CHAPTER 6
CASE STUDIES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

This chapter traces the background of community participatory management in the state of Himachal Pradesh in the first section and in the second section an attempt has been made to study the development efforts in the surveyed Panchayats and the extent of people's participation in them.

SECTION-1
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

The concept of participatory management in Himachal Pradesh is old. By the early nineteen thirties, the British government had realized that it could not cope with the rapid deforestation of forests in the Himalayas. The National Forest conference of 1935 in Madras took the view “The practicability of forming village forests should be examined, and Government may kindly be asked to appoint a committee to decide what particular steps should be taken in each district of the outer Himalayas.” (emphasis of the author). The resolution was unanimously passed and in September 1937 the Punjab government appointed a commission of enquiry to draw up a scheme. The recommendations were as follows:

• The villagers should agree to management according to simple working plans approved by the government involving closures, where closures were demonstrably necessary.

• In order that the demonstration be convincing, the government should make allies of people's representatives.

• An effort should be made to teach the villagers that whatever profits accrue from the management of the shamlat and the reserves, shall be to their benefit.

• In order that the people may have qualified representatives, Panchayats (elected village level bodies) must be formed and the details of forest management of the area in which the village is situated should be explained to them.

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1 Garbett Commission report, 1938.
• For this purpose, a working scheme of management for each village should be prepared. The scheme would envisage management of not only the _shamlat_, but also of the protected and reserved forests in which the village had rights, in such a way so as to secure the maximum crop of forest produce for the villagers' benefit.

• If possible, the cost of management should be met from the proceeds of sale, but the value of securing the catchment area to the province was felt to be far greater than the small expenditure on staff, which was to be paid for, in part or in whole, by the government.

In 1938 in Kangra district in Himachal, the Forest Department began the Kangra Forest Societies scheme with the support from the Cooperatives Department. A total of 72 societies were formed over a 12-year period covering 2,793 sq. km of Kangra district. The largest single acreage, 5,094 hectares was (is) managed by the KFCS (Kangra Forest Cooperatives Society) in Kaniyara, a high altitude village in the Dhauladhar, lying in the Dharamshala Range of Kangra Forest Division covering over 4,600 ha of demarcated protected forest (DPF) and 440 ha of undemarcated protected forest (UPF), most of which is alpine pasture. The smallest KFCS, with six ha – all shamlat land – was (is) Ghadoral in the Palampur range of the present Palampur Forest Division. At the end of March 1955, following termination of KFCS Khohala for continuous mismanagement, there were 71 KFCS, covering 23,500 ha. In January 1971, Himachal Pradesh became a full-fledged state. The Forest Cooperatives Society scheme was not extended and expired. The Forest Department withdrew technical support and took over working of the KFCS forest areas based on Rawal's Working Plan. Incomes of KFCS was reduced to insignificant sums. Marginal support continued however from the Cooperatives Department. In 1972-73, the scheme was extended for two years but the grants reached the KFCS only in the 1980's. In 1990 Himachal Pradesh Government notified a committee to look into rehabilitating KFCS and in 1996, 32 KFCS formed a Cooperative Societies Union.

There is a sizeable area of private forests in Una district being looked after by soil conservation cooperative societies. The Lohara and Gagret societies are specially worth
making a mention of. These two societies operate 5500ha and 1800 ha of forests respectively. The Forest Department has no control over the management of these forests and the forests are in reasonably good condition. These societies ensure least anthropogenic intervention in the forests through their own watch and ward staff and open forests for exploitation after a regular interval of 10-12 years.

The demarcation of ‘reserved’ and ‘protected’ forests began in most other parts in Himachal Pradesh only in 1986. Prior to that only a few areas were demarcated in 1952. In the first round of land classification, since 1947, most land classified as government land was simply taken over by the Revenue Department. In 1952 many areas belonging to the Revenue Department, specially those with forest cover were ‘transferred’ on paper, vide a government notification under Section 4 of the Forest Act to the Forest Department. This transfer and demarcation was legally incomplete because the subsequent settlement of the rights of the people over these lands and resources under Sections 11 to 16 of the Forest Act was not done for a very long time by the Forest Department. Besides the forest lands, there are large areas of ‘ceiling’ land all over the state which have now in practice become common resources lands. These areas are the excess non-cultivated fallow lands taken over from the erstwhile kings or landlords by the Government under the Urban Land Ceiling Act and Regulation Act 1976. Most of these lands serve a similar purpose as the shamlats (commons), but with the difference that they belong to the Revenue Department and do not fall within the category of land to be transferred to the Forest Department. By and large, these ‘ceiling’ lands have been fenced by the Revenue Department to control grazing. The other categories of forest and grazing lands, which did not come earlier under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department in Himachal Pradesh were the rakhas and shamlats. The shamlats are the commons, which came over to Himachal Pradesh from Punjab when the districts and the states were reorganized in 1962. The rakhas are the traditional forest preserves (community woodlots) managed totally by the local people. In the non-Punjab districts the grazing lands are known as ghasnis. These ghasnis are both privately and commonly owned.
Through the Village Common Lands Vesting and Utilization Act 1974, and the Land Preservation Act 1978, all the shamlats and rakhas were acquired by the Himachal Pradesh government, the former by the Revenue Department and the latter by the Forest Department. Later in the Land Settlement Process all the shamlats were also transferred to the Forest Department. The rakhas, nonetheless are still viewed by the people as their traditional forests and they continue to manage them in the traditional ways. Although the government has transferred the ownership of the rakhas to itself, so far it has not intervened with the traditional community management systems. Under the National Social Forestry Project called the ‘Umbrella Project’ in Himachal Pradesh there was a large ‘community woodlot’ scheme whose design and execution had not tried to learn from the rakha system. Review of this scheme showed that, by and large, it had been unsuccessful.

The new ‘community woodlots’ were planted on shamlats and other Revenue Department lands, whose ownership is with the government. There were no common lands with the Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh. It was realized in the early 1990s that in not paying any attention to the traditional community management systems, the administration was evidently not only proclaiming that it had the total scientific expertise in forestry, but also exhibiting gross mistrust in people. The state of Himachal requires the people’s help in not only developing wastelands, but also in protecting the vast area of unclassified forest land over which there is no formal regulation as yet. The rate at which the government is carrying out the demarcation and settlement has been slow though it has been picking up in the last few years.

A community based afforestation scheme was initiated in the state in 1998-99, in which communities as well as NGO’s were to play an important role in protecting the existing forest wealth and also participate in holistic rural development. The scheme is essentially an exercise in social engineering and would have long term implications in improving planning and management skills of the communities and staff. It would need to be monitored against milestones in developing the inherent authority of people’s power

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and its effects on more equitable and sustainable use of natural resources in general and forest products in particular. The thrust of the scheme is in constituting Village Forest Development Societies. The VFDS are being constituted in the villages located in the periphery of the forests. The membership of the society comprises at least one adult male and one adult female member from every right holder family in the village and also a migratory grazier. The heads of the VFDS are co-opted as members of the Production Committee of the Panchayat and the annual plan of operation prepared by the VFDS is placed before the Panchayat for information and suggestion. The responsibilities and duties of VFDS include assisting the forest department in planning, protection, afforestation etc; judicious use of all existing rights and their equitable distribution; informing the department about forest offenders including encroachers; helping the forest department in extinguishing forest fires; persuading villagers to give available areas for plantations; fair distribution of usufruct and settlement of disputes. Areas with better track records of community participation or with minimal conflict within communities are being selected first for constitution of VFDS.

The micro plan for VFDS normally contains information on geographic and demographic characteristics of the area, social analysis, livestock analysis, natural resource analysis, problems and needs analysis and details of the forest lands and forest products that households and villages have access and rights to, entry point activities and bye-laws. Forest activities are accorded low priority by the local community due to their long gestation period and the forestry programmes are considered government programmes. In order to sustain the interest of the community in forestry related activities, some non-forestry activities upto 25% of the total micro plan budget is to be funded by the department to gain the trust and confidence of the communities. These activities could be creation of water harvesting structures, construction of irrigation channels, development of village pastures, nurseries, paths, other common resources; livestock improvement – the list is indicative and not exhaustive. The VFDS is a gender affirmative programme and due emphasis has been given to the fact that women have a very important role to play if the community has to be involved actively and if the real aim of the government officials is not to perpetuate and maintain their role, thus, ensuring
that the villages don’t really become self-sufficient. Only a few VFDS have been constituted in the state so far but the programme if suitably implemented with the contributions of well-meaning NGOs is likely to go a long way.

SECTION-2

CASE STUDIES OF SURVEYED PANCHAYATS IN THE FOUR ZONES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

In the following pages case studies of surveyed Panchayats in the agro-ecological zones of Himachal Pradesh have been made.

ZONE I – Una district
Dulehar Panchayat

In 1994, watershed of Hum Khad was identified for the National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Areas. Most of the Panchayat Dulehar is covered under the programme. There are no facilities for irrigation in the Panchayat and the average annual rainfall is 1150 mm. Both a watershed committee and a kisan club exist in the Panchayat though there seems to be little co-ordination between these organizations. The Panchayat members have effectively used development funds to improve the access roads to the villages in the Panchayat. Suitable education and health facilities exist in the Panchayat and the main problem is that of a low water table. There have been a few efforts for soil and water conservation in the Panchayat. Marginal and Small farmers with less than 2 hectare land are predominant. Most of the agricultural operations are being carried out by women folk and the recent election of a woman Pradhan is helping much in appreciating and upgrading the skills of women. The villagers confirmed to having seen demonstrations of on-farm trials of improved seeds/varieties. It came across that atleast three villagers had taken part in a training conducted by the agricultural department for balanced use of fertilizers and chemical control of weeds. While the foremost problem identified in the Panchayat was that of a low water table, another very prominent problem was that of weed management. Weeds are the major yield reducers and cause serious damage to crops and grasslands in the Panchayat. Some weeds like Ageratum, Lantana, Oxals and Parthenium have assumed serious dimensions
and representatives of the Panchayat have conveyed their requirement of an integrated method of weed management involving cultural, mechanical and chemical measures to the various agencies active in the watershed management. However serious action with respect to the same still needs to be taken.

**Hatli Panchayat**

The Hatli Panchayat watershed is situated in the Lunkhar Khad watershed. In village Hatli Patialan in the Panchayat there are two wells and three *bouries* (shallow wells). There are 39 farming families of which 30 are of general category and 9 of scheduled caste. In village Kharooni, 18 farming families are of general and 10 of scheduled caste category. There are two *bouries* in the village. In Hatli Kesru there are 19 farming families all belonging to general category. The village has two wells. In village Jandoor, there are six scheduled caste families in the total 23 farming families. Two wells are the source of water to the inhabitants. The Panchayat members confirmed that unexploited potential of grasslands, meadows and wastelands was the main problem. 18 hectares of pastures have been closed recently and are now being managed by the forest department. These pasture lands were over-grazed and degraded. Productivity of the meadows and grazing areas in the forests was very low due to lack of suitable technology for their improvement. Agricultural Department’s extension activities in the Panchayat have so far been imparting suitable technology for fodder production to enable supply of green fodder throughout the year. The department has recommended that improving the digestibility and palatability of crop residues, which are major fodder resources will result in higher animal productivity in the Panchayat. The woman Pradhan and other Panchayat representatives were judiciously utilizing the Panchayat’s funds in building access roads. The villagers understood that timely and adequate supply of critical inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides were crucial to agricultural development. Another significant problem with respect to which community participation had been recently initiated in the Panchayat was that of high intensity rainfall during rainy season, which resulted in excessive run-off and soil loss due to undulating topography and shallow depth of soil. A scheme for construction of two tanks which will be paid for partly by
community savings and partly by the departments of Irrigation and Public Health in the ratio 30:70 is ongoing in the Panchayat.

In Una district there were some schemes operated on community basis with 100 percent financial assistance from the state providing water harvesting and storage structure in and around agricultural watersheds. In Hatli Panchayat in 1982-83 one such structure was built under the scheme of Water Storage Structure and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGSP). It covered a cultural command area of 2 hectares and was meant to benefit some 7-10 small farmers. The purpose of the structure was to provide irrigation to crops as well as to serve as mini silt detention dam. The tank and check dam has, however, been appropriated entirely by one large farmer in the Panchayat. Afforestation drives have been undertaken on Undemarcated forests and private forests. The forest department has a control on the management of the private forests for the purpose of preservation of land and does not derive material benefits from the produce. The practice of involving local farmers in the raising of nurseries of different plants is limited to just a few large farmers.

**Rampur Panchayat**

In Panchayat Rampur, a watershed committee has been constituted by the District Rural development Agency and a micro watershed programme, has been initiated in October 1996. Under the programme a Guide Bandh near Rampur Bridge, 248 metres long has been constructed to check soil erosion and to save the lands of the farmers from floods during rainy season. Activities related to Horticulture development and afforestation have also been undertaken. One of the achievements of the DRDA programme as documented by the people has been the digging of a *nalah* from Bhalorian *bouri* towards Rampur *khad* having a span of about 700 metres to drain out excess water from the fields of the farmers of the area. Most of the area from Bhalorian *bouri* to Rampur *khad* was

3 Almost 10,000 saplings of mango and poplar were planted/distributed among the farmers for planting. Among these only 35% have survived. Only about 1500 poplar plants near the sewage tank constructed by the IPH have survived out of a total of 2500 planted during last three years. 2000 more saplings of poplar were planted on both sides of the Bhalorian bouri to Rampur khad nalalah during February, 2001 but due to draught only 200 plants have survived.
Case studies of Community Participation in Himachal Pradesh

Waterlogged before the commencement of the watershed project. The task was undertaken by DRDA on a priority basis after the recommendation of the watershed committee constituted in the Panchayat. After the channelisation of this nallah, the excess water has been drained out and the land has become useful for agriculture. Also in the Panchayat commercial crops such as potatoes and vegetables are being encouraged through the medium of interaction of Mitra Kissans (farmers' representatives) and agricultural scientists. Although initially only a few farmers adopted potato and cauliflower cultivation for the market, the demonstration effect is catching on.

**Andora Panchayat**

In Panchayat Andora political interventions and lack of community initiative have delayed the watershed programme, which the District Rural development agency was to implement. Since the 1980's however under a US-Aid programme a number of tubewells have been dug in the Panchayat thereby increasing the irrigation potential and productivity. The Swan river flows through the Panchayat in a north-south direction. Lift irrigation schemes Andora and Lift Irrigation Scheme Badaun have a Cultural Command Area of 101 and 102 hectares respectively. Tubewell No. 44 and No.33 together have a Cultural Command Area of 71 hectares in the Panchayat. Some 35 hectares of land in the Panchayat are severely eroded. Cultivation on prohibited lands is a problem in the Panchayat. At a few places the people have extended cultivation to the fringes damaging the natural embankments formed over time. People had started cultivating maize, paddy, sarson, toria, sugarcane as well as tomatoes in the flood plains. Of late however government and community interventions have succeeded in putting check to a certain degree. Plantation drives have been made in the Panchayat on all of reserved forests and private and government lands under the Umbrella Social Forestry Project.

**Zone II- Mandi District**

**Rewalsar Panchayat**

The Panchayat is close to the town Rewalsar, which is an important pilgrimage for the Buddhists, the Sikhs and the Hindus with specific legends associated with all the three
sects and is being promoted as a religious tourism site. A settlement of Tibetan migrants exists in the town and some of them have their residences and shops in the rural Panchayat though they do not own any agricultural land. The rural community is divided on the lines of caste. In village Charhi, which is entirely a scheduled caste village, there is acute shortage of water even for drinking and the residents of other villages, which are predominantly upper caste resist work from beginning on the proposed scheme of the department of Irrigation and Public Health for channelising water for this village from a source in a neighboring upper caste village. In 2001, however the task of constructing two bouries (shallow wells) was completed in the village. In the rest of the Panchayat, departmental efforts since the early 1990’s have led to the construction of eight water harvesting tanks and six bouries. In another village Lehra, which is predominantly a Rajput village, a canal has been dug out by a progressive farmer, which provides water for irrigating their crops to twelve households.

**Maloh Panchayat**

The Panchayat has about 21% of the land under agricultural use and the principal crops grown are maize, rice, wheat, pulses, potatoes and oilseeds. The potential for growing off-season vegetables has been explored in the Panchayat for french beans, cabbage and cauliflower. Attempts have also been made to cultivate exotic cereals and vegetables like baby corn and broccoli. The District Rural Development Agency has assisted a project for setting up six floricultural units in the Panchayat. The project has been encouraged as a private enterprise involving five farm-households but is ensuring much employment generation in the Panchayat. Demonstration effect is catching on in the Panchayat and agriculture is getting commercialized gradually. Extension services have tried to advocate and promote suitable cropping patterns. The popular cropping rotation patterns now on irrigated land are Tomato-Tomato-Cauliflower, Cabbage-Cabbage-Cauliflower and Frenchbean-Frenchbean-Cauliflower. The villagers keep complaining about the migratory graziers who they insist leave their animals loose on their fields and cause a lot of damage to their crops.
Nergharwasra & Masohli Panchayats

As much as 35% of the land is under agricultural use in Nergharwasra whereas 60% land in the Panchayat Masohli is under agricultural use. The two Panchayats are adjoining and cover a fertile tract of land in tehsil Jogindernagar. A project known as Hydro Kuhl was approved in the tehsil covering nineteen Panchayats and including Nergharwasra and Masohli and completed in 1993, though the impact measurement is still going on. The main source of irrigation water in the command area is Uhl river. According to the interim report of this project entitled “Command Area Development of Flow Irrigation Project Hydro Kuhl in Tehsil Jogindernagar” brought out in 1997, a discharge of 0.70 cumecs was required for the 739 hectares of land and the demand could be met with the water of Uhl and the local Ner khad. Water users associations have been formed under the project. Demonstrations have been conducted under the project to teach farmers to improve water efficiency for optimum production per unit cumec of water and to make use of natural precipitation and ground water in conjunction with the surface water for increasing irrigation and cropping intensity. The Water Users’ Association has been operating in the command area and the representatives from different villages and the Irrigation and Public Health department are functional in facilitating the users to have a choice in selecting crops, cropping sequence, timing of water supply and period as well as frequency depending upon the soil, climate and other infrastructure facilities in the command area such as roads and markets. Survey of two Panchayats in the command area revealed that the impact of the project had been felt only by a few farmers. Only four households in both Panchayats out of the twenty surveyed had participated in the demonstrations. Some small, semi-medium and medium farm households have achieved high productivity of wheat and pulses whereas in the case of marginal farm-households the productivity remains low.

Zone III – Shimla District

Deorighat Panchayat

Deorighat Panchayat falls in the Dhamandri watershed in development block and tehsil Theog in Shimla district. The watershed is between Shimla-Kotkhai road and Shimla Dhamandri Sainj road and is about two kms away from Theog. It fulfills all the
conditions of dry land and has been selected during the 9th five-year plan under the National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed areas. Only about 10% of the Panchayat is under assured irrigation. Sheep and goats are kept for domestic use only and rearing is being discouraged due to ecological reasons. A Co-operative society has come up in the Panchayat in the early 1990s for the marketing of agricultural produce. Vegetable production on a commercial scale started in the Panchayat in the early eighties. Production of vegetables like peas and cabbage is increasing. Wheat and maize rotation is also being carried out by all households, specially the marginal and small farmers. Horticulture is prominent in villages Jetagaon, Kufar Khanal, Shadi, Deorighat, Chabtu and Naleha of the seventeen villages that the Panchayat comprises of. Extension activities and community initiative was channelised towards promotion of horticulture during 1985-1990 but the attempts have not been very successful. Cultivation of peas, capsicum and potatoes for the market picked up to a large extent during the nineties. Low productivity of wheat was reported by a majority of the farmers although it emerged as the major Kharif crop. The main reasons given were that most of the area under wheat was rainfed and therefore, the farmers were not applying the recommended dozes of chemical fertilizers due to fear of loss. Under the farming situations in the Panchayat the agriculture department has recommended that varieties HPW-89, HS 240, Surbhi and Archana of wheat be grown. The recommended organic manure quantity is 100-120kg/ha and the recommended fertilizer use per kg hectare is 40kgs per hectare each of N, P and K as Basal and 4kg/ha of Nitrogen as in Top dress.

Jathia Devi Panchayat
The Jathia Devi also called Bagi Panchayat has most of its villages Shilaroo, Patina, Bagana, Panti, Balawag in the Jathia Devi -Doomon watershed. Shilaroo village is inhabited by three families from general category and twenty three from scheduled caste families. Only 8% of the cultivated land in the village is irrigated. The village stretches from the bank of Shilaroo nullah towards the hill of Jubbar Hatti. Village Patina has twenty five households out of which twenty belong to scheduled caste category. Only 7% of the cultivated land is irrigated. In village Bagana out of the fifteen families, fourteen belong to general category. Only 0.01% of the cultivated land is irrigated. In Jathia Devi
village, out of the 28 families, 23 families belong to scheduled caste category. Almost 8% of the cultivated land is under irrigation. There is a Primary School and an Ayurveda dispensary. In the other villages in the Panchayat as well scheduled caste is a dominant caste.

A high proportion (68.6%) of the geographical area of the Panchayat is under permanent pastures and grasslands. The pastures are mainly of the category of private pastures and no practice of maintaining them has been initiated. The villagers and Panchayat representatives agree that there is scope for improvement of their ground cover. Atleast 30 percent of the population in the Panchayat are scheduled caste migrants who migrated in the early 1970's from tehsil Sarkaghat in Mandi district. The land they own was given to them under “Nautor” and villagers reported that more than 50% of this land was under legal disputes. These migrants have adopted weaving baskets from bamboo as an enterprise but there are no co-operative efforts to seek market for their product. Community action is lacking in the Panchayat although good evidences of community participation emerged from other surveyed Panchayats in zone III.

Mashobra Panchayat
As much as 84% of the area in the Panchayat is under non agricultural use. Vegetable cultivation is old in the Panchayat and the cultivation of cabbage, capsicum, peas and potatoes is prevalent ever since the late seventies and early eighties. Community participation is significantly evident as every year a fair is maintained (known as Sipi fair) where people from even the neighboring Panchayats come with their sheep, goats and cattle and officers and others from the Department of Animal Husbandry come and set up stalls to discuss improved fodder and ailments and diseases affecting the livestock. Livestock rearing is however on a decline in the Panchayat though the number of cross bred cows is increasing. Rearing of sheep and goats along with agriculture was the main occupation in the Panchayat till the early eighties but has now shifted to a subsidiary status. Horticulture, specially apple cultivation has proven scope but is feasible only at large scale and has not been undertaken by the small farmers.
Manubhabia Panchayat

The Panchayat is mainly mountainous with steep slopes. Due to steep to very steep slopes, the erosion hazard is acute. During the year 1999-2000 land utilization records revealed that 577 of the 751 hectares of land that constitutes the geographical area of the Panchayat was under the category pasturelands and grazing lands. Community participation was obvious in the Panchayat as a number of villagers mentioned that more than 300 hectares of the pasturelands were being managed as common property resources and were closed at regular intervals for maintenance. Discussions with villagers also revealed that the Panchayat was under good forest cover till about thirty years back but certain faulty policies led to rapid felling of trees. Coordination between villagers and the Irrigation and Public Health Department led to the construction of one tank in village Kinara and another in village Gyan in the Panchayat. Both tanks have storage capacities ranging from 10,000 to 15,000 litres. Two water sources in village Kinara and two in village Manu have dried up. The villagers blamed faulty cutting of pine, cementing of sources and less rainfall for the drying of sources. A Lift irrigation scheme for drinking water started in the early nineties drawing water for drinking from a source in another neighboring Panchayat, Bhyanu.

Vegetable cultivation in the Panchayat is a recent phenomenon. Extension experiments for cabbage and peas were not successful but tomatoes and potatoes are successful commercial crops in the Panchayat. The Kissan Club is successfully functioning in the village and the Panchayat has nominated a few farmers to function as "Mitra Kissans" for organizing timely supply of seeds and fertilizers from the block to the farmers. In 1985-86, the Horticultural Department experimented with cultivating a low height variety of apple, spur. Accordingly some ten to fifteen farmers in the Panchayat experimented with cultivating spur. The experiment was not successful. At present only one hectare of land in the Panchayat is under apple cultivation and the farmers say that they get crop only about once in two-three years.

The case of one Brahmin household in the Panchayat is worth mentioning. Ever since a forefather discovered a source of water that benefited three households the family
has been playing an active role in community participation programmes in the Panchayat. Initiatives by this family led to demonstration of cultivating *Saunf* and Kinnauri *Jira* by the members of the development block in which the Panchayat falls. A literate under the adult literacy programme himself the elder son in the family took initiative in the late eighties to organize adult literacy campaigns in the Panchayat.

About 15% of the population of the Panchayat comprises Muslim Sheikhs. They are mainly cultivators or shopkeepers or both. A Madrasa has come up in the Panchayat recently although earlier some of the local Muslims who did not send their children to other schools and colleges used to send them instead to the Arbi Madrasa in another neighboring Panchayat, Ruslah. The local population comprising both Hindus and Muslims are not very happy with the 100 to 150 strong Gujjar Muslims who come every year during November-December from Uttaranchal and have grazing rights in the area. Community participation is widespread in the Panchayat irrespective of caste and religion.

**Zone IV – Kinnaur district**

**Kafnoo Panchayat**

A Programme has been initiated in Kafnoo Panchayat with the combined efforts of the District Rural Development Agency, the department of Wasteland Development and the local community. The guidelines of the Integrated Watershed Development programme are being implemented. The terrain is mountainous with the river Sutlej flowing in the middle through a deep gorge. The melting of snow in the catchment causes floods in some of the basins but it is the rainy season, which causes most of the soil erosion. During last two years the snowfall has considerably decreased resulting in lowering of water level. The Bhava hydro electric project in the region has resulted in the drying of many water sources. The villagers are not linked too well with road communication. Agricultural and horticultural produce does not reach the market in time. The dependence on forests for fuel, wood and fodder is very high.
Endeavours are being made through community participation and departmental efforts to increase the agricultural and horticultural production by 25% in the area. The Panchayat members have also made efforts to provide timely loans to the apple growers and in ensuring proper packaging and marketing of apples. The Bhava khad, other nallahs and natural springs are perennial sources of water and need has been felt to conserve them. Almost all the households rear domestic cattle and ovines. Various roads are being constructed in the Panchayat now under the tribal sub-plan. The economy of the region depends on agriculture and horticulture. Some people have found employment in the Sanjay Vidyut/Nathpa Jhakri Power Corporation Project. Other economic activities are animal husbandry and forestry. The people are being encouraged to adopt handicraft making as subsidiary occupation during winters.

The institutional arrangements in the Panchayat are reasonably good. The Panchayat has at distances varying from 1/5 of a km to 8kms from different villages a Bank, a Co-operative Society, a Fair Price Shop, a Veterinary Dispensary, a Primary Health Centre, a Post Office, two Primary Schools and a High School. The Yangpa nallah has been tapped for the drinking water supply scheme through Gravity.

Kalpa Panchayat
Kalpa was earlier called Chini, probably a name given by the British. The Rajput community of Kalpa, the Negis claim that the highest deity in Kinnaur, Kalpa Narayan, understood to be an incarnation of Vishnu resides in Kalpa. The Devi and the Buddha are understood to reside in Kalpa as well. The Kinner Kailash range, the abode of Shiv is in view from Kalpa and the people consider themselves as blessed from all angles. Large expanses of land in Kalpa belong to the village deity and a system of community management prevails in these lands. Also a large extant of deodar forests belong to the deity and the village community decides rights for their wood to be used for different purpose of construction. The Pangi Nallah is an important natural water source. Most of Kalpa is irrigated but the water for irrigation from Kuhls is made available through a distribution system worked out by the Vikas committee. Some villages such as Shudarang get water as less as 6 hours in one month for 50 households. While agriculture and
horticulture are important professions, a number of local people work as contractors for almond and chilgoza forests.

Flash floods in July 2000 caused much loss to land and property in Kalpa and community efforts are on to make good the loss. Farmers complain of a disease whereby wheat turns black. The problem has not been diagnosed and no remedies have been found out as yet. Caste relations are very subtly defined in Kalpa. While the men eat and drink together and the scheduled castes are also members of the community development programmes in the name of the deity, they keep their distance from the inner sanctums of the temple specially when the Negis or the Rajputs are around. Polyandry or the practice of common wives to brothers is very common in Kalpa. In one surveyed household a woman who was married to the eldest brother and had refused to become common to the other brothers even after her husband died was given 4 Bighas of land, to cultivate and live separately by her father-in-law. Sometimes if a couple bifurcate they are not given any land. Two households who had taken the scheme of buying the machine for weaving shawls at 50% subsidy had a common history of not having inherited any land.

Kalpa has safe drinking water under the scheme of the Irrigation and Public Health Department. Before 1997, there was an acute shortage of water in the Panchayat and efforts are still on under the IPH scheme to revert the shortage of drinking water. The water is not free from cholera, typhoid and dysentry etc and the people were seen suffering from these diseases. Water has been tapped from the Yalang spring source. The discharge of the spring has been measured as 35ltrs/minute or 50400ltrs per day as against the ultimate requirement of 182630 ltrs per day of water for the population of 2609 @ 70 litres per head per day. The water is being used at present only by a population of 139 persons in one village Chini-Kalpa in the Panchayat. The water requirement of the village taking a projected population of 169 after another 10 years at 2.4% growth rate per annum is 11,830litres. Taking an 8 hours storage capacity an underground storage tank of 4,545 litres capacity has been constructed. Natural spring water is the main source of drinking water in the other villages. The IPH is trying to propose tapping another source for fulfilling the drinking water requirements of the
people. For Shudarang village in Panchayat Kalpa, a Kuhl of the length 10.68kms had been proposed to provide for irrigation, however the proposal has been sent back to the department of Irrigation and Public Health for revision by the Forest department. Water from Kuhls is being channelised for irrigation. The Panchayat has two Primary schools, one Middle school and one High school. Kalpa has recently been put on the country's international map of tourism. However, the provisions with regard to accommodation and food are pathetic. The saving grace is that Reckong Peo, Kinnaur district's headquarters is only forty minutes drive away from Kalpa and has better amenities.

Chitkul Panchayat

The Panchayat Chitkul abounds in natural beauty. The road from Sangla to Chitkul is entirely motorable and is about two hours drive. It crosses a number of Nallahs on the way. Common among them are Gangarang, Kharogla and Mastarang. *Bhojpatra, Tosh* and *Kayal* are common tree species in Chitkul. *Mathi devi*, the local deity is believed to be a very powerful goddess. There is also the mixed influence of Buddhism in the Panchayat. The Panchayat is known among other things for its vast collection of gold and bronze images of gods and goddesses. Community participation in the Panchayat comes out in the people leaving decisions to the discretion of the deity as conveyed by her oracles.  

A septic tank has been laid recently in the Panchayat under community initiative with about 30% support from the government. A number of villagers migrate to Sirmour district during winters with their sheep and goats. From June to October it is the other way round and migratory graziers from parts of Sirmour and Shimla districts come with their ovine to Chitkul. Community initiative is normally in the name of the deity and hence was to an extent subject to the whims of her oracles, though there have been times when indirect pressures from the community have worked to get the oracle to give

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4 On the same day as I visited Chitkul to survey it, a theft of a golden image of Buddha was reported early in the morning. Sometime after arrival at Chitkul, I saw the Superintendant of police, Kinnaur district outside the devi's temple questioning the devi through her oracle or mouthpiece regarding the theft that had been reported from the Panchayat. The S.P. was brought around to discuss the matter with the devi under pressure from the local community.
judgement in favour of the community at large. Evidences of rural tourism can be seen in the Panchayat and for some households an important source of income is keeping in-house tourists, generally foreigners and feeding them. Another noteworthy feature in the Panchayat is the great hazard from glaciers in the area as sometimes a glacier can take an unprecedented path and take in its stride all the constructed houses in its path.

Pooh Panchayat
In the Panchayat Pooh, the maximum proportion of land is in the category of alpine pastures (40%). The villagers stressed that the closing of the international border with Tibet in 1962 increased the pressure of migratory graziers to the Panchayat. Sheep and goats are dominant among both local and migratory livestock and among local animals cattle are prominent also. The declining productivity of pastures was cited by the surveyed households as the reason for the decline in the number of local livestock. Discussions with villagers and officials of revenue department brought out that the stocking rate in the Panchayat was less than one per hectare. There were no accounts or views on carrying capacity of the pastures that could indicate that the present stocking rates were higher than in earlier times although the general observation of officials and local perception supported the view that the pastures were overgrazed. Migration of men into services is a common phenomenon in the Panchayat.

The National Social Forestry (umbrella) project was implemented in Himachal Pradesh between 1985 and 1993 with a total budget of Rs. 570 million. Its main aims were to raise income and employment amongst the rural poor by increasing the production of fuelwood, fodder and timber and to arrest the erosion of the natural environment caused by deforestation. The scheme included tree tenures for the poor and landless, community woodlots (self-help and rainfed), regeneration of degraded forests, farmers’ nurseries and distribution of seedlings, as well as the planting of a variety of trees on private non-arable lands. The ‘Van Lagao, Rozi Kamao’ scheme, announced later was earlier a component. The project covered all of Himachal Pradesh’s 12 districts and attempted to implement its activities through villagers or in consultation with villagers. The Forest Department started the dialogue with the villagers through ‘gram
Panchayats’ or other existing Village Level Institutions such as Mahila Mandals. Village forest development committees were set up in many villages for the first time to implement the scheme. However, attempts to seek the active participation of an entire village community by including one woman (from the Mahila Mandal), one representative from the scheduled castes and one from the Gram Panchayat were not very successful (Sood 1994). The Village Development Committees evolved neither participatory mechanisms nor bottom-up systems for planning and management. The lack of representation of local forest users and domination by the elite reduced the experiment to proforma ‘involvement’ of the people. As ex-officio member secretary of the VDC, the forest department’s beat guard formulated the integrated resource management plan for the village, which in most cases was with little reference to the needs of the community. In the surveyed Panchayats community participation efforts in Hatli in zone I, Maloh in zone II are commendable. However generalizing the scenario community participation is missing in zones I and II. Community participation is evident at a much larger scale and at a slightly lower scale in zones III and IV although fewer extension programmes and conservation programmes have been undertaken in these two zones in comparison to zones I and II. With the result commercial cultivation of vegetables is on an increase in zone III and horticulture mainly apple cultivation is being practised very professionally in zone IV. In zone III and IV there are evidences of the trickle down effect that is marginal and small farmers have also sufficiently benefited from the schemes, a phenomenon which is conspicuously absent in zones I and II.