

**COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND RURAL LIVELIHOOD
IN NAWALPARASI DISTRICT, WESTERN NEPAL**

A Dissertation

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By

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation entitled “*Community Forestry and Rural livelihood in Nawalparasi, District Western Nepal*” was prepared by Devi Prasad Paudel under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examinations by Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of ***DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in GEOGRAPHY.***

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Date: June 15, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Ph.D. dissertation entitled “*Community Forestry and Rural Livelihood in Nawalparasi, District Western Nepal*” submitted to the office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, is an entirely original work prepared under the supervision of my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Narendra Raj Khanal. I have made due acknowledgement to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of writing this dissertation. The results presented in this dissertation have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other reasons. No part of the content of this dissertation has ever been published in any form before. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

Devi Prasad Paudel

June 2015

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ABSTRACT

Community based natural resources management is one of the most effective approaches in achieving the goal of livelihood improvement and environmental conservations. Nepal has been adopting community forest management system for conservation of forest resources and improvement of livelihood of rural people. The dissertation, entitled community forestry and Rural Livelihood has set for objectives such as discussing the forest management practices and policy building process of community forestry in the context of Nepal in general as well as the study area in particular; analyzing the organizational characteristics of community forest user groups in the study area; assessing the linkages between community forestry and livelihood of rural people with special focus on marginalized people and discussing the impact of community forestry and its management issues.

This study deals basically with an understanding the linkages community forestry and livelihood phenomena at different ecological regions which established as the central of geographic research. This study has attempted to link different models and concept and socio economic condition by the CFUGs centered perspectives of the study area.

Nawalparasi district was selected as the case study area. This district comprises three ecological regions: Middle hill, Inner Terai and Terai with different bio-physical and socio-economic conditions. The study has used both qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through observation, focus group discussion, key informant interview, and household survey of the members of community forest.

The first objective, discussed about the community forestry is successful in middle hill and inner Terai as compared to Terai. People residing in Terai are affected by traditional users, distance users come far from the southern areas and they want to collect sufficient firewood from forest located in the southern slope of Churia range and adjoining areas. Collaborative forest can be alternative options for those users who reside far from the forest. But collaborative forest is still in the process of development by the government, however, all community forest user groups are not in favour of collaborative forest.

Secondly, the organizational characteristics of CFUGs in Nawalparasi district have variation as per their situations. Those variations are seen in group size, organizational rules and decision making process. The increasing trend of CFUGs of the study area reveals that there were only nine CFUGs in the period of 1990-1995 after the year of the restoration of the democracy. The numbers of organization is increased by more than 4.5 times within a span of 15 years. Most of the CFUGs have priorities in the fulfillment of basic needs. Twelve CFUGs have placed fulfillment of local needs as their first priority activities. Conservation and management of forest is taken as first priority by eight CFUGs and remaining five CFUGs have taken income generating activities and poverty reduction as first priority.

In the third objective, the linkages between community forest and livelihood of rural people have been found different in the different ecological regions especially basic need such as firewood, leaf litter fodder are sufficiently available in middle hill and inner terai as compared to the Terai region in the study area. CFUGs seem to have more satisfied with the product of firewood, timber, fodder, grass and thatching grass in Inner Terai and Middle hills as compared to the Terai. However, they seem to be less satisfied with the products of medicinal plants in all three ecological regions. The members of CFUGs makes money to some extent by selling forest product for their livelihood. CFUGs have supported to develop community development activities such as road, schools, irrigation development and community halls. The income is also used to pay salary of school teachers are made from the income of forest product especially in Middle hill and Inner Terai. Different types of livelihood options are available that are directly or indirectly linked with community forest. Agricultural crops, livestock, vegetable and forests are interlinked to each other. More than sixty percent annual average income in the Terai is achieved from livestock. It is fifty six percent in the Inner Terai and fifty percent in the Middle hill. Agriculture is the second sources of income in all the three ecological regions. The off-farm activities are alternative livelihood options in the study area. Major off-farm activities include small industries, remittance, pension, business and services. Remittance is the major sources of income in the middle hill as compared to Inner Terai and Terai.

And the fourth objective, there are some dissimilarities and some similarities in the management system of forest in different ecological regions. The member of CFUGs is actively participated community forest management in all ecological regions. The

users of southern part of the Terai regions do not have opportunity to effectively manage community forest as their settlements are located far from this side of community forest. They are not so satisfied due to the far distance from settlement area to community forests. Some community forest user groups of the Terai have felt the lack of sufficient area of forest and they are facing conflict between and among the community forest user groups for utilizing forest resource and fixing boundary. Therefore, they want to use northern part of forests but the northern forest users do not want to provide sufficient forest products as per need to the southern forest users (distance forest users). The members of CFUGs, who live near the forest, they claim all community forest is protected by their own effort not the members of CFUGs far from the forest; however, they have helped to the users living in far distance by providing forest product equally. This is the major issues of conflict in the management of community forest in the Terai. Terai region seem to be less active in community development activities as compared to the Middle hill and Inner Terai. Pricing system of forest product is not the same in different ecological region. So, forests users of the southern part not to be seemed more active to protect the community forests and now they want to join in collaborative forests.

The impact of community forest management differs from one place to another due to ecological environmental, socio-economic and cultural differences. Forest protection system, resource utilization and distribution system have been considered as an indicator of effective forest management. Among three ecological regions, Middle hills have lots of scattered small patches of forests it is not so easy to protect however they seem to be very active to protect the forests in many ways. Moreover, there has been change in climate, land use household assets livestock, and other socio-economic status of forests users. In the Inner Terai, the community forestry has brought many changes in livestock and socio-economic pattern.

Finally it is concluded that the community forest development program is supporting to the rural people's livelihood by providing especially firewood, fodder/ grass, and timber on regular basis as well as the fund saved from both forestry and non forestry sectors, which has multi dynamic effects to carry out forest management and community development activities. Such types of activities are also equally supportive role to improving the livelihood of rural people.

One in which forest users roles are considered to be great importance in villages to bring significant change. CFUGs can create a conducive and favorable environment for community development and livelihoods support to thrive through their coordination, collaboration and partnership with different development agencies beyond the forestry sectors.

Particularly, in the Terai region and in resource- rich groups, CFUG governance can sometimes still be less inclusive and elite controlled. In such situation, transparency in communication remains a critical issue. Consequently, the major benefits are captured by the rich and the elites in such groups. Because of weak participation of the poor, marginalized groups, women and forest dependent people there are limited opportunities to harness the potential of indigenous knowledge and skills regarding forest resource management.

In some situation, CFUGs still pay lip service only to the poor, women and marginalized communities and frequently forest products are utilized only at subsistence level, which in many cases limit greater impact from forest management. In not shell, with the development of community forest appropriately, it could support to enhance the green employment and rural economy as well as to improve the livelihood of the rural people.

All community forest user group members do not actively participate in important decisions about the community forestry. CFUGs members are not satisfied with the result of CFUGs decisions. CFUGs executive committee does not have included proportionate number of women disadvantaged group. In CFUGs meeting, women play a much smaller role in the decision making process as compared to the men in the study area.

This study covers only a model of forest resource development and conservation i.e community forestry. But it does not cover other forest management modalities i.e. government management forest and park of protected areas. So, the situation of those forest is not yet understood. It is in this context, the further studies covering all types of management modalities are necessary in order to understand the linkage and effectiveness of forest management in holistic approach.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Program
CBFM	Community Based Forest Management
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBC	Community Based Conservation Approach
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CF	Community Forest/Forestry
CFA	Community Forest Agreement
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
CFP	Community Forest Policy
CPR	Common Property Resources/Common Pool Resources
Cu.Ft	Cubic Feet
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forest Office
DoF	Department of Forests
DDC	District Development Committee
DT	Development Thinking
ET	Environment Thinking
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization for United Nations
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry User Group in Nepal
FOCOG	Forest Concern Group
HICODEF	Himalayan Community Development Forum
IASCP	International Association for the Study of the Common Property
ICIMOD	International Center for Integrated Mountain Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IUCN	International Union for Nature and Natural Resources Conservation
IED	Institute of Environment and Development
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
JFM	Joint Forest Management

Ha	Hectare
LFP	Livelihood Forestry Program
LIP	Livelihood Improvement Program
LRMP	Land Resource Mapping
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
MPFS	Master Plan for Forestry Sector
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PRED	Population Resources Environment and Development
PNRM	Participatory Natural Resource Management
REDD	Reduced Emission from Forest Degradation and Deforestation
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TECOFAT	Terai Community Forest Action Team
TCN	Timber Corporation of Nepal
TV	Television
UNCED	United Nations Conference in Environment and Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WATCH	Women Acting Together for Change
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development