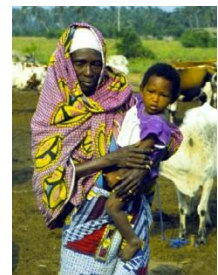




Qualitative Research Methods in Rural Development Studies (4903-470)

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**Social and Institutional Change in
Agricultural Development (490C)**



Introduction

A little exercise in interviewing



Please interview your neighbour about the issues, and then introduce him/her to the class – and vice versa

1. What is your name?
2. Where were you born, and where did you grow up?
3. Where and what did you study before coming to Hohenheim?
4. What are your career goals?
5. Why are you interested in learning about qualitative research methods?
 - What do you expect from this course?
 - How is this course linked to your career goals?
6. Do you have any experience in working and/or conducting research in a developing country? If yes, could you please share some information about it.

Qualitative and Quantitative Research



- **“There's no such thing as qualitative data. Everything is either 1 or 0”**
 - Fred Kerlinger

- **“All research ultimately has a qualitative grounding”**
 - Donald Campbell

Source: Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 40) *Qualitative Data Analysis*

Quantitative and Qualitative

„In many social sciences, quantitative orientations are often given more respect. This may reflect the tendency of the general public to regard science as relating to numbers and implying precision.“ (Berg, 2009)

Quantity: essentially an amount of something

Quality: elementally the nature of things- the what, how, when, and where of things

Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, characteristics or descriptions of things.

Some aspects of Qualitative Research



- Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. It aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are.
- **It is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about:**
 - Why people behave the way they do
 - How opinions and attitudes are formed
 - How people are affected by the events that go on around them
 - How and why cultures have developed in the way they have
 - The differences between social groups
- Questions which begin with: why? how? in what way? And not generally how much, how many and to what extent?

Some misperceptions about qualitative research



- **Misperceptions**

- Qualitative research means you just interview people.
- Qualitative research is less rigorous than quantitative research.
- Doing qualitative research does not require specific training, everyone can do it.
- Qualitative research requires less preparation than quantitative research.

- **In reality**

- Qualitative research requires different skills from quantitative research.
- Qualitative research requires as much preparation as quantitative research.
- Documenting qualitative findings, analyzing them and writing them up is as challenging as analyzing quantitative data.

What are the learning goals of this module?

Learning goals of this module

- **This module aims to enable you to**
 - understand the theoretical foundations of qualitative research methods;
 - be familiar with a range qualitative, including participatory, research methods that can be used for different purposes (academic research, project management, advocacy);
 - plan research projects that are based on qualitative research methods and identify the research methods that are most suited for a given purpose;
 - collect empirical data using selected qualitative research methods;
 - analyze data that have been collected using these qualitative methods; and
 - Draw conclusions and policy implications from qualitative research.



Case of wildlife conservation in Jammu and Kashmir, India

Doctoral Research by Ms. Saloni Gupta, University of London,
2011

Wildlife and Forest Conservation in J&K



Map of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: Saloni Gupta, 2011 (PhD Thesis, University of London)

Case of Tibetan Antelope (*Chiru*)

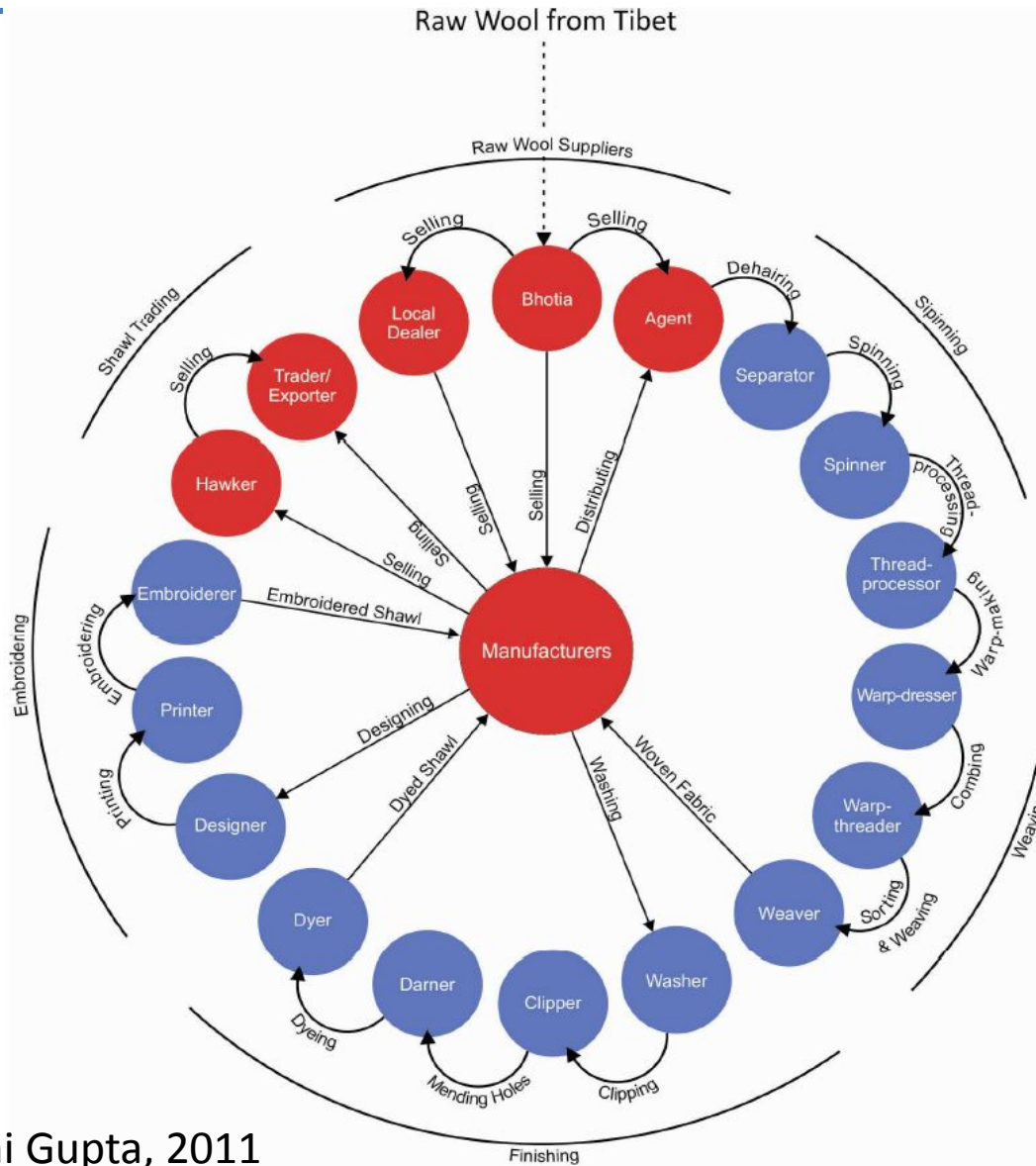
- Chiru endemic to Tibetan high plains
- Wool (known as *shahtoosh*) derived from the underskin
- Weaving done exclusively in Kashmir; age old industry
- Huge demand in high-end fashion markets of the world
- Price range 1000-10000 Euro per shawl; employs 20000 people
- International ban implemented in 2002



Figure 1: Male and female chiru (Schaller, 1997)



Production Process of Shawls



Trade routes of *shahtoosh* wool



Pictures from fieldwork



De-hairing Machine



Spinner



Warp Dressers



Warp Threaders

Issues in banning of *shahtoosh*

- Prevalence of myths regarding the origin of the wool
- Trade made “illegal“ in India since 1986 but J&K has its separate constitution
- First scientific evidence on the connection between *shahtoosh* and killing of chiru in 1992
- International pressure on the Indian government since mid 1990s; role of conservation NGOs (WPSI, IFAW)
- Long legal battle in the J&K High Court and Supreme Court
- Decision to ban trade in 2002; massive unemployment issue
- Shawl traders and manufacturers resisted the ban; poor workers made scapegoats
- False promises; No compensation or rehabilitation
- Trade continues illegally; workers further marginalised
- What after antelope population rises?

Some questions for discussion...

- The research objective is to understand the process of banning of Shahtoosh, its impact on the livelihoods of dependent communities, and perceptions of different actors involved.
- What are the limitations and prospects of exploring this issue with the help of quantitative data?
- Is qualitative research more suitable to understand processes and politics of resource conservation ?
- How could one make use of qualitative research methods in this case?

Data collection

- **Historical records, travellers accounts, archives etc**
- **Reports produced by wildlife conservation agencies**
- **Proceedings of the High Court and Supreme Court (documents relating to legal battle)**
- **Fact finding mission reports and other government records**
- **Interviews with various stake holders:**
 - schedules with open ended questions, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, informal conversations and observation
 - Purposive and Snowball sampling
 - interviewed a total of 117 respondents - 92 *shahtoosh* workers; 16 government officials; 7 conservationists and 2 politicians

Description of fieldwork period

- **Stage 1: Building up contacts, personal setup and initial interviews with workers**
 - Finding a safe place to stay
 - Interpreter and/or research assistant
 - Preliminary information from reports produced by wildlife organisations
 - Mapping out categories localities of workers
 - Preliminary interviews with key informants- senior members of workers community
 - Preparation of questions and schedules for next round of interviews with workers
 - Information about protest, resistance and illegal trade emerged during this stage

Description of fieldwork period

- **Stage 2: Interviews with state actors and local NGOs**
 - Understanding the “split” role of the state in enforcing the ban and allowing the trade to continue
 - Interviews with local NGOs and state actors on rehabilitation
 - Conflicts between the state and NGO actors
- **Stage 3: Interviews with central government officials and national NGOs**
 - Insights into the legal battle between the centre, state and conservationist groups
 - Efforts towards rehabilitation or compensation
 - Status of illegal trade after the ban

History of Shawl Industry

- ❑ **Origin of shawl industry (14th century)**
- ❑ **State owned workshops (*karkhanas*) developed under the Mughals (16th century)**
- ❑ **Shawl revenue more than land revenue during Afghan rule (18th century)**
- ❑ **Expansion of shawl markets and trade with Europe (19th century)**
- ❑ **Complex division of labour; brokers became powerful**
- ❑ **Heavy taxation on poor shawl workers continued until independence**
- ❑ **Working conditions improved a bit in post-independence period**
- ❑ **Industry dominated by rulers and merchants in pre-independence period was now dominated by manufacturers and traders**

Legal Status of *Chiru*

- **Listed in Appendix 1 of CITES, making trade illegal**
- **Listed as “endangered” in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals**
- **In India, protected under the Wildlife Act 1977; permitted trade under license**
- **Completely banned in India in 1986**
- **J&K has its separate wildlife protection act**
- **Under J&K Wildlife Act 1978, listed in schedule II; permitted trade under license**
- **Trade continued in spite of international ban**
- **Legally banned in J&K in 2002**

Ban on *Shahtoosh*: chronology of events

- Late 1980s: CITES and wildlife conservation NGOs began creating awareness about *shahtoosh* and antelope
- No awareness programmes in J&K; only in metropolitan cities
- 1995: CITES accused Indian MoEF of failing to stop the trade
- Survey team of MoEF to study *chiru* habitat, and market demand; found *chiru* farming as not a viable option
- Wildlife Warden of Leh stated that captive breeding is possible but requires high investment costs
- 1997: Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) requested the J&K state to stop the trade as it is illegal according to international laws

Split role of the state?

- Party politics being played by two important political outfits in Kashmir (National Conference and People's Democratic Party)
- 'Split role' played by the J&K state; acting as an agency for imposing the ban and at the same time allowing illegal production and trade to continue
- Out of 92 *shahtoosh* workers interviewed, 24 still engaged in shahtoosh
- Manufacturers have strong links with politicians and police; poorer workers often harassed by officials
- No seizures of *shahtoosh* in Kashmir; only confiscated outside J&K and abroad
- Rent seeking opportunities for local officials

Excerpts from interviews: politics of banning



“As long as I am the Chief Minister, *shahtoosh* will be sold in Kashmir. The campaign to ban the trade maligns the people of the state [...] There was no evidence of Tibetan antelope being reduced in number or their being shot to acquire wool for *shahtoosh*”

(CM of J&K, 28 June, 1998)

“Why target us? Why not raid the houses of ministers, bureaucrats and rich people? We've supplied *shahtoosh* shawls to most of them”

(A poor shawl hawker, 6 Nov 2006)

“We are harassed by the police. We pay several thousand rupees at different check posts until we reach Delhi. Many a time, they keep the money as well as our shawls. The Delhi police calls us notorious militants and anti-India people [...] You can imagine what will happen to us after protests and agitations”

(Shawl hawker, 2 Nov 2006)

Perpetuation of myths post-ban

Excerpts from interviews:

“Ban on *shahtoosh* is not justifiable as it based on the wrong reason that wool is obtained after killing an animal found in Tibet. Actually, the wool is collected by shearing goats that live on the Nepalese side and eat white mud. Had the reason behind the ban been true, I would have been the first one to support it.”

“No animal is being killed for *shahtoosh* wool. Had it been the case, the animals would have become extinct centuries ago. The mere fact that the supply of wool in Kashmir has increased over the last three decades confirms the fact that the animal is safe. I have heard that the animal looks like peacock”

(Interviews with *Shahtoosh* weavers in Srinagar, 2006)



Differential Impact of Ban

- Different categories of workers have experienced differential impacts
- *Shahtoosh* workers are left to work with *pashmina* wool; already a saturated sector
- Separators have become jobless because dehairing of *pashmina* wool is possible with machines
- Spinners, clippers, weavers, designers, darners, warp-dressers and embroiderers have lost almost two-third of their incomes
- Manufacturers, wool agents and traders have devised ways to compensate their losses
- Artificial shortages of wool, reaching out to rural artisans, use of machines, adulteration of wool and yarn, and deducting wages of poorer workers on the pretext of illegality

Excerpts from interviews: Differential Impact of Ban

“Before the ban, I was respected in my locality. People used to greet me as *salaam sahib* owing to my prosperity but after the ban, we are struggling even to bear the daily household expenses. The other name for our life now is compromise as we practically experience it at every step [...] These days, even a wage-labourer earns more than we do”

(Interview with a weaver, Srinagar)

“I used to clean 200 grams of *shahtoosh* per day and earned Rs. 250 for it. Although I did not receive this amount of wool everyday, my monthly income with *shahtoosh* was Rs. 1000 per month [before the ban]. With this income, I supported my family by contributing to the household expenses. After the ban, I get no wool to clean and the job of dehairing *pashmina* has also now been taken over by machines.”

(Interview with a separator, Srinagar)

‘Delegated Illegality’

- Poverty and lack of alternative employment opportunities are not the only determining factors for the participation of poor workers in the now illegal trade
- The workers are controlled by manufacturers and wool agents who delegate illegal tasks to them
- No concrete measures were taken by the government and conservation NGOs for rehabilitation, nor any compensation paid.
- Whatever discrete initiatives were taken, they failed to address their primary concerns

Excerpts from interviews: rehabilitation



“I have heard that the School is providing training to the shawl embroiderers these days. These programmes are futile as we know better designs than the young experts in the schools. The government needs to plan programmes which can help us overcome the real problems we face — low wages and exploitation.”

“I have been registered with the Handlooms Department since 1992. In 2004, I came to know about a scheme of loans for up to one hundred thousand rupees for shawl workers. I applied for it. The officer asked me the names of the instruments used in weaving and tested my weaving skills. He then asked for a bribe of 10,000 rupees and an undertaking by a government officer in support of my application for a loan. I did not know any government official and dropped the idea [...]”

(Interviews with Shahtoosh workers in Srinagar, 2006)

Conclusions

- **Global concern for wildlife conservation is justifiable but matching accountability towards affected communities is missing**
 -Blanket ban without rehabilitation unlikely to meet goals of sustainable resource management, especially in conflict regions
- **Shrunken space for protest in Kashmir crucial to sidelining issues of alternative livelihoods of affected populations**
- **Kashmiri shawl hawkers often face harassment from police agencies outside state, seen as suspected terrorists**
- **Powerful actors are able to manipulate the laws and minimise losses, the poor pay the cost of conservation**

Conclusions

- **Political climate of state largely shapes manner in which nature conservation interventions experienced by affected communities as well as ways in which state responds to local resistance**

- **In regions affected by violence, nature conservation policies can collide with ongoing political struggles between state, militant groups and wider civil society over legitimacy to rule**
 -Nature conservation interventions permeate different layers of politics from macro to micro, and in turn reconfigure power relations**

 -Conservations interventions rather than producing fixed outcomes are contested, resisted and reshaped by different stakeholders according to their powers and interests**

Categories and concepts emerging from data



- **Sustainability for *whom*?**
- ***Split* role of the state**
- ***Differential* impact of banning on different categories**
- **Provides larger picture of the political, social, historical and economic contexts of conservation policies**
 - Something difficult to capture through merely quantitative studies
- **Use of grounded theory helps in generating new concepts and theories (beyond simple verification!)**

Second Example

Joint Forest Management in Jammu and Kashmir



Joint Forest Management (JFM) in J&K



- **Rationale: Forest conservation can not be undertaken without support and participation of local people
.....Need to create ‘Sustainable livelihoods’ in conservation programmes**
- **By late 1980s, international forest conservation policies started to advocate *decentralisation* and *joint management* of natural resources**
- **Also indigenous grassroots movements like Chipko demanding local control over local resources
.....Both factors led to participatory forest management policies through out India**
JFM programme initiated in early 1990s, funded by central government, implemented by State Forest Departments

JFM: Key features

- **Forest Department (FD) and village community enter into an agreement to *jointly* protect and manage forest lands around villages by sharing responsibilities and benefits**
- **Principle: through local participation villagers will get better access to non-timber forest products and a share in timber revenue in return for their shared responsibility for forest protection**
- **JFM Committees to assist forest staff in rehabilitating degraded forests, protecting plantations, preventing timber thefts and encroachments, enclosing grazing areas, public works**

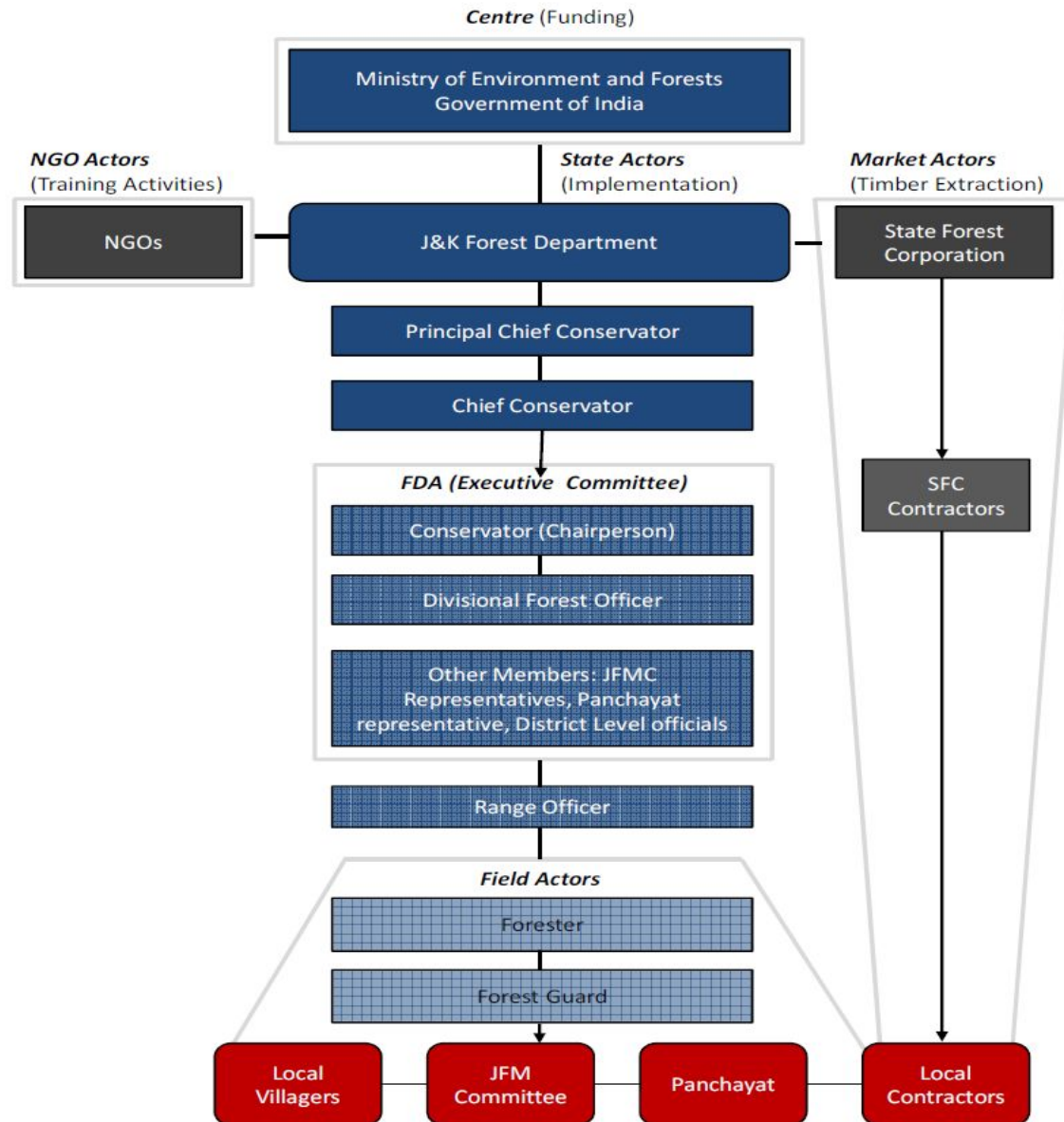
BUT.....JFM applied only in degraded forests and plantations on community lands, not on prime forest areas

JFM: key features

- Taking stock of previous JFM projects, government decided to give funds directly to JFM Committees
.....Two-tier decentralised mechanism of FDAs at executive level and JFMCs at village level
- FD claims success of JFM ----- increase in forest cover, better availability of fuelwood and fodder, active participation of communities in the programme etc.

BUT.....ground reality presents very different picture
- Conducted field study in two villages of Jammu region which FD considers as 'success' stories

Actors and Funding Process in JFM



Ground reality of JFM

- From Centralisation to Decentralisation: Do blockages disappear?
 - JFM Committees not elected but selected by field forest staff
 - Lack of awareness about JFMCs: rules, rights and responsibilities
 - Funds and decisions still controlled by field forest staff, not JFMCs
 - Created tensions within community (between JFMC and villagers)
 - More responsibilities than any real benefits for villagers

As Chairperson of the JFMC stated:

“I go and check the closures every four days. I even fight with people in the village for the illegal collection of damaged timber from the forests. I get no rewards for it. But I have to do this, otherwise if anybody damaged a closure, the staff would put the blame on me.”

Increased Biomass, Reduced Access

- FD mainly grows timber species rather than those more useful for villagers to meet fodder and fuel-wood requirements
- Behaviour of forest staff towards poorer villagers unchanged ----- still treated as ‘forest destroyers’ than ‘forest protectors’
- Differential attitudes towards poor and affluent

As one respondent narrated:

“There is no change in the attitude of the forest staff towards the local people. I just need one log to repair my roof but the Guard does not provide me timber [...] All forest employees are friends of the affluent. The rich get even deodar for firewood but the poor like me cannot get it even for constructing a house. Laws are only for the poor.”

Information asymmetries and corruption



- Information asymmetries between FD and villagers ----- opportunity for field-staff to bolster their authority as well as manipulate forest laws for private gains
- Villagers confused on what is 'legal' and what is 'illegal'

As stated by a village resident:

“Yes, the relationship between the forest staff and the villagers has improved in the sense that they talk courteously with us now. But they never discuss their forest activity plans with us and make late payments for the labour we provide in the construction activities. What is worse is that the permit fee is only Rs. 350 but they charge us Rs. 3000. They say that it is their commission”.

Split-role of Field-staff

- Dilemmas faced by forest guard with regard to Forest regulations vis-a-vis local needs

Interview with a Forest Guard:

“The forest laws are not in consonance with the needs of villagers. In winter, people come to me every day with their demands for timber to repair their houses. They also demand fuelwood at the times of marriages, community feasts and funerals. Their needs are very genuine and I give them the best possible help even going against law”.

Illegal Timber Felling



□ *An interview with forest guard:*

“In Mantalai, a few months back, BSF personnel felled 15 deodar trees. The Forest Guard of Mantalai complained about this to the DFO. The DFO sent a letter to the Deputy Inspector General, BSF complaining about the illegal felling by the BSF personnel in the region. After this, the Guard started receiving threats until he apologised and presented ten kilograms of ghee [clarified butter] to the BSF personnel in the village [...] In my forest range also, they illegally fell firewood and timber [...] I am afraid of the BSF because it will start snowing next month and they will clear a forest patch, and I will have to face antagonism from the local villagers”.

Illegal Timber Felling

□ An interview with a village resident:

“Most of our forests are being destroyed by the security forces [...] The BSF gets funds from the Indian government to buy coal and kerosene oil. They pocket this money and, instead, cut the trees from the surrounding forests for firewood, taking our share away”.



Conclusions from JFM case-study



- **Forest bureaucracy rarely devolves effective powers on decision making or funds onto local levels resulting in *repeated re-centralisation***
- **Increase in forest cover in last ten years but villagers access reduced to forest resources**
- **State Forest Corporation contractors and FD make profits out of valuable forest resources but local populations *devoid* of accessing resources even for subsistence needs**
- **Split role and dilemmas of field-staff**
- **Forest laws unclear to villagers, manipulated by field-staff for rent-seeking**

Cost of nature conservation borne by the poor than by who commit most of the violations