

## Community Forestry and Forest Management Policies in Nepal

# ネパールのコミュニティ林業と森林管理政策

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### Abstract

This paper will examine recent data and review of the recent researches in the field of community forestry and forest management in Nepal. The analysis indicates that community forestry in Nepal has received tremendous support from the government and the global community. These include strong political support, enabled regulatory frameworks, enhanced capacity/resources the administration and the forest-related development sector, and some income generation by community forests. Community forests in Nepal have full power on resource management and utilization and by the use of community forest, the members of the community forest user groups have succeeded in enhancing their livelihood and sustainability. Each member has got the opportunity to develop as a potential leader. The research results presented in this paper clearly show that the success of community forestry



program in the Nepalese context relies on proper management, equitable distribution and shared responsibility in decision making irrespective of the gender and caste. Although women participation of the committee members has significantly increased, the inequitable distribution of forest resources and underrepresentation of poor and marginalized communities in the executive committee was regarded as the major drawback. Further, the review of the available literature indicates that the comprehensive analytical studies regarding the impact of community forestry in Nepal, specially mid-hill areas, are lacking. The findings of this study can be useful in formulating policy measures for continuing community forest.

### 【要旨】

本論文は、ネパールのコミュニティ林業と森林管理における最近のデータと研究の検討を行う。本研究における分析によれば、ネパールのコミュニティ林業がネパール政府と世界のコミュニティから多大な支援を受けていることを示している。これらの支援の中には、強力な政治的支援、有効な規制の枠組み、行政および森林関連開発部門の能力/資源の強化、さらにコミュニティ森林による収入生成が含まれる。ネパールのコミュニティ林業は、リソースの管理と利用に全力を投入し、コミュニティ林業を使用する事により、コミュニティ林業のユーザーグループのメンバーは、生計と持続可能性の向上に成功している。各メンバーには、潜在的にリーダーとして成長する機会があるが、本論文で示された研究結果は、ネパールにおけるコミュニティ林業プログラムの成功が、性別とカーストに関係なく、適切な管理、公平な分配、意思決定における責任の共有の結果である事を明確に示している。近年では、委員会メンバーの女性の参加は大幅に増加している。実行委員会における森林資源の不公平な分配と、貧しく疎外されたコミュニティの過小評価が大きな欠点とみなれた。

さらに、本研究に際し、行った文献調査によれば、特にネパール中部山間地域のコミュニティ林業の影響に関する包括的な分析研究が不足していることが判明した。このように、本研究成果は、継続的なコミュニティ林業の政策措置の策定に役立つ可能性が十分にあるといえよう。

Keywords: Forest, Nepal, Community Forest, Forest Management

キーワード：森林、ネパール、コミュニティ森林、森林管理

## 1. Introduction

Community forestry is defined as a forest management model that provide local people to have major access in making decisions. Government of Nepal initiated the community forestry program with a very popular slogan “Hariyo Ban Nepal Ko Dhan” (Green forests are the wealth of Nepal). Primarily, registration of community forest under Community Forest User Groups (CUFGs) is a major advancement in forest policy of Nepal which provided the local people with a legal access to forests for its sustainable use. After the establishment of the community forest, several researchers from abroad including the Government of Nepal have focused their studies in community forest of Nepal (K.P. ACHARYA 2002). In the context of Nepal, although several studies have been conducted in a small number of locations, there is obvious lack of a direct and comprehensive study of substantial impacts of community forestry in a large number of sites. Furthermore, the recent research conducted is limited to a small area and mainly focused on the success of the community program and the demographics of user groups.

The Government of Nepal conducted one of the largest surveys in 2013 to discuss the outcome of the thirty years of community forestry in Nepal (Government of Nepal, 2013). This survey included 137 CFUGs in 47 districts and 2,068 member households. This study identified the issues that appeared during five distinct phases of community forestry from the 1980s and discussed the measures taken to overcome those problems. The study further concluded that majorly structural problems of society, particularly those associated with social exclusion and inequity, continued to exist.

(Garner, 1997)(Garner, 1997)(Garner, 2007) studied the political ecology of community forestry in Nepal. The research conducted in 1997 based on Sindhupalchok district was focused on the implementation and impact of forest policies, especially community forestry projects. By that time, 140 forest user groups were registered to the forest office of the respective districts. This study could not investigate the details of the user group composition. Most of the

operational plans submitted were limited the information of the total household member number only. The study further analyzed 40 operational plans that had the details of the members and found that membership was mostly prevalent among so-called high caste groups. Thus, the study concluded that discrimination against lower caste and economically disadvantaged people were mainly responsible for the limited community forest resource sharing among the members of the society. Moreover, community forest management has failed to benefit the poor than rich households. Analyzing community forest and its user group as an interface of politics, ecology, and economy, this research made significant original contributions to the debates of social inclusion, governance, and forest conservation, and made the following conclusions (Garner, 1997).

1. Members in the decision making position are predominantly from economically advantaged groups.
2. Economically disadvantaged groups are often excluded from membership.
3. Economically disadvantaged groups may lose access to vital resources.

The study further outlined the needs of strategic partnerships between forestry groups and other civil society institutions, and this will ultimately improve and strengthen the participation of the socially marginalized population. This, in turn, will enhance the accountability of the government towards emphasizing the needs of poor people, such as the efficient supply of domestic fuel and unrestricted access to the common resources without social bias.

Moreover, another participatory action research with four forest user groups in the western hills of Nepal studied the equity-based impact of community forestry which indicated six key factors affecting the ways by which benefits from community forestry are generated and distributed as follows (Neupane, 2003).

1. Inadequate support from the DFOs
2. Lack of new information and knowledge to committee members
3. Poor CF management techniques
4. Limited access to the poor people in the decision-making process
5. Inappropriate distribution of forest products
6. Reduced focus on forest management

(Pokharel, Branney, Nurse, & Malla, 2007) studied the impact of community

forestry in sustaining livelihoods and how policies, institutions, and practical innovations facilitated the development of community forestry. They found that the top-down decision making for community-based forest management is performed on an ad hoc basis. Also, the revision of forest management policies did not account for real-life experiences. Further, they found that community forest user groups can serve for forest conservation and democracy, and deliver rural development services if given full autonomy.

The cost and benefit shared by the members of a single CFUG were assessed by (Gronow & Shrestha, 1988) by taking an example from Dhankuta district. The study also highlighted the common equity problems, thus reducing the access of poorer households to forest products. Similar to the above mentioned study, this study also emphasized the importance of inclusion of marginalized groups in planning and commercialization of forest product collection and processing.

Additionally, the research conducted by (Dev, Yadav, O., & Soussan, 2003) in the middle hills community forests of Nepal using data from the Koshi Hills region in the East. Attempted to identify the impact of community forestry in livelihoods of the user group. The study found that the impacts are diverse both within and between CFUGs. People could successfully utilize the forest resources for earning their livelihood generating income opportunities along with their proper conservation and management. The study further used a livelihood systems model that gave an understanding of households' livelihood processes and allowed the mapping of consequences of specific changes, including changes brought by external interventions that intended to improve people's living system.

Moreover, another recent review by (Bijaya, Cheng, Z., J., L., & Liu, 2016) concentrated on the community forest and its effect on livelihood. They have defined a community forest program as a policy tool to eradicate poverty and improve the living standards of people. Thus, they analyzed the two major objectives of community forest program, 1. forest conservation and 2. livelihood improvement. The analysis further revealed the problem and challenges mainly associated with inequitable benefit-sharing, benefit capture by the elite group, social disparity, and exclusion of the poor from benefit sharing in each community. The review displayed

the need for enhancing awareness to minimize the discrimination to the poor people and suggested the involvement of policy-makers, experts and leaders of local communities in developing and improving the equal benefits sharing.

Hence, although community forestry program of Nepal is considered one of the very successful programs, the success of community forestry in Nepal has been challenged more recently which stresses how most of the benefits accrued to local elites ( (Thoms, 2008); (Malla, Neupane, & P., 2003); (Malla Y. , 2000)).

(Thoms, 2008) argues that community forestry is having rather limited success at improving rural livelihoods. The study indicates that the enormous wealth disparities between community forest member households and these differences have restricted access to low-income families to forest products. Another major highlight from this research was the significant power disparities within the CFUGs. The policy and practice further reinforce these disparities. Thoms further concludes that Nepal requires a change in policy that warrants inclusive local decision making to overcome these challenges.

(Malla, Neupane, & P., 2003) discussed a socio-economic baseline study undertaken among four CFUGs in Nepal with a particular focus on the level of participation, understanding of, and benefit from community forestry activities. They found that poorer households could obtain significantly fewer benefits than wealthier households. The major reason behind this inequity was considered to be the domination of wealthier households in the CFUG committee. Further, Malla et al. conclude that forests are being managed below their productive potential inefficiently.

The problem of inequitable distribution of forest product has been further highlighted by (Malla Y. , 2000), who found that although the requirement of forest product would be different depending on households, economically high-class people will require less forest product and the poor will require more. However, forest product distribution is constant per household. This will finally create a disparity where the rich will have more than required forest goods, and the poor will have far less than the annual need. Thus, Malla Y. (2000) suggests a necessity to reconsider the community forestry policy that meets the socio-economic requirements depending upon the society, thus possibly creates a more balanced

approach to distribute the sustainable benefits among the household of the user group.

Various scholars have further observed the inequality among the elite and low-income families in community forest program implementation in Nepal. (Agrawal & Gupta, 2005) used the data from protected areas in Nepal's Terai to examine the participation in the environmental decentralization programs. They found that presumed benefits depend on broad participation in the programs that the government creates. Further, they found that the likelihood of participation is greater for economically well-off families. Interestingly, they found a negative correlation between education and levels of participation.

(Adhikari, Falco, & Lovett, 2004) showed that in the forest-dependent rural areas of developing countries like Nepal, forest product collection from community forests is dependent on various socio-economic variables such as caste, household economic status, land and livestock holdings, and education. They also concluded that poorer households have more restricted access to community forests.

More interestingly, the involvement of women in the leadership roles of community forests of Nepal has been studied by (Leone, 2013). The study identified how and whether increased female participation in the executive committee of forest user groups impacts on forest protection and quantity of forest product collected by each household. The study found that a higher number of females in the committee members resulted in a decrease in the firewood collection from each forest. Since firewood collection is considered as one of the major causes of deforestation, these results indicated that the effectiveness of forest management depends on the gender composition too, and active role of women in forest management can serve and positively affect in forest conservation. In line with Leone (2013), (Agarwal, 2001) also explained how seemingly participatory institutions such as CFUGs can exclude relevant sections of the society, such as poor people and women.

## **2. An Overview of Forest Management in Nepal**

The history of forest management in Nepal is closely linked to the political history

of the country. Historically, current Nepal was divided into several kingdoms, and these kings utilized their forest as a potential source of the revenue. However, they had little interest in forest conservation and management. Instead, they made a way to enhance their tax base by the conversion of forest to farmland, thus promoting deforestation. The public who cleared a portion of forestland could get ownership of the land and would get subsidies on tax for the first few years. It was the tradition in the early 1600s started by King Ram Shah of Gorkha (Mahat, Griffin, & Shepherd, 1986).

The Zamindars<sup>1)</sup> and other revenue functionaries, over and above jagir<sup>2)</sup> land grant received for their work, were also entitled to reclaim them as much new land as they liked without payment of any additional tax (Regmi, 1978) The Gurkha ruler, Ram Shah, established a form of family rule over Gorkha (Regmi, 1978) The land tenure system was established in this area, and land tax was levied known as raikar<sup>3)</sup>. The peasants paid tax to the state crown as rent or tax equivalent to one-half of the product of the land they held. Peasant rights to the land were based on the regular payment of this rent to the crown representative and other revenue functionaries. At that time, the land was not allowed to remain as unproductive.

In jagir and birta<sup>4)</sup> grants, the land was assigned to a person who served, the court in some official, civil or military capacity, even the low ranked staff were able to receive benefits from this land. This form of grant remained valid only if the official concerned continued to serve the state or unite the land was recalled or

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- 1) Zamindars: A landowner, especially one who leases his land to tenant farmers.
  - 2) Jagir: A grant of land to a government employee (civil or military) in a lieu of salary. This led to the emergence of jagir land tenure. The jagir land grant was also tax free but remained valid only as long as the concerned person served the government.
  - 3) Raikar: In Nepal, land has traditionally been considered to be the property of the state. This system of state landlordism is known as Raikar.
  - 4) Birta: A grant of land to a as a reward for a service rendered to the state. This led to the emergence of Birta land tenure. It was usually both tax free and heritable, and had no set time limit. It was valid until it was recalled or confiscated (Regmi, 1978; cited by Hobley 1996)
  - 5) Kipat: Ancient type of communal land tenure, applied to both cultivated and forested land. Under this system, a community was communal tenure. On kipat land, the community (Community leader) gave individuals the right to till certain areas and to collect forest products from other areas.



confiscated. Kipat<sup>5)</sup> is another and entirely different concept of land tenure existing largely in Buddhist or tribal communities in the hill of Nepal in the Gorkhali period (Chemjong, 1967).

In many villages such as Rai and Limbu<sup>6)</sup>, they retained communal land for many years thought the kipat system of tenure, under which natural resources of land and forest were controlled by a village head and distributed by family requirements. Communal ownership provided checks and balances to prevent over-harvesting by legal means. In a similar manner, in the Gurung and Magar<sup>7)</sup> villages, these groups of people commonly managed their forest using a traditional system that was exercised through a council of village leader- Mukhiya<sup>8)</sup>. In the local system of authority, village heads were powerful about village activities, including forest and pasture. It seems that even before 1743, the former rulers of many autonomous states utilized natural resources for the principal source of income as a family heritage. In the name of state income generation, most of the land had been converted into agricultural land for revenue collection.

In 1768, the greater part of present-day Nepal was united into one nation by the King of Gorkha, Prithivi Narayan Shah<sup>9)</sup>. After the P.N. Shah regime, his descendants continued the task of unification and, by 1808, the frontier of Nepal extended 2,100 km from the Tistha River<sup>10)</sup> in the East. At that time, the political situation in India was different, and the British were spreading their political control over the Gangetic plain by subjugating the native Indian rulers. In the Terai, a confrontation occurred between British Indian and Nepal forces. British demanded the evacuation of the territory be unacceptable to the Gorkhali Government. The result was the British-Nepal war (1814-1816) and the “Treaty of Sugauli”<sup>11)</sup> gave

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6) Rai and Limbu: The ethnic group from different parts of Nepal.

7) Gurung and Magar: The ethnic group from different parts of Nepal.

8) Mukhiya: Local leader

9) Prithivi Narayan Shah: King of Nepal (1723 to 1775) was the first king of unified Nepal.

10) TisthaRiver : River name

11) Treaty of Sugauli: The treaty that established the boundary line of Nepal was signed on 2 December 1815 and ratified by 4 March 1816 between the East India Company and King of Nepal following the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16.

the British East India Company highly significant advantages. A considerable part of Nepalese territory was surrendered to the British, but the part of this was subsequently restored to Nepal in 1861 and 1960 ( (Stiller, *The Silent Cry: The People of Nepal 1816-1839*. Kathmandu, 1976); (Regmi, 1978)).

After 1950, there were rapid political changes made in the previous King's leadership. The forest was used to secure votes by different level of politicians mostly during the election period. Each elected Government even became unable to solve the forest land encroachment by the migrants in the Tarai. <sup>12)</sup>The popular movement in 1950 over (Stiller, *The Rise of the House of Gorkha: A Study in the Unification of Nepal 1768-1816*, 1973) threw the Rana government. The government nationalized all the forests in 1957.

After the unification of Nepal by King Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1768, this approach continued to some extent. As Nepal became a large country, the management of government also shifted and the people who served the official activities of the nation in some official, civil or military capacity or even low ranked staff obtained rights to the new land in the system of Birta or Jagir. This form of grant remained valid only if the official concerned continued to serve the state or unite the land was recalled or confiscated 1946, the Ranas took the power of the king and ruled the nation for 104 years until their ruling power was seized by the public movement of 1950. During the Rana regime, they started some kind of formal type of forest management to enhance revenue generation through the supply of railway sleepers to India with the establishment of Kathmahal (Forest office). The popular movement in 1950 overthrew the Rana government and there were rapid political changes made in the King's leadership. The other forest management and administration history in Nepal are listed in Table 1.

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12) Tarai: Plain region of Nepal which is located Indian border side.

**Table 1 Forest Management and Administration History in Nepal.**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Function</b>
Before 1927	No Administrative Forest Offices	Distribution of lands for farming
1927	Establishment of Kathmahal	To supply Railway sleepers To India.
1939	Establishment of “Eastern Wing and Western Wing.”	To manage the supply of sleepers to India and collection of Revenue.
1942	Establishment of DFO with “3 Circles and 12 Banjanch”	To control and manage the forest administration
1951	Establishment of 2 circles and 44 Ranges covering the Terai areas. Establishment of IOF	To control and manage the forest administration in Terai. Production of skilled manpower inside the country
1957	Nationalization of Forests.	
1959	Establishment of the Ministry of Forest (MOF)	To cover forest activities nationwide.
1960	MOF was abandoned (lack of staff). CCF office was established with seven circles and 22 Divisions.	To collect revenue to the country. External assistance started.
1961	Establishment of TCN	To utilize timber from resettlement areas. Protection-oriented laws were enabled (1961,1967,1970), the power to forest staff; women became users, corruption.
1962	Working plans were prepared for some Terai districts.	To start planning processes in forest activities.
1966	Establishment of “Fuelwood Corporation.”	To supply fuelwood to Katmandu.
1967	Formulation of especial forest protection act	To enable forest conservation & protection activities. DFO became policing and lawyer.
1968	Establishment of 14 circles and 75 DFOs (but failed due to lack of trained manpower.) Establishment of 7 circles, 22 divisions and “Pradhan Ban Karyala.”	To coincide with other administrative structures. To strengthen the organization with available manpower.
1970	Formulation of Forest production rules.	To restrict, control and collect the revenue.
1976	Publish of National Forestry Plan. (9 circles and 40 divisions covering 75 districts).	To implement the forestry activities nationwide on a planned basis.

## Community Forestry and Forest Management Policies in Nepal

1978	Promulgation of Community Forestry Rules	To involve the local people in the management of Forest.
1982	Decentralization Act.	To empower the local level administration.
1983-88	Establishment of 5 Regional Directorates (MFSC) and 75 DFO offices.	To match with decentralization Act.
1988	Master Plan for Forestry Sector was made.	To improve the policy of forestry sector.
1993	5 Regional Directorates (MFSC) and 74 DFOS. A huge reduction in central organization.	To reduce central control, but. To reduce whole forestry programs.
1993	New Forest Act.	To “handover” the national forest to the adjoining forest users for responsible management.
1995	Forest Bylaws	To launch the forest management programs according to the Forest Act 1993. Complete power to the forest user group for decision-making. HMG stood as the facilitator in CF programs.
1998	Forest Bylaws	To launch the forest management programs according to the Forest Act 1993. Complete power to a forest user group for decision-making but a legal provision to contribute 40% of CF income as the government treasure.

### 3. Nationalization of Private Forest in 1957

Different issues related to forest management needed to be addressed and various processes were ongoing in different regions of the nation. Furthermore, during the Rana Regime, most of the forest in Nepal were owned by the Rana family. The government formed after the Rana regime initiated to formulate plans for the unification of all the forests and bring all the private forests under state ownership through the Private Forest Nationalization Act in 1957. The aim of this Act was to control public property because the forest was the primary source of income.

This move helped to recover land granted to individuals, 75 per cent of them were from the Rana family (Hobley & Malla, 1996). Furthermore, this Act seized the power and control of limited elite Zamindars, bringing all the forest under the governmental control to preserve this natural resource, providing the protection of the forest, and controlling unplanned use by the people. However, the government had very weak organizational structure and lower workforce resources, and they could not aware of the local people of the view of nationalization to the citizens. This lack of communication accelerated deforestation. Although this Act has been the landmark of forest management in Nepal, many scholars linked this to deforestation in Nepal this Act alienated local people from their ancestral institution and controls (Rhodes, 1997).

However, the nationalization of the forest led to tremendous controversy and ignited debates regarding its role in deforestation and destroying the indigenous management system. (Bajracharya, 1983), (Fisher, 1989) suggested that the most severe forms of deforestation in Nepal occurred after the Nationalization Act. Many argued that nationalization destroys the indigenous forest management system and deprives the local people of their right to manage, and benefit from the forest. However, it was clear that nationalization of the forest could not fulfil the objective is mentioned in the Nationalization Act and also could not have a positive impact in community-level forest management.

#### **4. Forest Administration under the First Forest Act 1961**

After the democratic movement in 1950, there was another significant political change named as Panchayat system where political parties were banned, and the king undertook all the executive powers. Given the quick failure of private forest nationalization, the first forest act was enacted in 1961, with the primary focus of demarcating forest land brought under the state control with the Private Forest Nationalization Act of 1957, into three groups: forest land, agricultural land, and land owned by people. Under this Act, it became strictly forbidden to enter the forest and extract forest products such as wood, charcoal, clay, rocks, plant extracts (oil, resin), bark. Moreover, violators of provisions, such as plants like khayer

(*Acacia catechu*), pipla-pipli (*Piper longun*), the mahuwa (*Bassia long folio*), chiraito (*Swertia chirayita*), were subjected to punishments.

**Table 2 Prohibited Actions and Punishments.**

No	Prohibited activities according to Clause 27 subclauses (1) and (2)	Fine and term
1	Fresh forest clearance for ploughing or cultivation or some other purposes	Rs. <500 and/or max 6 months
2	Setting fire, or leaving or carrying fires in the forest in such a manner that fires may spread	RS.25 or ace. to damage or 1 year
3	Grazing cattle, or making them enter or letting them loose	Rs.0.5 to 5
4	Carelessly causing any damage when cutting, felling, dragging, or exporting trees	Rs.10 or ace. to damage
5	Gutting or clipping trees or plants, or cutting their branches, or stripping ace. To damage their bark or causing any harm to them	Ace. to damage their bark or to cause any damage to them if > Rs. 100 and six months
6	Taking out stones, manufacturing charcoal or lime or other products from them or collecting them	Same as above
7	Taking away forest products from state forests	Same as above
8	Cutting of trees to which one has no right	Same as above

Adopted from Graner, 1997(US\$1=Rs.70)

The Forest Act 1961 mentioned that to protect the forest and make proper arrangement on the economic welfare of the public; this Act gave the power to the forest officer to sell forest productions to the local people for their daily needs. It was not considered to be an attractive arrangement for the locals who were getting their requirements for free.

This Act also made a provision that individual forest plots (ban batika), should not exceed 1.25 hectares in the Hill and 3.25 hectares in Tarai if the persons planted and grew trees with their resources and efforts. However, no provisions were

made in the Act to hand over, the government forest to the public or Panchayat community, and there were no rooms for the community to utilize forest resources.

**Table 3 Time Chart of Ownership and Management of Forest.**

Year	Ownership	Management
Before 1850	King	Zamindar/ Talukdar
After 1850	King/Rana Talukdar Zamindar	(Encourage local people to convert forest into agricultural land and settlement through local functionaries)
1957	State (Nationalization)	Forest Officer (Nationalize all forest to remove control of local functionaries)
From 1962 to 1990		Panchayat (Birta holders and utilize it to benefit the nation by expanding it is controlling through its by selling hardwood from Tarai.)
After 1990 to Present		Community User Group (described in detail in Chapter Three.)

### Forest Plan of 1976

Under the Forest Act 1961, the Department of Forest (DOF) had the authority to manage household use forests and to arrest forest offenders. Forest officers were granted even more power under the Forest Protection Act 1967 and the public were allowed to collect forest products of value less than Rs. 50 from the forest. However, the mistrust between the community and the government generated during private forest nationalization did not improve during this period. The forest plan of 1976 emphasized the need for some form of the community manage forests, and this resulted in the amendment of the conventional Forest Act (Amendment 1977). Moreover, created Panchayat Forest by making provisions for the handing over<sup>13)</sup> of part of government forests to the smallest local governance unit, then

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13) Handing Over : Use rights

known as “Panchayat”<sup>14</sup>(HMG, 1978). Further, the Forest Rules were declared in 1978 for the smooth implementation of the program. The local “panchayats” had their new-planted forests (called panchyat forest) and existing natural forests (called panchyat protected forests)<sup>15</sup>.

### **5. The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector in 1988**

The master plan for the forestry sector of 1988 is an overall twenty-five-year forest policy prepared by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC) for developing strategies to manage forest resources in the appropriate way. This master plan and the provisions made under the Forest Act and its by-laws were duly acknowledged by the national planning commission in the national plans and programmed in Nepal. The NPC has incorporated policies from the national forestry plan published in 1976 in the seventh five-year plan. Objectives of the seventh five-year plan were to meet people’s needs for forest products, including timber, fuelwood, fodder, etc. Moreover, supply raw materials for wood-based industries so that they can be operated at optimum capacity. It also focused on the provision of grass for animals and encouraged maximum participation of people towards afforestation.

The master plan for the forestry sector had specified two sets of objectives; the long –term objectives and the midterm objectives as follows:

#### **Objectives of Master Plan for Forestry Sector**

##### **Long –term Objectives**

1. To meet the people’s basic needs for fuelwood, timber, fodder, and other forest products on a sustained basis, and to contribute to food production and effective interaction between forestry and farming practices.
2. To protect the land against degradation by soil erosion, floods, landslides, desertification and other effects of ecological imbalance.

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14) Panchayat: Lowest administrative and political unit (before restoration of Democracy), as like the present village development committee (VDC).

15) Panchayat Protected Forests: Any forest that which needed protection or enrichment



3. To conserve the ecosystem and natural resources.
4. To contribute to the growth of local and national economies by managing the forest and creating opportunities for income generation and employment

### **Mid-term Objectives**

1. To promote people's participation in forest resources development, management, and conservation
2. To develop the legal framework needed to enhance the contribution of individuals and institutions to forest resource development, management, and conservation
3. To strengthen the organizational framework and develop the institution of the Forestry to carry out their missions

**Source:** (HMGN, 1995)

## **6. Contemporary Forest Classifications**

According to the Department of Forest, forests in Nepal are divided into six categories, and there is a significant role for each category of forest in the Nepalese context. The government-managed forest includes the national parks and other huge forest structures and accounts for the majority of forests in Nepal. Though the past forest inventory reports have not classified the forest by ownership, data on different management regimes are presented here by available reports and databases (Table 2.4). The Government of Nepal owns the land ownership for most of these forests. However, many of these forests are organized/managed by leasehold group, religious institutions or forest user groups.

**Table 4 Forest Classification, Management Objectives, and Responsible Institutions.**

Forest category	Management objectives	Responsible agencies	Area (000ha)	Land Ownership
Government managed	Production of forest products	Government	390,227	Government of Nepal
Leasehold	Rehabilitation of forest production of forest products	Leasehold group, industries	41.73	Government of Nepal
Religious	Protection of the religious site	Religious institutions	0.543	Government of Nepal
Protected	Protection of wildlife, biodiversity, and environment	Government	711	Government of Nepal
Community	Production forest products and multiple purpose use	Forest user group	1,200	Government of Nepal
Private		Forest Owner	2.3	individuals

Source: Dep of Forest, 16 July 2014

## 7. Conclusion and Remarks

Community forestry began in the 1970s as a strategy to enable the utilization of forest resources in a sustainable way. In Nepal, during the early 1990s, priority for community forestry shifted and focused on the “handover” of natural forest. Since then, users have had the chance to receive some products that increased the principle of users in forest protection and created ownership of community forest.

The analysis of recent data and review of the recent studies indicate that community forestry in Nepal has received tremendous support from the government and global community. These include strong political support, enabled regulatory frameworks, enhanced capacity/resources the administration and the forest-related development sector, and some income generation by community forests. By the use of community forest, the CFUG members have succeeded in enhancing their livelihood and contributing to global sustainability. Each member has got the opportunity to develop as a potential leader.

Key findings of this literature review on community forest can be summarized as follows:

- Nepal is one of the first nations who implemented a community forest with a strong legislative framework.
- CFUGs in Nepal have dedicated to forming themselves as inclusive institutions that link all the families of the village, and utilize available resources for both

subsistence and commercial purposes.

- Formation of the community forest is clearly outlined, and community forests now account for the involvement of 26 million population.
- Community forests in Nepal have full power on resource management and utilization from the strong legislative framework.

Further, the research results presented in this paper showed that the success and importance of community forestry program in Nepalese context relies on proper management, equitable distribution and equal responsibility in decision making irrespective of the gender and caste. Although women participation of the committee members has significantly increased, the major drawback presented by all the authors was the inequitable distribution of forest resources and underrepresentation of poor and marginalized communities in the executive committee. Further, the review of the available literature indicates that the comprehensive analytical studies regarding the impact of community forestry in mid-hill areas like Palpa district are lacking. Given that the previous studies presented here do not clearly represent a typical mid-hill community forest; this study will focus on sharing of benefits from community forests by local people. Thus, it will provide insight into the issue of discrimination in Community Forestry against the people of the lower caste. Further, by taking three community forests as an example, recent developments of community forestry and the impact of public participation in forest management and equitable distribution will be analyzed.

Also, this study has provided an insight over the issues of community forest management and utilization in a very practical way by making social/cultural issues as the main base quite different from the researches done by previous scholars in this field. The study further explored the issues related to gender, status and financial status influencing CFUG member's participation in Community Forest management practices. This study further attempted to settle the problems associated with the CFUGs member's participation at the level of policy implication. Hence, the findings of this study can be useful in formulating policy measures for the continuation of the community forest in a much better and sustainable manner in close attachments to reward the user group.

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