

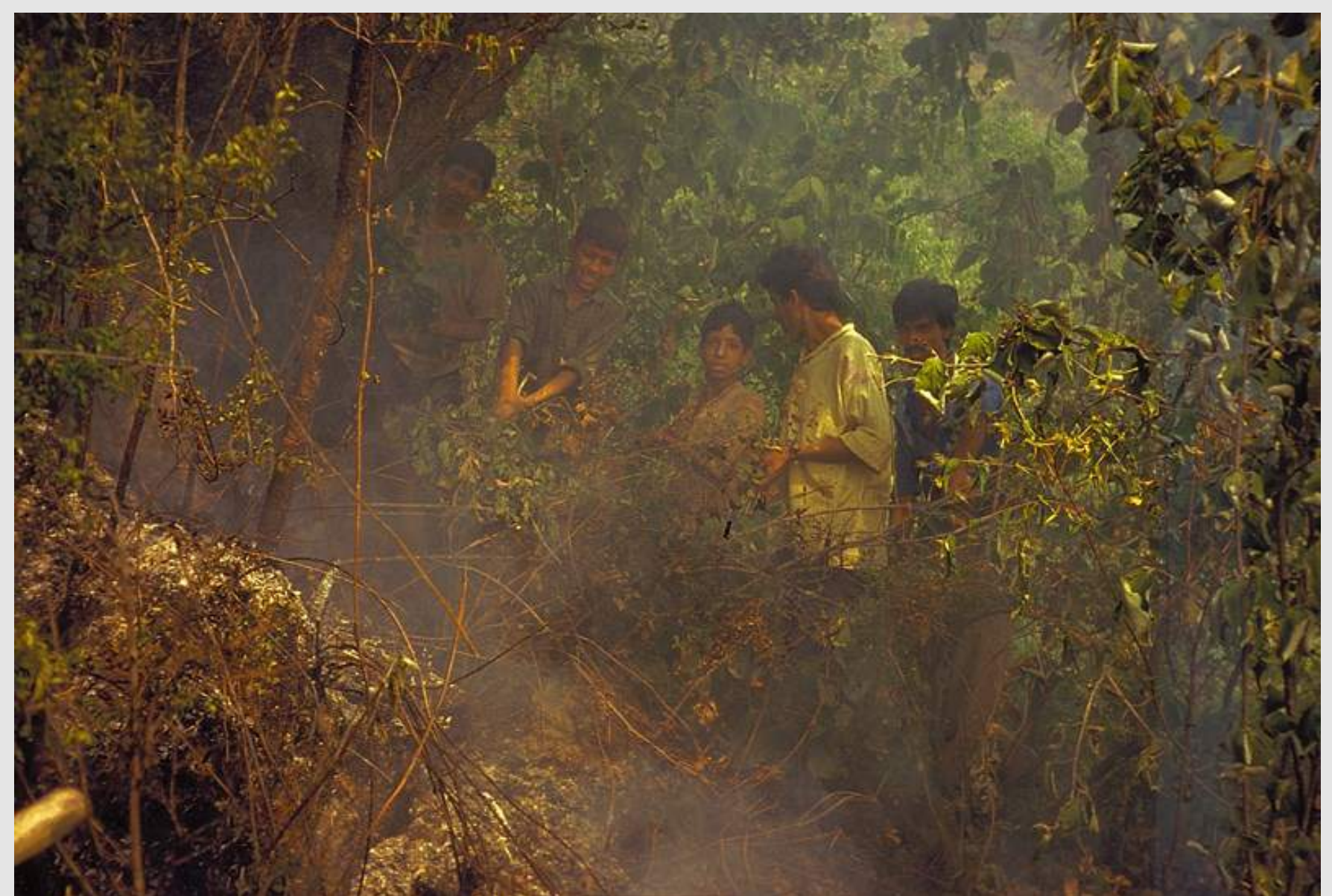
# Community Conservation<sup>7</sup>

Forests provide crucial life-support and livelihoods to hundreds of millions of people, supporting agriculture, animal husbandry, non-timber forest produce, and diverse cultures. The threats that these forests face come from both within and without communities, and their conservation is often most effective when the communities that use them are closely involved in their protection.

**Jardhargaon** in Tehri-Garwhal in Uttarakhand is a pertinent example. Gaining inspiration from the Chipko Movement of the 70s, this village in the Himalayan foothills formed a forest protection committee to deal with issues of regulating resource use of wood and litter and ensuring equitable distribution to all households of the village. The committee members themselves are chosen by **consensus** in a *gram sabha* (village council) meeting, and not by a majority vote. In addition, women's committees were formed to deal with external threats of mining in an area that is rich in limestone.



*Above: A meeting of the Van Suraksha Samiti (forest protection committee) in Jardhargaon, Uttarakhand*



*Above: Villagers putting out a forest fire in Jardhargaon.*

**Hiware Bazar** (below) in Maharashtra is another illustration of holistic thinking about the agro-forest complex; with the idea of *shramadaan* (voluntary labour) and *bandi* (restraint) at its heart - *bandi* of *nasha* (liquor), *charal* (free grazing), *kulhad* (indiscriminate tree felling) and *nas* (population increase).



*Above: Jardhargaon's regenerated forests.*

**Then**



**Now**



*Left to right: Historical change in Hiware Bazar, Maharashtra as a result of community action.*