**Case Study Name:** Building on Poor People's Capacities, the Case of Common Property Resources in India and West Africa

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**Region:** Africa - south of Sahara, South Asia

**Country:** India, West Africa

**Ecosystem Type:** arid and/or semi-arid

**Social Characteristics:** indigenous community, remote community

**Scale of Study:** household, community

**Resource Type:** other (common pool resources)

**Type of Initiative:** research-driven project

**Community Based Work:** Indigenous knowledge / traditional ecological knowledge, resource management

**Keywords:** India, West Africa, poverty, common property resources, indigenous resource management

**Summary:** This article examines the relation between poor women and men and common property resources (cprs). It locates poor people's use of cprs within a wider focus on sustainable livelihoods, which argues that
Development initiatives need to build on people's assets and strengths, and identifies CPRS as a crucial element of poor people's coping and adaptive strategies. The article considers evidence from India and West Africa with a particular focus on poverty reduction, equity, gender and management issues. Development agencies and governments which have re-focused their attention on poverty in recent years will find that CPRS provide an entry point to understanding poor people's perceptions of poverty and for building on their capacities.