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## **Conservation and Resource Management**

### **Leadership for environmental education and conservation: a case of green space park at PN Campus, Pokhara**

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The city of Pokhara in Nepal is facing a tremendous growth pressure, and the municipality has not been able to maintain open space for public use. There are no plans for the development of a nature park or green place where people could see, feel, and touch ornamental plants and flowers in nature. Further, Pokhara municipality lacks an open green space where people could walk, jog or spend leisure or free time.

Prithwi Narayan (PN) Campus is the largest campus of Tribhuvan University. Over 15,000 students coming from almost all hill districts of western Nepal study in this campus. It is situated at the bank of the Seti River in Pokhara. Its building and property is spread over a land area of 35 hectares. This is one of the largest plots of open-space land within Metropolitan Pokhara. The campus buildings occupy only a part of this area, and most of the land owned by the campus is left barren. Half of the campus land is protected by a compound wall and the other half has a natural boundary: the Seti River Gorge. In 2006, UNDP Global Environmental Facility funded a project to the Free Student Union of PN Campus to develop this open space as a “green space park” where university students could learn about environmental conservation and demonstrate an appropriate use of the open space to serve the leisure and recreational needs of growing urban population of Pokhara.

Urbanization is a relatively new phenomenon in Nepal. During the past 25 years, the country experienced a tremendous pressure of rural-urban migration. Many people moved to the cities in search of jobs, employment, and education. The conflict between the government force and the Maoists during the past decade further contributed to the rural-urban migration. As a result, there is an increasing pressure on land in urban areas, including Pokhara. As the cost of land is skyrocketing, people utilize every inch of land they own for building their homestead. Most

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public land has been used up for various uses such as school, health center, road, bus-park, or library. As a result, cities have lost most of their public land which could have been developed into open green spaces or public parks.

There is a wide spread public perception that college and university students are involved in political activities than in learning and constructive work of nation building. The leadership of PN Campus Free Student Union (FSU) feels that students should demonstrate a novel role in nation building and change the public opinion about their role. Thus, the FSU decided to work under the guidance of faculty members and campus administration to develop their campus land as an open green space park. They feel that they are committed to devote their time and energy in constructive work of conserving nature by promoting environmental education and serving leisure time and recreational needs of the public living around the college campus. The leadership of the FSU realized that it would be their great pride to develop the campus area into a beautiful green space in Pokhara by managing an open-space preservation and conservation area, by demonstrating environmental stewardship within campus compound through practices such as recycling, proper disposal of waste to keep the area free from paper, plastic or glass bottles.