Concept and methods:
Balancing environmental conservation and livelihoods of people in Nepal through ‘social-software research’ methodology

Jagannath Adhikari
Visiting Fellow
College of Asia and Pacific
The ANU
Concept and methods:

• Development of a research methodology to identify ‘social software’ that could help in better integration of government agencies dealing with ‘environmental conservation’ and NGOs and grassroots organizations dealing with ‘livelihoods’ of people in the context of conflict between ‘national park’ and ‘peoples’.

• Outcomes of a case study conducted.
Integrating ‘environmental conservation’ and ‘livelihoods’ of people

- In Nepal (like in most developing countries) there is competition for resources between people and wild animals in national parks.
- NGOs working to improve the livelihoods of people do various researches but are not communicated to people and to implementing agencies (government managing national parks).
- The problem of conflict between people and national park continues.
- There is a need for ‘win-win’ situation.
‘Social Software’ research to create ‘win-win’ situation

• Social software refers mainly to social mechanisms (including institutional development/innovations) developed in the process of intervention/implementing an intervention to link “natural system (i.e., parks)” and “social systems (i.e., livelihoods of people living/depending on resources of the park)”.

• Development of methods or tools which help us to identify “social software” (for understanding the context, concerns and priorities of stakeholders, mainly the target group).
Steps and tools for research

1. Identifying the case study and case study site through a discussion with stakeholders.

2. A social-cum-resource map of the case study site for understanding the context, concerns and priorities of stakeholders, mainly the target group.

3. A transact walk with the beneficiaries and stakeholders and understanding the situation and using the social and resource map as developed above.

4. Stakeholders analysis - learning the types and process of intervention and the role of different stakeholders.
   • ‘time-line survey’ for understanding the process and sequence of interventions and the impacts.
   • identify the internal innovations (institutions, techniques and practice) made by the people in response to intervention from outside and the project goal and their impacts.

5. Impact analysis using a format that involves the participation of all stakeholders.
Outcome of a case study (done in Chitawan National Park, Nepal)

Study identified the following components of social software that helped in influencing all stakeholders through research and in better implementation of activities or interventions:

A. Grassroots initiatives
B. Influencing stakeholders
C. Research communication
D. Policy influencing
Grassroots Initiatives and identification of issues and best practices
Engagement with stakeholders

Influencing Stakeholders

Local Stakeholders
- Informal discussion
- Fact findings and sharing
- Formal interaction
- Submission of issue

Stakeholders at multi-scale levels
- Issue establishment
- Persuasion
- Public hearing
- Multi-stakeholder workshops

Networking, Communication, Advocacy
Research Communication

- Journalist Visit
- Research and Facts Sharing
- News/Articles
- Personnel Relation
- Press Release, Press Conference
Policy Advocacy

- Grassroots initiatives
- Research/facts presentation
- Networking, Communication, Advocacy
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue / interactions
Outcomes of the research

The methodology helped in:

• Identification of relevant issue for research
• Inform stakeholders about the research issue, process, and ownership of findings.
• Enhancing policy dialogue and bringing appropriate policy change.
• Policy change for better relation between ‘park’ and ‘people’.
• Iteration of research process.
More Information

This presentation was based on a research on ‘social soft-ware’ to study park-
people conflict in Chitawan National Park, Nepal. This research was carried
out under the co-ordination of the author (Jagannath Adhikari) involving NGO
Community Development Organization, Chitawan and researchers from Kyoto
University, Japan.

For more information on people-park conflict – see the book:

Adhikari, Jagannath and Sharad Ghimire. 2002. A Bibliography of
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Poster Presenter:
Name: Jagannath Adhikari, PhD
Visiting Fellow, Crawford School of Public Policy, College of Asia and Pacific
Research Fellow, Climate Change Institute
Coombs Building
The Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200, Australia

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