphlang Sacred Grove, Meghalaya

8

CBNRM: JHUM MANAGEMENT

- Jhum regulation
 - Jhum rationalization & optimization
 - Crop intensification
 - Crop diversification
 - Crop commodification
 - Jhum redevelopment / modification
- Jhum agro-biodiversity conservation
- Jhum & forest fire management



Lessons learned & Recommended actions

- Although NERCORMP & CFANEI strategies have demonstrated elements of CBNRM success, our overall **understanding of various CBNRM initiatives in NE India**, particularly how they are envisaged and prioritized between concerns of livelihood enhancement, sustainability (ecological/ social/ economic), equity, democratic decentralization processes, etc. **remained limited**. Understanding on various approaches of different CBNRM implementers, how these approaches or strategies have implications or are affected by wider regional development discourses and policies also remained limited. **Hence, there is an urgent need for research based CBNRM documentation and studies.**

10

Contd....

- Dominant & expanding role of Govt in development in NE India continue to generate a widely-held perception that Govt is the provider, which in turn is also influencing to the gradual erosion of community-level capacity for self-governance and self-action. On the other hand, Govt is guided by 'decentralization policy' aiming to stimulate peoples' capacity for self-governance and self action for development, particularly in the areas of NRM (eg. JFM). Multiplicity of communities and traditions of resource tenure in NE India also offer challenging dimension. Therefore, **there is the need for developing a flexible Framework for CBNRM to provide guiding principles and operational strategies.**

11

Contd....

- While many of the national NRM policies such as the National Forest Policy of 1988 & JFM resolutions are primarily towards **ecological sustainability and improving forest cover**, however the overriding perspective of the communities to successful CBNRM is the underlying **economic & livelihood enhancement**. Blending and linking these two objectives and aspirations through appropriate research for policy reorientation and field application remained a challenging task. **One possible best option could be transforming JFM into CFM.**

12

Contd...

- Sustainability of CBNRM has to be adjusted to local capacity. Key area of concern is the general lack of coordination between the institutions (academic and R&D) government agencies. This could seriously impair the sustainability of the CBNRM, and facilitation and acquisition of knowledge for continuous refinement, including policy improvement according to times, demands and ground realities. Research is also needed to develop models that will make the NRM programmes attractive and remunerative to the investors for continued support outside the government, particularly when there is strong possibility of linking CBNRM (eg. CFM) with climate change programmes, carbon trading, etc.

13

Contd...

- Experiences in CFANEI showed that CFM-led CBNRM offers greater effective flexibility to address both conservation and livelihood goals, as compare to the Govt-initiated JFM-led CBNRM in hill areas of NE India. Hence the followings are recommended:
 - ❖ Strengthen Indigenous Community Institutions (ICIS) particularly those with CFM.
 - ❖ Formal Recognition of CFM Areas and funding support, particularly under Community Carbon Funding and/or Community Biodiversity Payment.
 - ❖ Strengthen CFM Rules with policy support and reorienting Govt strategies (eg. Forest Dept's JFM.)

14

Contd...

- CBNRM strategies with the following attributes facilitate achieving Poverty Reduction.
 - Reversing degradation of natural resources (particularly forest) improves equity and opportunity.
 - Expands livelihood options.
 - Resolving tenure improves security.
 - Participation builds equity (fair share, equal opportunity, gender concern).
 - Builds assets: social, human, physical, natural and financial.

Therefore, upscaling of CBNRM could be a good option for rural development strategy in NE India

15

Contd

- CBNRM as adaptive learning could provide useful strategy towards Developing Sustainable Rural Communities through:
 - ❖ Community institution building for social mobilization & motivation, in partnership with active local TVI support and NGO participation.
 - ❖ Appreciative participatory bottom-up planning & action.
 - ❖ Entrepreneurship & private sector development and Enterprise support services.
 - ❖ Market analysis and market development.
 - ❖ Livelihoods through CBNRM (eg Community forestry).

16

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Effective CBNRM Strategies as experienced in NERCORMP & CFANEI

- CBNRM & livelihoods
- CBNRM & entrepreneurship development
- CBNRM & ecological sustainability
- CBNRM & community learning & mobilization
- CBNRM & democratic decentralization
- CBNRM & equity
- CBNRM & social transformation
- CBNRM & private sector advancement & local development

17

**“Go to the people,
Live among the people,
Learn from the people,
Plan with the people,
Work with the people....”**

**Credo of Rural Reconstruction
(in Dr. Y.C. James Yen's Vision)**

18

THANK YOU

Acknowledgements

- Mr. K. Moses Chalai, PCDS, NERCORMP-IFAD
- Dr. Mark Poffenberger, CFANEI-CFI