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Permaculture In Nepal: A Decade

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The number of permaculture trainings conducted, the growth of individuals or organisations interested in permaculture and the use of its principles in practice indicate that the development of permaculture in Nepal is encouraging.

The history of permaculture design course training dates back to 1986 when INSAN in collaboration with APROSC and Winrock International organised it in Kathmandu which was facilitated by Bill Mollison.

As NECOS has also conducted the design course training, its number has further increased since its inception in 1991. The number has again increased when JPP (Jajarkot Permaculture Programme) started providing it independently since 1993.

It is roughly estimated that there have been more than 350 permaculture graduates in Nepal (308 graduates have been listed in the directory produced by NPG in 1995; a great number are missing from it).

On top of permaculture graduates, nine graduates have already received a Diploma from the International Permaculture Institute, Australia. As already mentioned above, there are three organisations in the country which provide permaculture design courses. Besides these organisations, AAA has been providing organic farming and sustainable agriculture training which is based on permaculture principles. Many INGOs and NGOs have become interested in permaculture — they have sponsored many people for permaculture training (many of their staff have received permaculture training) and have started working on a permaculture line.

Organisations like INSAN, NECOS, JPP and AAA have developed farms based on permaculture principles. Considerable interest has been shown by government organisations toward permaculture.

A number of individuals like Mr Surya P Adhikari have also developed permaculture farms. Mr Adhikari, a farmer in Begnas, Pokhara has improved a degraded barren land to productivity in a few years.

Recently Nepal Permaculture Group (NPG) has come into being to promote and co-ordinate permaculture activities in Nepal and abroad. NPG has identified its role, responsibilities and challenges.

The challenges include facilitating the development of a large number of productive and self-sufficient permaculture model farms, which are replicable in different farmer settings, help develop and disseminate appropriate alternatives and achieve an official favour of the government of Nepal. Besides, to make the majority of Nepali people aware of the threat of the so-called modern agriculture and fetch a better market for quality (organic, etc) produce are among the challenges.

Thakuri Malla, Secretary NPG and Chairman of "Chauteree", has been actively involved in Permaculture teaching and site development since 1989. He has co-taught four design courses in Nepal between 1991 and 1995 and thirteen introductory courses. Thakuri is currently working in Kalayanpur VDC among 160 households and community programs which involve: organic farming, agroforestry, watershed management, saving schemes, integrated woman-based income generating activities and sericulture, common property and natural resource management. "Chauteree" has been a model for sustainable farming since 1992.