Preface

Socioeconomic Attributes of Trees and Tree Planting Practices

Chapter 1 - Background of the Study

The changing role and repertoire of foresters

The decade since the publication of the landmark study Forest Society for Local Community Development (FAO 1979) has been a time of great change in forestry practice in developing countries. It has placed enormous demands on the forestry profession as a whole, and on the role of as well as beyond its role as an intermediary between the labour requirements of the entire production system for the farmer, or women or men, who want a different function to be played by the trees. The issue is not that some trees are universally helpful or harmful; certain species are simultaneously perceived to be miraculous by some and bad, even evil, by others.

In looking at forest projects it is quite apparent that some are popular with farmers because the planted or managed trees are useful to them, are located in a situation that suits the local land-use patterns, and require a management regime that suits the economic conditions. This study reports on a number of projects that have been evaluated in terms of their performance on the basis of what they have produced. Yet it is equally obvious that many projects have been designed without adequately understanding the function the trees are to play in the rural economy and the distribution of benefits and the tree and its location will yield.

Dr. John Finnemore of the International Center for Research in Agroforestry, with the support of its Director General Bjorn Lundgren, has cooperated with the Forestry Department of FAO to write this forestry role. A number of people contributed to the work, including scholars and researchers, contributed literature and arches, contributed literature and made substantial contributions to a group of researchers. The document also had the benefit of a review by a group of experts.

Socioeconomic Attributes of Trees and Tree Planting Projects was produced by the Centre for Community Forest Management of the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Kodaikanal. It was partially funded by SIDA and partially funded by the ICRAF Core Programme, Trees and People, which focuses on increased sustainability livelihoods for women in developing countries, especially the rural poor, through self-help management of tree and forest resources. It is to be followed by a field guide that will make these ideas available for use by foresters and forest project staff.

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Chapter 2 - Methodological Framework

The original study

The original study for this idea arose out of the controversy surrounding the use of eucalyptus in community forestry programmes in India. It was not an effort that there should be a companion community forestry study to complement the FAO commissioned study on the Ecological Effects of Eucalyptus (Poon 1979). As interesting as it might be to undertake such a study, it was for the more constructive to examine the larger question of species choice in general. Although the Great Eucalyptus Debate has underscored the political importance of choosing the right trees for different users and has brought to light many of the socioeconomic factors that can influence on species choice, most observers would agree that the debate itself has generated more heat than light.

In the initial plan this study was conceptualized as an effort to look at the conditions on the production system level and has not ventured far into the wider system of ecological linkages with post-harvest processing, marketing and institutional arrangements required elsewhere in the value chain. In this study the choice of species for a particular socioeconomic setting might vary not only with the type of tree but also with the

The practical purpose of the present, less empirical and more conceptually oriented study was not to arrive at a definitive conclusion on the merits or demerits of the genus itself (most often the focus in the Indian debate was on E. tereticornis) but rather to draw whatever conclusions are possible from this study. It is to be followed by a field guide that will make these ideas available for use by foresters and forest project staff.

The choice of species for a particular socioeconomic setting might be described in terms of the socioeconomic attributes of trees and the impacts of tree planting practices. This study reports on a number of projects that have been evaluated in terms of their performance on the basis of what they have produced. Yet it is equally obvious that many projects have been designed without adequately understanding the function the trees are to play in the rural economy and the distribution of benefits and the tree and its location will yield.

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resource materials and decision aids in the appendices.

Appendix A presents a minimal diagnostic checklist for use in trouble-shooting problematic tree planting efforts to determine where they may have gone wrong. Appendix B outlines the range of tree planting options open to project planners and implementors. It enumerates potential user groups, functions, tree planting locations and arrangements, and tree management options that, in their various combinations, define the enlarged repertoire of the new forester. Appendix C provides reference materials supporting the matching of tree planting technologies to users. Appendix D supports the matching of trees to technologies by providing an indicative list of tree specifications for a broad range of tree growing technologies.