

**A Report**  
**On**  
**ROLE OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITY FOREST**  
**of**  
**( Chhankhola Community Forest Gorkha District)**

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## Cover/Recommendation Letter

Usha Basnet Thapa has completed this Project Work entitled “**Role of Women in Community Forest**”: a case study of Chhankhola Community Forest Gorkha district.

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## ABSTRACTS

This paper explores the “**Role of Women in the Community Forest**” (a case study of **Chhankhola community forest**) forest users group, Dhuwakot VDC, Gorkha, basically focused on the women participation in the community forest. The generic objectives of this project are to examine the women’s participation in Chhankhola community forestry users group, and also to analyze the women participation of the rural areas on environmental improvement. The aim plus is to focus on the socio-economic situation of the community forest.

The present project work was based on the field work carried out in 2013, Chhankhola community forestry users group, Dhuwakot VDC. This paper has been limited due to diversity of caste and creeds and different ethnic groups so the finding may not be generalized in the other area. Chhankhola community forest has 20.21 hectors forest land and 200 households of the users. The FUG consists of 258 households including several tole and gaun. The community forest has been chosen from the point of view that the community forest in Gorkha district are not doing the forestry but they are even working for the environmental cause due to same reason ICIMOD has also awarded the cash incentive.

The data gathered for the project work has been done based on primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered from the field through observation, interview, household, survey, group discussion etc. secondary data were gathered from the various published and unpublished documents, records, journal, books, articles etc. the secondary data helped to understand overall status of women in CF management activities. The Chhankhola Community Forestry users groups Dhuwakot VDC ward no- 05 were selected as a universe purposively for the detail study. Total population was 2000 of which 1340 was male and 660 female were selected as a respondent selected sample unit.

**Key Words:** Community Forest, Women, Participation, Social, Economic, Environmental Improvement.

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## **Abbreviations**

CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDA	Centre for Economic Development and Administration
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre
CPFD	Community and Private Forestry Division
GN	Government of Nepal
MPFS	Master Plan for the Forestry Sector
NPCS	National Planning Commission Secretariat
NACFP	Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project
NASC	Nepal South Asia Centre
UNICEF	United Nation Children Fund
UNDP	United Nationals Development Program
DoF	Department Of Forest
FUGC	Forest Users Group Committee
DFO	Direct Forest Office
SUCS	Save the Children US
CFV	Community Forestry Volunteers
EC	Executive Committee
p.c	Percentage
VDC	Village Development Committee
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

# **Chapter One**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

In the past decade, the scope of the international research and policy debate about community- based approaches to natural resources management has been extended from an original focus on resource conservation to include concerns for rural poverty alleviation and enfranchisement(Brown *et al.*, 2002; Lund and Treue, 2008).

Community forest refers to any form of forestry in which specific community users protects and manage national forests in partnership with the government. Gender is the historically and the cultural determined social construct created by men and women to define their relationship with each other and with the environment. This includes access to and control of resources. Gender analysis provides a conceptual framework and a methodological tool for disaggregating information about the functioning of the household and community organization involved in natural resources managements such desegregation help to clarify the indefinite boundaries of household and the family and the complex ways in which the family household community and ecosystem are linked. Community forestry therefore provides a platform to understand how gender is being understood and used in community forestry where both social and natural systems interact to bring desirable outcomes.

Community forestry program in Nepal officially started in late 1970s. Since then concerning movement has been evolving to involve local communities in the management and utilization of forests. The policy of the government was originally intended to meet the basic forest products required by the communities through active participation in forest development and management. Later, it was expanded to include the mobilization and empowerment of the members of community forest user groups in the development of their local communities. It is observed that the trend of forest degradation has decreased since the handing over of national forests to local communities, but a number of unintended social anomalies have also cropped up. Such anomalies essentially constitute of the inequity and unfairness in the local



and national level and in terms of long-term sustainability of forest resources. This paper provides an overview of various issues of community forestry, especially focusing on the major achievements made in community forestry. It calls for rethinking community forestry program in order to face the present day challenges of linking community forestry with livelihood promotion, good governance, and sustainable forest management. It also lays out strategy for reforms in community forestry.

The process of CFUG formation was very slow in the beginning of community forestry program. A measure of this trend through slope calculation using weakening analysis indicates that 778 CFUGs per year were formed in the country before 1995. With the enforcement of the Forest Act (1993) and Forest Regulation (1995), community forestry was provided with the legal basis for its implementation. As a result, the number of CFUGs formed per year has increased to 1,479 until the year 2000. As most of the national forests adjoining to human settlements in the mid-hills have been handed over to the local communities, only the distant forests not much of interest to the local communities are now left as residual national forests. A circular issued by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation in the year 2000 to undertake a detailed inventory of community forest for prescribing annual harvest of timber in the operational plan has further delayed the process. Inventory became obligatory before handing over Community forest (CF). With the limited technical capacity of the District Forest Office (DFO), it is difficult to hand over more CF at a faster pace. Slope calculation clearly indicates that only five hundred and forty six CFUGs were formed per year during the period 2000 to 2003.

Forest is a biotic and versatile renewable natural source it is the main source of firewood timber litter and animal fodder. It plays vital role in the rural livelihood. These resources are indispensable to about 90 p.c of the rural population which is directly involved in managing forest as a part of everyday life. Having said this we can say that forest is an important natural resource that is highly essential for all living creatures in the world. Forest has played a significant role from the history of human civilization. It plays an important role in sustaining the productivity of the land by providing the organic manure of animal dung supported with bedding material from the forest. It is also the major source of income for the people. Besides this forest plays an important role in managing a stable ecosystem and

precipitation in Nepal. Forest has a numerous role to play in protecting the hilly topography from the natural disaster like flood landslide and soil erosion.

It is difficult to define women's daily activities as it is based on climatic and cultural and even the traditions in a particular area. If we take the hill area, women's workload includes food preparation collect firewood milking fetching water and subsistence agriculture production. The member of family produce 80 pc of the material needs of the household in Nepal themselves and the women make the major part of that. Only 20 pc is bought outside the home. In this type of subsistence economy the contribution of women is 50 pc of the household of income of male members 44 pc and of the children 6 pc.

Nepali women have a lot of work to do at home as well as on farm. Women are busy from morning until mid night and have no chance to get enough sleep. They spend most of their time around and in the homestead which contributes a lot of the household. Women are responsible for storage cleaning grinding pounding cooking and firewood fetching. The women of our country are completely different when we look at the women of urban area and to those of rural area. The literacy rate of urban area in concern to the women is below the average. And these all women without any knowledge on uprising global problem of pollution on air and the work which they are performing on their daily basis at the community level is really the worth praisy.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Nepali society is assorted in terms of caste and creeds, religion and the class. In the religion caste ethnic group women and men have occupied different spaces of the society. In the sphere of development people from different caste ethnic group region class and the sex do not participate equally in the decision making programs implementation monitoring and benefits sharing.

Community forestry program in Nepal officially started in late 1970s. Since then concerning movement has been evolving to involve local communities in the management and utilization of forests. The policy of the government was originally intended to meet the basic forest

products required by the communities through active participation in forest development and management. Later, it was expanded to include the mobilization and empowerment of the members of community forest user groups in the development of their local communities. It is observed that the trend of forest degradation has decreased since the handing over of national forests to local communities, but a number of unintended social irregularity have also cropped up. Such anomalies essentially constitute of the inequity and unfairness in the local and national level and in terms of long-term sustainability of forest resources.

In context of forest management women have been contributing for protecting and management of the forest resources from the time immemorial. However the involvement in different aspects of natural resources managements has been mostly in the form of nominal participation. Their role is subsided by the existing patriarchal cultural practices religious beliefs and value systems even though they are the prime managers of the natural resources.

In the context of Nepal society women are less motivated in some cases to go ahead in the area of decision making and representation in the public sphere our social system has provided women with less opportunity of education and exposure to outside worlds i.e. enthusiasm capacity and confidence on leading the management decision making and influence in managerial process and outcomes have been limited. Therefore women social position meaningful participation representation in the community forest management is also highly influenced by their level of awareness capacity and their confidence.

Community forest is a strong medium of empowerment in term of involving local people to decide how to use and community resource. It also seems to be devolution of power to the local to manage the available resources programmed may further marginalize the weaker sections of the society like women poor and the low caste as the policy vests the rights and the responsibility on only a few individual in the community.

Regarding the major challenges underpinning the lack of financial capital for the poorest of forest users relates to the low social capital in FUGs, as well as FUG institutional arrangements and the decision making process that reinforce those trend. The poorest are the ones who are suffered the most since they cannot afford to participate and hardly speak are rarely heard and benefit from the community forestry. Given the unequal social structure in

terms of class, caste, gender and regional disparity there is unequal access to decision making to opportunities to contribute and to benefits. (Pokharel, 2002)

In the recent years the progress of handing over the forest patches into the community forest is in speedy rate. After handing over the community forest to the forest users a lot of problem being created between the users. Such as CF program is widening the gap between the poor and the rich people involved in the management of community forest. Elite groups in the villages dominate the decision making and they can do neglect the interest of other people. This raises a question of how democratic is the decision making process when it occurs under the social condition if inequality. The good governance is how the decision is made and how it is implemented which needs to be assessed in CFUGs.

Community forestry has two major objectives, environmental protection and the social development. It is lauded in development circle that the community forestry has to some extent been successful to achieve its environmental objectives in terms of reversing the trend of deforestation in the hills of Nepal. However one needs to ask the question whether it is also successful to achieve the social objectives of empowering the women poor and dalit to increase their representation. This study is an attempt to provide a conceptual framework of gender equality and participation in the context of community forestry programmers in Nepal by seeking the answer of a fundamental research question to what extent the theory of gender and participation is being translated into reality in the context of community forestry in Nepal.

- How community forest has been increasing?
- **How community forest is working for the global problem on pollution control?**
- What will be the role of women in community forest?
- How women are taking part in the process of decision making and the implementation of community forest?
- Is there equal participation of women in community forest?

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

When we are discussing about the main research project question mentioned above the broad objectives of this study will be to examine how gender theory and the participation are

translated into practice in the context of community forestry in Nepal and on the same side of next part we will also try to find out on how the community forest is addressing the global problem of pollution. Hence the specific objective of the study will be as follow:

- To conceptualize the theories of gender and participation in the community forest in the Nepalese rural areas focused on Gorkha district.
- To collect and analyze information on the main issues of gender and women participation in the community forestry and visualize the gap between theory and practice of gender and participation.
- To increase understanding on the prominent issues regarding women's participation find out recommend the practical ways to address them.
- To analyze the work of community against the pollution.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Community forestry program is one of the best and the successful national programs that has been implemented for more than a decade and has both technical as well as social components in it. Forestry programs are conducted in every rural part of the country having both gender participation, these kinds of programs are only the sector where the women's of rural areas are participated with conjunction to the male dominated society. The topic has been selected in order to highlight the preventive measure taken by the underdeveloped nation like Nepal in the present situation where the growing pollution and the concrete building around the world are fast growing and the illiterate women are participated in project like community forest to counter the act of literate people of urban area. Different international organization are working and different act has been under the process to strengthen the good deed of women and the community, recently the international organization like ICIMOD has also awarded the incentive to such community forest.

So in order to highlight the project, the topic CHHANKHOLA community forest of Gorkha district was taken which was established in 2050 B.S by the local male and female residence of Magar community of Dhuwakot VDC it has 85 working members which is headed by the male president covering the areas of 103 ropani (Chhankhola)

This program will therefore provides a good ground for researchers to broaden knowledge and understanding on the basic question to what extent theories are translated into the practice.

### **1.5. Limitation of the Study**

As the student of the rural development this research project will be undertaken to meet the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the master degree of arts which will be carried out in the community forest of Gorkha district due to time and budget small area have been selected for the study. The study was focused on the meeting its given objectives in certain period of the time with the limited budget. Some selective social science research tools was also used in the research work which was also one of the limitation of the study therefore the finding of the study may not be generally conclusive in others community forests.

### **1.6. Organization of the study**

The study is divided into five chapters.

- Chapter one provides the general introduction of the topic of the thesis objectives and rationale of the study and an overview of the Nepalese context and more importantly the status of women in the Nepalese society.
- Chapter two presents the theoretical basis of gender and participation. It conceptualizes gender theories and participation in development and it's relevant to Nepali development policy context.
- Chapter three presents the methodology used in the study. The main qualitative and quantitative research `methods used in the study are described.
- Chapter four provides the insight analysis and discussion on the information related to gender issues and women's participation.
- Chapter five summarizes the main finding, concludes the thesis and recommends some key points of policies and program implication

## **Chapter: Two**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Community forest**

Community forestry was initially defined by FAO, 1978 as any situation which intimately involves local people in the forest activity. It embraces a spectrum of situation ranging from wordless areas which are short activity. It embraces a spectrum of situation ranging from wordless areas which are short of wood and other forest products for local needs through the growing of trees at the farm level to provide cash corps and the processing of the forest product at the household artisan or small industries level to generate income to the activities of the forest dwelling communities. Thus community forest was planned as encompassing activities by individual household's men and women farmers and other people as well as those enveloping a community as a whole.

#### **2.2 What is community forest?**

Some definitions are given below; most stress, the importance of participation and benefit sharing. Perhaps like sustained development community forestry should be seen as process a process of increasing the involvement of and reward for the local people of seeking balance between outside and community interests and of increasing local responsibility for the management of the forest resource. Also like sustainable development community forestry should be a learning experience for all involved parties. Whether or not it leads to better forest management is an arguable point but in some places it may well be the last chance for the forests.

#### **Some definition of community forestry:**

“Community forestry is a village level forest activity decided on collectively and implemented on communal land where local population participate in the planning establishing managing and

harvesting of forest corps and so receive a major proportion of socio-economic and ecological benefits from the forest”

**-Martel & Whyte, 1992**

“Successful community forestry requires.... genuine popular participation in the decision process ... Experience has proven time and again that the participation is more than a development cliché; it is an absolute necessity if goals are to be met. But working with people rather than policing them is a new role for many forests”

**-Eckholm et al, 1984**

“Community forestry, social forestry and the rural development forestry are more or less equivalent and reflect Abraham Lincoln’s view of democracy – government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

**-J. Burley, Oxford Forestry Institute.**

“The political dimension of community forestry makes it a venue for the peoples struggle against domination and exploitation of the community resources by outsiders. Ecology equity and social justice are the part of this struggle. ”

**-Rao, 1991.**

The challenge for all societies is to create a system of governance that promotes supports and sustains human development - especially for the poorest and most marginal. The goal of governance initiatives in community forestry should be to develop capacities that are needed to realize development that gives priority to the poor and women, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for local employment.

Community forest management issues are only discussed in committee meetings and in general assembly, where poor people and women usually do not participate. The normal practice in community forestry is that the elite members of the society tend to take all key positions in the executive committee and make decisions on community forest management such as harvest of the forest products and their distribution. The ordinary users of the CFUG are least involved in the overall process and have virtually no idea whatsoever related to harvest of their community



forest. Thus, it may ignore the traditional dependence of the poor, women and occupational castes on forest for their livelihoods. The need of the community and the condition of the community forest should determine the forest development activities. But it is not addressed in most of the Operational Plans (OPs). As the elite members of the CFUG and the DFO staff make the decision on this matter, ordinary users are unaware about it. Many management prescriptions are conservative in terms of the harvesting levels allowed for forest products. Complete closure of community forest in the initial period of implementation harms the poorest the most. Many users have the feeling that community forest is the chairpersons' forest.

Gender needs can be categorized into mainly two practical gender needs and strategic gender need (Parker et al 1995). The practical needs are those needs which are seen as arising from the actual conditions in women's engendered positions for example improved cooking stoves health care and water supply (Agarwal 1994). Similarly strategic needs are those arising from the analysis of women's subordination to men for example the abolition of gender based division of labor land and the property rights and political equality. The analysis of practical and strategic needs has emerged as powerful tools in the policy making and planning process

It is also pointed out that male biases or the male domination in the development process exist in the most institution policies and processes. And they show every sign of continuing. For this reason women are still being left out despite the increasing availability of data on the predominant roles that women in the primary sectors of economic development. Even though many women focused programs exist in government plans to address the practical and strategic needs of rural women less evidence is focus at the ground level that these have had any impact (Gurung 1998). In fact national policies have failed to increase women's participation in development (Joseph 1997)

Maxumdar also highlights upon the fact that in Asia, women constitute the single largest group engaged in agriculture and food production, some Asian traditions even claim that women discovered agriculture. Yet very few of them control the basic asset land, although they participate actively in the labor process. Further, women in agriculture attach highest priority to food crops, as it becomes their responsibility to feed their families. Therefore, their greater control on agriculture decisions could be made instrumental in reducing the areas under food crops.

## 2.3 Status of women

According to the constitution of Nepal all citizens of Nepal are equal under the law, regardless of sex, caste, religion, and ethnicity, in actual practice, illiteracy, poverty deep –rooted social cultural values and traditions, especially cost prejudices, and political factors have all often combined to prevent women from exercising their human rights. While human rights are common to men and women, there is a large area in the human rights of women that either not recognized or neglected.

“The constitution guarantees all citizens the equally before law and equal protection of law. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex. Despite these constitutional and legal provisions, Nepalese women are suffering from social, economical and political discrimination. Major areas of discrimination include citizenship rights, property, employment, reproductive health rights, marriage, family relations and punishment and legal proceedings Deep – rooted cultural norms and patriarchal values are themselves unfavorable to women. As a result, social preference for sons in schooling, neglect of women’s health needs, child marriage and unmatched marriage bigamy\polygamy are part of the reality. Dowry and domestic violence are still other problems”.

Discrimination between males and females starts in the family. Females are not included in the decision making process, and the opportunities and benefits available in the society are monopolized by males. Women’s participation in the social-cultural and political activities depends upon the attitudes of their husband\father \parents \male relatives”

Commenting upon the difference between pre and post 1990 years, almost all the respondents stated that in the post 1990 days, “women have the opportunity to speak and exchange views with their husband, to participate in public forums, institution and political parties, and also get elected in different tiers of local government bodies, particularly the VDCs, but they also pointed out that women still are not often encouraged to participate in social – cultural and political activities, and when they do, their ‘character’ is questioned and ,worse ,the members of their families citizen them”( Dahal 1992).

In the study of Nepalese women sociology by Acharya & Bennett how women are facing the hazardless situation in family and society as a whole. Similarly, according to March, (1983) how

the works of male and female is different and who is given more priority is clearly described of the Tamang society. Similarly a research in tradition and change in legal status of Nepalese women (by Lynn Bennett) explains the legal status of women and their legal differences. Acharya & Bennett (1983)

Meena Acharya and Lynn Bennett reflect that in Nepal people express less desire to educate girls than boys. This is manifested in two ways (i) fewer people are willing to send girls to school and (ii) even among those who do send girls to school there are very few who want as much education for the girls as boys (Acharya, 1982).

The economy of Nepal is totally dependent on agriculture production and women play a major role as they actively participated in the various farm activities. 98.1% of the economically active rural women are agriculture workers, hence women importance.

Women's health is a societal issue. Improving women's health and well being improves not only their own life but also those of their children and contributes to improve household and community welfare.

The health status of the Nepalese people in general has improving though it is low compared to others less development countries. The health status old women remain still lower. The life expectancy for male is 60.4 years and 60.7 years for female (CBS, 2011).

Marital status makes a woman totally dependent upon her husband because her rights upon the family property are only through husband. About the women's right upon family property Bennett wrote that "men are endowed with the right to property by virtue of the biological fact of birth. Women's right to property depend almost entirely upon the social fact of marriage (i.e. on their role as a wife)". Therefore 'economic security is entirely dependent on their adherence to strict social norms of proper marital behavior (Bennett, 1980:89).

Although there is imbalance in status between men and women as in the most of the developing countries, women in Nepal are also engaged in domestic chore along with the social and economic activities required for survival. Despite their important roles undertaken for social and economic life capacity and potential, women have more disadvantage than male partners due to an inadequate access to exposure, technology, credit and environment.

Women have low degree of opportunities for their education and have hardly any access to employment. There is lack of women participation in decision making from house to the executive levels. There is no positive attitude towards women's health and they do not get appropriate nutrition even in the period of pregnancy (UNICEF, 1996). Women get married early and are considered as child bearing machines due to early age delivery there is high maternal and child mortality shows the lower social status of women. Women have lack of economic power and also have lack of decision making role over their fertility too (Acharya, 1995).

## **2.4 Women's Participation in Community Forest Management**

As we have discussed in brief about the role of the status of women in general now it becomes wise for us if we look into participation on the topic relevant. We all know that in 1970s CF emerged as a locally managed forest. It was realized that women's participation is also necessary from the view of sustainable development in the management of natural resources. After 1980s issue of women's participation came in the field of development discourse. To facilitate women's participation in CF, government of Nepal had launched a forestry program to produce female forest officer and the ranger as a facilitator by the government. These programs found a milestone in the field of participation of women in CF (ibid).

Women and forest if we look closer in link in rural areas where life is shaped and dedicated by a availability and access of basic resources such as water fuel wood fodder and other forest products (Siddiqui, 1989). Women are deeply related with forest and their products which are near their house. If forest is not nearby women need to walk a long distance to collect the fuel wood and fodder. In the study carried out in eight villages, Molnar states that women's over all contribution to house hold work including forest related task, was found to be approx 11 hrs a day as compared to 8 hrs for men. Thus women spend significant portion of their time in forest related activities such as farming collecting fuel wood and fodder, grazing animals etc (Molnar, 1983). Their extensive and closer contact with the forest may give local women more detailed understanding of forest resource than local men. This partly because women are more likely to make frequent trips in to the forest areas in different seasons for the firewood, fodder and grasses (Fortman, 1986)

In the context of exploring the issue of participation of women in CF the women participation in the committee are only fashionable than functional in operational issue. They are unable to implement and manage plans because of lack of support and encouragement from men and forestry staffs. Only few women of FUGs attend meeting and are usually listeners rather than talkers. (Hunt et.al. 1995)

## **Chapter: Three**

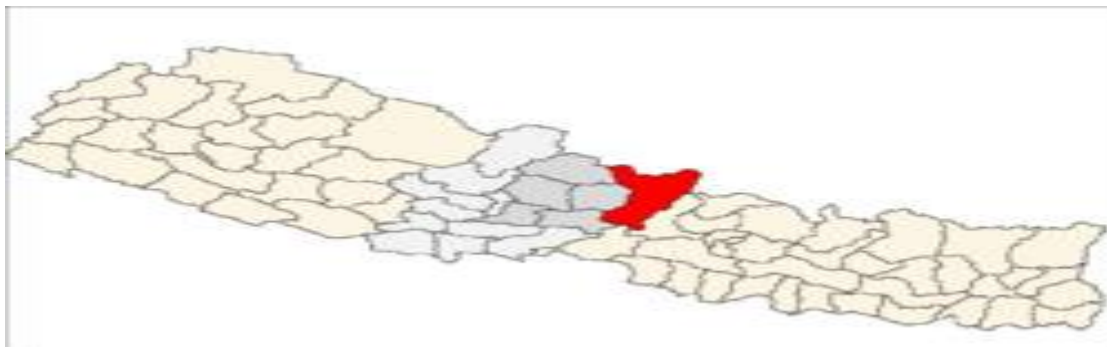
### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Methodology is one of the most important parts of research work. Reliable and relevant study is possible only by applying proper research method. Hence, the research designs. Different procedures were used for this project work. However because of the time, budget and the security constrains, the study has been focused on only one (Chhankhola community forest) of the Gorkha district.

#### **3.1 Area of Study**

The empirical data for this project were collected from one of the CFUG of Gorkha district (28° 17' 23.92" N, 84° 41' 23.1" E).

#### **Location of Gorkha district**



This district lies in western region of Nepal between it covers an area of 450 ha. Gorkha district is 1390 sq. mi. in its area, having the total population of 288134 as per the census of 2010-

2011. Land utilization of this district covers forestland agricultural land, grazing land and others. Out of total agricultural land is covered by irrigated land. The study area has been so selected for the following reasons.

- It is not much far away from its headquarter and also not far away from the capital city, it is linked with the rural road (off route) so it was easy to reach and travel VDC for data collection and various other purpose.
- It is one of the oldest CFUG of Gorkha district where the feminist has well conducted the community forest as one of the best exemplarily for the rest in Gorkha district.
- The study area consist of diversified population ranging from various castes and from different economic and education level those factor widely effects the women to involve in the community forestry management
- Study has been carried out on women's participation in community forestry management.
- This study will be useful to other part of CFUG in Gorkha district because of their similar geographical structure social and cultural aspects.

### **3.2 Geographically**

East: Dhading district

West: Tanahu district

North: Tanahu district

South: Chitwan district

Four major rivers run within and along it, they are Chepe, Daraudi, Marsyangdi and Budhi Gandaki, whereas we cannot find any major lakes. Main religion is Hindu comprising of 98.60%. In this district there are tharu, cheetri, bramhin, kami, damai, thakuri, kuwar, magar and others. Similarly officially the people of Gorkha speak Nepali language whereas it is also learnt that some of them speak their native language too. (Source DDC Gorkha, 2011)

### **3.3 CF status in Gorkha district**

According to district forest office of Gorkha it was learned that there are altogether 31 community forest handed over to local community in Gorkha district. Out of the total land 324791 hectares, the total forest covers 216437.5 hectares and community forest area covers 9796.17 hectares. Similarly out of 90538 households in the district, only 26741 households are involved in CF activities.

### 3.4 Universe and sample

The study area lies in Dhuwakot VDC 5, of Gorkha district which is under the range post of Mirkot. The total population of Dhuwakot VDC- 05 is 2000 among them 1340 are male and 660 are female (Village Profile 2068). The neighboring VDC of Dhuwakot is Birkot and Changyli VDC. This is moderately populated area with diverse caste and communities. This area is dominated by Brahmin and Chettri, and there are other castes as Damai Sunuwar, Gurung and Magar etc. The main occupation of the people is agriculture.

The Dhuwakot VDC is 5 hrs walk from the Gorkha district headquarter. There is no facility of public transportation however the personnel vehicle can be used for different purposes. CHHANKHOLA community forest was established in 2050 B.S by the local residence of Magar community of Dhuwakot VDC comprising 27 executive members where it has 10 and 17 female and male members respectively which is headed by the president covering the area of 450 hec and this community forest was picked for the project work. The temperature is almost same to that of district headquarter, major rivers are Tadhi khola and Sily khola which has no major impact during the dry season but sometimes may affect during the rainy season.

Following box shows the climatological information and the species ranking respectively.

**Table A. Climatologically Information**

S.No	CF	LAT(N)	LONG(E)	ALTITUDE
01	CHHANKHOLA	27°59'43.88"	84.°40'41.87"	1714m

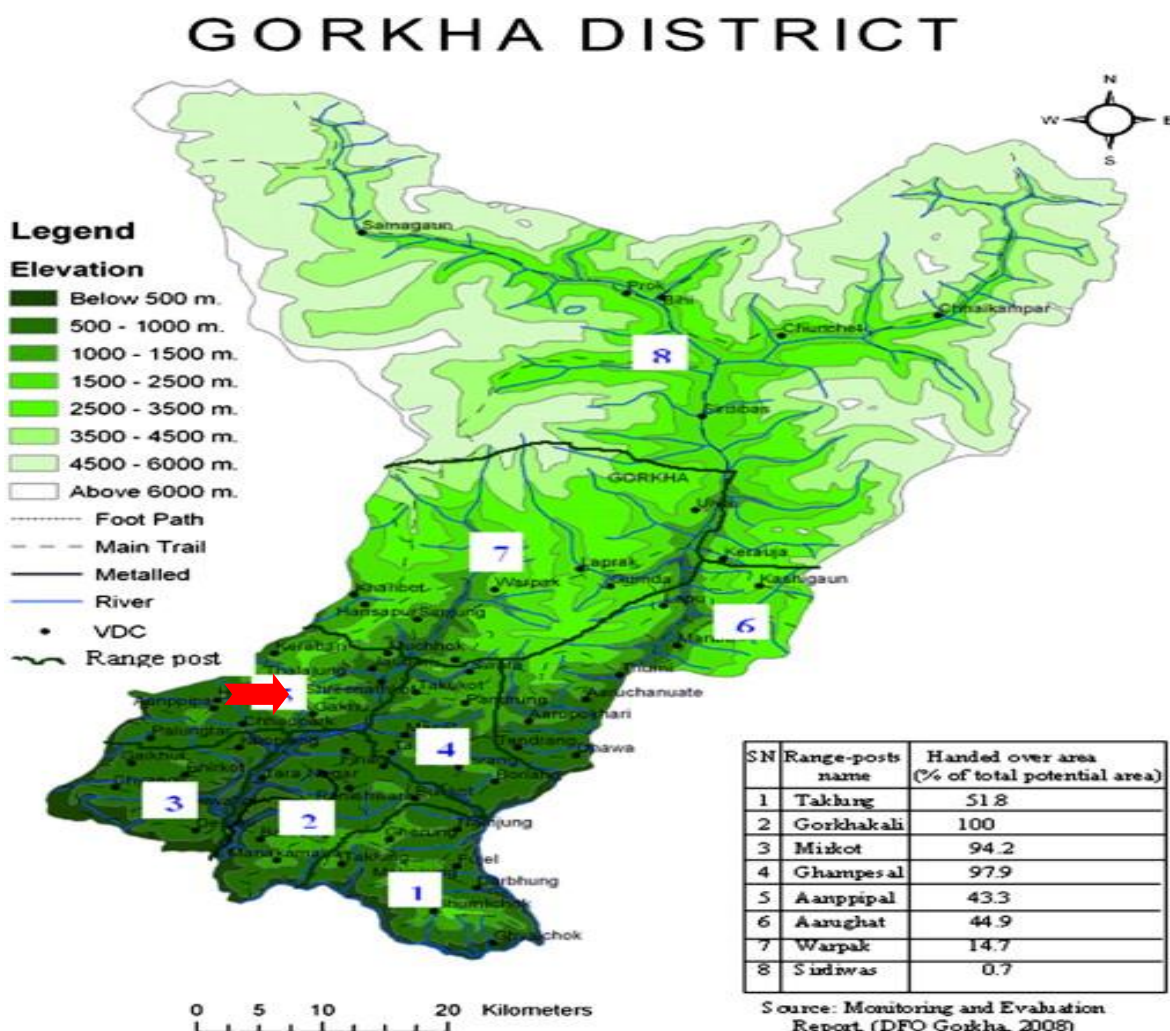
Source: District Office Gorkha

**Table B. Species Ranking**

S.No.	CF	Rank 1 Tree	Rank 2 Tree	Rank 3 Tree
01	Chhankhola	Sal (0.88%)	Chilaune (0.69%)	Katus (0.74%)

Source: DoF, Gorkha

### 3.6 Map Showing the Study Area





### **3.6 Research Design**

The present study will best try to assess women's role in managing the community forest resources and the community forest against the raising pollution. This study will follow both the descriptive and exploratory research design. Present study has given emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the phenomenon.

### **3.7 Nature and Resource of Data**

This research is a field base study. The nature of the data in the study is both the quantitative and qualitative. The source of data are also based on both primary and secondary through household survey field observation review and group discussion and secondary data was also collected from related journals, reports, books and unpublished document from various publication.

### **3.8 Data Collection Technique**

#### **3.8.1 Household survey**

Household survey was conducted to acquire detail information about the population characteristics like age sex composition, marital status religious, occupation and education etc. moreover landholding size livestock numbers and their types housing pattern source of fire woods fodder life-litter and timber pattern of forest products collection and involvement of collection were also collected through the household survey. Besides these it also helped selecting the key informants who were actively involved in the forest management activities and who were known about the CF.

#### **3.8.2 Observation**

Observation was also used to collect qualitative information like womens participation in CF management activities including decision making monitoring and evaluation activities program implementation and cost and benefit sharing. Observation also helped the researcher to recheck the information which is collected through the other sources. The CF executive committee minute showed that the women participation in meeting in both the general assembly and executive committee were high.

### **3.8.3 Focus Group Discussion**

Focus group discussion proved useful to find out the relevant information like decision making evaluation process of CF management activities. Two group discussions were also held during the field project. Through this discussion information about the motivating and hindering factors of women's participation were collected. Likewise other two informal group discussion were also held in a tea shop which helped to collect information about the socio-cultural practices in the study area.

### **3.8.4 Interview**

Interview was applied to find out the past and present participation and position of women in CF management. Similarly this tool was also useful for the researcher to find out the women's perception about the CF management. A set of question were prepared for interviewing with the respondents. Three interviews were conducted with female executive committee members about time table of monthly meeting and their attainment and women's role in management activities. Some few interviews were also conducted with elderly people about the crop production and agricultural calendar seasonal availability of forest products. Likewise an interview was held with the president of executive committee regarding women's role in CF management. Besides unstructured interview was also held to gather information physical facilities like school health post market road agricultural products labor economic activities cultural practices etc from the field.

### **3.8.5 Key Informants Interviews**

Through the key informant's interview information regarding the women participation in CF, the history forest, and women involvement in forest management women's perception in CF and hindering and motivating factors of women's participation in CF management were also collected. Key informants were also knowledgeable persons of community. Among 10 elderly people (4 male and 6 female) 2 school teachers, 3 local political leaders and 4 executive committee and 1 local people sample interviews were taken.

### **3.8.6 Data Analysis and Presentation**

The data collection process was through various sources using data collection techniques and tools. Collected data were preceded and analyzed using the simple statistical tools and with the help of special computer software program like “Tally” where different data’s were tallied and compared. The findings have been described in various topics and heading.

## **Chapter: Four**

### **DATA ANALYSIS PRESENTATION**

In this chapter, main issues related to women and their participation in community forestry is presented in the following:

- ❖ Issues related to women's participation
  - at the community leadership positions
  - at the public assembly meeting
  - on environmental upgrading

#### **4.1 Issues related to the women's participation**

In Nepal the master plan for the forestry sector mentions that there should be at least 30% of women users in the FUGC. However at the early stages of the study (1990-1993), most of the FUGs had only men in those programs. Now at this chapter I have tried to highlight some of the findings on the level of women participation in FUG general assembly and FUG committee and the women's attendance in such meetings.

##### **4.1.1 National Level**

CPFD (2002) database shows that the trend of representation of women in FUGC position is increasing. For that we can take the example, in 1999, average p.c. of women in FUGC was reported that to be in 19% (Karki and Pokharel, 1999). This figure has now increased by 2% in three years (CPFD database, 2002). Similarly the number of only women led committee raised from 232-449 in 1999 in the whole country. There is no national figure on the average attendants of women members in the FUGC and general assembly.

### 4.1.2 FUGC Level

Since the woman's population is almost 50% of the total members there is only 36% and 40% of women in FUGC. It is found that participation of women in FUGC meeting and general assembly is also increasing. There are many contributing factors such as gender equality focus program through animators. Labor migration to India and even on other African countries and also even increased number of women headed household, mandatory provision of women's representation in local VDC ward and its positive knock on effect to FUG as there is increased awareness among political party cadre that they have selected few women as VDC ward representatives.

**Table 1. Women in Chhankhola Community Forest**

Name of FUG	Members in EC	In the first FUG committee	
Chhankhola	27	Women members in EC	% Women in FUGC
		10	37%

Source: FUG report, 2068

### 4.1.3 Women at the FUGC meeting

The table below shows that there is poor participation of women in the committee meeting. The analysis of the record of FUGC meeting over the period of 10 months indicates that there is only an average of 37% of women representation in the FUGC meetings.

**Table 2. Women participation in Chhankhola community forest**

Meeting date	Total attendants	Women attendants	% of women's attendants
2067/2/10	23	9	39%
2067/4/15	20	7	35%
2067/7/13	19	6	31%
2068/3/05	20	8	40%
2068/6/20	22	9	41%
2068/09/20	21	8	38%
2068/11/21	18	5	27%

Source: FUG's meeting minutes, 2068.

Because of force sanctioning of the presence of women in the meeting, women's participation seems high in FUGC meeting. The problem faced by the women attendants however is critical. Following is the version of Chinmaya Thapa Magar of Chhankhola community forest, member.

I am a committee member of Chhankhola FUG. I was unknown about that I was kept in the current FUG committee. Although it is good to be here in the committee, many problems arising once you will be nominated in the committee. I do everything what I was doing before. If I have to go for the committee meeting, I need to prepare food and finish domestic work quickly before I go to the meeting. If I don't prepare food for the family and feed cattle, my husband will not allow me to go to the meeting. For women it is really a burden to be in committee if no one shares the work of a woman at home and on farm.

It is also argued that the belief that inclusion of women of FUGC promotes women's participations is wrong. Inclusion of women on FUG committee does not necessarily mean they are involved in the decision making process. (Chettri and Rana, 1995)

#### **4.1.4 Women at the general assembly meeting**

Women as a group are also not homogenous. Women from rich households are relatively better off than those from poor dalit households. Access to resource may vary among women of different class and caste too. In Chhankhola community forest, for example rich and women have preference of timber over the firewood, since they have started to use biogas; in result have different management goal of timber production from those of poor and lower caste women who have preference of firewood.

There was little participation of women right from the process of FUG formation. For this we can take example that there were 16 p.c women of the total attendants of the assembly and this figure has increased in the last assembly to 24 p.c Although there are variation in various assembly meetings women have low representation. Those who attended that assembly meeting they did not stay the whole time in the meeting in the process of making rules. A women committee member of the Chhankhola FUG reported she signs in the minute but never talks in the committee meeting. Those who have attended the meeting did not raise their voice their ideas and concerns. Women's representation in the committee is giving a false assurance that they are successfully involved in decision making.

**Table 3. Women in assembly meeting in FUG**

Date of the assembly	Total members attending	Male no.	Male in %	Female no.	Female in %

2060/10/10	107	89	83%	18	16%
2063/10/09	150	120	80%	30	20%
2066/10/09	134	102	76%	32	23%
2068/10/10	160	122	77%	38	24%

Source: FUG meeting minutes, 064-068

The figure of women's attendants in the first and second assembly of the FUG assembly is interesting and there is just the participation of women.

## 4.2 Why do not women participate?

There are a number of reasons on why do or do not women participate in public meeting. Work load inappropriate venue and time, lack of information, lack of support from the family members, friends and relatives lack of recognition of their knowledge and capacity and some of the inappropriate social values of unequal power relations and so on. Insight in the box indicates that women are interested and enthusiastically to participate equally in public events but they face many difficulties. When questions were asked to women committees leaders about the participation in a group decision the following insight was gained.

### **Box 1. Insight from the focus group discussion with women samiti members of Chhankhola FUG**

**How many of you have attended the last samiti meetings?**

10 out of 25

**Why so less?**



Our social system is also defective because it discourages women to go to the public events. There are also number of reasons such as education time work burden and perception of men as pothi basyo if women speak in front of men, some think that women in public meeting break social norms and so on.

**What issues were discussed there?**

The issues were on the provision of collecting fallen twigs and firewood and distribute on an equitable basis after the collection.

**How many of you spoke up?**

Only few of them spoke up in the meeting on the process of collecting wood.

**Have any EC decisions been changed due to your speaking up?**

Yes, at the time of Dashain festival women need firewood for cooking meat circular bread and some of us make raksi too, and all these require more firewood. We demanded firewood collecting time to be extended during the Dashain.

**Do you inform other women about decision at samiti meeting?**

Yes, we do but not in every details.

**How and when do you inform them?**

We inform them once we meet on farm on common spring and also in the gathering at Tole meeting that takes place every month. Early days we used to inform them wherever we met them individually but these days time is changed our monthly Tole meeting has become a regular event we inform in tole gathering.

**Do you face any problem in attending samiti meetings?**

Yes, so many problems. If I have to go to the meeting I need to sort the following things out, first finish domestic works such as grinding beating rice cleaning fetch water. Second please father and mother in law and also husband. Thirdly feed the children and cattle.

**Is meeting time a problem in attending?**

W1, Not so much because our meeting time is normally during 7 am to 8 am.

W2, It is a problem for me because my kids are very small my husband has to go to work in the field. If I come to the meeting there will be no one to cook food and to send kids to school.

## **Box 2. Suggestion from Women Respondents**

**Would it be easier for women to speak up if there were more women in the samiti?**

W1, well I think both male and female should be equally represented in the samiti and should work jointly.

W2, I think it is not the matter of whether women or men should lead the committee the major thing is that both men and women should equally participate in the committee and work together for the uplift of the community forest.

**What would help you to attend more samiti meeting regularly?**

W1, we should be informed and encouraged by our husbands and brother in law and we should also take interest.

W2, all the family members have to share some work of the nature that we do so that we will have some time to be in for the work of samiti work.

**What would help you to speak up at samiti meeting?**

W1, at least the women should also be given chance to lead the samiti for which we are capable, for example you can take my own friend who is I.A passed and most of the time she participate on every samiti meeting.

W2, in fact our society is all the time male dominated, in fact we are proud that you are here for the project work, this will somehow enhance us to speak from next time?

Source: Interview 069

During this I found that there was one woman who always attend meeting but she had never spoken a word and when asked said the following:

## **Box 3. Why women do not speak in the meetings?**

**Did you speak in the meeting?**

No.

**Why you did not speak?**

Male samiti members speak up whatever is to be spoken up and discussed. Usually they ask mown I me just to sign in the minutes.

**Do you know what is written in the minutes on which you normally sign?**

No, but sometime my elders brief.

**Why do you sign without knowing the issues?**

They ask me to sign saying that it is about the CF and they need woman sign on the register.

Source: Interview 069

Likewise during the process of interviewing, it was also learned that some of the females were facing difficulties in attending meeting because they were not getting support from their respective husband.

**Box 4. Sorrow of a woman members**

**Do you face any sorts of problem in attending samiti meeting?**

Presently it is not like that but initially there used to be very difficulties somehow it was terrible.

**What type of problems did you face earlier to attend meeting?**

My husband used to scold me and even he had beaten me. Once he bit almost to death saying that I had gone to meet other man in the name of meeting.

**Does he scold or bit you even now?**

No, after that incident he got enrollment in Nepal Army, and to tell you the fact now he has changed a lot and he is only the man who is very much happy on my performance. And to be honest, he loves me lot these days, and find himself a guilty on doing such act before.

Source: Interview 069

During focus group discussion in Chhankhola community forest some of the members expressed that there are a number of reasons for women not being able to speak in the assembly. Comment from their words.

**Box 5. Following are the reasons for not being able to participate.**

Most woman do not speak in assembly meeting because

W1, due to illiterate and lack of confidence

W2, not habitual in speaking in meeting

W3, feel hesitate in speaking in front of their elders and male

W4, one way the other male too do not want us to speak

W5, lack of current information on the topic

W6, many of them even do not know the agenda of such meeting

Source: Interview 069

As a whole the reason for not participating in the meeting is revealed by a woman goes like this:

“Women will not get information about the agenda of assembly meeting and the time of meeting. Women are so busy in their domestic work that they will not have adequate time to come to the meeting. In case they come to meeting women cannot spend their full time in the meeting. Most of the woman they sign the attendance and go back to their home. How could woman come to

public meeting if their work load is not shared by the men at home so that woman will have adequate time to sit in the meeting and make the fruitful discussion.

However having said this now a days it has changed a lot since after the Chinmaya Thapa Magar has joined to the member she gives us every information written in the minutes and make more discussion among the female in enhancing the community forest. Lately she had also shared the information about the global problem to all the members including the male about the problem of pollution and the role of community forest. She was the one to talk about the community forest of Birenchowk and Devi kumal who was awarded by ICIMOD cash incentive.”

### **4.3 Where does participation require and by whom?**

From this we can analyze, that the woman of a community, participation is the inherent enthusiasm or self disciplined determination to take part in an activity. If it is seen in this way, participation is a way of life in the village. It is a natural or in born. To do work in a household collectively, participation is always needed. Participation in works at home is an internalized or feeling of obligation to take part in an activity for the welfare of the family.

Despite the natural participation that Nepali households enjoy, there is an important issues raised in this study from the gender perspective, which is about the equal representation and the sharing of work, power, authority and access to resource at household and community, of course all the participate in household work and it is natural but how much work load woman bears is an issue and this has to be addressed from the national level itself.

This study has also attempted to address the issue of participation in the context of development intervention such as community forestry. In this case the participation is of sponsored nature. In this context the main participants to talk of participation include people outside of community. As the study has shown the major participant for promoting participation are government officials, political leaders, nongovernmental organizations, donors, project staffs and even the project visitors. In the participation has become an activity or an area of intervention for which the government agencies or the projects actually have sponsored in order to seek the presence of participants to achieve the outsider’s target of participation.

As the cases indicated in this chapter there is much talk on inadequate participation of people in the community forestry development activities within forest users groups. Although there are provisions for equal opportunities for both the men and woman, poor and rich and high caste, often local leaders, power elites and the officials have often made the decisions on forest use rules. It is thought that if poor, has come to the meeting, in that case the projects are evaluated as successful in terms of participation. Emphasizing much on the participation of women in public meeting without adequately addressing the issue at intra household level will have little meaning. Therefore there is a need to increase participation of all members of household to share work at the home so as to enable. Women to have less work burden, then they only woman can be encouraged to participate in public meetings.

## **Chapter: Five**

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **5.1 Summary**

The main aim of this project was to examine the participation in the context of communities' forestry in Nepal; literatures on the theories related to gender and participation have been reviewed. Chapter two reveals that despite the emergence of many policy debates on gender, woman issues are still not adequately incorporated into national level policy, plan, programs, projects and even community level constitutional and operational plans. Women's needs are still remained invisible to policy makers and planners. Neither the provisions are translated into practices. Nevertheless there has been growing awareness among men and woman from community to national government for women's participation and the concern of gender equality has got enough debate and attention.

There are so many factors for women not being able to participate in the FUGC as well as in assembly meetings. Even if they attend the meetings many of them do not voice and actively take part in the meeting because of many factors. The major factors are summarized in below.

Meetings are held at times not convenient for the woman. The poor have less spare time and cannot afford time for the voluntary work. It is found that men get upset and ridicule to women if they go out home. Perception among men and woman about "pothi basyo" also hurdles women for not speaking. Most of the, Nepalese men expect women to refrain from speaking up in the public meetings or gatherings. Some of the men conservative and tend to strongly follow traditional socio-cultural norms and the values. Some see woman attending public meeting as a threat to "family values".

In light of the factors mentioned above, one of the key finding of the study is that woman's participation in public meeting can only be increased if men's participation can be increased at the household chores which woman have been doing since history. In this sense what is important is that share of household work moral support and encouragement from men seems to

be crucial for women's participation. Many women reported that they are interested to participate in meetings and want to be in leadership positions of the committee. Some women also felt that they lack confidence and they usually see themselves as inferior to men and feel ignorant. It might be due to the lack of education and exposure and more importantly lack of information. Some of women are found to have inferiority complex of being uneducated and ignorant. Many women have expressed that they should be provided information training encouragement moral support and more importantly support of work sharing from men so that they could participate in the public area.

Poor and lower castes are the ones who actually depend on most of the forests as they have little land and few plantings. The lower castes especially the blacksmith, rely heavily on forests for the charcoal. Rich people get most of the forest products from their own land. As both cases show that the committee members are from the upper caste and relatively rich family and many of them are not sensitive to poor and dalit needs.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

Literatures show that community forestry is being reorganized as a successful national program in terms of reversing the trend of deforestation in the hills of Nepal. Since biologically community forests are better protected against grazing, fire, illegal felling, and encroachment and from haphazard's use.

The main conclusion of the study is that the theories of gender and participation have not yet been translated into practice and ensuring the women's participation requires more work time and commitments. Similarly another key conclusion is that although of limited scope the case studied shows that the participation varies among gender and social status. In particular representation of women poor in the committee, committee meeting and in the assembly is less than wealthy upper caste men and women. This study reveals that treating only gender as a variable in community forestry may ignore differences between women of different classes and castes. Class and castes as well as gender are major indicators in determining level of participation and differential access to and control over the resources in the community forestry in Nepal.



In the light of the finding in chapter four there is a need to increase participation of women in the committee, meetings and assemblies, for which Paulo Fiere's (1973) statement is relevant here to quote:

Go to the people. Live with them and learn from them, and plan from them. Start with what they know. Start slowly in a small way and with the little pushes build on what they have. Plan with flexibility not a fixed model but rather a fluid process of development, which improves and adapts to each situation. Adopt the role of the project management as convener, catalyst, colleague and a messenger. Help to develop a rural in network which concentrates on practical experiences and lessons learnt.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

As we all know that project making process is never ending so after my completion of this project I have recommended some points on how we can enhance the women's participation in community forestry.

- ❖ Men should be focused on the daily household or the domestic work so that the women will have sphere time to go public meeting.
- ❖ However on the other side, we should also not forget that carbon money on tress can be another incentive for the community forest users, and for this we can take the example of 3 different exemplarily FUG committee belonging to Dolakha, Chitwan and Gorkha district which has been awarded by the ICMOD and REDD+ during the recent years.

- ❖ Governance:

The challenge for all societies is to create a system of governance that promotes supports and sustains human development - especially for the poorest and most marginal. The goal of governance initiatives in community forestry should be to develop capacities that are needed to realize development that gives priority to the poor and women, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for local employment.

- ❖ Forest Management:

Community forest management issues are only discussed in committee meetings and in general assembly, where poor people and women usually do not participate. The normal practice in community forestry is that the elite members of the society tend to take all key

positions in the executive committee and make decisions on community forest management such as harvest of the forest products and their distribution. The ordinary users of the CFUG are least involved in the overall process and have virtually no idea whatsoever related to harvest of their community forest. Thus, it may ignore the traditional dependence of the poor, women and occupational castes on forest for their livelihoods. The need of the community and the condition of the community forest should determine the forest development activities. But it is not addressed in most of the Operational Plans (OPs). As the elite members of the CFUG and the DFO staff make the decision on this matter, ordinary users are unaware about it. Many management prescriptions are conservative in terms of the harvesting levels allowed for forest products. Complete closure of community forest in the initial period of implementation harms the poorest the most. Many users have the feeling that community forest is the chairpersons' forest.

❖ Inlusiveness of Participation

Although the forestry sector policy has tried to define accessibility to forests and forest products linked with collectively recognized traditional user rights, distant and seasonal users have been excluded. Once excluded from the CFUG, one has to pay very high fees to get back their traditional access and use rights. An issue here is ensuring use right of genuine users and promoting equity within the members of the CFUGs.

❖ Livelihood and Social Justice

Community forestry was initiated to address the livelihoods of the people and management of natural resources. Although some progress has been achieved in this respect, it is often criticized for lack of positive livelihood benefits to rural poor.

- ❖ Programs should be focused firstly at fulfilling women's practical needs such as targeting to reduce time in collecting firewood fetching water and processing food, time saving technologies such as bio gas, drinking water systems and grain processors and

simultaneously programs should be run to meet women's strategic needs such as literacy, training, provision of credit and so that gender equality issues can be addressed at short medium and long term.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### Questionnaires used at committee and focus group discussion

#### 1. Identification

Name of the district

VDC name

FUG name

Total household in FUG

Age of the group

#### 2. Samiti Composition (Currently And The First Samiti)

Name and Sex

Caste

Age

Education

#### 3. Forest Related

Total area

Forest condition

Forest type

#### 4. Samiti participation

Meeting Date	Members	Women members	Issues raised	Attendance

#### 5. Why don't women speak during the assembly meetings?

## 6. Observations of Researcher

Observation of researchers about the women's participation in the meeting and interview.

Did the women speak up openly? Did the men listen when women spoke? Any other discussion

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Questionnaire for key information at household level**

#### **1. Identification**

Name of the district

VDC name

FUG name

Total name (for the sole she belongs to)

#### **2. Particulars of Respondent**

Name

Marital status

Caste

Age

No of children

Main occupation

Educational level

Husband main occupation

Husband educational level

Land owner by husband

Land owner by her

Large animals

Small animals

Type of house (pakki, semi-paaki or kacchi)

Assessment of economic status

#### **3. Involvement in Samiti**

When did you become member of the samiti?

Who asked you to be a member of the samiti?



Did you become a member by consensus or voting?

How many women were there in your samiti?

How long were you on samiti?

Did your husband or any other family member object to your joining the samiti?

Did he or any other family member object to your attending meetings?

How often did you attend samiti meetings usually?

Did you have any problems in attending meetings?

What kinds of issues were discussed in the meeting?

Did you speak up at the meeting?

If not, why not? What problems did you face in speaking up?

If yes, what kinds of issues did you raise?

Did others listen to your opinions at the meetings?

Were you able to influence actual decision made?

If so, which decision?

Do you tell other women about the decisions made in EC?

If not, why not?

If yes, when did you tell them?

How can women's involvement in FUG GB meetings be increased?

What can be done to increase women's ability to speak in FUGGB meeting?

Are you personally a registered member of the FUG?

Should women be independently registered as members in addition to husbands?

Has your workload increased, decreased or remained the same since community forest was started?

If your workload has increased or decreased specify in what way?

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Checklist used at DFO and Project Office**

1. FUG records
2. Publication
3. Progress reports
4. FUG databases
5. FUG summary

## District summary of FUGs

District	No of FUG	Community forest area	Household membership	% of women in FUGC

### District of FUGs n various VDCs

[illegible]