

Bazaar of Ideas

“Applying the Green Growth approach for basic service delivery and poverty reduction”

Committee on Environment and Development
first session, Bangkok, 2 – 4 December 2009

Name: Community Forestry under Conditions of Low Forest Dependence

Conserving: Forests

Sector: Forestry

Presented by: Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka

Championed by: Forest Department, Sri Lanka with the Support from Sri Lanka Australia Natural Resource Management Project (SLANRMP)

Location: Sri Lanka

Year of introduction: 2003



Concept: The project was designed in a way that it delivers incentives for the local communities to actively engage in community forestry activities. Accordingly the project intervened in three broad aspects, namely conservation oriented forest-based activities, income support activities (agriculture and micro-enterprise activities) and community-based activities. Some of the activities, mainly forest-based activities, implemented under those categories have commonly been implemented across many sites. On the other hand the income earning and community welfare activities were introduced to match local conditions and community needs.

Other information: The Community Forestry (CF) project implemented in the said areas had two main goals namely, to ensure sustainability of forest resources and to contribute to poverty reduction and enhance well-being of the local communities. Usually CF programs work well in the contexts with high forest dependence. In contrast, CF in Sri Lanka was implemented in a context where there is less dependence on forest resources (as a source of livelihood), which shows the innovativeness of approach. The pilot project was undertaken with the support from the SLANRMP. After the withdrawal of the project the FD is the responsible agency for facilitating and coordinating future CF programs in the country. Future CF programs will have to focus on undertaking innovative measures of benefiting communities and strengthening links between the FD and communities under low forest dependence conditions.

Associated costs and benefits: The project has brought in significant social and institutional benefits, which are commonly enjoyed by the villagers. Among the activities, rehabilitation of tanks and community wells contributed to provide water for both agricultural and drinking purposes. Improvement of rural roads seems to be quite appealing for villagers where lack of such infrastructure remained a main barrier for rural development. It has also provided alternative income sources for households, especially for women participants. Through the project, a considerable degraded land area has been rehabilitated. The project has benefited fifty villages in five districts of the country. Around 1,761 households have directly benefited.

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