Trends of Forestry Policy Concerning Local Participation in Bhutan

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Abstract

Bhutan is very rich in natural resources and biodiversity. Its 40,076-square-kilometre land area is home to 7,000 plant species, 165 mammal species, and 700 bird species. The country has 72.5 percent forest cover, and 26.23 percent of total land area is designated as protected areas. The international community has declared Bhutan as one of ten global biodiversity "hotspots" in the world. The Bhutanese people have been able to conserve the country's forests even to this day, first, because of visionary leadership, and second, because of the people's way of life and culture, which is strongly influenced by Buddhism. Bhutan's commitment to conserve its forests is reflected in its forestry policy to maintain a minimum of 60 percent forest cover for all time.

Before modern development started in 1961, there was a strong traditional institution in place to utilise and manage forests, and the people enjoyed free access to the forest resources from which most of their daily basic necessities came. Slowly, modern legislation replaced the traditional customary laws and institutions, and it restricted the people's rights to the use of forests, because the government was concerned with the rapid depletion of forests in some parts of the country and their long-term sustainability.

In response the government adopted a participatory forestry policy to involve planning, management, and forest utilisation by the communities themselves. Under this policy, a social forestry programme was launched whereby the people developed community and private forestry through the government's technical assistance. The forestry activities have been devolved to the grass-roots level in line with the government's decentralisation policy. Through this programme, people have been able to participate in forest management and harvest forest products on a sustainable basis.

Keywords: Biodiversity, Protected areas, Social forestry, Community and private forestry, Decentralisation.

1. A brief country profile

The Kingdom of Bhutan is located on the southern slopes of the eastern Himalayas, and is land-locked between China (Tibet) in the north and India to the south, east, and west, with an area of 40,076 square kilometres (LUPP 1995). Bhutan is one of the least populated countries in the world, and about 79 percent of the population lives in rural areas (CSO 2001). Its physical features consist mostly of rugged mountains, valleys, and ravines traversed by a network of swift rivers and waterfalls, all flowing to India. Human settlements are confined mostly to interior river valleys and southern plains. Herders graze sheep and yaks on alpine grasslands beyond and between these settlements. The country has diverse ecological zones ranging from sub-tropical to temperate to alpine forests. About 72.5 percent of the total land area is under forest cover and is home to about 7,000 species of plants, 165 species of mammals, and 700 species of birds. About 26.23 percent of the country is designated as protected areas, not including the nine percent of biological corridors created to connect different protected parks. Around 35 percent of the country's total area is under some form of conservation. All these characteristics have made Bhutan one of the top ten countries with the highest species density in the world, and it has the highest percentage of land under protected areas and forest cover in Asia, so the small kingdom is very rich in ecological diversity.

2. Biodiversity conservation in Bhutan

Unlike in other Himalayan regions where natural resources have been exploited for short-term economic returns, Bhutan has been able to successfully conserve and preserve its rich biodiversity. The Bhutanese people have preserved their natural environment for centuries because they have always lived in harmony with nature, and this relationship has been enforced within moral, cultural, and ecological borders. The Kingdom's commitment to preserving its biodiversity is firmly rooted in the understanding of the importance of the forest ecosystem for the survival of remote, isolated, and scattered communities, and their religion and belief systems. Its commitment is also evident from its "decision to maintain at least 60 percent of our land area under forest cover and to designate more than one-quarter of our territory as national parks, reserves and other protected areas" (RGOB 1999). It also placed environment conservation at the core of its development strategy. The people have a strong conservation ethic and a cautious attitude towards the environment. Beliefs have it that different spirits inhabit the sky and the earth. The mountains, rivers, lakes, cliffs, rocks, and soils are considered as the domains of

different spirits, and any pollution or disturbance of these habitats can bring death, disease, and destruction.

Buddhism plays a central role in people's life and culture. The basic principle is to give back to nature what has been taken away and accord respect to all forms of life. Buddhism teaches the interdependence among all life forms. The Bhutanese worship *lha* (deities of heaven), *lu* (beings of the under world), *tsan* (deities of mountains), and *sadag* (deities of the land). People's lifestyles and culture, rooted in Buddhist philosophy and values, have intrinsically guided their actions, which is in conformity with basic Buddhist tenets. This has established a close and harmonious relationship with the surrounding environment. Throughout Bhutan's history its people have always co-existed with nature in harmony and maintained interdependency, even before modern forestry legislation. Sustainability has been their way of life long before the creation of Agenda 21 at the 1992 Earth Summit.

Bhutan's rich biodiversity can be attributed, first, to the efforts of the government and its policy, and, second, to the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, which is mostly influenced by Buddhist val ues. Such a symbiotic relationship between human beings and nature is built into the people's culture and belief system, and it was recognised long before the global movement for environment conservation began. Bhutan's guiding development philosophy of maximising "gross national happiness" (GNH) tries to strike the right balance between economic development on one hand and cultural and environmental preservation on the other. The concept of GNH, propounded by His Majesty the King Jigmi Singye Wangchuck "defines Bhutan's development objectives as improvement in the happiness and satisfaction of our people rather than the growth of Gross National Product" (RGOB 2000b). This unique approach sacrifices short-term gain in the pursuit of long-term sustainability. Ever since the start of planned socio-economic development in 1961, the country's leadership has ensured sustainable use of natural resources by integrating conservation and development. This became evident quite early when the first protected area was declared in 1964. As of today, there are nine protected areas,[1] excluding biological corridors set up as a "gift from the people of Bhutan to the Earth" to connect all protected areas in the country. Environment conservation forms one of four broad pillars propounded for attaining happiness for the Bhutanese people.[2]

Table 1. Bhutan's land cover area by percentage.

SN	Land cover	Areas (km^2)	Percent
1.	Forest	25,787	64.35
2.	Scrub forest	3,258	8.13
3.	Pasture	1,564	3.90
4.	*Tseri*/fallow-rotation	883	2.20
5.	Agriculture	3,146	7.85
6.	Snow and glacier	2,989	7.46
7.	Water-spread/marshy	339	0.85
8.	Rock outcrop	2,008	5.01
9.	Other	102	0.25
	Total	40,076	100.00

Source: Biodiversity Action Plan for Bhutan 2002, Ministry of Agriculture, Thimphu.

[1] Royal Manas National Park (1022.84 square kilometres [km^2]); Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (1400 km^2); Jigme Dorji National Park (4349 km^2); Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary (1486.75 km^2); Thrumshingla National Park (768 km^2); Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary (278 km^2); Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary (650 km^2); Khaling/Neoli Wildlife Sanctuary (273 km^2); and Toorsa Strict Nature Reserve (650.74 km^2).

[2] The other three being socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and good governance.

As one can see in the table above, more than 72 percent of Bhutan's land area is covered by forests and scrub forests; only 7.85 percent is suitable for agriculture. This reality negates the advantages of the country's small population because the pressure on land is very high, and it will become inevitable that the people will intrude into the forests for cultivation—a great concern for the country.

The traditional land use in Bhutan has been sustainable. There are five kinds of traditional land uses: irrigated rice land (*chuzhing*); rain-fed dry land (*kamzhing*); land use similar to shifting cultivation, with very scant tree cover and short-fallow rotation (*pangzhing)*; long-fallow rotation/shifting cultivation (*tseri*); public woodlot, on which either individuals or a community have user rights for leaf-litter, fodder, and dry firewood (*sokshing*); and natural pasture/grass land, on which an individual or a community has grazing rights (*tsamdro*). Leaf-litter collected from the sokshing serves as bedding for cattle in their sheds, and the combination of decomposed litter and manure is applied to the fields so as to improve soil fertility. Before modern development began in 1961, the whole country was a large tract of undisturbed, pristine forests. The areas of use were confined mainly to the south—close to the border with India—around centers of population and near roads. It was because of the relative abundance of forests that the traditional architecture uses large quantities of timber and the per capita fuelwood consumption is one of the highest in the world.

The community managed its natural resources like forests and water through its indigenous institutions and unwritten customary laws, and ensured their sustainability by instituting positions of authority such as forest protector (*risungpa*), protector of forests against forest fires (*mesungpa*), protector of crops against wild animals (*shingsungpa*), and protector of drinking water and irrigation canals (*chusungpa*). For instance, the risungpa ensured proper distribution of fuelwood and timber for construction, and enforced *ridam,* the traditional practice of managing natural resources. Similarly, the mesungpa protected the forest from fires and mobilised firefighters from amongst the community. Individuals or communities used forests in the form of sokshing—a forest where individuals or the community exercised their customary right to collect or gather leaves for composting with animal manure as well as collecting fodder and dry firewood.

Under ridam*,* access to the utilisation of mountain resources is strictly prohibited for a certain period in a year. Restriction is imposed so as to prevent people from felling trees in the mountains that could provoke the displeasure of local gods and deities, who would then unleash a torrent of rain and hailstorms and destroy all crops. In the village of Galing in eastern Bhutan, a certain Meme Dendu infringed upon the rules by fetching bamboo from the forest. Within days, a large area of maize in the village was destroyed by an unprecedented hailstorm. The village imposed a fine on Meme Dendu, who had to slaughter his pigs and surrender a few newly-woven *gho* along with an amount of money (Sonam Kinga, unpublished).

Pressure on ecosystems (forests) did not lead to their degradation, because of the country's relatively small population and the sustainable land-use practices of the local people. The civil authorities (district officials) slowly took more control of traditional forest use and grazing rights, but the institutions of mesungpa, chusungpa, etc., continue even to this day. The role of civil authorities was slowly replaced by the Forestry Department, which was established in 1952 with a mandate to manage natural resources. There was no central regulation or administration prior to 1959, when the communities still managed the forests. After the launch of Bhutan's first five-year plan, created with the financial and technical assistance of India, a sudden change occurred in the country's forestry policy. This was greatly influenced by India's own national forest policy, which stressed both productive uses and the conservation of forests. Bhutan's policy gave forestry officials the role of policing.

3. Bhutan's forestry policy and people's participation

We shall now examine some important pieces of legislation that are directly or indirectly related to forestry, conservation, and the people's participation in various forestry activities or programmes.

Thrimzhung Chenmo, 1959 (Supreme Law of Bhutan, 1959) was the country's first forestry-related legislation. This law shifted the power from the community to the centre and changed traditional unwritten customary laws to formal written law. The National Assembly became an important lawmaker in many domains, including forestry. The 24th National Assembly made a royalty exemption for timber and firewood for domestic purposes, while it imposed a royalty on commercial forestry activities.

In 1966, the first protected area—Manas Game Sanctuary—was established to protect fauna. The forest conservation, management, and utilisation functions were largely managed from the centre through a network of functional administrative units. In the initial years, the primary focus of the Forest Department was to establish the forestry administration, the sustainable use of forests for income generation, afforestation activities, and sawmills and other wood-based industries. Scientific management of forests with forest management plans began in 1964 to decrease forest exploitation, despite the fact that the primary focus of the Forestry Department was revenue generation and that its management plans focused on logging. All activities related to forests and nature conservation were assigned to the Forestry Department.

The *Bhutan Forest Act, 1969,* is the first piece of modern forestry legislation enacted to protect the forests. The large-scale deterioration of forests in neighboring countries made Bhutan's government more cautious in pursuing systematic forest management programmes.

The National Assembly made civil authorities, mainly *thrimpon* (judges), responsible for enforcing forestry rules, and the forestry administration was made responsible for the protection of wild fauna, the maintenance of protected areas, and managing and controlling access to the forests through forest patrolling. Concerned with the over-exploitation of forests through logging, as well as continuous forest fires, new activities were started such as patrolling against illegal activities, controlling forest fires, checking unauthorised felling of trees and clearing of land, supervising authorised felling, assisting in natural regeneration of forests, and educating villagers on forest protection.

The *National Forestry Policy, 1974,* prescribes long-term national goals and objectives on forests and their utilisation. It was made mandatory to keep 60 percent of the land under forest cover, as was the need to demarcate forests and create management plans.

The *Land Act, 1979,* established all legal categories and types and uses of land, including agriculture and forestry. It specified local rights in sokshing, *tsamdo* (pasture land), and private forestry, besides outlining legal provisions for conversion of land types.

His Majesty issued the *Royal Decree on Social Forestry* in 1979, commanding the Department of Forest to revise forest policy and prepare a scheme for the promotion of social forestry in and around rural villages by involving the local people in the planting of trees on their own land or villages. The importance of community involvement in the protection and management of forest resources was increasingly recognised, since it is the people who live closest to the forests that are best suited to this role.

The *Social Forestry Rules, 1990,* were framed by the Ministry of Agriculture in response to His Majesty's command to mainly encourage the plantation of trees in the absence of policies or incentives. These are also called private forests rules, since they allow individuals to plant on dry land (*kamzhing*), wetland (*chushing*), permanent cultivated land under fallow cultivation (*lhotshe*), and shifting cultivation (*tseri*). No royalty is levied for forest produce harvested for any purpose from private forests in accordance with the rules. This rule is significant in reducing the threats to biodiversity caused by forest fires and the practice of shifting cultivation.

In line with the national policy of decentralisation, all kinds of field-level forestry programmes were made readily accessible to the local people. The Ministry of Agriculture adopted the "RNR Approach" in 1991 by creating a renewable natural resources (RNR) structure and functions to decentralise local planning, project implementation, and monitoring to districts. RNR includes the agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, and irrigation sectors.

The *Forest Policy of Bhutan, 1991,* was framed to ensure that forest resources are used according to sustainable principles. The main goals of the policy are to first ensure conservation of the environment and, thereafter, to derive economic benefits from the forests through rational management.

The *Bhutan Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995,* is the most important piece of legislation ratified by the National Assembly in that year. It has nine chapters on 47 topics ranging from forest conservation and the use of forest timber, to the protection of wildlife in the kingdom. It provides a strong legal basis for all activities related to social forestry. The Act was framed after concerns were raised over the exploitation of forest resources and losses of wildlife. Its explicit goal is the protection and conservation of forest resources, while its implicit goal is conservation of biodiversity through land-use controls in national parks and game sanctuaries. It put a limit on the utilisation of forest produce for rural consumption and the requirement for forest management plans, and extract forest produce for commercial or industrial purposes. This is to ensure the sustainable management and utilisation of forests. Social forestry, introduced in 1979, was also incorporated in the new act. Among others, there are provisions for soil and water conservation and protecting forests from fire.

The most important provision for people's participation in forestry is social and community forestry, where any person is encouraged to grow and nurture forest crops on his own private land (see appendices). This policy reduced shifting cultivation by allowing individual, household, or community ownership of land, and it provided comprehensive guidelines for the balanced use and management of the nation's forest resources.

Geog Yargay Tshogchhung (GYT)*, 2002*, and *Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu* (DYT)*,* 2002, were enacted to further decentralise a wide range of powers, authority, functions, and responsibilities to the people, with provisions on community participation in conservation and forestry activities (see appendices).

In Bhutan, social forestry consisted of Community Forest (CF), which is management of local forest activities on government land, including community lands, by groups of traditional users; Private Forestry (PF), which is promotion of tree planting and forest or woodlot activities by individuals on private land, as well as creation of private nurseries and seedling distribution; and School Social Forestry, which involves institutional forestry focusing on education and developing awareness among students (RGBO 2000a).

The main objectives of the private, community, and institutional forestry programmes are (1) to promote community-based forestry development, (2) assist rural people to become self-sufficient in their forest resource needs and forest product development, and (3) integrate tree planting into farming systems and transfer responsibility of local forests resource management to traditional users organised into forest management groups. Before this programme was started in 1979 through a royal decree, all forests had been nationalised with the intention of ensuring environmental protection and equitable access for all Bhutanese citizens. Prior to that, local people

had unrestricted and unlimited privileges and access, using local trees and forests resources to meet their needs according to traditional practices.

Community and private forestry enabled sustainable local forest management on government reserve lands at various levels, especially at the village level, through the involvement of individuals in tree planting and other forestry-related activities on their private lands, and with groups of traditional users implementing activities specified in the community management plan. The ultimate objective of this programme is decentralisation of forestry-related activities to rural communities for effective forest management and protection. His Majesty exempted taxes and royalties on trees planted by the people on their own land under the social forestry programme, which was initiated by distributing free seedlings to households, schools, monasteries, and other institutions.

Under the decentralisation programme, the social forestry scheme (SFS) was designated as a district-level programme, and staff were accordingly transferred. District forestry extension officers were made responsible for the management of private forestry, community forests, school social forestry, protection of government forests from fire, prevention of encroachment into sokshing (leaf-litter), tsamdo (pasture land), and for the allocation of dry firewood. At the director's level, the forestry extension section was mandated to coordinate a nation-wide decentralisation programme on social forestry activities.

At the district level, social forestry activities have been broadened over time to include a wider variety of activities such as (1) the creation of community awareness of social forestry, (2) conducting needs assessments and participatory planning exercises, (3) community mobilisation of participatory forest and plantation management, (4) involving villagers in the production of tree saplings, (5) private nursery development and operations training, and (6) monitoring and evaluating planning programmes.

Several different forestry development programmes with social forestry component have been started across the country over the years, and social forestry activities have gained a high priority. They are increasingly oriented towards better and more productive partnerships with local communities. District staff and project specialists facilitate the villagers in planning, implementing, and reaping the benefits of forestry initiatives as part of the wider Renewable Natural Resources sector programme.

The Forestry Department declared Coronation Day (June 2) as Social Forestry Day in 1985 to promote widespread tree planting.

In order to maintain the considerable size of protected areas at the present level of ecological stability, the stakeholders have been involved in their management. These are subsistence farmers that depend either directly or indirectly on the surrounding natural resources. The protected area management staff collaborate closely with these stakeholders, who are the actual guardians of the natural resources, in order to improve their socio-economic conditions.

The Integrated Conservation and Development Programme (ICDP) was launched in the early 1980s to address and resolve the conflicting interests of bio-diversity conservation on one hand and the development needs of the local communities who depend on local resources on the other. Residing in almost all the protected areas in Bhutan are local communities that depend on the local resources for their subsistence. Since conservation cannot be achieved without fulfilling the socio-economic needs of these people, this integrated development programme identifies activities that lead to conservation as well as fulfillment of communities' socio-economic needs. Income generation though community-based enterprise development is one potential area, and eco-tourism is one viable programme in this area that will bring positive changes in conservation as well as development. Many historical and religious sites are also located in protected areas. The integration of such sites with park management activities may also result in strengthening community support towards the conservation of the environment.

In order to make such activities more effective, the implementation of integrated conservation and development programmes are left to the local authorities, which have first-hand knowledge of the community's development and constant dealings with the local people. In 2002 the Participatory Forest Management Project (PFMP) was started to "achieve sustainable forest management and improve rural livelihood in Bhutan by strengthening the capacity of local communities to utilize and conserve forest resources, with an emphasis on poverty alleviation and the equitable distribution of benefits."

4. Analysis of trends in terms of local participation

In Bhutan, people have always found the right balance between the conservation and use of natural resources. Traditional customary (unwritten) laws—which are based on people's faith, beliefs, traditions, and customs—exist in every mountain community and accord high respect for the natural environment. There is a popular saying that in every community there are no rocks, hills, mountains, forests, rivers, or lakes which are not abodes or citadels of deities, gods, goddesses, or *neydag zhidag* (owners of pace and land). When someone intends to construct a house, a ritual (*salhang,* literally land begging ceremony) must first be performed to beg the *sadag* (spirit, owner of the land) for some land or to get the spirit's permission to construct a house on its land. The people believe that disturbance of these abodes or failure to perform this ritual will lead to pestilence, natural disaster, or famine. Buddhism teaches respect for all forms of life and the principle of giving back to the Earth what one has taken away. Buddha taught that the compassion of a tree is such that it tries to shade the woodcutter even as it is being cut. But this conservation idyll is quickly changing.

Before the introduction of modern forestry legislation in the early 1960s, the Bhutanese people had unlimited access to their forests. Communities were able to conserve and use forests on a sustainable basis, first, because of the subsistence nature of forest use for family or household needs, and second, because the concept of commercial exploitation did not exist in the culture itself. But with the advent of modern development, more and more people, especially in urban settlements, started to exploit the forests. In the initial stages, even the government (Forestry Department) started to harvest forest products and, in some cases, the use and management of forests was very unsustainable. After promulgation of *Thrimshung Chenmo* in 1959, a series of legislations, bylaws, and rules that are directly or indirectly related to forestry have been passed by the National Assembly and government ministries. The government's forest policy showed progressive movement, going from a situation where the forest was there for everyone to exploit to a period when such rights and privileges over the forest were restricted. The government deliberately adopted this policy, not to deprive the people of some of their basic survival needs that come directly from forests, but rather to manage this important natural resource for both the present and future. Sustainability was its main concern. It also felt that a limited forestry service staff cannot adequately manage and control the local use of forests, and that participation of local people is the key to the conservation and utilisation of forest resources.

The government, being fully aware of the restrictions that the *Forest and Nature Conservation Act of 1995* put on the community's traditional rights over the local forests, adopted a forestry policy that allowed the people to participate directly and reap benefits from the programmes. Many major steps have been taken since then to promote people-oriented forestry and participatory forestry across the country as a means of utilising forest resources for the benefit of rural people who traditionally depend on forests for their livelihood. This policy, which is also seen as a way of conserving and also improving already degraded forests, combines elements of decentralised resource management to benefit village farmers. Participatory forestry management, such as community or private forestry, was designed on the principle that the plan should (1) be simple and easy, (2) meet the real needs of the people and solve their problems, (3) be practical for implementation, and (4) involve the community from start to finish.

An important piece of legislation is the *Royal Decree on Social Forestry*. The government increasingly recognised the importance of effective public participation in forestry, and it placed the sustainable supply of forest products for local requirements above commercial production. Many community and private forestry efforts in different parts of the country revealed mixed results, but there is no doubt that the stakeholders benefited.

The government of Bhutan is aware that some modern legislation only weakens existing informal arrangements that have evolved over centuries and helped local communities sustainably manage resources. These informal arrangements often embody a holistic understanding of local ecosystems and represent very tangible expression of Bhutan's cultural heritage. The challenge is to balance modern legislation that can advance environment conservation and, at the same time, respect and maintain informal arrangements that have proven to be able to achieve sustainable development—even in a harsh and unforgiving geography (RGOB 1999b).

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Appendices: Important laws and decrees related to local participation in forestry activities

a) Geog Yargay Tshogchhung Chathrim, 2002

ARTICLE 8. Regulatory Powers of Geog Yargay Tshogchung

The following are the areas of powers and functions of Geog Yargay Tshogchhung on which it can adopt and enforce regulations applicable within a geog:

8. protecting and harvesting of edible forest products in the local area in accordance with the Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995;
13. creation and designation of local recreational areas around villages.

ARTICLE 9. Administrative Powers and Functions of GYT

2. administration, monitoring and review of all ac-

tivities that are part of the geog plans, including the maintenance of…and extension centers of the renewable natural resources sectors;

7. conservation and protection of water sources, lakes, springs, streams, and rivers;
8. custody and care of communal lands, community forests, including *sokshing* and *nyenkhor tsamdo*, medicinal herbs and accordingly prevention of illegal house construction and all other types of encroachments in such community lands as well as on Government land and forests;

b) Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu Chathrim, 2002

ARTICLE 8. General Functions and Powers of Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu

As the highest forum for local policy and decision-making on matters of public interest in a Dzongkhag, the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu shall:

1. make recommendations on activities with major environmental impacts such as construction of roads, extraction and conservation of forests, mining and quarrying.

ARTICLE 9. Regulatory Powers and Functions of Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu

The following are the areas of powers and functions of Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu on which it can adopt and enforce regulations, applicable within the dzongkhag:

1. designation and protection of areas of special scenic beauty or biodiversity as dzongkhag parks and sanctuaries

ARTICLE 10. Administrative Powers and Functions of Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu

The Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu shall have broad administrative powers and functions to give direction and approval on the following:

1. forest management plan including extraction, conservation and forest road construction in accordance with the Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995.

C) Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan, 1996

CHAPTER 1

Preliminary

3. Definitions

In this Act, and in all rules made hereunder:

b. "Community Forestry" means any area of Government Reserved Forest designated for management by a local community in accordance with the Rules issued under this Act.
e. "Forest" means any land and water body, whether or not under vegetative cover, in which no person has acquired a permanent and transferable right of use and occupancy, whether such land is located inside or outside the forest boundary pillars, and includes land registered in a person's name as *Tsamdog* (grazing land) or *Sokshing* (woodlot for collection of leaf litter).
g. "Forest Produce" includes the following, whether or not found in the Forests:
trees and parts or product of trees including timber, firewood, charcoal, bark, wood-oil, resin, latex or natural varnish, katha/kutch, etc;
wild plants and parts or products of wild plants including flowers, seeds, bulbs, roots, fruits, leaves, grasses, creepers, reeds, orchids, bamboo, cane, fungi, moss, medicinal plants, herbs, leaf mould, or other vegetative growth, whether alive or dead, wild animals, including fish, and parts or products of wild animals including skin, hides, feathers, fur, horn/antlers, tusks, bones, bile, musk, honey, wax, *lac*; and boulders, stone, sand, gravel, rocks, peat, surface soil.
q. "Social Forestry" means planting of trees and/or other forest crops on private registered lands, within the 25-acre land ceiling, such as *kamzhing*, *tseree* and *pangzhing* lands and registered under the social forestry rules.