Behind Rhetoric and Discourse of Community Forestry: in the case of the *Van* (Forest) *Panchayats* of Uttarakhand, Central Himalayas, India.

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Abstract. –

The discourse of community forestry shows a debate between a positive rhetoric and a contesting literature. To contribute to this debate, this study aims to assess the contesting literature in practice. To do so, this study conducts fieldwork and interviews with users and practitioners in the case of Uttarakhand, India. The study shows how a popular discourse may result in a superficial top-down creation of community entities and suggests a limited reality of community forestry policies. Further, it illustrates the limitation of an independent and homogenous rhetoric by assessing the influence of non-governmental organisations and social heterogeneous features.

Key words –

Community Forestry; Policy Implementation; NGOs; Social Heterogeneity; Uttarakhand; India.

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Introduction

The discourse of natural resource management in developing countries has witnessed a growing attention to include community participation during the 1980s and 1990s (Sundar and Jeffery 1999, 15; Agrawal and Ostrom 2001; Larson and Ribot 2004, 1; Matta 2006, 274). The community level was adopted by international agencies and brought a flood of scholarly papers and policy reports about community-based conservation (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, 631).

In the case of India, legal and administrative provisions promoted community governance in the fields of forests, branch canals and watersheds (Baviskar 2004, 24). This study will focus on community forestry which has a global relevance with a share in forests of 22% in 2002 and 27% in 2008 (Larson et al. 2010). Community forestry exists all over India with more than 100.000 communities (Bhattacharya et al. 2010). A nationwide adoption became visible in the 1990s with the policy of Joint Forest Management (JFM) which aimed for a combined management by villages and the state.

The attention for community forestry can be seen as a response to several factors (Charnley and Poe 2007 , 305 – 306). First of all, the attention for community forestry stems from a post-modern shift in the development discourse away from top-down development assistance. In addition, it is part of a greater struggle for democratisation and recourse access expressed in collective actions and protests by local communities and civil society. Furthermore, it has been acknowledged that state governments lack resources to enforce laws and regulations and hence the local level is seen as an alternative. Finally, the concept of community forestry received support from international development agencies, foundations and banks. These actors provided assistance and finances and pushed governments to include community forestry in their policies.

The concept of community forestry entails the idea that local people are given the rights to manage forests. Local people negotiate about the use and responsibility of a forest resource and apply both formal and informal regulations. An important rhetoric behind the advocacy of community forestry lies in the assumptions that 'communities' have a long-term incentive to manage their forest, and that they have unique indigenous knowledge about the forests (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, 633). Moreover, community forestry is based on a combined rhetoric in favour of nature and people. It is said to bring both positive changes to ecological resources as that it will bring positive changes for the rural livelihood of people.

The rhetoric of community forestry seems to find recognition in a consensus which shows evidence that the concept can have positive ecological outcomes in cases where a village was able to create effective local-level institutions for forest management (Charnley and Poe 2007, 325). This idea invited scholars to search for factors that determine positive ecological outcomes so that the concept can be successfully implemented with a specific focus on the relevant factors.

However, the realisation of community forestry is also questioned in literature (Charnley and Poe 2007, 325). For instance, despite that the state of Uttarakhand is a well-researched example (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001, 496) with the *Van Panchayats* (VPs) as an exemplary case by many scholars (Ballabh et al. 2002, 2163), studies suggest a decrease in the functioning of VPs (e.g. Ballabh et al. 2002, 2163 and Balooni et al. 2007).

Thus, on the one hand there is positive rhetoric and consensus about community forestry. But on the other hand there is a literature which questions the realisation of community forestry in practice. This calls for a careful assessment of the policy adoption in the 1990s behind the rhetoric of community forestry. Consequently, this study aims to assess the contesting literature in practice. In doing so, three questions from the contesting literature are chosen as the focus of this study .

Firstly, policies are being questioned as a result of the fact that many states are retaining their significant shares of large forest areas. In addition, cases are documented where simplistic community entities have been created in a top-down manner for important political objectives (e.g., Cromley 2005, Hale 2006, Li 2000). This asks for a reflection of the popular advocacy of community forestry in policy programs and the role of the state. It leads to a first question which focuses on the VPs as a high adopted policy which can be divided in two parts: whether community forestry is applied accordingly its bottom-up rhetoric and whether community forestry entities are really functioning.

Secondly, it can be questioned whether communities can adopt the bottom-up advocacy in development thinking without external support. In other words, can villages create a local institution as expected with the assumptions about long-term incentives and indigenous knowledge? The fact that

initiatives of community forestry are often supported by the work of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), suggests that the role of NGOs is vital for the success of community forestry. This leads to a second question which focuses on the role of NGOs.
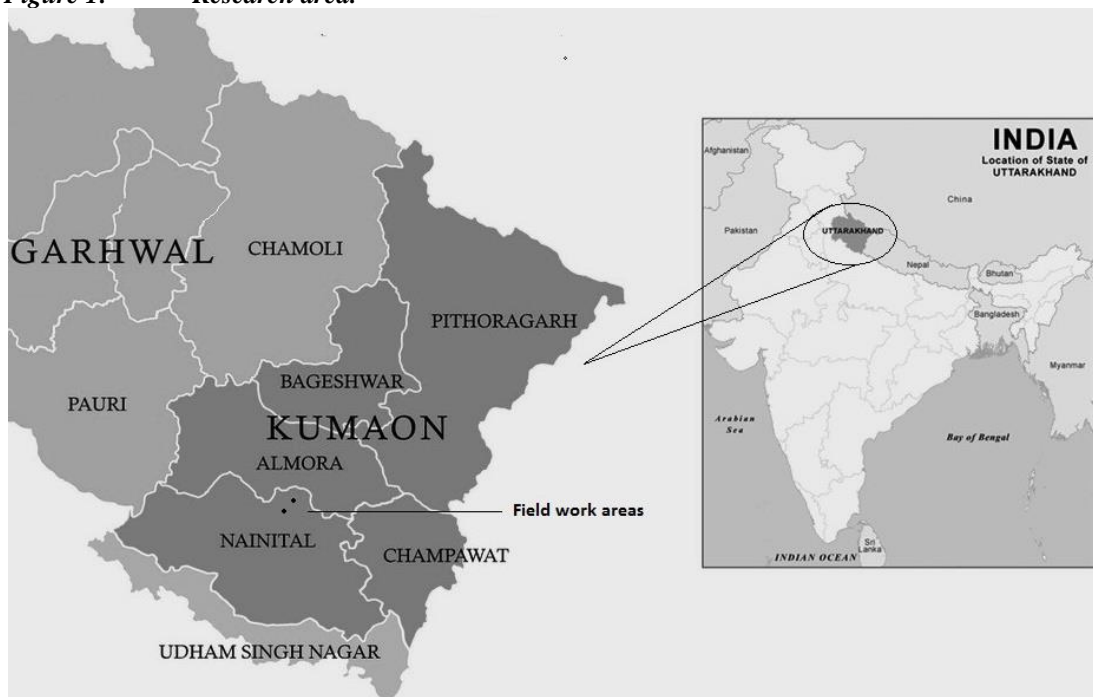
Thirdly, an important discussion focuses on how different settings of social relations within communities lead to different outcomes. Most influential is the work of Ostrom (1990) who stressed that community governance is possible, but requires a context of collective action with shared trust, goals and communication. In addition, there is a debate about outcomes along different social groups (Agrawal 2014, 89 – 90; Charnley and Poe 2007, 313). In other words, the assumption of a collective entity is highly questioned. This leads to a third question to be assessed in practice which focuses on the role of social heterogeneity.

To assess community forestry in practice, this study will explore the *Van* (forest) *Panchayats* (village councils) of Uttarakhand, India (figure 1). The state of Uttarakhand is very relevant in the field of forestry with 61,45% land registered as forest (FD 2012). Uttarakhand is historically known by its decentralised initiatives since the early 20th century and is well known to date by the activist *Chipko* movement. In addition, Uttarakhand is known as a forest state because it hosts the Forest Research Institute (FRI), the Forest Survey of India (FSI) and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). But moreover, it is the mixed nature of Uttarakhand as both an exemplary and criticised case which makes it an interesting area to assess the concept of community forestry in practice.

The further relevance of this study for Uttarakhand can be found in the issue of soil erosion due to forest degradation on the hills. The forest degradation increases the likelihood of landslides which became very clear during the hazards of 2013. More on a higher scale, soil erosion also aggravates the cycle between floods and draughts in the Gangetic plains because the fewer soil decreases the ability to absorb rainfall in the hills, hence increasing the run-off in the monsoon period and decreasing the deep-flow which is important in the non-monsoon period.

The next section will present the approach and the methodology of fieldwork and interviews. Then, it will elaborate further on the three questions followed. Consequently, the paper will present the results accordingly the three questions. Finally, the paper summarises the findings with its implications for the debate about community forestry.

Figure 1:   Research area.

Source: http://uttarakhand.org/library/maps/

Approach and methodology

To assess the contesting literature in practice, this study will select three questions in the debate around community forestry. Those questions will function as a framework to see concretely what the contested literature implies in practice. To systematically asses the three selected questions in practice, this study will carry out empirical field work in two villages and will conduct interviews with practitioners. In this way, community forestry is perceived with the two ends from the implementation towards the user.

The study was carried out in the period September 2013 - February 2014. First, field work was carried out in two VPs in the district of Nainital (figure 1). The field work entailed individual and group interviews and general observations about the functioning and context of the VP. Secondly, 12 semi-structured interviews with 14 practitioners were held to address the policy adoption of community forestry in the case of the VPs in Uttarakhand.

The two villages were selected from a sample of 30 VPs which was based on practical grounds in terms of accessible relations with a NGO. The two VPs were selected to make it possible to further asses the first question about the criticised bottom-up rhetoric and functioning of VPs. Consequently, one VP was selected from the 1940s representing a more bottom-up VP and another VP from the 1990s representing a more top-down VP.

The respondents in the villages were selected in such a way that all areas were included and that both women and men were included in those areas. Because caste is mostly geographical divided, geographical and caste representation were considered similarly. In addition, the field work also included interviews with local forest guards and local NGO staff to cover the local practitioner level.

In addition, interviews were held in the FD, the Divisional Forest Office (DFO) in Nainital, Forest Research Institute (FRI), the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and four NGOs. The NGOs represented the local level and the state level, as well they represented NGOs with a practical and research background. Further, interviews were held with a scholar in natural recourse management and a social forestry activist.

All interviews followed a semi-structured approach and the topics evolved during the research. The three questions created a general structure in which the interviewees could further address specific topics. These topics evolved in such a way that in each following interview, results and topics from the former interviews were discussed. In addition, to address the subjective nature of the information and the lack of solid data, the approach of respondent triangulation was applied in each interview.

Background and history

Before elaborating on the three questions, this section will first give attention to the history and background of community forestry in India and Uttarakhand which is especially needed to understand the first question. The current relation between the state and communities derives from the British period in which the forest area under state control increased at the expense of community control. In particular, in 1878 the first step towards government control was made with the Indian Forest Act (Murali et al. 2006, 23).

From the 1870s to the 1910s, large areas were allocated as Reserved Forest (RF) under the new created Forest Department (FD) to ensure the national wood production which was further emphasised due to increasing revenues from timber. As a result, villagers faced restrictions for their cattle and fuel wood. This created violent protests in which large forests were burned down (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001, 494; Ballabh et al. 2002, 2154 – 2155).

In 1921, the protests made the government to appoint a committee for the area of Kumaon (figure 1) to examine the situation. The committee recommended to reopen parts of the RF and to offer the possibility of community forests. Accordingly, the RFs were divided in two parts with respectively less or more restrictions. In addition, a law in 1931 made it possible to create local forests councils (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001, 494; Ballabh et al. 2002, 2154 – 2155). Since the 1930s, VPs were created mostly in Kumaon and only in a later stage in Garhwal (figure 1).

Although the states of Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana are other examples of states with early decentralised initiatives (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001, 496; Dasgupta and Debnath 2008, 54 – 57; Bhattacharya et al. 2010, 470; Nayak and Berkes 2008, 708), similar early processes as in Uttarakhand did not occur significantly in the rest of India. Since 1935, most Indian forests were under the control

of the FD to get more control over valuable timber resources (Kaushal and Kala 2004, 13). Forestry remained a state policy after independence and the policy in 1952 even stated that communities should never be permitted to use forests at the costs of national interests (Khare et al. 2000, 45).

Instead, a visible change in mindset in forestry has been traced during the meeting of the Central Board of Forestry in 1989. Consequently, a resolution in 1990 states that every village should have a micro-plan to regenerate and restore an adjacent forest which should be based on a village representing entity (Mukherjee 2004, 39). The first period till 1993 is witnessed by a formative phase in which 14 states adopted the resolution. The first phase entails mostly a classification of forest protection communities and a creation of an institutional framework within the FD. This policy is known as the JFM program.

The period till 1999 witnessed a strengthening of local committees to include options to include micro plans in a village for forestry integrated with income generating activities and rural development. The possibility for a broader development was underlined with a mandate to share the profits from timber which made it possible to transfer the benefits from the forest to a broader development perspective (Dasgupta and Debnath 2008, 62).

The period from 1999 to 2003 is known by the National Forest Action Programme with a pilot of 170.000 villages. It aimed to further strengthen the JFM network and activities. In addition, the JFM guidelines of 2000 entail a legal status of the local councils, the recognition of self-initiated groups and the reservation in the councils of 50% for women (Dasgupta and Debnath 2008, 63 – 67).

In 2006, a policy was initiated which recognised the rights of indigenous communities. Moreover, it admitted that these rights were undermined in former forest policies. This was followed by the recognition of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in 2007 which gives tribes rights to live in the forest and to use forests under certain approves and conditions (Aggarwal et al. 2009, 7). However, the FRA brought also local conflicts (Baheranwala 2011, 77) and created tensions between the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. This indicates that community forestry is still limited in the mindset of the FD which suggests a limited reality of the JFM rhetoric.

Contesting the concept of community forestry

This section will further elaborate on the three questions. It will first elaborate on the policy adoption and the role of the state. Then, the section will address the role of local NGOs to question the advocacy of independent initiatives without external support. Finally, the section will address the role of social heterogeneity as opposite to the collective nature of community forestry in theory.

Contesting the bottom-up rhetoric and the role of the state

Firstly, community forestry is contested as a popular concept which is adopted in policies. Uttarakhand became also involved in the JFM policy and the linked donors schemes, despite the early presence of community forestry here. Of great concern is that the amount of VPs increased from 5000 in 1996 to more than 12.000 to date (Ballabh et al. 2002, 2155; FD 2012). To illustrate, the early sample of 30 VPs in this study shows that 16 VPs were created in three years in the period 1996-1999 and only 13 VPs in the period 1930-1963 (one VP in 1977).

The concern about a quick policy adoption is also perceived in literature. Ojha et al. (2009) stress that the reality of community foresrty rhetoric is limited because of the remaining power structures. Consequently, they use the term of symbolic violence to describe that community forestry is romanticised internationally for its livelihood potential. Further, Baviskar (2004, 24) observes that in some cases "*the consensus in development circles about the virtues of decentralisation has created a curious paradox, leading to a situation where centralized strategies are employed to demonstrate the 'success' of decentralisation*". In other words, decentralisation initiatives are created from above without taking care whether localities meet the assumptions of community forestry.

In addition, Baviskar (2004, 34) warns for pressures from donors who promote community forestry. While donors can be seen as positive agents to promote decentralisation, they should also be perceived with their drawbacks (Baviskar 2004, 34). Funding dependencies and administrative pressures in fixed timeframes are likely to force projects to show results, so that neither ecological nor social justice are achieved. Put simply, the fact that a lot of community entities exist as a result of a policy does not imply that community forestry is also functional and effective.

Likewise, critical attention should be given to the high increase of VPs. The increase of VPs took place along the existence of the 'World Bank Uttar Pradesh Forestry Project' from 1997 to 2003 for which $12,57 million was allocated for institutional development. One of the central objectives was to make the FD more participatory and to accept more involvement of communities in forest management (World Bank, 2004).

One of the critiques of the World Bank project was that 50% was not based on existing VPs and that no specific activities were included to strengthen the VPs. However, most striking in the implementation report is that the aim to create a VP in every village is seen as an indication that the FD is shifting to a participatory approach (World Bank, 2004) which is a very technical and superficial measurement which does not say anything about the functioning of the VP.

The community forestry in Uttarakhand can further be assessed with the share in forest by the VPs. Anno 2012, the VPs share only 15,7% of the total forest land (FD 2012). In addition, these lands are still officially owned by the state. Moreover, the fact that state forests are largely used by villagers, indicates that the VPs are not sufficient to meet the rural livelihoods. Similarly for Nepal, Ojha et al. (2009, 370) state that community forests are too small to provide a significant livelihood potential. This undermines the assumption that villagers have incentives to manage their forests because.

In addition, one should be aware of the poor forest quality. Much land that is labelled as forest derives from the colonial time when most land, also shrub land, was labelled as forest to ensure the state interest. Such lands only occasionally have trees (Vasan 2005, 4448). Moreover, VP forests are mostly lands which are in the surroundings of villages, so most intensively used.

Furthermore, scholars critically perceived the state involvement. For instance, Ballabh et al. (2002) concludes that the real community forestry is limited because of centralised mechanisms. This is especially true for JFM which is for Uttarakhand actually a centralisation because JFM empowers the FD whereas Uttarakhand had already shown small devolutions in the past. Further, Agrawal and Ostrom (2001) observe that communities in Indian forestry have indeed gain some management rights and operational rules to protect the forest, but that villages do not have ownership and control.

Despite the debate in which degree the state is involved formally, it is more important to question whether the state is really involved in practice. On paper, the FD has an important role such as for commercial activities in the VP. However, if one considers the FD with its traditional production and protection tasks, it is likely to expect a limited ability to be active in VPs. Moreover, the low quality of VPs forests makes it not likely to create incentives for the FD to get involved. Finally, the state control is further nuanced by the fact that the VPs are able to define own institutions within the boundaries of a framework of guidelines (Agrawal and Yadama 1997, 438; Agrawal and Ostrom 2001, 495).

Thus, a rapid top-down centralised creation of community entities is likely to create VPs without strong local roots. Therefore, one should critically assess the functioning of VPs which are created in the time of the high discourse when donors wanted to see numbers of community initiatives on paper. In addition, it is important to be aware of the limited share in forest area owned by VPs, also in terms of forest quality. Finally, the criticism towards the state as interfering in the VP should be tempered considering the low likelihood of ability and interest to be active in the VPs.

Contesting the independent communities: the role of NGOs

Secondly, community forestry contains the rhetoric of a post-structural idea where communities can select their own development. However, the context of community initiatives is closely connected with the activities of local NGOs. For instance, the Indian grassroots initiatives from 1970 to 1985 were supported with 400 million dollars from the non-governmental level (Khare et al. 2000, 50). In this way, NGOs have helped to hear the voices of local and indigenous groups. In addition, NGO efforts make governments aware of participation policies. Likewise, Agrawal and Gibson stressed already in 1999 that there is a need to understand the role of external actors in addition to the local functioning.

Certainly, if well trained, external agents and facilitators can influence the success of community based projects (Mansuri and Rao 2004, 1). Agarwal (2001) found for South-Asia that NGOs have a large role in creating community forestry and can have a positive influence on women's participation in forestry management. For instance in a study in Rajasthan, Gupte (2004) observed

how a NGO had a large influence on developing a community forestry entity. It promoted meetings and brought awareness about the management of natural resources.

Thus, NGOs can act as catalysts or intermediaries in group formation and functioning (Agarwal 2001, 1626). This questions the idea of community forestry as an independent concept as part of the shift in development thinking. Interesting is that Andersson (2013) found in the case of Bolivia that NGOs were appreciated by communities but did not have an impact on the probability of establishing a local forest council. Consequently, this study will further explore the role of NGOs.

Contesting the collective action: the role of social heterogeneity

Thirdly, the application of community forestry is contested with the required context of a homogenous entity. Agrawal and Gibson (1999) critically observed a popular rhetoric on which villages were seen as 'mythical communities'. Talking about a community seems to refer to homogenous social structures with shared norms, which excludes hierarchical, heterogeneous and conflict-ridden features (Sundar and Jeffery 1999, 37 – 38). In contrast, one should be aware of the presence of heterogeneous communities, as found in a growing attention for equity issues in the community forestry literature (McDermott and Schreckenberg 2009, 158). McDermott and Schreckenberg (158 – 159) state that it is required to analyse power relations rather than simply focus on poverty impacts.

Despite the attention for internal diversity, the field of community management has still been commented with a lack of attention for equity issues (Aggrawal, 2014). Aggrawal stresses that successful ecological outcomes do not have to go hand in hand with an equal share of benefits (89 – 90). Hence, he calls for a need of more social differentiated analyses. Therefore, this study will analyse community forestry with a sensitivity for the social heterogeneous features

Heterogeneous features have been linked with uneven outcomes in the management of natural resources by focusing on questions of power and authority (Sikor and Lund 2009). For instance, in a meta-analysis based on more than 100 studies world-wide, Leisher et al. (2011) found that having more advantageous social ties leads to more participation in ecological conservation initiatives and that elites often capture the benefits of an initiative. In addition, Sikor and Nguyen (2007) conclude that uneven local relations may constrain the 'poorest of the poor'.

In particular, in the case of India, Kumar (2002, 777) observes that unequal distribution of rights for land and local citizenship at the start of a forest project will shape outcomes. Further, Sundar (2002, 276); Larson and Ribot (2007); and Vyamana (2009) suggest that social forestry projects may increase hierarchies and inequalities. For example, Ballabh et al. (2002) found that members of the forest committee were all relatives of the head which resulted in developmental activities around the settlements of the dominant caste. Finally, Malla et al. (2003) found that poorer households benefit less than wealthier households because of lower participation and awareness.

Furthermore, Gupte (2004, 366 – 367) warns for overlooking formal representations of women on paper versus the traditional practices on the ground. Women are important actors in natural resources because rural women in developing countries are responsible for most of the collection of food and fuel wood. However, in decision making they have been traditionally neglected (Gupte 2004, 367).

Thus, for the assessment of VPs as an example of community forestry, this study will also address the role of NGOs and the internal differentiation along settlements (hamlets), caste and gender. NGOs can promote collective action and might provide more participation along minorities and gender. Yet, it remains that an external facilitator has to deal with deep rooted differentiation of the Indian rural villages.

Field work in two Van Panchayats

Context

The livelihoods of Uttarakhand are closely linked with the forests. Fodder and grass are collected from VP and FD forests, for which oak forests are most suitable. Fuel wood is collected from trees on court yards and from VP and FD forests. Cattle grazes on own civil land and inside the VP forests. People who can afford use gas which is however limited available due to the transportation difficulties in the hills.

The agricultural lands (*uproan* terrace fields) are small and very low in production in relation to the Indian plains. The agriculture output is mainly for substance use and the population is partly dependent on grain from the plains. Straw, oak leaves, pine needles and leftovers from fodder are used as cushion for the cattle which is later on spread on the agricultural land. The removal of needles prevents fires in the summer and helps to stimulate the grow of grass and herbs.

The two villages for the field work (table 1) are located in the district of Nainital and in the development block of Ramgarh (figure 1). The villages do not share a border. To ensure anonymous information, fictive names were given to villages and the NGO. The VP of Kendrita (Hindi: geographically centered) was established in the end 1990s and the VP of Bikhra (Hindi: geographically scattered) was established in the mid 1940s.

Kendrita (1400m) is dominated by Chir Pine and the few oak trees disappeared in the last 15 years. The forest is very degraded and the villagers get almost nothing out of it. The case of Kendrita might be linked with the fact that a lot of scrub land was labelled as forest in the early 20th century. This questions whether all VPs in Uttarakhand can be considered as forests.

The domination of pine derives from the fact that pine trees cannot be browsed and cannot be utilised for fodder. In contrast, oak is of great use and hence the domination by pine increased. However, a less gradual cause lays in the deliberate replacement of oak with the more profitable chir pine (Somanathan 1991, 42). To illustrate, an old man explained that the weak forest quality derives from *"resin tapping of small trees and they [FD] were not interested to see that"*. Notwithstanding the fact Kendrita is situated in the highest regime for pine trees (1400-1800 meter), the policy of the FD did not promote oak trees to grow during the last 100 years.

Bikhra (1800m, oak regime) has a mixed vegetation of oak and chir pine and the forest is moderately degraded in comparison with Kendrita. Nevertheless, it became clear that also the Bikhra forest cannot fulfil the needs for fuel wood, fodder and grass. More specifically, in a very degraded part of Bikhra which is situated on a drought southern aspect, villagers only have some pine trees and can only utilise grass during a short period in the monsoon season.

The lack of the VP forest is in both cases compensated by the use of a RF located approximately 5 km from the village. Consequently, women spent the early mornings to walk and collect grass, fodder and fuel wood. In addition, villagers utilised the option to cut trees in the RF after paying money to the forest guard. In Kendrita, all women stressed that if they need trees, they have to go to the foresters which was perceived as a sensitive topic.

This section will present the results of the fieldwork. It will first reflect on the nascency of the VPs and the role of the FD. To further address the promoted community forestry discourse in policies, it will also analyse the functioning of the two VPs. Then, it addresses the role of a local NGO and finally it will perceive the VPs with their social heterogeneity.

Table 1 Basic features of the two case studies.

	Bikhra (1800m)	Kendrita (1400)
VP Forest (% of village area)	Oak – Chir pine (11)	Chir pine (25)
Forest quality	Moderately degraded	Heavily degraded /absence forest
Scheduled caste share	12%	40%
Below poverty line	33%	38%
Social geographical features	Islands of households with different castes	Two clustered areas divided along caste
Involvement NGO	Low	High
NGO cover	Difficult relations with lower cast	No complete geographical cover, especially one lower caste is missing.

Origin	Bottom-up / Local activism	Top-down / created along JFM funds

Bottom-up versus top-down and the role of the state

To assess the first question about the bottom-up rhetoric, the two VPs can be analysed with their nascency. The difference in political settings from bottom-up versus top-down was clearly observed in the field work. First, the head of the VP (sarpanch) in Bikhra described clearly the bottom-up creation: *"There were some people who raised their voice in the British time. They said we have also rights to cut the trees. The British replied with agreeing of making a type of government [...]"*. A man stresses further: *"It was created by the villagers"*.

In contrast, the sarpanch of Kendrita emphasised the lack of profit from resin tapping as a reason for the creation of the VP: *"That time [1990s] the villagers were not getting good money. The main concern for constructing a VP was to get money [...]"*. He stressed that the VP started with substantial finances as opposed to date. Moreover, non-SC women stated that they received money individually in the beginning of the VP which indicates that the VP was created along available finances.

The first question also deals with the criticised policy adoption of community forestry by emphasising on the involvement of the state. Whereas some literature stressed the state involvement, the field work found an absence or only limited involvement. For instance, the sarpanch in Kendrita described it as follows: *"They [foresters] have no interference, they should come to the meetings but they are never there and never checked"*. In addition, a local forest guard explained his position: *"I have 739 hectares of forest to protect. VP is an extra duty, the FD does not have enough persons"*.

Despite of the absence of involvement by the state, two old men in Kendrita were aware of the fact that the land is from the FD and that the FD has the last decision on paper. They seem to refer to the time that the VP forest brought incentives for the FD as being economically valuable for resin tapping and fund flow. Accordingly, the criticised involvement of the FD might be limited only to the time when financial flows were available during the high discourse in the 1990s.

To which extent do VPs function?

To further assess the first question, it is important to analyse the functioning of the VPs which are likely to be a result of their different nascency. In doing so, one might look at the formal existence of the VP. According to the Van Panchayati guidelines, a VP should have a functioning committee with a head (sarpanch) and members (panches) who vote for decisions related to the VP forest and at regular meetings. The committee consist of eight members or panches out of which four are women. In Kendrita, only one panch is from SC (women), whereas Bikhra has two panches from SC (woman and men) despite the SC share is only 12%.

Yet, it became clear that the functioning of meetings was low to absent and that the panches have in fact no role in Kendrita and are not willing to involve in Bikhra. This was well illustrated by the sarpanch in Bikhra: *"There were three meetings in the last five year. These were general meetings where everybody in the village can come. But usually not a lot of people turn up at these meetings. People are not interested because they think they have nothing to gain from these meetings so only 15 people turn up. If there is no pine resin money, people are not interested because there is even not enough money for a cup tea."* For Kendrita, a meeting in December 2013 was the first meeting in at least four years and also the first meeting for the new sarpanch after being a year in function. Ironically, this meeting about royalties worked as a financial incentive and did attracted 50 men.

Thus, rather than the committee of the VP, it is the informal application of penalties and rules which has to be analysed to critically explore the functioning of VPs. Important to consider is that the low utilisation value of the forest, especially in Kendrita, is likely to decrease the existence of rules in the VP. Hence, one has to look for small clues indicating VP institutions.

To start, the fieldwork observed ambiguity and flexibility in the rules for cutting trees. While it was argued that green trees were not used, a quote from an old man in Bikhra indicated the flexibility of rules: *"We do not cut green trees"* [Interviewer: *"But if you need a green tree for a wedding?"*]: *"Yes then we do"* [Interviewer: *"for how much?"*] *"200 Rupees"*. Furthermore, a man in Bikhra shared confidentially that the sarpanch never knew about the trees used for his house, though

he told this only when the voice recorder was switched off. Moreover, it was observed in situ on the road side how villagers in Bikhra chopped a green and young tree till no branches were left.

In addition, the former sarpanch in Bikhra described the flexibility by stressing the right to use trees from the VP in accordance with certain needs: *"Everyone has to ask permission from the sarpanch and if anyone has problems for wood they can go to the VP. For instance, if we need trees for our house, the VP can ensure in that"*. He further emphasised the possibility to differ in payments along the financial ability of households.

Despite the flexible application and some illegal activities, Bikhra seems to show a presence though limited, of a financial mechanism for trees. Approximately 70.000 Rupees had been collected as fees and penalties for trees in the last 20 years based on the interviews with the current and former sarpanch. The former sarpanch even claimed to ask payments for old trees. The money was used for a guard for some years and the former sarpanch also described how money from penalties were directly given to a women group.

In Kendrita, the current sarpanch never used the possibility of penalties or fees and also argued that inspection is not required. According to villagers, an earlier sarpanch did use the possibility to fine but was also accused of taking the money for his own. The current sarpanch explained his policy by stressing the common rights of the VP forest: *"The VP is for villagers and they can cut a tree with permission of sarpanch or panch. [...]. For a green tree there should be a rare condition"*. Considering that villagers have to pay for the RF, it is understandable that it might be uncomfortable for the sarpanch to ask money for a tree in the VP forest which is seen as a common resource.

In addition to the pressure for the sarpanch, the sarpanch lacks power and faces practical difficulties. For instance, a woman in Bikhra identified the sarpanch as*" powerless in face of so many people with different claims. People can chop trees at the middle of the day and night and the sarpanch cannot be around to check that. [...] He has no agency to speak"*. In addition, it was observed that both sarpanches have to combine their function with a retail shop.

Furthermore, villagers emphasised the problem of cattle grazing in the forest. Only in Bikhra, grazing is prohibited in some areas. A woman in Bikhra illustrated the difficulties of grazing: *"We had new plantations but some people allow their cattle in the forest to graze. The sarpanch asked to stop [...] they couldn't stop because they can't afford to buy fodder"*. In addition, the intense removal of leaves and grass on the ground is not regulated which hence hinders the restoration of the forest soil.

A final matter of concern in the functioning of both VPs is that the money is even not reinvested in the forest. Only some money from the CAMPA program in Bikhra, which is led by the FD, was used for 3 hectares of plantation. Especially in Kendrita, all villagers called for social use of the money as pointed by a woman: *"The village needs a pot and tent for occasions of marriage and festivals"*. Moreover, most households just wanted to see cash in return for the resin tapping. In addition, it is surprisingly that the sarpanches were not aware of the possibility for the VP to use national wide funds via the gram sabha (general village meeting).

The tendency to focus on non-forest purposes may be explained in two ways. First, there is no inspection whether the guidelines as in the Panchayati Forest Rules of Uttarakhand are followed in terms of VP plans and accountability. This also questions the functioning of micro-plans, as highlighted in JFM. Second, the absence or low existence of a livelihood function for the VP forest limits the incentive to invest in the VP forest. In addition, the incentive is undermined by the fact that people in Kendrita perceive a period of 6 to 10 years between the actual resin tapping and the income flow from which 50% has already been taken by the FD.

NGO involvement

To assess the second question, the field work assessed the influence of the local NGO 'Dipaka' (pseudonym). A man in Bikhra describes the contribution of Dipaka as follows: *"In the past we went more to the FD forest. Now we made the VP for cases if someone cuts a tree [he points to the hill behind where the forest is in a good quality]. Dipaka is very important for us [...] they provided half of the money [...] they provided us with instruments and the women were paid to plant trees"*. This shows how a NGO helps to improve a part of the VP. In addition, it is interesting to see that the VP was not perceived as existing until Dipaka intervenes as described in the quote with *"now we made the VP"*, despite the VP existed before. This indicates the closely relation between Dipaka and the VP.

In another area in Bikhra, a woman stressed the positive impact of Dipaka by bringing awareness of the removal of pine needles and the collection of medical herb plants: *"Without Dipaka, we would not have known about the herbs which Dipika sells for us"*. The herbs are brought on the market via the NGO which is also an illustrative example of livelihood possibilities from Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs). In addition, a man described the meaning of Dipaka for women: *"They came here to put women in the centre and give them more confidence"*. The NGO contributed also in other areas to forest improvement and it contributed for instance financially to a central guard, which was however not effective. Then, the answer from an old man is not surprisingly when asking about the VP: *"Our VP?, that is with Dipaka"*. So, this shows how NGOs are very important in the concept of community forestry.

In Kendrita, Dipaka is clearly less connected with the VP. Whereas the sarpanch in Bikhra has meetings with the NGO, it became clear that the sarpanch in Kendrita did not agree with the fact that the VP was divided along the women groups created by Dipaka. In addition, the recent and difficult position of the NGO is clearly reflected by a practitioner in the VP work: *"We came in 2008 and saw that meetings were only happening on paper [...] in a meeting we told them about the VP [...] and we started women groups [...] but some villagers disappointed us in plantations provided by us"*.

Finally, the field work observed a critical note about the role of the NGO. In Kendrita, Dipaka perceived that the higher caste area is better in protecting the forest than the lower caste area. In Bikhra, a SC woman pointed out how the NGO did not succeeded in her area: *"Dipaka has done some fodder development in the past but people did not follow the advice of Dipaka and sarpanch about keeping their animals out. After that, Dipika has not done any development here"*. The same woman laughed when asked about Dipaka. These observations question the work of the NGO along social divisions, also when not intended.

Social heterogeneity

While assessing the third question, it became clear that the VPs function along internal social divides. The VP of Kendrita is divided along the geographical divide of the village between SC and non-SC households. The part of the higher caste is further divided along two women groups created by the NGO. The lower caste villagers have a collective part with one women group. When asking for the reason behind, answers did not go further than simply *"they have their forest [...]everybody protects their part"*. As well, the royalties are planned to be divided accordingly.

In Bikhra, the VP is divided along groups of adjacent households, so called *tokes* or hamlets. Such divisions are according to the sarpanch the rationale behind the panches which are however not functioning under the formal VP: *"After we stopped with a central guard we decided that the panches could take an own round in their surroundings [...] they are responsible for protecting their part of the VP [...] but panches are not functioning and not interested to be involved with the VP"*. In addition, a man added that *"all the panches are a guard. Every toke has its own guard"*.

The women in Bikhra explained that the forest is controlled along the hamlets: *"People made small groups to protect the forest [...] when we as women are in the forest [pointing to their VP patch on the hill behind their house] we can see what is happening there. At night we don't know but at day we can caught them"*. However, the fact that women pointed very strictly at their role to guard their adjacent forest will in fact mean that they exclude other hamlets in their hamlet. This is also likely to prohibit the effectiveness of the earlier central guard who is from a particular hamlet.

Furthermore, the fieldwork brought insights in sensitive interactions between higher and SC caste. It became clear that the SC caste households from the most degraded patch of the VP face a disempowered position. Specifically, a SC woman illustrated that she faces uneven access: *"People of the village cut trees but do not allow other people from other parts to cut trees. [...] People from there [pointing to the higher caste area] also go outside their area including the foothills of our area [SC-caste area]"*. After being confronted with the practices the higher caste people responded as follows: *"We guard ourselves. We said them [SC-area people] to stop with cutting that green tree because it is from our father, and they did not stop [Interviewer: is it true you took the instruments from them as punishment?] Yes. They cut green trees, that is why"*. This is likely to make the SC households more dependent on the RF than the households nearby a better forest patch.

The backward position of the SC households is further decreased by another practice in the VP. Namely, the former sarpanch declared that an area in the east of the VP could improve because

they were able to prevent cattle to graze and because they allow to use trees from the SC area. As a result, SC households had to allow other hamlets to use 'their' trees.

The social heterogeneity can also be perceived along gender. For instance, women in Kendrita explained their low position in meetings: *"They do not consider the talk of the women. We only went sometimes because we cannot get anything from the meeting as they do not listen to us"*. Instead, some women from the higher caste explicitly accepted their position: *"Men know about royalties. The men decide it, I have no idea. I don't know where it is used for and where it comes from"*. This acceptance might be interpreted as a satisfaction with the money in the early stage of the VP. Also, the higher caste women argued that they know more about the meetings of the earlier sarpanch than the current sarpanch. This suggests a higher willingness to involve in the beginning of the VP, most likely due to the fund flow.

To summarise, the field work showed how the VPs seem to reflect the nature and period of their creation corresponding bottom-up versus top-down. Also, it was interesting that no involvement of the state was found. Notwithstanding the presence of informal institutions and some successful examples, it also showed difficulties along the social divides and a superficial existence due to a low forest quality. Finally, despite the critical note whether NGOs cover the whole village, it became clear that community forestry is highly dependent on the support of a NGO.

Interviews with practitioners

This section will present the results from the interviews with practitioners. Their perspective and experience in the implementation of community forestry is especially fruitful in the debate about the functioning of the concept in practice. To further reflect on the first question, the interviews discussed the perceptions and experiences of the adopted policy and the functioning of VPs. In addition, the role of NGOs will be discussed separately from the field work because the interviews with practitioners addressed the role of NGOs in particular on the scale of Uttarkhand and in comparison with the FD.

To begin with, a woman in the WII argued that the shift has been well integrated: *"from 1860 to 1990 the whole idea was that communities have to be kept out of the forests [...] but then there was a global shift in thinking and experience [...] and I don't think there is any lack of awareness, mindset or skills now"*. In addition, other foresters depicted the functioning of VPs in positive terms.

Further, it was argued by two respondents from the WII that the attention for social matters and community involvement is now well integrated in the education program for foresters and hence created relevant knowledge and awareness. However, a man at the DFO pointed out that there is still no attention for community governance next to the focus on forestry and wildlife law: *"They do not prepare you to communicate with the public"*.

Interesting was that a Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) claimed that Uttarakhand had no difficulties with the shift: *"We did not experience any kind of a shift! We already had the body of the VPs"*. Conversely, a respondent in the FRI identified *"there was a lot of resistance on community involvement by the FD because they were afraid of losing control"* and a forester in the District Forest Office (DFO) of Nainital used the term landslide to describe JFM.

In addition, another PCCF identified that some VPs are so small in size that they are even not viable. In addition, a man in a research NGO cynically observed the functioning of VPs: *"I think that only 5% of the VPs are actually in function [...] they only exist on paper"*. Identically, other NGOs described the functioning of the VPs as very weak with low to no awareness by villagers.

Respondents from the NGOs linked the increase of VPs with the financial incentives from the JFM policy. To illustrate, a man in another research NGO linked the hollow nature of VPs with the JFM period: *"Most of the VPs are created after JFM in the 1990s, formed only because of a target [...] there is no existence [...] and some are less than 2 hectares."* This supports the concern about the meaningless increase of VPs during the end 1990s.

The emphasised micro-plans under JFM, which are said to be created by the village, can also be linked with financial incentives. To illustrate, the micro-plans were perceived with cynicism as budget letters by respondents from a local NGO: *"They [FD] made a micro-plan for whatever village [...] they make the same one for a cluster of VPs"*. In other words, by showing micro-plans and VPs, a rhetoric was created to receive support from donors such as the World Bank. The micro-plans disappeared after the support and anno 2013, only 10 from the almost 400 VPs in the Nainital district

have an active micro-plan. Moreover, the 10 micro-plans checked at the DFO were almost identical copies. This is a general observation for Uttarakhand according to the NGOs.

As a result of the disappearance in fund scheme, the foresters at the DFO described the current amount of money as low compared to the time of the high discourse. The financial flows during the high discourse are likely to receive interest considering the fact that one current money flow to a VP from either a scheme or forest royalties contains already 200.000 Indian Rupees (about $3400), based on the 12 VPs out of the current sample of 30 VPs. Similarly, the fact that the old VP of Bikhra did not received DFO sources from 1991 till 2009, might indeed suggest a link between donors funds and new VPs.

Surprisingly was that also two foresters at the DFO admitted the link between the attention for community forestry and the financial flows from donors: *"As long as the World Bank was providing funding, JFM was a success, but after the disappearance of the funding, the department had its own priorities"*. Consequently, it is clear that the financial flows during the high discourse invited the FD to go for rhetoric targets such as the amount of VPs and the creation of superficial micro-plans. The large scale policy is perhaps best summarised with a '*Big Bang model*' and '*with the stroke of a pen*, as described by a professor in water management.

Furthermore, the role of the state in terms of FD control was discussed. Two NGOs and the forestry activist claimed that everything is under the hand of the FD. This perception is critically reflected by a man in another NGO who observed that *"the FD is [was] only linked with some VPs within the schemes and they did not want to go behind these programs"*. Then, the FD seems *defacto* not involved in the VPs as a result with the absence of financial incentives after the schemes ended.

To summarise, the functioning of the VPs is highly questioned. In addition, it seems that VPs were created as an aim in itself duo to financial incentives. Certainly, the FD was also just part of a discourse that believed in the promise of community forestry on a large scale. The individual in the FD who strongly believed in the concept of VPs was determined that more VPs should be created on a large scale. Finally, similar to the field work, it seems that the state has no role in the VPs, at least not anymore after the disappearing of funding.

Role of NGOs
Notwithstanding the critique about the FD, NGOs did understand the historical functions of the FD. The foresters described also the limited capability such as explained by a forester at the DFO: *"You cannot expect from the same person to do protection work in the morning and to be a NGO in the evening [...] that is where the NGO can do better work"*. This underlines that the FD is not the most suitable agency to implement community forestry, although the FD is an actor to be included as an large player in forestry.

Respondents in a local NGO further highlighted the vital role of civil society while referring to a meeting with the FD and water department: *"The water department said they had a pipeline scheme but did not make the villagers aware and they just ask us to take over the project and make villagers aware because we [water department] can't handle it"*.

Similar to the field work, respondents from the NGOs claimed that well-functioning VPs are closely linked with the support of NGOs, such as identified by respondents in a research NGO: *"A NGO is there for 30 years with women groups and plantations [...], there is no ability without that NGO [...], every NGO has some VPs"*. Another NGO compared VPs with NGO involvement versus VPs without programs or NGOs, and they found large differences in awareness about forest management. The vital role of NGOs implies that VPs without an external involvement, especially the new created VPs, are less likely to function in reality.

Conclusion

This study addressed three questions to assess the contesting literature in the community forestry discourse. It aimed to reflect on the contesting literature by carrying out empirical field work in two cases in the state of Uttarakhand and by conducting interviews with practitioners. Consequently, this study uncovered several insights.

Firstly, the study questioned the policy adoption of VPs. This consisted of assessing whether community forestry is applied according to its bottom-up rhetoric and whether community forestry

entities are really functioning after policy implementations. In addition, it has addressed the critique of the dominant role of the state.

The study made clear that the increase in VPs does not reflect a successful policy adaptation of community forestry and hence should be perceived critically. Especially the more recent created VP in this study can be seen as illustrative for the superficial creation of VPs as a result of the popular discourse in developing thinking. Consequently, this study advocated that the increase of VPs might be linked with the high discourse. In addition and in line with Baviskar (2004), this study provides further evidence that financial incentives from donors can create a top-down and superficial policy adoption of community governance on a large scale.

The top-down concern can be nuanced by the fact that this study found no current involvement by the state. This contradicts with the criticism of state involvement in some literature. Yet, this finding correspondents with Balooni et al. (2007, 1447) who described that forest officials are practically not able to get involved. This might be explained by the fact that the criticised involvement was observed during the high discourse period along the existence of funding schemes. The involvement decreased after the funding disappeared. Despite the disappearance of economic incentives to get involved in VPs, it is important to acknowledge that the state has simply not the ability and interest to get involved as a result of the practical organisational limitations, its historical legacy and the low value of VP forests.

The indications of the superficial nature of new VPs and the limited functioning of early VPs support the concern by Ojha et al. (2009) about community forestry in Nepal. They stress that the application of the community governance rhetoric is limited because of the remaining power structures. Consequently, they use the term of symbolic violence to describe that the community forestry is romanticised internationally for its livelihood potential. The use of state forests in Uttarakhand also implies that the VPs cannot fulfil the livelihood needs and hence indicates the limited reality of community forestry.

Despite the fact that most VPs seem to have a superficial nature, the more mature VP in this study showed, though still weak, signs of mainly informal institutions. This confirms the importance of informal institutions and localised arrangements such as emphasised by Ostrom (1990). Moreover, this study does not aim to deny the positive consensus about community forestry. When community entities do function well, they may contribute between 25 and 50% to a village's livelihood when (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001, 496).

However, the positive consensus seems to be relevant only in specific set of local features. For instance, a VP in the same area consisted of a homogenous high caste population surrounded by a large forest in relation to the size of the village which had in addition an advantageous hydrosphere. Finally, it had a well aware and charismatic sarpanch who possessed contacts with higher levels to maximally utilise the JFM funds. This VP had even no NGO involvement.

Secondly, the study focused on the role of NGOs to question community forestry as independent entities in developing thinking. The study confirmed that community forestry might not function without the support of NGOs. When having a mature position in terms of years involved, NGOs can positively contribute to the VPs in terms of forest regeneration and the existing of women groups. This suggests that the role of a NGO is essential in the understanding of community forestry.

However, the study also revealed a critical note about the functioning of NGOs along social and geographical divisions. It seems that the NGO had difficulties in their relation with certain areas and groups. This asks for a compelling need for further study to understand possible difficulties between NGOs and certain groups.

Thirdly, it focused on the social heterogeneity in community entities as opposite to a homogenous rhetoric. In doing so, the study approached the VPs as heterogeneous and conflict-ridden entities. The study observed that areas within a VP only protect their part and even exclude adjacent villagers.

Similar to observations in the same research area by Balooni et al. 2007 (1446), this study shows how scheduled caste households were overruled in their own area by an adjacent higher caste area and by a policy to save trees in another part of the VP. In addition, an interesting observation was that higher caste women did accept their disempowered position in the decision process in contrast with lower caste women. This issue deserves further empirical study.

Regardless of some limitations due to a lack of solid data, a lack of representative data for whole Uttarakhand and the sensitivity of the issues, this study developed an useful perspective to

analyse the application of community governance. The study emphasised how one should critically perceive the policy adoption of a popular concept from the developing discourse. Further, the study illustrated how community governance may require intervention from civil society and it illustrated how internal social differentiation may undermine the ideal concept of community governance.

To further assess the debate between the positive consensus and the critical literature, it would be of great use to adopt the same approach to reflect upon community governance in other areas and fields. In addition, the study can be of use for development practices. One should selectively apply community governance and consider carefully whether a village is really suitable. Large schemes of villages should be prevented following the idea that community based projects are best undertaken in a context specific manner with a long time horizon and clear monitoring and evaluation (Mansuri and Rao 2004, 1). This means a focus on real development from below instead of a *'big bang'* from above.

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Abbreviations

DFO	Divisional Forest Office
JFM	Joint Forest Management
FD	Forest Department
FRA	Forest Right Act
FRI	Forest Research Institute, Dehradun (Garhwal)
FSI	Forest Survey in India, Dehradun (Garhwal)
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PCCF	Principal Chief Conservation of Forests
RF	Reserved Forest
SDO	Sub Divisional Office (under DFO)
SC	Scheduled Caste
VP	Van (*forest*) Panchayat (*council*)
WII	Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun (Garhwal)

Annex – Overview research activities

From Delhi to the mentioned places it is 10 hours travelling by bus or train (Indian style). To the fieldwork location it was in addition 5 hours travelling in the hills. Also between Haldwani and Dehradun, it is 7 hours travelling by Indian buses. Hence, all trips were quite exhaustive.

Period	Activity	Comment
2013		
15 July – 7 December New Delhi	Course at TERI University: Governance and Management of Natural Resources (equivalent to 6-7 ETCS)	This course brought background information about the discourse of Natural Resource Management. I followed regular classes with students from India, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan.
11 September 24 September	Interview forest activist and consultancy/professor community water management	These interviews took place to get inspiration for the approach in my research and get more information about the situation in India
September	Switching from Haryana to Uttarakhand Reading literature and writing first part article	After discussions with professors and with PhD students I came to know that Uttarakhand is the place to study forestry
17 October – 25 October Derhradun, Haldwani, Nainital, Nathuakhan	Interviews WII, NGOs and FD	This period had the aim of gaining information about the policy of community forestry in Uttarakhand. In addition, I made connections for the field work. I made these connections myself without support from the university.
12 November – 16 November Nainital and Nathuakhan	Selection of cases Interview and data collection at DFO	I discussed the practical matters with the NGO and carefully selected two cases accordingly with my criteria in combination with the practical possibility of a translator.
November – December New Delhi	Transcribing and analysing key interviews, presented in a paper for the course Presentation research about interviews in the course Examination course	I adjusted my research plan and theory in the article as a result of the ideas I developed during the classes I followed. I prepared my fieldwork with discussions with my professor at TERI.

7 December – 29 December Nathuakhan, Mauna	Field work in two villages	I conducted interviews and made observations in two villages. For one period, I was staying with a family in the village. And for the other village, I stayed at the hostel of the NGO. During the fieldwork I worked every night on adjusting the interview questions for the next day after new information I found that specific day. I stayed at the NGO with two human ecologists who just graduated to do research for another NGO. One was doing similar research as I did and we combined interviews. With the other I went for ecological samples and learned more about the forest. At the evening, we discussed out findings of the day. At the end I felt really sick after I got accidently wrong water. The period was one great experience and in fact was only about walking, interviewing, eating and sleeping. I stayed two days more to recover from my sickness.
2014		
3 January Dehradun	Interview at a NGO to discuss findings field work	
15 January Dehradun	Interview at FD to discuss findings field work	
1 February	First planned return	I was not allowed to leave India because something went wrong in my visa registration.

1 – 16 February New Delhi	Arranging visa and transcribing interviews	Most of the time I was occupied with the immigration office. At the end I got a severe cold.
16 February	*Return Netherlands*	
February March	Sinusitis virus	I was not able to work
March April	Transcribing interviews field work	
May June	Analysing and writing article	
July August	Revised version article	
September	Second revised article	

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CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This is to certify that

Mr Henk Hofstede

has attended and successfully completed the course: "NRE 149 – Governance and management of natural resources" during the period July 2013 to December 2013 and was awarded 'A+' grade.

This 3 credit course is part of the curriculum of the M.Sc. (Environmental Studies and Resource Management) programme of the University.

Gp Capt. Rajiv Seth (Retd.), Ph.D
Registrar

Leena Srivastava, Ph.D
Vice Chancellor

Dated: 23 January 2014