

SITE STRATEGY FOR SATCHARI NATIONAL PARK

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SATCHURI NATIONAL PARK

1. Environment Scanning

Location

- Satchari National Park (NP) is located in Chunarughat Upazilla of Habigonj District. It is situated nearly 130 km north east of Dhaka, and about 60 km south west of Srimongol on the former Dhaka-Sylhet road, now less used due to construction of the bi-pass road that is used as the main Dhaka-Sylhet highway.
- The Park has an area of 242.82 ha (600 acres) and comprises forests of Raghunandan Hills Reserve Forests within the Satchari Range.
- The notification by the Ministry of Environment and Forest has recently (2005) been made declaring Satchari as National Park.
- A number of villages and tea estates fall within the zone of influence of Satchari NP. Satchari Tea Estate borders the Park entirely on the western side while on the eastern side Chaklapunji Tea Estate runs parallel to the Park boundary. Other Tea Estates located close to the Park are Amo, Surma, Nababkhan, Chandpur, Teliapara, Kapaichora and Laskarpur.

Forest Cover

- Forests of the park are composed of mixed tropical evergreen and semi evergreen plant species. The tall trees are deciduous and the under storey evergreen.
 Original natural forest has been altered by clear felling and subsequent long shortterm plantation practices. Now only 200 ha have natural forest, rest is secondary raised forest.
- Roughly 15-20% of forest cover is completely lost, and another 60% of its area thinned considerably due to illegal logging and fuel wood collection. Herbs and shrubs have declined by 60%; medicinal plants have also declined by the same proportion.
- Wild life has declined by roughly 80% and other forms of habitats have become extinct or are facing near extinction.

Settlements

- There are 15 settlements (villages) within the interface landscape, covering 5 km from the forest boundary. Out of the 15 villages there is a Tipra tribal village, having 24 households, located inside the forest; the remaining 14 villages are located 6-8 km away from the forest.
- 5 of the 14 villages have medium stake, 5 minor and the rest 4 negligible.

Social Stratification

- There are about 2190 households (including tribal households) in 15 villages that are located within the interface landscape.
- Poverty is pervasive, particularly among the tribal people. Overall, 4-5% people of the area are rich, 20-25% of people are middle class, 55-60% are poor and 17-20% are Hard core poor (HCP).
- Literacy rate is generally low. Roughly 80% of the tribal people and 40% of Bengalis are illiterate, 40% of tribal children and 85% of Bengali children attend primary school; very few go to high school and college.

Stakeholders

According to PRA report, key stakeholders include:

Mohaldars

Illegal tree fellers

Fuel wood collectors/ Bamboo collectors/ House building material collector

Honey collectors

Sun grass collectors

Fruits/vegetables collectors

Medicinal plant collectors

Lemon cultivators

Saw mill owners

Furniture shop owners, and

Brick field owners

- Mahalder, fuel wood collectors and illegal tree fellers have major stakes and are
 directly responsible for forest degradation. Mohaldars are auctioneers who are
 basically rich and influential locally. Other influential rich people includes:
 sawmill owners, furniture shop owners, brickfield owners, etc.
- Bamboo collectors, house building materials collectors and lemon cultivators are medium stakeholders, the rest 7 have minor stakes.
- There are about 18 saw mills (maximum are in Chunarughat), 3 brick fields (gets 40-50% of its energy requirement from forest), 20 furniture shops, and 4-5 fuel wood traders (in Teliapara, Deworgach and Chunarughat bazaar) who procure fuel wood from individual collectors, sell those to local consumers and transport to other districts by truck or train.
- Poor people living inside the forest primarily collect vegetables, building materials, twigs, and branches; outside poor people--tea estate workers, old and unemployed and Women and children--mostly extract fuel wood.

Livelihood

- Primary occupation of people is agriculture. Roughly, 65-70% is directly dependent on it. 20-25% is working as wage labourer, 3-5% as fuel wood collectors and timber fellers and 3% as service holders. 1-2% is also engaged in employment overseas.
- About 20-25% of people in the tea estates are unemployed. Among the villagers unemployment is 5-7%. In the surrounding areas 15% of people remain unemployed throughout the year.
- Unemployment is higher during Baisak and Jastha and during Posh and Magh; timber felling is more during wet season primarily due difficulty in forest patrolling by the FD staff.
- Lemon cultivation is the primary economic activity among the Tipras.

Of late there has been deterioration of economic status of people in general and this has contributed to an increase in the number of day laborers, fuel wood collectors, timber traders, illegal fellers. Because of increased timber felling there has also been proliferation of sawmills, carpenters, business people, in the surrounding growth center.

Power Structure and the Local Governance

- The most influential person is the local MP, Mr. Mostofa Shahid who has direct link with local elites.
- Others are: Masuk Miah, Chairman-Shahjahanpur, Abu Taher Chairman-Deorgach, Shafiqul Hossain, Ex-Chairman, Parvej Chowdhury, Choto Mia, Jogesh Tipra, Akaml Mia, Samir Hossain, and other local elites.
- In all the areas, UP seems to play a critical role and also constitute very powerful people.

NGOs and Credit Providers

- There are few major NGOs that offer credit to local people. These are: BRAC, ASA, BRDB, Heed Bangladesh, and Grameen Bank.
- There are local NGOs also BASA and PASA. NGOs concentrate on health, education and alternative income generation.
- They also provide micro credit to support agricultural activities, small business and IGAs. Overall, credit programme is not operating well; repayment is poor.

2. What Makes Satchari Unique?

• The Park is small in size and has good tree cover. In fact, it has one of the few remaining true patches of natural forest in the country, and particularly in Sylhet Division.

- The forest has large number bird species and could serve as excellent place for bird watching.
- It is in close proximity to Dhaka and well connected by the national highway network. It takes only two hours to reach from Dhaka and Sylhet by road and hence has good potential for nature tourism.
- There are areas that could be used as ideal spots for picnic or resting without disturbing the core zone.
- The beauty of the Park has been enhanced by the presence of number of tea estates bordering its western and eastern sides. The tea estates also pose severe problem as unemployed labourers act as key force in forest depletion.
- There is a Tipra community of 19 households located inside the boarder of the Park, dependent mainly on lemon and pineapple cultivation. These ethnic people are less educated compared to the Bengali population.
- Culturally, people are very conservatives and the religious leaders exert great influence on every facet of life. Women are severely repressed. Their movements and involvements in public domain are severely restricted.
- Relatively few communities/villages are directly located next to the Park. Most exploitation of the Park resources is carried out by people coming from 6-8 kilometers away.

3. Key Problem Areas Needing Strategic Intervention

- FD's inability to protect the forest
- Poor image of the Forest Department
- Poverty generated by high level of unemployment and lack of income opportunities among people living in surrounding villages and tea estates.
- Influence or involvement of local elite in forest deforestation

4. Objective

Motivate and mobilize different stakeholders and poor people of the community within the defined landscape and take, in collaboration with the Forest Department, collective actions to reduce resource extraction by over 90% so as to ensure regeneration of green cover and restoration of bio-diversity. Also promote alternative income opportunities for poor people to reduce their dependence on the forest for their livelihoods.

5. Key Strategic Interventions

A. Social Mobilization and Improved Local Governance of PA

People's support, cooperation and participation are now considered imperative for protection who conservation of forest and biodiversity. NSP is trying to mediate and forge partnership between the community people and the Forest Department (FD) through Collaborative Management, involving participation of various sections of the community having stake on the forest in some form or other and sharing with Forest Department authority, responsibility and decision making related to forest and biodiversity conservation. Co-management also demands community empowerment. NSP is also undertaking various awareness raising and social mobilization interventions using various tools to make people understand and realize the short-term and long-term disastrous environmental impact of indiscrete resource extraction on their lives and livelihoods and other life forms and roles they need to play to avoid such disaster.

B. Enhanced Esteem, Importance and Performance of Forest Department

For the Collaborative Management to take root and function on a sustainable basis, it is essential for the FD to break its isolation and be proactive in interacting with and involving community people to protect forest and conserve biodiversity. NSP is trying to forge this through joint activities and other supportive interventions. This will not only dispel the negative image of the FD but will also bear long term impact on forest protection and bio-diversity conservation.

NSP is also trying to enhance the knowledge and social skills of field level staff-members of FD through need-based training, exposure visits and workshops.

C. Economic Alternatives for Local Households

Mere motivational efforts are not likely to make much impact on the behavior of people living in and around PAs and are fully or partially dependent on forest for their livelihoods unless alternative income generating opportunities are created. In all sites, NSP is trying to expand income opportunities for poor people who are mostly dependent on forest for their livelihoods trough providing grant money on different trades. To enhance income opportunities for the larger section of the community NSP is trying to promote eco-tourism, which, with increased flow of tourists, will create demands for different products and services, that people around could provide and earn income.

Demand for fuel wood both for consumption in households and enterprises prompts hundreds of people to go inside the PAs to collect fuel wood that hey can easily sell and earn income. The demand is likely to increase in the future due to demographic dynamics and increased developmental needs. One of the major areas that NSP has particularly focused on is promotion of alternative energy both for households and enterprises particularly in brickfields.

D. Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core

Once the community is empowered and catalyzed protection of the PA is less likely to be a problem since the members of the Co-management Council/ Committee are likely to,

by themselves, evolve modalities to perform the task. Until such community empowerment takes place some mechanisms have to be evolved to protect the forest. One of the mechanisms that NSP and FD have initiated is paid patrolling by selected community people in one of the PAs and has earned significant success in arresting tree felling. NSP and FD are now trying to promote volunteer patrolling through the initiatives of the Co-management Council/Committee. They are also trying to motivate the beneficiaries of the buffer zone plantation to organize patrol groups to protect the Core Area.

E. Local Participation in Monitoring Impact

There is need for local people to get actively involved in monitoring of actual progress made in the protection of PAs. Apart from observation by NSP and FD staff during their regular field visits, council members will be motivated to initiate the process following certain criteria.

6. Programmatic Interventions

A. Social Mobilization and Improved Local Governance of PA

1. Develop Collaborative Management Structure

- 1.1 Co-Management Council has already been formed and meeting regularly.

 Three meetings will be held within the next 6 months:
 - Dewargach Union Parishad Campus (1)
 - ➤ Two in Satchuri Beat Office Campus (2)
- 1.2 Scrutinize and finalize list of members by the Council in its next meeting.
- 1.3 Share constitution with Council members.
- 1.4 Form Co-management Committee.
- 1.5 Share site strategy with the Committee members.
- 1.6 Finalize constitution and the site strategy incorporating comments from Council members and Forest Department.
- 1.7 Provide training to Committee members on organizational development and management specially focusing on the operation and management of the council.
- 1.8 Post minutes of each council meeting prepared in Bangla in Range and Beat offices for public review.
- 1.9 Catalogue all activities undertaken by partner government agencies within the Landscape and post it in the office for public knowledge.

2. Promote Broad-based Social Mobilization, including Women and Ethnic Minorities

- 2.1 Stage Popular Theatre for social awareness building one each at:
 - Deworgach High School campus
 - Sutang Bazar (Paikpara Union)

- 2.2 Stage Folk Song for awareness building one each at:
 - ➤ Site Office campus
 - ➤ Chandpur Bazar
 - > Dewargach (Amtoli) Bazar
- 2.3 Organize movie shows on forest and bio-diversity conservation one each at:
 - Chunarughat Govt. College Campus
 - Dewarganch High School Campus
 - ➤ Paikpara High School Campus
- 2.4 Organize specific awareness building programmes such as Rallies , Meetings, Essay writing, Art Competitions and Cultural Programs during the observance of three national days (21st February, 26th March, and 16 December) at Chunarughat Upozilla Town.
- 2.5 Organize poor people of the community in groups in each village of the four Union within the landscape
- 2.6 Hold meeting with Sawmill Owners
- 2.7 Develop Community Development Schools (CDS)
- 2.8 Give orientation to Imams on bio-diversity conservation at Mosque
- 2.9 Hold Satchari Week to promote eco-tourism
- 2.10 Make arrangements for VIP visits to Satchari National Park
- 2.11 Build rapport with other NGOs operating in the area and identify and implement actions to leverage extended social movement by networking with them.

B. Enhanced Esteem, Importance and Performance of Forest Department

3. Develop Strong Collaboration between the Forest Department and NSP

- 3.1 Hold discussion meetings with the Forest Department regularly every month
- 3.2 Hold Site Program implementation review meetings with FD every month
- 3.3 Post all activities to be undertaken by Nishorgo in the site Notice Board for continued review and monitoring and public knowledge.

4. Build Capacity of Staff Members of the Forest Department

- 4.1 Organize orientation/training for Range officers and Beat Officers
- 4.2 Organize orientation/training for Forest Guards
- 4.3 Organize exposure visits outside the country for Range officers and Council members

5. Develop Positive Image of the Forest Department

- 5.1 Organize periodic meetings among NSP staff, vital Council members and FD staff
- 5.2 Hold awareness raising meetings in collaboration with the Forest Department staff
- 5.3 Postering, distributing leaflets and doing wall paintings with messages to raise public awareness by the name of Forest Department.
- 5.4 Publish articles in local News papers

C. Economic Alternatives for Local Households

6. Promote Alternative Income Generation (AIGA) for Poor Households

- 6.1 Provide training and grant for nursery Development
- 6.2 Provide training, grant and follow up support for vegetable cultivation at homestead
- 6.3 Provide training, grant and follow up support for fish culture
- 6.4 Provide training, grant and follow up support for poultry rearing
- 6.5 Provide training, grant and follow up support for cow rearing
- 6.6 Provide training, grant and follow up support for pig rearing

7. Support Tree Planting, Forest Regeneration and Social Forestry

- 7.1 Select with Forest Department area for plantation
- 7.2 Organize meeting between FD and Committee/Council members on the choice of species and modalities of plantation.
- 7.3 Select with the help of the Committee/Council poor members of the community who could be employed by FD in plantation activities.

8. Identify Alternative Energy Sources for Brickfields and Households

8.1 Introduce improved chulas for economic energy consumption

Facilitate development of eco-tourism and 1-2 other enterprise areas

- 8.2 Arrange supply of brochures, visitor booklet, Site Summery Report to make Satchari attractive to tourists.
- 8.3 Coordinate with Forest Department to set up Rest Rooms and toilet facilities for tourists and visitors
- 8.4 Catalyze ethnic groups to develop cultural groups to perform cultural shows to entertain tourists

D. Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core

9. Establish Systems to Ensure that Protected Area is Respected and Conserved

- 9.1 Share PA management plan with the co-management council
- 9.2 Enumeration and Marking of Trees (commercially valuable).

E. Local Participation in Monitoring Impact

10. Engage local stakeholders in monitoring impact of Project

10.1 Orient Council Member in NSP monitoring system

- 10.2 Orient Group Members in AIGA tracking
- 10.3 Build capacity of local Stakeholders in monitoring and data collection
- 10.4 Field vetting of community score card and reporting.

7. Six Monthly Programme Implementation Plan and Staff Responsibilities

	Activities or Milestone			Tir	ning				NSP Reso		Other Resources		
		Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Ma y	SF (132)	FOs (132 x 4 = 528)	RC (~ 30)	FD Staff	Other NSP	
Α.	Social Mobilization & Improved Local Governance												
1.	Develop Collaborative Management Structure												
1.1	Hold Co-Management Council meetings at:												
	Deworgach Union Parishod Campus (1)	X						3	12	1	NC, DFO, SDFO, RO, BO	COP, PAMS, LGCBS, LC	
	Satchari Beat Office Campus (2)			X		X		6	18	1	NC, DFO, SDFO, RO, BO	COP, PAMS, LGCBS, LC	
1.2	Scrutinize and finalize list of members by the Council in its next meeting.		X	Or X				2	8	1	SDFO, ACF, RO, BO	LGCBS, LC	
1.3	Share constitution with Council members.		X	Or X				4	8	1	SDFO, ACF, RO, BO	Do	
1.4	Form Co-management Committee		X	Or X				2	8	1	NC, DFO, SDFO, ACF, RO, BO	COP, PAMS and others	
1.5	Share site strategy with the Committee members		X	Or X				2	8	1	DFO, SDFO, ACF, RO, BO	LGCBS, PAMS	

1.6	Finalize constitution and the site strategy		X	Or			2	8	1	NC, DFO, SDFO,	COP, LGCBS, PAMS
	incorporating comments from Council			X						ACF, RO	
	members and Forest Department.										
1.7	Training/orientation of the Council						2	8	1		TC, EDS, NSP Dhaka
	members on eco-tourism and income				X	X					
	flows and organizational development.										
1.8	Posting of minutes of each council	X	X	Or	X		2	8			
	meeting prepared in Bangla			X							
1.9	Catalogue all activities undertaken by										
	partner government agencies within the										
	Landscape and post it in the office for										
	public knowledge.										
<i>2</i> .	Promote Broad-based social										
	mobilization including Women and										
	ethnic minorities										
2.1	Stage Popular theatre for social										
	awareness building one each at:										
	➤ Dewargach High School campus			X			2	8	1	SDFO, ACF, RO,	COS COO
										BO	COS, COO
	➤ Sutang Bazar (Paikpara Union)				X		2	8	1	Do	
2.2	Stage Folk Song for awareness building										
	one each at:										
	➤Site Office Campus			X			2	8	1	Do	COS, COO
	≻Chandpur Bazar			X			2	8	1	Do	
	➤Dewargach (Amtali) Bazar			X			2	8	1	Do	
2.3	Organize movie show one each at:										
	➤ Chunarughat Govt. College Campus				X		2	8	1	Do	COS, COO
	➤ Dewarganch High School Campus				X		2	8	1	Do	
	➤ Paikpara High School Campus				X		2	8	1	Do	
				<u> </u>							

	Organize specific awareness building	X		X	X			4	20	1	Do	COS, COO
2.4	programmes such as Rallies, Meetings,											
	Essay writing, Art Competitions and Cultural Programs during the											
	observance of three national days (21st											
	February, 26th March, and 16											
	December) at Chunarughat Upozilla											
	Town.											
2.5	Organize poor people of the community	X	X	X	X	X		5	20	1	RO, BO	AIGO, COO
	in groups in each village of the four											
	Union within the landscape											
2.6	Hold meeting with Sawmill Owners				X			2	12		RO	AIGO, COO
2.7	Develop Community Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	12	1	RO	AIGO, COO,
	School (CDS).											MF&GO
2.8	Give orientation to Imams for briefing on					X	X	2	12	1	SDFO, RO, BO	COO, AIGO, MF
	bio-diversity conservation at Mosque											
2.9	Hold Satchari Week to promote eco-		X					10	32	2	CCF, NC, DFO,	COP, COS, CCO,
	tourism										SDFO, ACF	AIGO,
2.10	Make arrangements for VIP visits to	X				X		3	12	1	CCF, NC, DFO,	COP, COS, COO
	Satchari National Park										SDFO, ACF	AIGO, SF (rest),
												MF&GO
2.11	Build rapport with other NGOs, GOs,	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	8	1		COO, LC
	LG operating in the areas and identify											
	and implement actions to leverage											
	extended social movement by											
	networking with them.											
В.	Enhanced Esteem, Importance											
Д.												
	and Performance of Forest											
2	Department C. II. L. C.							-				
<i>3</i> .	Develop Strong Collaboration											
	Between the Forest Department and											

	NSP											
3.1	Hold discussion meetings with the Forest Department regularly every month.	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	16	1	RO	CCO
3.2	Display six monthly work plans at Range Office and inform local FD office whenever NSP staff visits forest.		X					1	4			
3.3	Post all activities to be undertaken by Nishorgo in the site Notice Board for continued review and monitoring and public knowledge			X	X	X	X	1	8			
4.	Build Capacity of Staff Members of the Forest Department											
4.1	Organize orientation/training for Range officers and Beat Officers	X									RO, BO	
4.2	Organize training for Forest Guards			X	X							
4.3	Organize exposure visit outside the country for Range Officers and Council members.			X				2	4	1	SDFO, RO	COP, PAMS
5.	Develop Positive Image of the Forest Department											
5.1	Organize periodic meetings among NSP staff, vital Council members and FD staff		X		X		X	3	16	1	BO, RO, Staff	
5.2	Hold awareness raising meetings in collaboration with the Forest Department staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	3	32	1	BO, staff	
5.3	Postering, distributing leaflets and doing wall paintings with messages to raise public awareness by the name of Forest Department		X	X	X			1	4		RO, BO	COS, COO
5.4	Publish articles in local News papers			X		X						

6.	Economic Alternatives for Local Households											
6.1	Provide training and grant for nursery Development	X	X	X	X	X	X				SDFO, RO, BO	MF&GO, AIGO
6.2	Provide training, grant and follow up support for vegetable cultivation at homestead					X	X					PMO, AIGO
6.3	Provide training, grant and follow up support for fish culture				X	X	X	6	32	1		COO, AIGO
6.4	Provide training, grant and follow up support for poultry rearing	X			X	X	X					COO, AIGO
6.5	Provide training, grant and follow up support for cow rearing		X									Do
6.6	Provide training, grant and follow up support for pig rearing	X	X	X	X	X	X					
7.	Support tree planting, forest regeneration, and social forestry											
	Enrichment plantation in Core Zone											
7.1	 Select with Forest Department area for plantation in Buffer Zone 			X	X	X	X	2	8	1	SDFO, RO, BO	SF(LNP), AIGO, PMO
7.2	 Organize meeting between FD and Committee/Council members on the choice of species and modalities of plantation 			X	X	X		3	4	1	Do	SF (LNP), AIGO, PMO
7.3	Select with the help of the Committee/Council poor members of the community who could be employed by FD in plantation activities.			X	X	X		3	8	1	Do	AIGO, PMO
8.	Identify alternative energy sources for households											

8.1	Introduce improved chulas for economic energy consumption			X	X			1	4			NSP (NACOM)
	Facilitate development of eco- tourism and 1-2 other enterprise areas											
8.2	Arrange supply of brochures, visitor booklet, Site Summery Report to make Satchari attractive to tourists.	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	8		RO, BO	
8.3	Coordinate with Forest Department to set up Rest room and toilet facilities for tourists and visitors.		X					1	8	1		
8.4	Catalyze ethnic groups to develop cultural groups to perform in front of tourists upholding culture and heritage					X		1	8	1	RO, BO	COS, COO, EDO
IX	Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core											
9.1	Share PA management plan with the Co-management Council/Committee	X	X				2	8	1		SDFO, RO, ACF	PAMS
9.2	Assist in Park boundary demarcation, survey, mapping and pillar posting	X	X	X	X		6	8			PMO	
9.3	Catalyze local community to help in controlling illicit felling, poaching and forest fire			X	X		2	8				
10.	Local Participation in Monitoring Impact											
	Engage local stakeholders in monitoring impact of Project											

10.1	 Orient Council Member in NSP monitoring system 	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	8	1	SDFO, ACF, RO	NACOM
10.2	 Orient Group Members in AIGA tracking 	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	8		Do	Do
10.3	Build capacity of local Stakeholders in monitoring and data collection	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	8		Do	Do
10.4	Field vetting of community score card and reporting.	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	8		Do	Do
Total L	abour Allocation for Key Staff							129	458	36		