

Rosan Raj Devkota

Interests and Power as Drivers of Community Forestry

A Case Study of Nepal



Universitätsdrucke Göttingen

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Dedicated to my mother
who taught me the value of education

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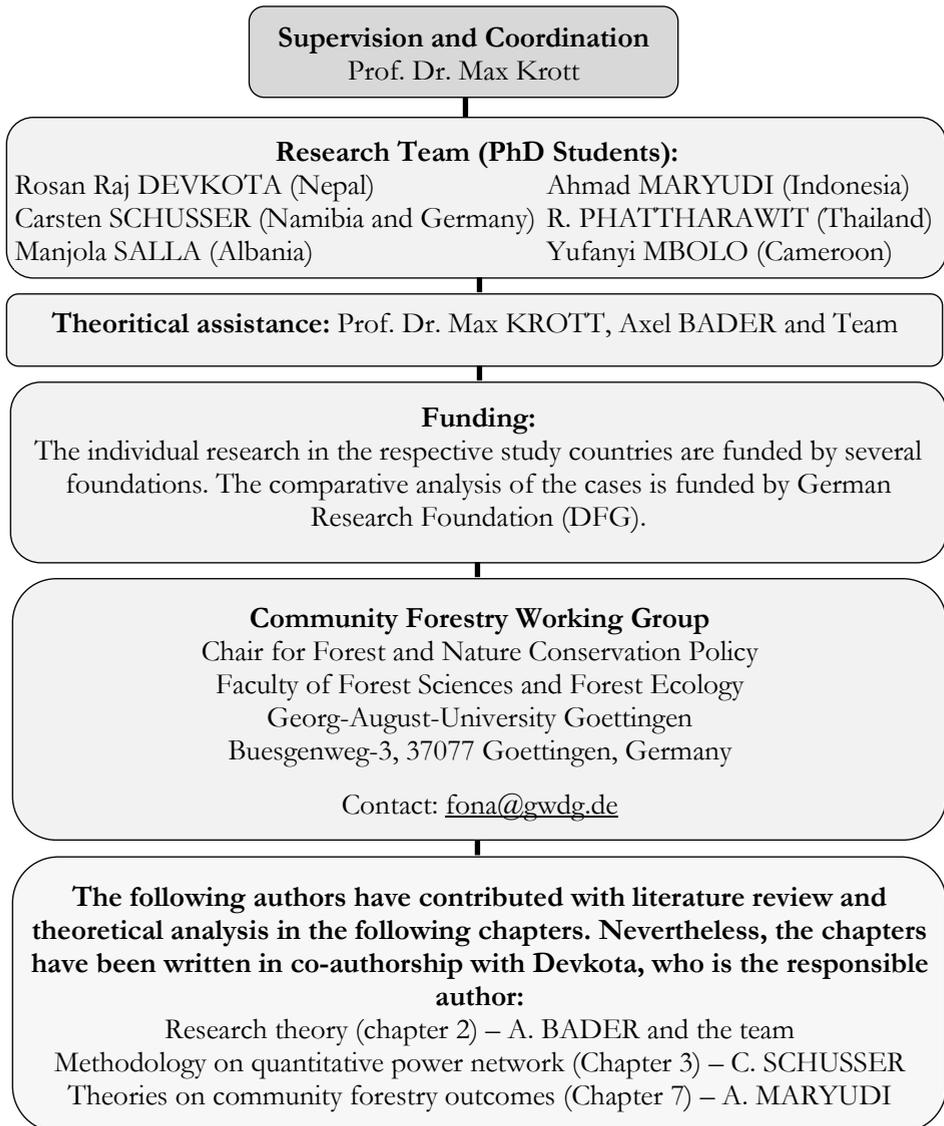
Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANSAB	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources
AusAID	Australian Aid for International Development
BISEP-ST	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai
CBO	Community Based Organization
CF	Community Forest
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
CHF	Swiss Franc
CIAA	Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority
CNRM	The Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Means
ComForM	Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya
CPF	Community and Private Forestry
CPFP	Community and Private Forestry Program
CPN-UML	Communist Party Nepal, United Marxist-Leninist
DAO	District Agriculture Office
DCSIO	District Cottage and Small Industry Development Office
DDC	District Development Committee
DDG	Deputy Director General of Forests
DFCC	District Forest Coordination Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forest Office/District forest officer
DG	Director General
DLO	District Livestock Office
DoF	Department of Forest
DPR	Department of Plant Resources
DPRO	District Plant Resource Office
DSCO	District Soil Conservation Office
DSCWM	Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management
ECARDS	Ecology, Agriculture and Rural Development Society
ECOS	Environment Conservation Society
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal
FUG	Forest User Group

FUGC	Forest User Group Committee
GoN	Government of Nepal
Ha.	Hectare
HIMAWONTI	The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association
HMG/N	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IoF	Institute of Forestry
LFP	Livelihood and Forestry Project
LG	Local Government
LSGA	Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA)
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
MPFS	Master Plan for the Forestry Sector
NC	Nepali Congress
NEFEJ	Nepal Forum for Environmental Journalist
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRs.	Nepalese Rupees
NSCFP	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
NTNC	National Trust for Nature Conservation
PF	Panchayat Forests
PIDO	Powerful Interest Driven Outcomes
PPF	Panchayat Protected Forests
RD	Regional Director
RLCC	Range-post Level Coordination Committee
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SNV	The Netherlands Development Agency
TCN	Timber Corporation of Nepal
UCPN (M)	The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
USD	United States Dollar
VDC	Village Development Committee
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

The Project Structure

This study is part of the research project on *“Stakeholders, Interests and Power as Drivers of Community Forestry”* at the Chair of Forest- and Nature Conservation Policy at the University of Goettingen (Germany). The comparative research project is conducted in seven countries, both developed and developing, precisely: Nepal, Indonesia, Namibia, Germany, Thailand, Albania and Cameroon. The research in the respective countries is mostly executed by native researchers.



Research Summary

Community forestry is acknowledged as an expanding model of forestry devolution. Its implementation has been mainly driven by the failure of ‘centralized forest management’ with the aim of enhancing accessibility of the direct forest users in forests and common decision-making processes, as well as the protection and restoration of the forest landscape. However, this remains rhetoric in reality. In fact, the community forestry is governed by the interests of the powerful stakeholders. Hence, the present debate in community forestry revolves to the issue of self-governed community forests and sharing of power between stakeholders aiming to secure a better access of direct forest users to the forests and benefits.

This study is focused on the distribution of power among stakeholders assessing the options available in community forests by including meaningful participation of direct forest users, or rather a new form in which the biased influence of the powerful continues to dominate. Grounded on theories of ‘power’, especially on those proposed by Max Weber in political sciences and Max Krott in forest policy, the study argues that the activities and outcomes in community forestry depend mostly on the interests of the powerful external stakeholders. Therefore, the study aims to examine the current practices of community forestry in Nepal.

Being organized into eight chapters, the study emphasizes that the community forestry should be seen in a broader context of social relationships between the Forest Administration, users’ committees and other stakeholders, who are part of the processes. It discusses the formal goal of community forestry referring to social and economic outcomes for the direct forest users, and the ecological goal dealing with the forest condition and biodiversity conservation. The first part of the study is mostly focused on the identification of the powerful stakeholders in each community forest network, employing a quantitative method based on three power elements: *coercion*, *trust* and *incentives*. Sources of data include formal and informal interviews with the stakeholders of specific community forest network of twelve community forest user groups (CFUGs) of Nepal, being selected by applying multi-criteria methods, direct field observations, as well as documents including available records and legal documents with network stakeholders.

The quantitative analysis of this study indicates uneven distribution of power, in terms of three power elements among the stakeholders. With the empirical evidences, the qualitative assessment confers that the formal and legally based devolution practices of community forestry, are accompanied by an informal power network which guarantees that the Forest Administration and its alliances have even more influence on forest communities than before. The study finds out that the expected social and economic outcomes of community forestry are highly constrained by power disparities. Furthermore, the study shows that the notions of ‘ecological rationale’ have been effectively

employed by powerful stakeholders in order to legitimize and capture own interests, while excluding direct forest users in community forestry processes. The study is concluded by stating that only in the cases when the distribution of power enables direct forest users to make their own decisions, then it could be possible to have common rule-making in community forestry.

Chapter One

Research Concepts

1.1. Introduction

This study attempts to analyze the distribution of power in the network of community forests, interests of stakeholders in community forests, and various outcomes produce for direct forest users and forest itself. Based on the case study from twelve community forests of Nepal, the study demonstrates how power distribution in community forestry networks contribute and shape the outcomes at the local level in order to fulfill their interests. Analyses thus focus on four components: stakeholders, power, interests, and outcomes in community forestry processes.

The past few decades have witnessed a popular trend toward a decentralized approach in forest management. Its popularity was boosted from the global debate over how to tackle degradation, environmental crisis, and rural poverty in one combined approach after 1970s. Failures of conventional practices of forestry and growing distrust to the state forest bureaucracy in forest management are the main arguments in favor of forest decentralization. Central governments of many countries have created legal policy frameworks on forest devolution, transferring some degrees of power and authority over the forests to lower administrations through community forestry program (Colfer *et al.* 2008, Edmunds and Wollenberg 2003, White and Martin 2002). The shift of centralized management ideologies to participatory forestry arose out of a suspicion of the state and paralleled the strong push towards community management of forest resources seeking for alternative forms of institutional relationships between the state and its citizens (Hobley 2007). The policy transformation is expected to open up the space for local forest users, not only to get involved in decisions made by external stakeholders, but meaningfully

participate in common decision making procedures as well as implementation of forest activities (Sikor and Nguyen 2007).

During the past years, every country around the globe applies its interpretations of community forestry (McCarthy 2004). The quantitative figure presented by Bull and White (2002) show that more than 11% of the world's forests are managed by communities, this figure is expected to rise to 45% in 2015. Failure of top down approaches, increasing numbers of stakeholders, national legislation and international obligations as well as the reduction available financial resources of the public forest sector investment are the drivers toward the emergence of community forestry (see Sikor 2006:339).

Community forestry exists today in many forms and is treated as an effective mechanism of forest management through local participation. Furthermore, it is expected to offer more effective forest management through local participation and, it is argued to be desirable on grounds of equity and social justice (Fisher 2000). The participation of local people is believed to produce increasing benefits for the local community, to promote efficient resource use and allocation, to make use of local knowledge, to encourage voluntary compliance, to trigger innovation and to contribute to sustainable forestry comprising economic, social and ecological benefits (Charnley and Poe 2007, Kellert *et al.* 2000, Blaikie 2006). Hence, the growing interest in community forestry in part stem from the belief in the intimate synergies between local people and their environment (Stevens 1997). In addition, its implementation has been driven by calls for forestry activities that benefit the people given the fact that they continue to live in poverty (Hobley 2007, Westoby 1987). Therefore, the central belief of community forestry rests on the increased accessibility of the direct forest users to forest use, common decision-making processes, and ultimately supports the economic condition of the users by practicing sustainable forest management.

1.2. Research Rationale

Despite the promising concept of community forestry studies reveal that the ways in which local people realize the benefits of community forestry devolution differ widely and that negative trade-offs mostly felt by the poor, are common (e.g. Shackleton *et al.* 2002). Hence, devolution in community forestry does not necessarily mean that local forest users automatically have the capacity for forest management and can reap benefits derived from the forests. Community forestry, in most cases, has resulted in positive ecological outcomes such as increasing vegetation cover (Brendler and Carey 1998, Chakraborty 2001, Charnley and Poe 2007, Thoms 2006). However, the social and economic benefits associated with local control over forest management have been mixed and unequally distributed (Charnley and Poe 2007:325, Gilmour *et al.* 2004), and improvements of local access to forest products has not been

clearly demonstrated (Malla 2000) as well as the overall livelihoods of the local forest users have been challenged (Shepherd 1992).

These all indicated that there are some weaknesses in the devolution in 'action'; as a result achievements that have been limited so far (Dahal and Capistrano 2006:378) and it is likely that the poorest forest users have become worse-off than before (Edmunds *et al.* 2003, Edmunds and Wollenberg 2001:192). The forest condition is often referred as a precondition for better social and economic results. Nonetheless, in many cases, forests are devolved to local arenas after they have been severely exploited and are in a degraded condition. In many cases, states appear to have initiated the devolution concept to restore degraded forest lands by taking advantage of cheap and voluntary labor (Colfer 2005, Contreras 2003, Edmunds and Wollenberg 2001, Larson 2005, Sarin *et al.* 2003, Shackleton *et al.* 2002 and Thoms 2006). Later, the state often re-appropriates forest resources after locals have invested in the protection of these resources and improved their status (Larson 2005). These critical findings show that despite a promising program on poverty alleviation and local empowerment, results are often poor. Such findings definitely trigger a questioning of the concept of community forestry and further examination of factors contributing to such failures.

The scientific analysis described the complex political process of community forestry in great details. However, it could not identify key factors which drive the political process and its outcomes. Nevertheless the findings about the strong influence of the external framework of state and civil society on social choice made clear that the internal factors of community forestry are probably not the key factors. Analysis of the attributes of the local users, such as what constitutes a "community" (Agrawal and Gibson 1999); interactions between forest users and the forests (Moran and Ostrom 2005); institutional settings for community forestry (Ostrom 1999, Pye Smith *et al.* 1994); power imbalance within intra-community level (Barrow *et al.* 2002, Thoms 2008) and the "effective" size of local groups for collective action in forest resource management (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999, Gibson *et al.* 2000) all provide important insights but do not give sufficient answers if the political framework dominates the activities and outcomes of community forestry. Barrow *et al.* (2002) analyzed the influence of external stakeholders on the local level and he was able to explain community forestry to a certain degree.

The goals of the central forestry department, rather than being responsive to local needs and objectives, dominate forest use. The model of local governance improved the funding available for local development but failed to meet public goals for the forest. Looking on these political frameworks we notice strong indications that key factors might be identified if we focus on the stakeholders and their power resources. The existing research has not yet exclusively explored how and why the external stakeholders exercise and accumulate more power and have the capacity to steer the processes as well as define the outcomes from community forestry. Thus, this study aims to test

whether the stakeholders and their respective power provided for an explanation of the activities and outcomes in community forestry processes by referring to the case examples from Nepal.

1.3. Research questions and hypothesis

We argue that the interests of the powerful stakeholders are the main decisive factors in community forestry processes. Our research questions focus on the distribution of power among stakeholders. We ask whether the options available include meaningful participation of forest users, or rather a new form in which the biased influence of the powerful stakeholders continues to dominate. Referring to the second case, a dream of community forestry would be only on a formal level, by camouflaging the real influence on forests and forest users. Explicitly, four questions are aimed to address:

- Who are stakeholders and which interests do they have on community forestry?
- How powerful are the stakeholders?
- How social, economic and ecological outcomes of community forestry are structured?
- How do powerful stakeholders influence community forestry outcomes?

In order to answer the above four research questions, we have formulated general and specific hypotheses:

General hypothesis: Dynamics of community forestry change over the processes:

Community forestry process involves mainly four stages: initial stage (prior handing over the forest to local communities), formal handover, implementation, and normal operation. The formal objective of community forestry offers ‘autonomy’ to the direct forest users in common decision making throughout the stages. However, the reality rarely reflects this rhetoric. In fact, each stage of community forestry is governed by the power and interests of the involved stakeholders. Such power is translated into actions through facilitation and sanctions during formalization and implementation of community forestry which ultimately question the ‘autonomy’ of direct forest users and their share on forest outcomes. Therefore, we argue that dynamics of community forestry change over the processes. This general assumption guided us to formulate the specific research hypothesis, which aims to compare how powerful stakeholders influence community forestry outcomes.

Specific hypothesis: Activities and outcomes in community forestry depend mostly on interests of the powerful external stakeholders.

Five main assumptions are used to develop this hypothesis. First, community forestry is characterized by many stakeholders due to the social, economic and ecological function and values that forest provides. Beyond the direct forest users and its committees, external stakeholders at local, regional and national level also have an impact on local users' access to forest and decision making processes. Second, these diverse arrays of stakeholders have specific interests in the forests and their expectations regarding possible benefits from the community forest span the entire political, social, economic and ecological scope. In our model, interests have always been traced back to certain stakeholders. Third, stakeholders in community forestry always try to influence the behavior of others through different sources such as legal rights, customs, direct access to the forest, financial sources and knowledge. The strength of power elements determines the power of respective stakeholders in community forestry processes. Fourth, community forestry is expected to shift the locus of control over the forest resources from the Forest Administration to local forest users, hence, assumed that such an action will bring positive social, economic and ecological changes of the forest users access and decision making rights, economic well-being and forest condition *per se*. Finally, as stakeholders pursue different capacities to influence the community forestry processes, the study aims to use the empirical data to explain the outcomes as function of the interests of the most powerful stakeholders.

In case, the outcomes provide open or hidden benefits for the interests of the powerful stakeholders we consider our hypothesis to be proven. We expect that the most powerful stakeholders will not be situated in the inner circle of the community forestry network, but in the periphery. If this hypothesis is proven the consequences are rather important. This would imply that for a diagnosis of community forestry it is most important to look on the external stakeholders whereas the individual management model of internal coordination and decision is of minor significance. Another conclusion would be that strategies for improving community forestry are most effective if they influence the setting of external stakeholders and their network.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

This study is composed of eight chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, which presents the rationale of the study, questions and hypothesis of the study and the thesis structure. The theoretical framework and methodological overview of this study are discussed in chapter two and three respectively. In the theoretical chapter, I have briefly discussed rationale for using the concept

of power, power networks and power elements in community forestry research. The methodological chapter discusses on criteria for case selection, procedures of complete network survey and identification of the powerful group of stakeholders in each community forest network, qualitative evaluation of powerful stakeholders and criteria to assess community forest outcomes.

Chapter four, based on literature, describes conceptual details on community forestry, definitions and concept of stakeholders in community forestry. The process and outcomes of community forestry in Nepal and roles of the involved stakeholders are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five analyzes quantitative power networks and qualitative evaluation of powerful stakeholders by applying a mixture of quantitative and qualitative field information. The identification of quantitative network follows the concept of individual relative power (X_i) and dominance degree (D_i) calculation. Chapter six, based on formal expectations and informal behavior, deals with the interests of the most common powerful stakeholders in community forestry processes. The assessment of community forestry outcomes is done in chapter seven. The assessment is aimed to measure the contribution of the community forest to the main goals of public programs for community forests.

Chapter eight provides comparative assessment of power and outcomes in community forestry processes. This chapter attempts to bring together the major findings and relate them to the main hypothesis and postulations raised at the introductory chapter. This chapter also portrays conclusions and a synthesis of the study. I conclude the chapter with possibilities of global comparison and final remarks.

Chapter Two

Elements of Power- An Analytical Framework

2.1. Introduction

Following chapter one, an investigation of how powerful stakeholders determine community forestry outcomes require a logically and theoretically based concept of power. As an important phenomenon in social relation, power has always attracted the attention of scientists in forest policy. By referring the classic sociological definition of power by Max Weber, Krott (2005) relates the issue in forest policy as: ‘those who utilize or protect forests are forced to subordinate their interests to politically determined programs in the face of conflicts..... in fact, stakeholders and political players both avail themselves of power’ (Krott 2005:14). As community forestry is recognized as a paradigm shift of forest policy in developing countries, it is essential to understand the power processes and to address the way that the power is distributed and wielded among stakeholders.

The starting point is Max Weber’s dictum of power being “probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out one's own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber 1978:53). Weber defines power in terms of intention. This intention is termed ‘will’, the realization of which, even against the resistance of another, has to be an exercise of power. Here, power is the general characteristic of a stakeholder that determines his political standing or ‘will’. The universality of Weber’s notion makes it rather difficult to apply it as an empirical research concept. In this chapter, a stakeholder ‘A’ exercising power is called ‘potentate’ and a stakeholder ‘B’ receiving power is the ‘subordinate’. Power is distributed between the potentate and the subordinate. Therefore,

based on Weber's basis, this chapter discusses the logical concept of power to guide the empirical and analytical aspect of the research.

2.2. Basic assumptions of power

For Weber, power can only be verified at the presence of resistance and the use of 'coercion' to break this resistance (Krott 1990). The implication of Weber's entails that power only exists when the resistance of others is overcome. Weber's point is not that resistance must be present in all power situations but that the over-coming of resistance is a necessary feature of power. Barbalet (1991: 388) reveals that, the probability of realizing one's will and power diminishes, if the resistance is higher or more widespread in the social relationships. According to Weber, the most direct source of power is coercion, or the right to use or threaten by using physical force. This behavioral concept of power has some inherent weaknesses, as Offe (in Bachrach *et al.* 1977:10) points out: influence cannot be verified because it is not possible to measure total power in a social relationship. But even Weber mentioned the *possibility to exercise power as equivalence to power* (Weber 1972:28). With the help of the *threat of power*, the behavioral concept avoids Offe's paradox. How can the *threat of power* be measured? Etzioni proposes to examine the stakeholder's resources and instruments (Etzioni 1975:333). Thus, power potential becomes verifiable beyond its simple exercise.

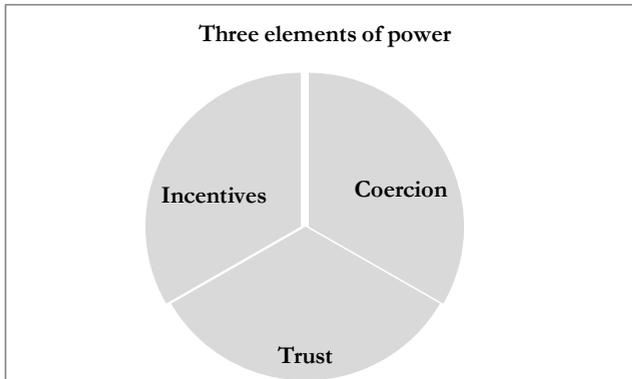
In order to see power in a social relation, the power must be of value to the power recipient (Hall 1996:116). Hence power can be verified in the behavior of the subordinate, too. A subordinate can appropriate the preferences of a potentate in two ways: By unchecked obedience, which could be called 'trust', or by a congruence of interests which requires information to accomplish a critical check and autonomous decision-making. Only in the case of trust one can find a power process, because here, the subordinate does not decide on his own free will. He follows due to a brief overlook on the potentate's power resources and not to a congruence of interests. The subordinate's anticipatory obedience can be verified empirically at his deciding or failing to decide and the information he possesses (Simon 1981:155).

But even if the subordinate has all relevant information and the right of an autonomous decision making, his behavior can be altered or even steered by a potentate: through 'incentives'. Incentives structure the subordinate's list of preferences and provide ways to fulfill them. Through incentives, the potentate 'buys' to a good part the self-interest of the subordinate. The potentate compensates the subordinate's giving-up of his interests. To the subordinate, incentives do more good than an ongoing pursuit of his (former, inherent) interests. This, finally leads to a superficial congruence of interests between the potentate and the subordinate. Under the condition of strong incentives, the amalgamation of the potentate's and the subordinate's interests, is a logic

consequence because it is a rational choice to the subordinate. Our concept of power thus states as follows:

- *Power is a social relationship, where a stakeholder 'A' alternates the behavior of stakeholder 'B' without recognizing B's will.*

Figure-2.1: Three elements of power



2.3. Definitions and theoretical roots of power elements

2.3.1. Coercion

Coercion is the practice of forcing another party to behave in an involuntary manner. This can be accomplished through action or inaction. Coercion may involve the infliction of physical pain and psychological harm, but potentates usually use threats, intimidation, trickery, or some other form of pressure or force. Such actions can be seen as leverage, to make the subordinate act in the desired way because their 'margin of liberty' is extremely limited (Foucault 1988:12). The threat of further harm may lead to the cooperation or obedience of the subordinate. Many philosophers claim coercion as the opposite of freedom¹ and this adds a negative smack to coercion².

Thus, coercion is the application of pressure and that is why it is a top-down approach. It includes the ability to demote or to withhold other rewards. The desire for valued rewards or the fear of having them withheld, ensures the obedience of the subordinate. As coercion builds resentment and resistance from the subordinate, it tends to be the most obvious but least effective form of power because it demands a load of control.

¹ Kant, Immanuel: *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschgeschichte*, A 234: „Da nun jede Einschränkung der Freiheit durch die Willkür eines andern Zwang heißt...“.

² Kant, Immanuel: *Was heißt sich im Denken zu orientieren?*, A 326: „Der Freiheit zu denken ist erstlich der bürgerliche Zwang entgegengesetzt“.

For example, Stern and Heskett (1969:299) state, "power need not imply coercion or use of force; it may be any degree of compulsion from the gentlest suggestion to absolute domination. . . . capricious use of power probably will be self-destructive". Byman and Waxman define coercion as "the use of threatened force, including the limited use of actual force to back up the threat, to induce an adversary, to behave differently than it otherwise would be (Byman and Waxman 2000). To them, "coercion is not destruction". Coercive strategies are most successful, when threats need not even be carried out (Byman and Waxman 2002:3).

The instruments with that a potentate can carry out coercion are violence and violence with threat. With the use of violence, a subordinate's will is broken the hard way. Threat is the perception of potential violence by the subordinate. Violence is the physical or psychological harm done to a subordinate (Popitz 1992). Very often, a threat precedes the act of violence, thus presenting the last change for the subordinate to avoid severe consequences. A threat can also be a strategic means. Threat without the possibility of force is a bluff, but this can only be seen afterwards. Therefore in strategy games bluff and real threats cannot be separated.

Coercion is not necessarily hard to be seen. One has to look at the instruments and their effects. Direct violence is clearly visible. Therefore violence as an instrument of coercion is easier to detect than threat because physical harms as a result of violence are obvious, but psychological harms are much more hidden. Generally potentates seek to hide acts of violence. A threat is hard to be seen directly. One can be witness of it, but generally the rumors are the one that can be found. To separate threats from bluffs, one can evaluate the resources of each stakeholder. Resources are the backing of a threat. Resources are material or immaterial goods, among which money, police, strategic positions, and knowledge are the most important. These resources put the potentate in the position to carry out his intentions. Knowing the resources, one can estimate the credibility of a threat.

2.3.2. Trust

Trust is a power element when the subordinate changes his behavior by accepting the potentate's information. It is the subordinate's confidence to the potentate's good will that makes him behave accordingly. Trust happens when the subordinate has the reasonable expectation that a cooperative behavior will be beneficial to him. Once the trust is granted, the subordinate suspends his disbelief, and the possibility of a negative outcome is not considered any more. This means for the subordinate the risk to be vulnerable to the actions of the potentate. But he is in no position to control the situation. To the subordinate, trust reduces the number of contingent possibilities in the future, which means it reduces social complexity. It can be seen as a bottom-up approach of social behavior. Trust is based on the assumption that the potentate will not engage in opportunistic behavior, even in the face of opportunities and incentives for

opportunism (Bradach and Eccles 1984, Chiles and McMackin 1996) which entails acceptance of relational risk (Nooteboom 2002).

Trust is also applicable to relationships between and within social groups such as families, friends, communities, companies, or nations. It is a popular approach to frame the dynamics of inter-group and intra-group interactions (Hardin 2002). But trust is not only a subordinate's possible way of behavior. A potentate can also display trustfulness thus gaining an attractive alternative to control (Mollering 2005). So, trust is based on a rational evaluation of trustworthiness and good grounds for confidence among the stakeholders. Trust is four-place predicate (Nooteboom 2002): A trustor (i) trusts a trustee (ii) in some respects (iii), under some conditions (iv).

Sociologists have been interested with the position and the role of trust in social systems (Sztompka 1999). This interest has grown significantly since early eighties, from early works of Luhmann (1979), Barber (1983), and Giddens (1984). This has been stimulated by the on-going changes in the society, characterized as late modernity and post-modernity. Sociology tends have two distinct perspectives: the macro view on social systems, and the micro view on individual actors. All sociological views on trust follow this dichotomy. The systemic role of trust has been discussed, with certain disregard to the psychological complexity of individual trust. Here, a behavioral approach to trust is usually assumed (Coleman 1990). Trust becomes measurable. These systemic approaches have been contrasted (Castelfranchi and Falcone 2000) with micro level studies on social actors and their decision -making process. Here, they could contribute to the understanding of the emergence of trust.

Economics view trust as an explanation for a difference between actual human behavior and the one that can be explained by the individual desire to maximize one's utility. In economic terms, trust can provide an explanation of a difference between Nash equilibrium and Pareto optimum. Such an approach can be applied to individuals as well as societies. Economic theory has demonstrated that the optimum level of trust that a rational economic agent should exhibit in transactions is equal to trustworthiness of the other party. Such a level of trust leads to efficient markets (Zak and Knack 2001). Trusting less leads to the loss of economic opportunities, trusting more leads to unnecessary vulnerabilities and potential exploitation. Here, trusting means relying in transactions. Therefore, trust can be seen as an economic lubricant. It reduces the costs of transactions, and enables new forms of cooperation. Economists assume trust generally further to business activities, and contribute to prosperity of a society (Fukuyama 1996). This observation led to the idea of trust as a form of social capital. Among economists it is widely accepted that trust benefits the economy, and that a low level of trust inhibits economic growth (Zak and Knack 2001).

The instruments with which a potentate can gain trust are persuasion, prestige, and reputation. Persuasion is the force of his actual arguments. A

subordinate is usually persuaded by a logic argumentation that is based on shared beliefs. Prestige is the credibility of a potentate's appearance and reputation is the sum of the experiences with the same actor in the past. A reputed potentate has been positively evaluated by the social entity of subordinates. Too them, he has a "good" image, which makes reputation a component of his identity. Based on the subordinates' good experience with the potentate in the past, the potentate seems to be reliable for future interaction. The potentate and his actions seem predictable to the subordinates.

Here, the reputation is an efficient instrument within social relationships, because in present times a simple addition of experiences renders a complex evaluation/check of possible alternatives unnecessary. It is worthy to note, that this is not directly an unconditional surrender of the subordinate to the potentate. In most cases, a thorough check is just too complex, time-consuming, and expensive and therefore inefficient to the subordinate, so he relies on his and other's experiences.

2.3.3. Incentives

Incentives are financial or non-financial factors that alternate a subordinate's behavior by motivation³. Motivation is the initiation of goal-orientated attitude. It is the expectation of benefits that encourages people to change their behavior. To convince subordinate in action, the potentate offers financial and/or non-financial resources to subordinate. To the subordinate, a behavior according to the potentate's incentives produce more benefits than a pursuit of his former self-interests. In a way, the potentate remunerates the subordinate's abandonment of his preferences. Therefore, incentives are a form of trade-off. Facing a strong incentive structure, even a well-informed subordinate is driven towards the goals of the potentate. The subordinate's old interest is replaced by a new interest, and this process was triggered by the potentate's incentives.

The instruments with that a potentate can set out incentives are material, moral benefits and rewards. Benefits and rewards motivate a subordinate to act in the potentate's desired way. Material incentives exist, where a subordinate can expect some form of physical reward in exchange for acting in a particular way – especially money and luxury goods. Moral incentives exist, where a particular choice is commonly regarded as the right thing to do, or as particularly admirable. A subordinate acting on a moral incentive can expect a sense of self-esteem, and approval or even admiration from his potentate. A subordinate acting against a moral incentive has to face a sense of guilt, and condemnation or even ostracism.

In this study we have defined incentives as:

³ As far as technical support changes the behavior of the subordinate (through motivation) it is part of a power process. But if it enables only to do something it is not part of a power process.

“One stakeholder (suppose ‘A’) offers financial and /or non-financial materials to another stakeholder (suppose ‘B’) in order to alternate the behavior/decision of ‘B’. Incentives can be in the form of: technical, material and financial support that one stakeholder in the network offers to another”.

2.4. Operationalization of power elements

Our power concept stands on three elements: coercion, incentives and trust. This listing provokes questions on a possible ranking or defining importance of these elements. Which one is the most important: Coercion, incentives or trust? The notion of ‘coercion’ in community forestry is understood as ‘command and control’ which can be illustrated as the potentates’ ability to administer the direct forest users through loading the forest management task or to increase the administrative hurdles through imposing highly regulative access rules. In community forestry processes, extent of mutual trust between stakeholders should be relatively low when coercive strategies are used frequently in the relationship. As observed in the economic practices by Frazier and Rody (1991:54), the power element ‘coercion’ may be used with great reluctance, only when non-coercive strategies (i.e. incentives and trust) have failed to produce satisfactory outcomes.

In general, authors argue that trust enhances the chances for cooperation between stakeholders, and this is true for both the public and the private spheres (March and Olsen 1976). It is claimed that trust reduces the uncertainty of the actions of other stakeholders because it enhances the predictability of the strategies of other stakeholders and reduces the possibility of opportunism (Edelenbos and Klijn 2007:31). However, in a social relationship trust is difficult to achieve as it does not appear at the snap of a finger, but it must be built up in the interaction among stakeholders (Edelenbos and Klijn 2007:33). Most observations show that trust is a characteristic frequent interactions and previous trusting relationships (Hardy *et al.* 1998, Lane and Bachmann 1998). Trust is very fragile and can easily turn into distrust (Edelenbos and Klijn 2007:42). This statement can be compared with community forestry practices, for example, one sees that trust can diminish in the implementation phase when stakeholders are keener on acquiring their own interests (e.g. rent seeking) rather than addressing the socio-economic objectives of direct forest users.

Incentives by its nature depend upon the available resource to be offered to the other stakeholders in social relationship. In order to convince the other stakeholders, stakeholder (s) might offer incentives to others so that the others party rely on them and consequently support their actions. Krott and Hasanagas (2006:557) state that financial incentives promise cooperation between policy stakeholders. They argue that financial incentives, such as infrastructure, sponsorships, grants for specific projects, favorable loans or even staff time, can attract others and motivate them to do what they want (ibid 2006:559).

The review of power elements implies that coercion is a rather cost intensive matter. Incentives, too, but to a lower extent, and trust is nearly for free. Risks rise with the possibility of non-compliance, which is the lowest for coercion, medium for incentives and rather high for trust. Power enforcement is a time consuming matter. Coercion is faster than incentives, and trust is built up very slowly. An adding-up for each attribute does not lead to a definite ranking but to a balanced outcome. Coercion, incentives, and trust may overlap each other thus making a definite separation sometimes difficult. Coercion and incentives are overlapping, when incentives turn negative and become sanctions or turn into exploitation. Incentives and trust are overlapping, where a trust game is played repeatedly. Power, no matter on which element it is actually based on, needs a minimum of control. The need for control is minimal in the case of (mutual) trust. The need for control is enhanced in the case incentives or even coercion become *modus operandi*. This leads to the notion, that none of the three attributes prevails over the others, hence, cannot be seen separately from each other. Thus, in this study, these three elements are analyzed through quantitative and qualitative ways separately.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This study has used mixtures of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The results of the combined use of these two approaches were mutually reinforcing (Bryman 2001:447). Case study approach was used for investigation at the field level. Through case study approach, researcher has attempted to learn interactions of community forestry stakeholders through direct field observation from micro to macro-levels and in the course of formal and informal interviews with network stakeholders of selected community forests for this study.

The research is based on interviews and secondary information. The primary field data was drawn from interviews, discussions and other information from network partners of each community forest network. The interviews have been complemented by additional records, informal interviews and direct field observations.

Data was collected in two stages, where I spent a total of six months in Nepal. During the first stage (July-September 2008), I selected of the forest user groups and conducted network survey to identify the powerful group of stakeholders in each community forest network. After identifying the powerful stakeholders, I did qualitative interviews with selected powerful stakeholders. The second stage (August-October 2009) of my research was a follow-up of my first research visit in Nepal, which reinforced and enhanced the information, collected in the first phase as well as provided the collection of additional information for the comparative project. In the second field visit I followed up with the powerful stakeholders in each community forest network case study and collected additional information through interviews and available records.

During this trip I also had the opportunity to participate at an international community forestry workshop in Nepal. At this workshop I could share our research concept and preliminary findings with other researchers and interested stakeholders coming from the same field. Criticism and recommendations were suggested from the participants of the workshop, which further initiated the operationalization of research concept. The following sections provide in-depth insights on research methodology.

3.2. Selection of community forest user groups (CFUGs)

3.2.1. Criteria to select case studies

The following three criteria have been used to select the community forest users' group (CFUGs): i) development status of FUG- their initial and advanced stage (formally handed over at least 5 years before this study), ii) production potential of outcomes, and iii) with and without donor supported CFUGs. Twelve CFUGs which fulfill the above criteria were selected by using stratified sampling based on physiographic location of the country, from Terai (<300 m above mean sea level), Mid-Hills (<2500 m) and High-Hills (>2500 m). This strategy of case study selection ensured the inclusion of all major types of forests and institutional regimes. It also ensured the variability of samples in this study (see Table-3.1).

Table-3.1: Forest User Group (FUG) selection matrix

Criteria	Number of CFUG			
	Initial CFUG		Advanced CFUG	
Development status	High	Low	High	Low
Production potential of outcomes				
Social	1	0	6	5
Economic				
Ecological				
Donor supported CFUGs			4 (6)	2 (5)
Without donor	1 (1)		2 (6)	3 (5)
Total CFUG	12			

Development status: The initial stage refers to those CFs which have been registered as community forests but not handed over formally to the FUGs and advanced stage refers to those CFs which were formally handed over to the FUGs at least five years before this study took place.

Production potential of outcomes: Every community forest has either social, economical and ecological outcome potential or a combination of all. The production potential refers to the potential of CF to produce social, economic and ecological outcomes due to site conditions. Recent forest state conditions

(rich or poor) and total forest areas (absolute and relative) are short-term, and soil productivity is a long term indicator used to assess high (rich) and low (poor) production potentials of particular community forests.

3.2.2. Cases

Based on the above mentioned criteria, the following community forest user groups (CFUGs) were selected for this study:

Table-3.2: General information of the selected community forest user groups (CFUGs)

S.N.	Community forest user groups (CFUGs)	District	Handed over date	Forest area in hectare	Households involved	Forest per capita households in	Resource status	Donor involvement
1	Bhiteripakha CFUG, Boch VDC-1,2&3	Dolakha	30.03.2000	362.3	237	1.53	Poor	Yes
2	Tiprikot CFUG Hemja VDC 7, 8 & 9	Kaski	17.08.2003	119.7	191	0.63		Yes
3	Pachabhैया CFUG, Lekanath Municipality-11	Kaski	02.06.2000	235.2	378	0.62		No
4	Akala CFUG, Vash Municipality-1	Tanahun	06.04.1998	38.7	320	0.12		No
5	Yagyadole CFUG, Gokarna VDC	Kathmandu	15.07.1998	20.6	760	0.03		No
6	Dudkoshi CFUG, Birendranagar Municipality-7& 8	Chitwan	12.11.2000	686.4	1015	0.68	Rich	Yes
7	Parewashowri CFUG, Piple VDC-6	Chitwan	07.10.1996	1312	601	2.18		Yes
8	Pashupati CFUG Manahari VDC-3	Makawanpur	13.01.2005	167	211	0.79		Yes
9	Piple Pokhara CFUG, Hetauda Municipality-5	Makawanpur	13.07.1995	230	453	0.51		Yes
10	Gitawor CFUG Chatiwan VDC-8	Makawanpur	29.08.1997	553	370	1.50		No
11	Raniban CFUG Devghat VDC-4	Tanahun	08.07.1997	139	152	0.91	Rich	No
12	Satanchuli CFUG Bharatpur Municipality-1	Chitwan	Initial stage	1413	560	2.52		No

Source: Field survey 2008 and 2009, Nepal

Out of the twelve cases in Table 3.2, eleven have been handed over to local communities by the District Forest Office and legally recognized as community forest user groups, where the oldest (Parewashowri CFUG) were handed over in 1996 and the youngest (Pashupati CFUG) was handed over in 2005, while the second field visit in Nepal took place (i.e. in October 2009). One group (Satanchuli CFUG), which is in the process of being handed over, was considered as the initial stage FUG in this study. The selected twelve cases

belong to six different districts (out of a total of seventy five) of Nepal where six of these are donor supported cases and five CF belong to resource poor status.

Forest user groups vary significantly in size; the number of households per forest user group in a survey ranged from 152 (Raniban CFUG) to 1015 (Dudkoshi), with a mean of about 437, and the area of forest handed over ranged from about 20 hectare (Yagyadole CFUG) to 1412 hectare (Satanchuli CFUG) with a mean of about 440 hectare. Likewise due to varying in household number and forest area, forest per capita households also varies across twelve cases which ranged from 0.03 hectare (Yagyadole CFUG) to 2.52 hectare (Satanchuli CFUG) with a mean of about 1 hectare. Forest management is governed by an executive committee; this is often dominated by wealthier, high-caste males in the key positions. One forest users group (i.e.Dudkoshi) is run by women whereas there were mixed representation in eleven cases. The studied CFUGs comprise various castes and ethnic groups with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

Map-3-1: Map of Nepal showing study districts and community forests



Map not to scale

Source: Compare Infobase Limited, 2006

3.3. Identifying the most powerful group of stakeholders

3.3.1. A complete network survey

The field research in Nepal was carried out in two stages: July to September 2008 and August to October 2009. At the initial stage, I visited the selected forest users' groups and interviewed the users' committee leaders, chairpersons and secretaries or any of these representatives who were available in the site by organized meetings. The first interviews consisted in being informed on the organizational structure of FUG, general information of their forests and respective tasks of the users' committee. Additional to this, they were also asked about their partners from whom they have received information and support. The aim of interviewing the partners of specific users' committee, was closely related with the identifying the stakeholders in the network of specific community forest. Identifying the stakeholders with whom users' committee collaborate, they were also further asked on the power elements by using quantitative measurements, being called as the 'quantitative network analysis' in this study.

After completing the interviews with the initial stakeholders, I contacted and interviewed the stakeholders pointed out by the first stakeholder and other new stakeholders mentioned during the interviews. In this way, through successive refereeing and contacting (snowball effects) I was able to explore the complete networks of each community forests under this study. The process of identifying network partners was supposed to be complete when new partners were no longer mentioned. By taking into consideration-both individuals (such as wood contractors, sawmill owners) and groups (such as District Forest Office, forest user group committee, and donors' project) as stakeholders in a network of specific community forest the door is opened for meaningful analysis of a complex power structure. The aim of a complete network survey was to use the knowledge of the specific stakeholder to identify other stakeholders and their power elements.

The interviewees were mostly the chiefs of respective stakeholders' organizations such as the chairpersons of community forest users' group committees, District Forest Officers at District Forest Offices (Forest Administration), Project Managers of the donor field projects, coordinators of the NGOs, sawmill owners. In the twelve community forests networks there were ninety-six stakeholders ranged from five to eleven in each case. Some stakeholders' groups such as forest users' committees, Forest Administration, users' Federation (FECOFUN) were repeated from one case study to the other, where there could be categorized-just thirty-six different types of stakeholders out of ninety-six identified in total. The list of interviewed stakeholders and used questionnaire in this phase of fieldwork are attached in Annexes-1 to 3.

3.3.2. Power elements

This study has used three power elements: coercion, trust and incentives as power indicators to identify the group of the most powerful stakeholders in a specific community forestry network. During the complete network survey with each stakeholder, the interviews- started by asking the interviewed stakeholders'- on the perception and reasoning the level of trustworthiness toward other network partners. By using, a four-point ordinal scale, each stakeholder was asked to label the degrees of trust towards other network partners, with a score of '3' indicating complete trust and '0' indicating no trust at all. Likewise, by using Yes (1) - No (0) each of them was also asked that which of the network stakeholder (s) was necessary in securing community forestry activities in order to finally approve some activities or whether giving permissions or directives to carry out in community forestry activities. The aim was to measure the coercive capacity of the network stakeholders in community forestry which were further enriched by using qualitative information. Hence, measuring 'coercion' by quantitative figures was just an indication of stakeholders' coercive capacity in community forestry and mostly depends upon the forest condition and prevailing regulatory framework. A follow-up open-ended question tried to explore stakeholders' reasons for their coerciveness toward other stakeholders. To measure the contribution of incentives (cash, material and technical support) of the particular stakeholders to their own programs was not an easy task, so we measured incentives only by using a two-point scale, where a value of '0' indicated particular stakeholders who did not receive any incentives at all and a value of '1' indicated that incentives that were received from a specified network stakeholder (s). Follow-up questions were asked about the types and extent of incentives received by specific stakeholder from network partners. The results of power elements through complete network survey were used to identify the powerful group of stakeholders in each network of community forests.

3.3.3. Identifying the powerful group of stakeholders

After accomplishing the complete network survey, we used calculation of 'individual relative power-Xi' and 'dominance degree-Di' to identify the powerful group of stakeholders in each network of community forests. In order to calculate the Xi and Di, following procedures were followed:

First, the quantitative value of each power element (coercion, trust and incentives) of each identified stakeholder measured by partner stakeholders from the complete network survey were entered into the Microsoft excels sheets. Then each summarized power element which is called 'total accumulated value' was calculated by simply adding the value under each power element. The calculation of 'total accumulated value' of each power element was done separately for each stakeholder, and the corresponding element has to be seen as independent as shown below:

Figure-3.1: The network matrices

Stakeholders/ power elements	DFO	CFUGC	Wood Contractor	BISEP-ST	DFCC	Rangepost-CC	DSCO	FECOFUN	SNV
1 T		2	2			2			
1 I		0	0	1		0			
2 T		2	2	2		2	2	1	
2 I		1	0	1		0			0
3 T		3				0			0
3 I		0				0			0
4 T		3	0			3	2	2	2
4 I		0	0			0			0
5 T		2	2		2		2	2	0
5 I		0	0			0			0
6 T		2	3				0	0	1
6 I		1	0						0
7 T		0	2		2		0	0	0
7 I		0	0		1				0
8 T		2	2		2		0	0	0
8 I		0	0		1				0
9 T		0	0		3		0	0	0
9 I		0	0		0				0
Summary									
Trust - T	11	14	4	9	6	4	4	4	2
Incentives - I	2	0	1	3	2	0	1	0	1
Coercion - C	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

After calculating the ‘total accumulated value’, the shorting of value of each power element was done by being ranged from high to low as shown in Figure 3.2. By using ‘total accumulated value’ of each stakeholder in regard to each power element, the ‘individual relative power -Xi’ (in percentage) of each stakeholder in the corresponding network was calculated separately as below:

i. Percentage of relative power -Xi (Trust):

$$= \frac{\text{Total accumulated value of stakeholder} * 100}{((\text{Total number of stakeholders in the network}-1) * \text{maximum scale of the measurement i.e. 3 in the case of trust})}$$

ii. Percentage of relative power -Xi (Incentives):

$$= \frac{\text{Total accumulated value of stakeholder} * 100}{(\text{Total number of stakeholders in the network}-1)}$$

iii. Percentage of relative power -Xi (coercion):

$$= \frac{\text{Total accumulated value of stakeholder} * 100}{(\text{Total number of stakeholders in the network}-1)}$$

We defined ‘Xi’ as the percentage of the maximum amount a stakeholder gets from the evaluation of all other stakeholders in the network. The amount was evaluated for each power element separately.

Figure-3.2: Calculation of quantitative power networks

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
32	Power elements	DFO	CFUGC	Wood Contractor	BISEP-ST	DFCC	Rangepost-CC	DSCO	FECOFUN	SNV	
33	Trust - T	11	14	4	9	6	4	4	4	2	
34	Incentives - I	2	0	1	3	2	2	0	1	1	
35	Coercion - C	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
37		Shorting position (i)									
38	Trust	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
39	Stakeholders	CFUGC	DFO	BISEP-ST	DFCC	Wood Contractor	Rangepost-CC	DSCO	FECOFUN	SNV	
40	Total accumulated Value	14	11	9	6	4	4	4	4	2	
41	Individual relative power-Xi	58.33	45.83	37.50	25.00	16.67	16.67	16.67	16.67	8.33	241.67
42	Individual concentration value- Hi	0.24	0.19	0.16	0.10	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.03	1
43	Cumulative concentration value-Cri	0.24	0.43	0.59	0.69	0.76	0.83	0.90	0.97	0.97	1
44	Dominance degree value-Di	2.55	2.65	2.83	2.78	2.51	2.40	2.48	3.50	#DIV/0!	
45		Shorting position (i)									
46	Incentives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
47	Stakeholders	BISEP-ST	DFO	DFCC	Wood Contractor	DSCO	SNV	CFUGC	Rangepost-CC	FECOFUN	
48	Total accumulated Value	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	
49	Individual relative power-Xi	37.50	25.00	25.00	12.50	12.50	12.50	0	0	0	125
50	Individual concentration value- Hi	0.30	0.20	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.10	0	0	0	1
51	Cumulative concentration value-Cri	0.30	0.50	0.70	0.80	0.90	1	1	1	1	
52	Dominance degree value-Di	1.71	1.50	1.56	1	1	1	1	1	1	
53		Shorting position (i)									
54	Coercion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
55	Stakeholders	DFO	CFUGC	SNV	Wood Contractor	BISEP-ST	DFCC	Rangepost-CC	DSCO	FECOFUN	
56	Total accumulated Value	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
57	Individual relative power-Xi	50.00	12.50	12.50	0	0	0	0	0	0	75.00
58	Individual concentration value- Hi	0.67	0.17	0.17	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.00
59	Cumulative concentration value-Cri	0.67	0.83	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
60	Dominance degree value-Di	4.00	2.50	#DIV/0!							

In the next step, the ‘individual concentration value (Hi)’ of each stakeholder under each power element was calculated by dividing the ‘individual relative power -Xi’ of each stakeholder by the sum of Xi (ΣXi) of all the network stakeholders. The formula can be constructed as follows:

$$h_i = \frac{x_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i}$$

The sum of Hi (ΣHi) of stakeholders under each power element is always ‘1’. After calculating Hi of each stakeholder under each power element, the ‘cumulative accumulated value-Cri’ of each stakeholder in the network was calculated as follows:

- Cri of stakeholder 1 = Hi of stakeholder 1
- Cri of stakeholder 2 = Hi of stakeholder 1 + Hi of stakeholder 2
- Cri of stakeholder 3 = Hi of stakeholder 1 + Hi of stakeholder 2 + Hi of st. 3
- Cri of stakeholder ‘n’ = Hi of stakeholder 1 + + Hi of stakeholder ‘n’

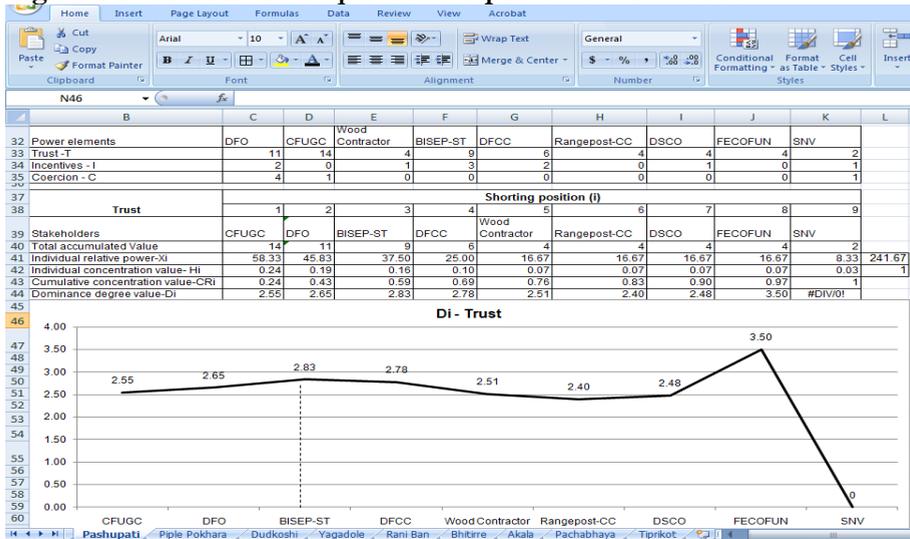
Now, with the measurements of ‘cumulative concentration value- Cri’ under each power element: coercion, trust and incentive of each stakeholder, calculation of ‘dominance degree-Di’ is possible by using following formula:

$$D_i = \frac{\frac{CR_i}{i}}{n - i}$$

(Source: Jonas and Pfisterer 2010)

Where, ‘i’ refers to the position of specific stakeholder after shorting a specific power elements as shown in Figure 3.2 and ‘n’ refers to the total number of stakeholders in the network which acquired positive (more than 0) value under a specific power element.

Figure-3.3: Calculation of quantitative power network ‘trust’



By using the ‘dominance degree-Di’ of each stakeholder under each element of power of specific community forestry networks, it was further visualized in the form of a chart diagram in the Microsoft excel program. The first highest peak, which is considered as the boundary between the powerful and weak groups of stakeholders in the network of specific community forest due to specific power element, was considered as an evaluation criteria of power networks in this study. Hence, stakeholders’ ranged up to the highest dominance value, which falls under the group of powerful stakeholders (coded as ‘1’) and remaining stakeholders are considered as the group of weak stakeholders (coded as ‘0’) for qualitative assessment.

For example, in Figure-3.3, the first highest peak, which refers the highest ‘dominance degree-Di (2.83)’ value and corresponding ‘individual relative power-Xi (37.50)’ of the stakeholder (i.e. BISEP-ST) in the specific community forest (i.e. Pashupati CFUG) network, is the boundary between the powerful and weak groups of stakeholders. Therefore, three stakeholders: CFUGC, DFO and BISEP-ST drop under the category of ‘powerful group of stakeholders’ by the evaluation of power element ‘trust’ in the below mentioned example.

Similarly, by using the methodology described above, the groups of powerful stakeholders were identified by the evaluation of power elements: coercion, trust and incentives separately in the specific network of twelve community forest case studies. The quantitative power network of each community forest is presented in Annex-4.

3.3.4. Further assessments of the powerful stakeholders

The identification of the powerful group of stakeholders through quantitative power network was taken as indicators for further assessment. Therefore, in the second step, field work begun with qualitative investigation of power elements of the powerful group of stakeholders in specific community forestry network. In this stage, stakeholders who were under the 'weak group' due to quantitative power network but in reality play an influential role, were also considered for further assessment. During this stage of field research, the powerful groups of stakeholders in each community forest network were re-visited and information was collected through qualitative interviews, written documents, field observations and external sources like statistics or reports. The results of the qualitative assessment were further used to validate the results of the quantitative network analysis.

3.3.5. Data collection at community forest user group-level

At the user group level, the committee leaders (mainly chairperson and secretary), in particular, were requested to provide the researcher with their minutes books, audit reports and official documents including the Work Plan and Constitution. Furthermore, direct observations of the community forests and informal conversation with some forest users were also conducted in order to validate the information provided by users' committee leaders. The forest users' group committee leaders were really cooperative when I visited them at their offices. I offered some snacks and tea and in some cases lunch during the course of interviews as a token of appreciation for their time spent with me and cooperation offered. Actually, with such complements made them free to talk and provided me with different stories and information which were impossible through official discussion. So, in this way the data gathered was voluminous; and I had to select the specific information for each forest user group presented in this study. This information has helped me to build the arguments about how external stakeholders and users' committees themselves respond to community forestry and illustrate the nature of FUGs engagement and disengagement with the network stakeholders, especially the Forest Administration.

3.3.6. Data collection from Forest Administration

The ones interviewed in the field, were the forest officers in the District Forest Offices and Rangers who were responsible to monitor the studied CFUGs. In

addition, at the district levels, the engagement of the forest officials with each other and the communication with forest users' committee who came at their offices for various reasons, as for example taking permits to harvest trees in their CFs were also under my observation. Listening quietly in the district and field-levels provided me with insights about the complexities of community forestry implementation and made me understand the response given during the second interviewing stage. The questions that I asked during the interviews addressed to the following: Forest Administrations and forest officers' roles in community forestry, constraints faced by community forestry programs, policy changes within Ministry and Department of Forests and interactions with other stakeholders. During the meetings held with forest officers in each district, supporting documents such as forestry legislation; letters, circulars, orders and policy decisions from Ministry and Departments of Forests; their correspondences to the central forest agencies and satellite offices; correspondences to and from forest user groups as well as possible copies for empirical examinations, accompanied my field work file.

3.3.7. Data collection from donors

To understand donors forestry aid to community forestry in Nepal, I used semi-structured interviews to collect data from three different forestry projects/programs: Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP), SNV funded Biodiversity Sector Programs for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST), and Denmark based University of Copenhagen (KU) funded Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya (ComForM) which have been supporting community forest user groups under this study. I was able to interview project officials who are responsible to supervise forestry programs of each project. Questions I asked during these interviews addressed to what specifically these projects do in community forestry; their interaction with CFUG, Forest Administration and other service providers; their sources of funding, human resources and publications; and finally their final expectation or outcomes of funding from the specific community forest. I also collected available project data on community forestry, their research and occasional papers, Work Plans, project budget, progress reports, project strategies and other necessary documents.

3.3.8. Data collection from private sector stakeholders (saw mills, wood contractors and paper enterprise)

Interviews with the private sector stakeholders were the most difficult in this study. First, they often hesitated to show their connection to community forests and second, most of them suspected that I was an agent of anti-corruption body of the government. Finally, through the help of users' committee leaders and forest officers, I was able to reach the aim of my research which made me able to interview them. Questions I asked during interviews addressed to their

interaction with CFUG and Forest Administration, marketing problems of forest products from community forests and administrative procedures, market competition, network of the private sector stakeholders, and finally their expectations from community forestry. During the first field visits in 2008, I realized that I was not able to get the real information from them, therefore, in the next study visit I decided to organize the meetings in a different way. So, after providing official meetings with the key interviewed people, I decided to spend more time with them and offered them to continue the interview in an informal way, having lunch together and being more open while discussing community forestry in general. This informal discussion in Nepal is known to be more productive and I found out that I was able to collect the factual information on private sectors' involvement in community forestry processes, including formal and informal gateways.

3.3.9. Data collection from other stakeholders

Data collection from other stakeholders, who fall under the group of powerful stakeholders of a specific community forestry network, followed the same procedure like the one with the users' committees, Forest Administrations, donors and the private sector. I conducted interviews by using semi-structured questionnaire to collect information about their sources of power such as: their interaction with users' committee and other stakeholders in the network, financial and human resources, as well as legal mandates. Furthermore, available records such as publications, progress reports and policy documents were also collected from them.

3.3.10. Data collection from other sources

In this study I tried to enrich the information from different sources. In addition to interviews with the powerful group of stakeholders of each network of specific community forests, I did informal consulting with five forestry experts at the macro-level in Nepal. These officials were provided with the open-ended interview questions beforehand, which served as a helping starting point for the interviewee, being informed on the type of information being sought and thereby making the interview more focused.

The study also used forestry news archives from Nepalese national news papers such as: Kantipur News, The Kathmandu Post, Republica, The Himalayan Times, The Rising Nepal, and Nepali Times for further validation of the field information. The most cited news from these newspapers intended to cover recent development of community forestry policies and practices, which were also applicable in the studied community forestry case studies.

3.4. Assessment of community forest outcomes

The evaluation of outcomes is aimed to measure the contribution of the community forest to social, economic and ecological aim of community forestry. In this study, social and economic outcomes refer the contribution of community forestry on empowerment and poverty alleviation of the individual direct forest user, while, the measurements of ecological outcomes were focused in order to identify the effects of community forestry on forest growth and biodiversity.

The evaluation of the outcomes done by using the existing field level information such as Work Plan and Constitutions, audit reports, meetings minutes and other records of the studied CFUGs; statistics or reports from the powerful group of stakeholders at each community forest networks; direct field observations and personal knowledge of the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher also attended and observed various events at community level such as forest management activities, executive committee meetings and product distribution processes.

I used two indicators: i) access to the decision-making processes, and ii) access to the forest and forest products, to measure the empowerment levels⁴ of direct forest users in each community forestry case study. Check-list/question (see Annex-1CI) I asked during interviews with users' committee leaders were addressed on a structure of FUG and executive committee; representation of class, caste and gender in the FUG and users' committee; forest management agendas and decision making processes; participation in the general assembly, users' committee meetings and forest management activities; fund utilization decisions; rules and regulations of forest use; access on and distribution systems of forest products such as animal grazing, fodder/leaf-litter collection, fuel wood and timber collection. To supplement the information from interviews, available records from users' committees were also collected during the fieldwork.

Similarly, three indicators: i) products from community forests, ii) income and expenditures of FUG fund, and ii) community development and services, were used to know the actual contribution of community forestry to the economic (poverty alleviation) outcome of community forestry. Check-list/questions (see Annex-1CII) I asked during interviews with users' committee leaders were addressed to the annual harvested quantity of different forest products, sources of income and expenditures, access of individual forest users on the FUG income and expenditures; community development and livelihood improvement activities from the FUG fund and support from other stakeholders; access of individual forest users on community development and various services. Information from interviews was further validated through the FUG Work Plan, progress reports, and annual audit reports of the studied

⁴ Indicates low and high empowerment level of individual forest users due to the extent they can access to the decision making processes and access to the forest and its products.

CFUGs. The income-expenditure calculation was done solely by using the annual audit reports and financial records of the CFUGs, hence, unrecorded financial transactions were not included in this study. Therefore, the economic outcomes were measured quantitatively in natural and partly in financial units, and analyzed qualitatively.

Assessments of ecological outcomes were based on the knowledge of the powerful group of stakeholders in each community forestry network. The outcomes were not measured directly but indirectly by the existing knowledge such as, Forest Inventory data, provisions mentioned concerning forest growth and biodiversity in the Work Plan of the studied FUGs, the knowledge of the powerful stakeholders about the impact of community forestry on such outcomes, and direct field observation (transect-walk) to check forest and biodiversity indicators (see check-list in Annex-1CIII).

3.5. Data recording methods

Information collected through various means, were recorded in different forms during and after the field visits. Information during interviews with stakeholders was recorded directly into the questionnaire sheets. In the unstructured observations and interviews, the researcher maintained different notes during the course of the fieldwork. The notes taken in interviews contained interviewee's answers and the information about the process of the interview. Note taking was supported with photos and other materials available in the field. Available records and documents during field work were documented into two forms: photos from digital camera (later transferred into computer and converted in to PDF file) and photocopies in case of availability. Due to high volume of the printed documents, most of the printed copies also converted into digital form by using digital camera.

3.6. Literature review

A literature review was done concurrently with the primary research methods and continuing alongside the empirical data collection, analysis and write-up to identify more specific data needs as the research progressed. Scientific articles published in the international forestry and social science journals (such as Forest Policy and Economics, International Forestry Review, The Forestry Chronicle Journal of Sustainable Forestry, Annual Review of Anthropology), reports, books, proceedings and project documents relevant to the research topic were reviewed. A review of articles written by forestry officials in the Nepalese Journal of 'Banko Jankari' and Journal of Forest and Livelihood also was helpful. The main areas covered community forestry outcomes, power analysis, stakeholder analysis, and policy provisions and practices. Records and databases established and maintained by the forest user groups, Forest

Administrations, forestry donors and NGOs as well as other agencies in Nepal were important sources of information. Secondary information was used for interpretation, comparison and triangulation of the data gathered from various sources.

3.7. Data triangulation

Triangulation is used in this study to verify the responses and to reduce the distortion of information from its originality. In social science, triangulation is defined as the cross-checking of various types of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic (Olsen 2004). Neuman (2002) stresses that it is important to crosscheck what people say and what they really do. The collected data for the research can be affected by many sources of error during data collection for example socio-political context of the study area, and researchers' own capacity to get the information. For example, in the context of this research, it implies that the results from quantitative power network were cross-checked through qualitative power assessment. During field visits, stakeholders were asked about their views on other stakeholders' use of the resource, and how he or she interacts with other stakeholders over the use and management of community forests. Such approaches may be particularly important for certain topics, e.g. a group might not mention their own involvement in illegal activities, but may be willing to talk about the illegal activities of other groups. Likewise, Forest Administration might not expose their involvement in rent seeking from community forests but users' committee leaders and wood contractors can mention the behavior of foresters. So, collected data from primary as well as secondary sources in this study were cross-checked through: formal and informal interviews, direct field observations, and also through the published/unpublished field records and policy documents.

3.8. Analysis of quantitative and qualitative information

The study used statistical and descriptive analysis. The quantitative data such as power networks were analyzed by quantitative tools: individual relative power (X_i) and dominance degree (D_i) calculations. Likewise, quantitative data on community forestry outcomes were analyzed by using simple statistical tools: average, percentage and trend analysis. The results were produced into tables, charts and bar diagrams. The qualitative assessment on power and outcomes further supplemented the quantitative figures with descriptive and comparative analysis techniques including content analysis, illustrative cases, quotations and boxes.

3.9. Strengths and limitations of network analysis

The most important advantage of complete network survey is the mutual verification of the stakeholders in each network of community forestry. In complete network survey, each stakeholder can get equal opportunity to assess the strength and weakness of other stakeholders which determines the power position in the network. Furthermore, the snowball effects of survey were close to reality and not arbitrary or dependent on the personal feeling or observation of each stakeholder (Hasanagas 2004).

Like other researches, this study is also not free from weakness. Firstly, the identification of network stakeholders in the first phase of research was totally based on the decision of individual of specific stakeholder group. Hidden and boundary stakeholders those who could potentially influence community forestry processes informally, but were not mentioned during survey were not included in quantitative power networks. Secondly, the power position of each stakeholder in the network was calculated by the evaluation of power elements by partner stakeholders, however, those stakeholders who have limited contact (suppose only with one or two stakeholders), but in reality they are powerful, can get few measurements which possibly make their position 'weak' in the network. In other words, quantitative power analysis was possible only for the stakeholders that were included in the survey and not for hidden and boundary stakeholders.

To overcome problems outlined above, I tried to include hidden and boundary stakeholders in the second stage of the field research (qualitative approach). The quantitative power elements were further checked by qualitative means through interviews and supportive evidences (see chapter five). Triangulation of power position due to specific power elements through quantitative and qualitative approach enhanced the validity of this study. Finally by using quantitative and qualitative information and knowledge of researcher, a robust model of improved power network of community forestry in Nepal was developed as a final output of this study (see chapter eight). This model was used to examine how interests of the powerful stakeholders determine community forestry outcomes in practice.

3.10. Terms and definitions

- **Community forestry:** Community Forestry is a forestry, which directly involves local forest users' in common decision-making processes and implementing forestry activities.
- **Stakeholders:** Stakeholders are individualistic or collective actors that have interests in the community forestry and also have the potential to influence the community forestry process. They form networks in the processes.

- ✓ **Internal Stakeholders** are actors of the network, which form the specific community forestry. Internal stakeholders can play the role of direct forest users, forest user group, the committee and sub-committees.
 - Forest user:** Individual direct forest user who has legally based rights to be directly involved in forest access and decision making process of community forestry.
 - Forest user group (FUG):** FUG is the group of direct forest users who have mutually recognized rights to use a particular forest.
 - Users' committee:** They are the executive body of the users group. The committee coordinates and negotiates with the governmental and other external stakeholders, and over look forestry and organizational duties.
- ✓ **External stakeholders** are stakeholders of the network, which are outside of the community forestry.
- **Power:** Power is a social relationship, where a stakeholder 'A' alternates the behavior of stakeholder 'B' without recognizing B's will.
- **Power elements:** Power elements are coercion, trust and incentives. Power elements are applied in social relations from potentate (A) to subordinate (B), but in practice all stakeholders of the network apply power elements.
 - ✓ **Coercion:** Coercion refers that, the subordinate (B) is forced to accept the information by the potentate (A). It doesn't require that B believes it. Therefore, coercion is the practice of forcing another party to behave in an involuntary manner.
 - ✓ **Trust:** Trust is a power element when the subordinate (B) changes his behavior by accepting the potentate (A)'s information.
 - ✓ **Incentives:** Incentives are financial or non-financial offers of potentate (A) that alternate a subordinate (B)'s behavior by motivation.
- **Interests:** Interests are based on action orientation, adhered to by individuals or groups, and they designate the benefits the individual or group can receive from a certain object, such as forest (Krott 2005).
- **Output:** Output is the activities of community forestry, these activity comprise use of economic, social and ecological parts.
- **Outcome:** Outcome is the effect of output on economic, social and ecological dimensions of community forestry. The Outcome is influenced by the decision making by the internal and external stakeholders.
 - ✓ **Social outcomes:** Social outcomes are the empowerment of the direct forest user. Empowerment enables a direct forest user to influence the forest and forest use decisions.

- ✓ **Economic outcomes:** Economic outcomes are the products and services the household of a direct forest user gets from the community forestry. The assessment on the economic outcomes focuses on how community forestry contributes in poverty alleviation of direct forest users.
- ✓ **Ecological outcomes:** Ecological outcomes are natural conditions of the community forest. The natural conditions are defined as natural requirements for forest growth and biodiversity of the forest.
- **Work Plan:** Work Plan is a legal document prepared by users' group for the management of a particular forest area under their jurisdiction and approved by the District Forest Officer (DFO). The plan guides the management of a particular community forest normally for five to ten years.

Chapter Four

Formal Concept of Community Forestry

4.1. Community forestry: Concepts and definitions

At global level, many forms of community forestry exist and are treated as effective mechanisms of forest management by mobilizing local people through democratic processes of program formulation and decision making. The popularity of community forestry was boosted from the global debate on how to tackle degradation, environmental crisis and rural poverty in one combined approach after 1970s. The concept of community forestry emerged in response partly to this failure of the forest industries development model to lead socio-economic development, and partly to increase the rate of deforestation and forestland degradation in the Third World (Gilmour and Fisher 1991:6). The concept was crystallized in the late 70s with the release of the landmark FAO publication 'Forestry for Local Community Development' (FAO 1978). In the late 70s when international attention began to focus on basic needs and the problem of rural development in the Third World, it was recognized that, in addition to its industrial role, forestry had two important roles to play-i) to provide forest products and trees for rural people who no longer had access to them, and ii) to find ways to increase the benefits of forest resources to local people who lived in or near forests (Gilmour and Fisher 1991:6). The legitimatization of the concept was also boosted by the adoption of 'Forestry for People' as the theme for the Eighth World Forestry Congress in Jakarta in 1978 under Westoby's personal prompt (Leslie 1987).

Similar to the industrial forestry model, the concept of community forestry spread rapidly and gained easy acceptance (Pulhin 1996:20). This was partly due to the realization of policies promoting industrialization (e.g. Indonesia) and privatization (e.g. in Nepal) were not effectively attacking the problems of rural

poverty and forest degradation (Kirchoffer and Mercer 1984). The concept also fitted with political considerations of the time. It matched almost perfectly with the political rhetoric on redistributive justice and poverty alleviation, which were advanced by development institutions like World Bank. Moreover, community forestry supported people-centered or community-centered ideologies that became fashionable in developing countries in 1980s (Pulhin 1996:20). By the 1980s, the concept of community forestry became firmly entrenched with forest policy of many developing countries (Gilmour and Fisher 1991:8). Studies reveal that a growing number of communities in several developing and developed countries are attempting to gain greater control over their forest resources. To address this issue, national policies are being developed worldwide to re-engage communities in forest management decision-making (Roberts and Gautam 2003). One of the most compelling reasons for states to foster participatory management approaches is that they have not been able to police forest effectively (Klooster 2000). As a result, nowadays nearly every country around the globe applies its interpretations of community forestry (McCarthy 2004).

The growing interests on community forestry stem from the beliefs of the intimate synergies between local people and their environment (Stevens 1997). The concept of CF is founded on the recognition of interdependency between rural people and forests. The basic premise is that people's meaningful role in decisions affecting surrounding forests, can achieve improved socio-economic well-being and ecological sustainability (Shrestha 2005). Since its inception, the concept has been participatory and directed towards rural needs, in particular- the needs of the poor (Arnold 2001). The participatory approach of community forestry is considered to produce increasing benefits for the local community, to make use of local knowledge, to encourage voluntary compliance, to trigger innovation and to contribute to sustainable forestry comprising economic, social and ecological benefits (Kellert *et al.* 2000). The distinguishing feature of the concept is its attempt to build active participation of the population, with the external involvement having a supportive rather than management nature (Arnold 1991). It is also assumed that the democratic process of decision making gives local forest users a sense of ownership concerning the protection and utilization of the forest (Agrawal 2002).

An increasing number of studies, highlighted that devolved model of forest management to local communities could be an alternative model of 'centralized control' or 'privatization' for overcoming the tragedy of the commons (Ostrom 1990, Baland and Platteau 1996, Agrawal 2002, Kumar and Kant 2005, Adhikari *et al.* 2007, Pagdee *et al.* 2006) and concluded that forest management by local people is possible. Over the years, together with the discourse of emphasizing local people's 'rights' of access to resources and to the forest benefits for their subsistence, this right-based participation approach has supported the promotion of participatory forestry (Nomura 2008:167) and

participatory approach in forestry has been a near-universal conclusion of international forest policy initiatives (Brown *et al.* 2002).

Recently, the community forestry debate is noticed to have significantly broadened its agenda. Community forestry stakeholders now focus their attention on the reform of the national and international policy frameworks that constrain or make possible community forestry to deliver ideas, resources, and practical advice to foresters and communities (Colchester *et al.* 2003).

Defining community forestry:

Community forestry, as a representative of different forms and practices in forestry issues, still notice that debates continue over what defines community forestry (e.g. Brendler and Carey 1998). It is described by using similar terms such as participatory forestry, social forestry, urban forestry, model forestry, collaborative forestry and joint forest management. Definitions and terms for community forestry abound in the literature, and the forms it takes on the ground vary widely (Charnley and Poe 2007:303). There is nothing wrong with diversity as a concept more or less it is the same across the world. However, a lack of consensus on what we mean by CF causes confusion, which often emerges because there is significant misunderstanding of the basic elements of CF; the community, forest and forestry (Shrestha 2005).

Over the years, community forestry has been explained both in scientific and practical discourses. Significant scholars assesses community forestry worldwide (e.g. Shackleton *et al.* 2002, Pagdee *et al.* 2005, Thompson *et al.* 2005, Wily 2005, Poffenberger 2006, McDermott and Schrekenberg 2009), reviews concepts and definitions, and even relate community forestry to broader discourses such as neo-liberalism (McCarthy 2006).

Looking back on the history of CF development, at the time of the World Forestry Congress in Jakarta in 1978 it was seen very broadly as “any situation that intimately involves local people in forestry activity” (FAO 1978). Although, this definition clearly differentiates CF from ‘centralized management’, it fails to speak clearly to three issues: 1) how that “intimate involvement” is or can be structured - who has ultimate decision-making authority; 2) representation - who is involved locally and how are they selected; and 3) equity - who pays and who benefits (Duinker *et al.* 1994).

Later, in 1985, Shepherd (p.317) defined community forestry as “any form of forestry activity undertaken specifically and principally to provide communal benefits to the people living in villages or small communities in the vicinity of the forest area which involves them directly in its management”. As the issue of control relates CF with the political processes by which the local forest users are empowered to control the use and management of forests on which they depend, during 90s, Gilmour and Fisher tried to shift the focus of community forestry solely from participatory to livelihoods based forestry and linked it as an integral part of rural farming system, where they defined community forestry as “...the control and management of forest resources by the rural people who

use them especially for domestic purposes and as an integral part of their farming systems” (Gilmour and Fisher 1991). Further elaboration of community forestry was done by Brendler and Carey (1996), they termed community forestry as ‘another brand of forestry’ which intended to benefits local communities through managing forests. Subsequently in 1996, Marry Hobley’s definition on community forestry highlighted as a ‘partnership’ approach with the government, and in a similar line, Krogman and Beckley (2002) infer community forestry as an entity that has an explicit mandate and legal decision-making authority to manage a given forest for the benefits of the community.

Box-4.1: Three attributes of community forestry

Residents have access to the land and its resources: Community forestry is deeply concerned with how benefits from forest resources, including timber and non-timber products, jobs and opportunities for value-added processing, are distributed. Community forestry seeks to ensure that local people have access to a portion of the benefits flowing from nearby forests.

Residents participate in decisions concerning the forest: Recognizing that neighboring communities stand to suffer most from resource degradation, community forestry aims to provide local people with the meaningful role in forest decision making.

The community begins by protecting and restoring the forest: In the developing world, community forestry programs have focused on areas where the balance between subsistence cultures and the surrounding forests has been upset by resource depletion and resulting social decline; in such places, the first job is conservation and restoration.

Source: Brendler and Carey (1996)

Community forestry is not merely only about trees and its silvicultural operation, it is also about people and their access to and benefits derived from the forests. Thus, community forestry, as its name implies, is basically where "community" and "forestry related activities" are combined and where communities take charge for themselves (Pokharel 1997:62). Advocates of the community forestry often asserts that the stabilities of ‘local’ eco- systems, communities, and economies are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing (McCarthy 2006). Thus, a community forest might represent a new kind of forest, wherein not only scientific management goals are central (Davis 2008). In a recent paper, McDermott and Schreckenber (2009:158) have elaborated community forestry as the exercise by local people of power to influence decisions regarding management of forests, including the rules of access and the disposition of products. This definition entails community forestry as ‘power shift’ from the state to the local communities and opens a question of power sharing in order to deliver its objectives into practice.

Charnley and Poe (2007:303) highlight three characteristics of community forestry, shared by most of the definitions mentioned above. Firstly, in community forestry, the degree of responsibility and authority for forest management is formally vested by the state to the local communities. Secondly,

a central objective of forest management is to provide local communities with social and economic benefits from the forest. And thirdly, ecologically sustainable forest use is a central management goal, with forest communities taking some responsibility for maintaining and restoring forest health. However, despite generalization: three attributes: i) who decides; ii) who benefits, and ii) how broad-ranging are the management objectives; are the traits of a community forest which set it apart from other types of forests (Duinker *et al.*1994: 717).

It must be remembered that the above mentioned definitions often give what CF should be, rather than what CF actually is. There is a need for defining and understanding CF in relation to specific contexts and with a realization of gaps between actual and ideal versions (Shrestha 2005). Therefore, in our study, we define community forestry as:

“Forestry practices which directly involve local forest users in common decision making processes and implementation of forestry activities”.

We argue that meaningful ‘community forestry practices’ require decision-making autonomy to the direct forest users in setting objectives, local control in forest management and utilization, and ownership of the benefits of the forest.

4.2. Scope and goals of community forestry

4.2.1. Scope

Community forestry initiatives have attempted to institutionalize a more postmodern approach to forest policy (Lee and Field 2005:299). The scope of the newly emerged community forestry "paradigm"⁵ (Kuhn 1970 and Foster-Carter 1976 in Pokharel 1997:63) has been interpreted by various authors in various ways. Arnold (1991) interprets community forestry as one dimension of various disciplines such as forestry, agriculture, rural energy and other components of rural development. Van Den Breemer and Venema (1995) describe community forestry as a new meeting point for the natural and social sciences. In this sense, there are various stakeholders from different backgrounds with different knowledge, from different institutional contexts and with different objectives. They constitute many elements from both the classic and populist approaches. The elements of central management authority, top-

⁵ Source: Pokharel, 1997- Kuhn (1970) has used the concept of 'paradigm' in two main senses: "on the one hand, it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques shared by the members of a given community. On the other, it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science" (ibid:175). Foster-Carter (1976) has applied Kuhn's concept of paradigm to elucidate the theory of development and underdevelopment (ibid: 167).

down centralized decision making, reliance on science and experts, as well as the transfer of technology model of extension, are inherited from the classic approach. Whereas, the elements of bottom-up participation, collective action, equitable distribution of benefits, indigenous knowledge are derived from the populist approach. Community forestry is therefore a model in which the strong elements of classic and populist approaches continue to exist side-by-side, resulting in contradictions in many occasions (Pokharel 1997:63).

The “paradigm” of community forestry represents an attempt to devolve management of forest resources through the direct involvement of local forest users in decision making and benefit sharing. In practice, this refers, local forest users without expert training, can decide how to resolve issues regarding forests. Most efforts to analyze the participation of locals in community forest management have been based on theories of common property management regimes (Benneker 2008). In her theory of common-property regimes (Governing the Commons), Ostrom (1990) advocates on the creation of local institutional arrangements to enable the “commons” success. She has dedicated substantial effort in to identifying the conditions that enable resource users to design such institutional arrangements. Numerous researchers in community forestry have applied Ostrom’s design principles (e.g. McKean 2000, Sekher 2001, Varughese and Ostrom 2001, Agrawal 2002, Gautam and Shivakoti 2005) and concluded that forest management by local forest users is possible. Most of these studies also argue that the condition of the forest has improved since local people took responsibility for its management. The applicability of the design principles prove that under certain circumstances (i.e., design principles), self governance in community forestry is possible. Hence, our definition of community forestry ‘direct involvement of local forest users in common decision making and implementation processes’ is convincing for the analysis.

4.2.2. Issues, goals and formal objectives of community forestry:

The rationale model of forestry program developed by Max Krott (2005) provides theoretical foundations how to analyze the formal program objective of community forestry. He defines four elements of rationale program model: specific issues which need to be dealt with, goals which are the objects of the program, impact and realization stage of the program, and the implementation stage refers to the task of different stakeholders in forestry programs. In this section, the former two elements appear relevant to be discussed. The other later two elements are more related to the processes of community forestry which will be discussed in chapters five, six and seven.

Issue of community forestry:

Livelihood of rural people, empowerment and forest protection are the specific formal issues which always serve as a logical point of departure for community forestry programs. These issues are adequately defined in the literature by using facts (Hobley 2007, McDermott and Schrekenberg 2009). These issues are

widely used to define community forestry problems and designing goals of community forestry (Lindayati 2000, Poffenberger 2006).

Goals of community forestry programs:

Policy goals of community forestry broadened from forest management efficiency and sustainability to include equity, social justice, and decentralized decision making authority. Policy assumptions evolved accordingly, from viewing community forestry practices as a threat to an alternative solution to forest sustainability. The policy goal of community forestry is: sustainable timber production and ecological conservation - but now included (at least rhetorically) a new dimension of distributional benefits to local people (Lindayati 2000). Furthermore, community forestry programs have been diversified to include various forms of land uses and tenurial arrangements (ibid). For example, Poffenberger (2006:63) mentions two types of forest policy strategies that are emerging in forest management in the context of Southeast Asia which support community involvement. Firstly, the formulation and implementation of laws and policies that articulates community rights and responsibilities on lands that have historically been claimed by the state and managed by its agencies or private sector leases. And secondly, policies that support devolution and decentralisation, in order to ensure the authority of local institutions. Both policy strategies focus on 'participatory approach' of forest management.

At the inception of community forestry, the protection and rehabilitation of degraded forests and the establishment of new forest resources was the main policy and practical objective of community forestry program (Gilmour *et al.* 2004). Hence, there is a long list of community forestry initiatives in developing countries during the past two decades (Carter 2005). Consequently, this approach emphasized three major functions of forestry in rural development in addition to the industrial role (Pulhin 1996:19).

- i. The social equity function- to provide tree and other forest products to rural people, who no longer had access to them (Gilmour and Fisher 1991:6).
- ii. The poverty alleviation function- to find ways of increasing forest benefits to the local people who lived within or adjacent to the forests (Gilmour and Fisher 1991:6)
- iii. The resource sustainability function- to address the perceived fuel wood crisis (Eckholm 1975) and the increasing rate of deforestation and land degradation in developing countries (Mayers 1980).

Although, a central objective of community forestry is to provide local communities with social and economic benefits from forests, McDermott and Schreckenber (2009:168) argues that forest conservation objective is much stronger in the developing countries where local people are often seen as the chief agents of degradation. Similarly, Charnley and Poe (2007:303) mention that ecologically sustainable forest use is the central goal of community forestry. There is, however, a large potential for community forestry to deliver poverty-

related outcomes to scale-up these approaches and therefore a broad scope for community forestry to contribute to the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015 (Nurse and Malla 2005).

4.3. Stakeholders in community forestry

Community forestry is characterized by many stakeholders due to the economic, ecological and social functions and values that forests provide. Beyond the communities themselves, other groups at regional, national and international levels also have an impact on local people's access to forests and trees (Peluso *et al.* 1994). Conceptually, four broad stakeholders are involved in forestry: the state, the civil society, the private sector and the donors (Hobley 2004, Dahal 1996, Sharma and Acharya 2004). All four strands are critical for sustaining community forest management. Barrow *et al.* (2002: 24) argue that the state has a strong, dominant role in forest management, permitting, or not, various forms of use to different groups, at different times, and sometimes without due consideration of the impacts on other groups. However, structural adjustment and retrenchment are changing this, as states are no longer able to properly manage forests, but need to enlist the support of both communities and the private sector.

We define stakeholders as an “individualistic or collective organizations that have interests in the community forestry and also have the potential to influence the community forestry process. They form the network in community forestry processes”. The term “stakeholder” refers to resource users as well as policy shapers and service providers (including education and research), who undertake or facilitate community forestry processes. Broadly, stakeholders can be divided into two groups: internal and external stakeholders. Internal Stakeholders are organizations of the network, which form the specific community forestry. Internal stakeholders can play the role of direct forest users, the committee and forest user group and sub-committees. External stakeholders are organizations of the network, which lies outside of the community forestry, such as: government forest agencies, users’ networks, NGOs, donors and wood industries. However, the most fundamental division between stakeholders is likely to be between those who affect (determine) a decision or action and those who are affected (whether positively or negatively) (Grimble 1998:1).

According to Krott (2005), forest management in practice is only possible with the cooperation of all stakeholders and implementation of the various regulatory instruments. Politicians and administrative bodies on one hand, as well as associations and individual citizens on the other hand, are directly involved in forest management goal formulation. Krott (2005) gives a prominent role to forest administration, based on its forest policy mandate. Forest administration aims at realizing the public goals of forest policy, both through managing state forests, as well as by enforcing forestry programs. Such

enforcement in practice is formulated by politicians in government, special administration and relevant associations. Forest users, primarily forest owners, are targeted by the regulatory functions. In addition, this would include those wanting to recreate, environmentalists, as well as wood-processing industries. A whole range of other users, direct or indirect, and those people/organizations whose actions have a direct or indirect influence on forests also play a role.

Both, state (governmental) and other (non-governmental) groups of stakeholders have the potential to influence the community forestry processes. The classification of stakeholders and their roles is given in Table-4.1.

Table-4.1: Stakeholders and their role in community forestry:

S.N	Stakeholder types	Examples	Roles
1	State	Governmental: Parliamentary committee on Natural Resources; Cabinet of Ministers; Ministry of Forest and its line agencies; National Planning Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of policies • Provision of information and capital • Technical and advisory services
		Local government: District Development Committees (DDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and networking • Infrastructure development • Advocacy and extension service
2	Users, users' group, committees and users' group federations	Forest users Forest users' groups Forest users' group committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and labor providers • Holders of 'local knowledge' • Land and forest management • Community development
		Federations or networks of the forest users' groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and lobbying
3	Associations (e.g. NGOs)	Association of Foresters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provider • Negotiation with stakeholders • Public relations, advisory and extension services • Lobbying • Capacity building
		International NGOs National NGOs Local NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information • Stakeholders capacity building • Legal and political advocacy for communities • Source of funding • Research and education
4	Donors	Different multi-lateral and bi-lateral funding agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information • Source of funding • Support for legal and technical reforms • Capacity building • Research and education

5	Forest based enterprises and industries	Wood Industries, Saw Mills, Wood Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets for timber products • Provision of information • Employment
6	Political parties	Different political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying • Creation of legitimization
7	University and Research Institutions	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of programs • Provision of information of programs through research • Capacity building and production of trained manpower
8	Media	Radio, FM, TV, Newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public attention and awareness
9	Consultants	Consultants involved in community forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication and documentations • Capacity building

a. The State:

The 'state' represents the government institutions that are involved in the forestry development and policy formulation. The governmental stakeholders comprise all institutions at different levels of the state. The state is the highest authority which presides over society and the business sector and is responsible for making binding decisions in order to define and implement common welfare (Grimm 1994 in Krott 2005). Migdal (1988:19) defines the state as an organization with the ability or authority to make binding rules for society and the ability to enforce its rule. His definition of the state links clearly to the concept of capabilities. He defines state strength or capabilities as "the ability of state leaders to use the agencies of the state to get people in the society to do what they want them to do" (1998: XIII). He emphasizes four main capabilities as state strengths: i) capacity to penetrate society; ii) capacity to regulate social relationships; iii) capacity to extract resources; and iv) capacity to appropriate or use resources in determined ways. The states, which have these four strengths, are strong states; others are weak states.

Drawing on the ideas of Max Weber, many consider territorial integrity, rule making on how people should behave and the claim of legitimacy in the exercise of coercion, as defining characteristics of the modern state (Migdal 1988 and 1994, Barber 1989). The state includes institutions such as; the government, the civil service, the judiciary, Parliament and local government (Smith 1993:2). In this research state refers to "the formal governmental agencies, which deal with forest policy tasks and management of state 'forest' lands in the form of community forestry".

Forest Administration:

State Forest Administration remains a powerful governmental stakeholder in community forestry. The main Forest Administration bodies are the central ministry of forestry and regional and local forest administration. According to Krott (2005:125), Forest Administration takes on the executive tasks in the

state, i.e. it implements political programs in the form of concrete measures. He further mentions that in practice they developed a large number of diverse institutions which span everything in the forest sector from special forestry offices to the general forest administration.

Krott (2005:126) distinguished Forest Administrative machinery into two dimensions: tasks and structure. The tasks in the form of legal stipulations define the framework in which forest administration takes action, as well as its orientation. Advisory and extension services as well as overall forest management of the country are the discrete tasks of Forest Administration. To conduct these tasks, Forest Administration has built up a distinct structure which has local, district, provincial and state offices, involving expert staff and certain routine procedures.

Local government:

Most developing countries have been implementing decentralization in order to coordinate and manage local development in an effective ways. Local government, hence, considered as a decentralized agent of the central government (smaller area compared to the national one) by locally elected politicians. They provide a legislative platform to strengthen decentralized forest governance in the country, to allow local self-determination, and to facilitate the use of local knowledge to treat local problems and issues. Political parties are the key players and decision makers in local government bodies.

b. Users, users' groups, users' committees and users' groups federation:

Forest users are the producers and immediate users of the forest. In community forestry, forest users refer to individual direct forest users who have legally based rights to be directly involved in forest access and decision making process. Forest users are inhomogeneous group interested in forest, such as: wood-fuel wood-other forest products collectors, hunters, encroachers, livestock herders and black smiths. The group of direct forest users, who have mutually recognized rights to use a particular forest, is known as forest user group (FUG). They are either formal or informal (e.g. traditional authorities) organizations of the local forest users, authorized to manage local forests in a sustainable manner. Conservation, management and utilization of the forest are the major concerns of the forest user groups. Users' committee is the executive body of the users' group. The committee coordinates and negotiates with the governmental and other external stakeholders, and over-look forestry and organizational duties.

Federations are the umbrella organizations or the network of the forest user groups. A federation is a more formalized agreement making possible to work together. Advocacy, lobbying and networking are the major interests of federations in community forestry.

c. Associations:

Krott (2005:69) defines associations “as organizations which articulate the interests of the groups they represent, and attempt to implement them by lobbying politicians”. Associations’ gear three major tasks: representing the interests of the forest sector, the employer’s interests and the employees’ interests (Nembach 1993 in Krott 2005:70). They attempt to exert significant influence over forest management policy through lobbying, initiation of lawsuits, and other means (Kearney and Bradley 1998:8). Non-governmental organizations are the examples of association.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations, whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level (Martens 2002:282). NGOs claimed to be non-state, independent, professional and formal organizations, which deliver services in forestry field. NGOs played an important facilitator and capacity building role in many of the cases, helping to bridge divergent views between local people and governmental agencies and manage conflict within or among communities. In some countries, governmental departments used NGOs as project implementers (Shackleton *et al.* 2002). They were also significant in shaping the community forestry policies together with governmental stakeholders. Based on their level of operation, NGOs are local, national or international.

International NGOs are the lobby groups of countries or international organizations, which exercise their activities in more than one country. Their policy mandate and budgetary allocations are defined by foreigners. They may act as project implementing agencies, as funding agencies, or both. In most countries, international NGOs together with national and local NGOs have been instrumental in driving the community forestry concept into practice. Sustainable management of forests, poverty alleviation and research, are the major interests of international NGOs. National NGOs have the capacity to operate at the national level. These NGOs will either lobby the politicians, or even execute tasks on behalf of their government. Local NGOs are functioning at district and village levels. Being local, they are small by definition and have well defined objectives. These NGOs work either on behalf of national and international NGOs, or independently, as well as they also work as partners with the government.

d. Donors:

Hobley (2004:33) mentions that the donor agencies cannot be considered as a homogenous group similar to other players. In many countries, external assistance is still a major source of financial support for activities by the state and civil society organizations and therefore the objectives and political agendas of donor agencies are of fundamental importance in terms of shaping the evolution of the sector. Two main types of donors are:

- international financial institutions
- bilateral donors

According to Hobley, both these sets of donor institutions have sustainable development goals linked to poverty reduction, as established through the Millennium Development Goals. The approaches and tools they use to influence change in the forestry sector are diverse and vary from the use of conditionality to a more engaged supportive role building capacity and understanding the change within the public sector and civil society.

e. Forest based enterprises and industries:

The private sector plays a key role in forestry business and they all are motivated by profit. Private operators in forestry have the capacity to assist forest communities greatly in terms of technical expertise, providing capital plus market access. Big concessionaires, timber industries, furniture industries, saw mills, contractors and loggers, small scale fellers are examples of private sector stakeholders in forestry. It is the role of state Forest Administration to facilitate linkages between forest users' groups and timber operators. However, in most of the cases, these powerful stakeholders tended to ignore local regulations and controls, undermining the authority of community institutions and appropriating the resource base at the expense of local community members (Shackleton *et al.* 2002).

f. Political parties:

Political parties are organizations, which have evolved on a voluntary basis by independently accumulating votes in competition with other parties, and whose goal is to have their party representatives elected to political offices (Krott 2005:111). Their interests in community forestry can be learnt from: lobbying their positions in policymaking and trade-off forestry issues to get votes from the citizens and recruiting political elites in the CF programs.

g. University and research institutions:

Universities are institutions of higher education where forestry related subjects are studied, researched in depth are provided, and degrees are offered. Education and research are their foremost interests. Through formal forestry education, forestry professionals could acquire the basic competencies (knowledge, attitudes, values and skills) required for forest management (Rebugio and Camacho 2003). Universities and research institutions could play three types of role to promote community forest management: advocacy, information/knowledge generation, and capability building or human resource development.

Research institutions also help to generate knowledge in community forestry. Their roles have been to train forestry professionals in community

forestry practices, provide technical support to stakeholders, carry out field-based research on different modalities of participatory forestry, and act as advocates for the development of community forestry.

h. Media:

Media refers to various means of communication mechanisms involved in disseminating community forestry information. For example: television, radio, and the newspaper. Having public attention and awareness as interests in forest, the media is a product of either a state-owned or a private enterprise. The media as a product (for example, in the form of newspaper or television) has to be oriented towards market by fulfilling the demands of recipients and advertising customers (Klienschmit and Krott 2008:127).

i. Consultants:

Consultants are individual or private organization in forestry providing 'forest advisory services'. Krott (2005:153) mentions that consulting provides information to support the client in resolving his own problems. Most consulting issues refer to research, technical procedures (e.g. use of equipment), capacity development (training), marketing (e.g. business management) and financial promotion (entrepreneurship development). Service delivery, employment and profit making are the interests of consultants in forestry.

4.4. Community forestry in Nepal

The status of the Nepalese community forests has been a topic of discussion for more than a century. As a pioneer of community forestry, Nepal has experienced long trajectories of devolution processes that illustrate misapplications of the concept as well as ways in which these challenges can be addressed. There is a range of contributing factors behind the implementation of community forestry. These include the change in government forest policy in 1957 from the countrywide nationalization of the forest followed by international outcries against environmental harm due to the massive degradation of the forests during the 1970s. The concentration of rights to the state, through forest nationalization and supportive forestry legislations, has led to massive degradation during 70s, which was believed to be one of the major reasons behind the initiation of community forestry in Nepal. The national and international chaos of deforestation in the hills of Nepal has also triggered a rapid flow of grants to support extensive afforestation activities. As a resulting, numbers of bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank, pushed for reform on the forestry sector during 1970s and onwards.

In mid 1970s, the government started to place a considerable emphasis on rural development and the protection of environment, and it was raised with great clarity in the first National Forest Plan of 1976, a plan proposed for the

establishment of '*panchayat*⁶ forests' to benefit local communities. This was followed in 1978 by a set of rules and regulations (Panchayat Forest Rules, Panchayat Protected Forest Rules) to govern the handing over of limited areas of government forestland to the control of village *panchayat*. The step in 1978 was the first formal legal initiation for community forestry in Nepal. The Panchayat Rules, provided a framework for the operation of a new fleet of externally funded community forestry projects and then after, international donors poured funds into Nepal on the basis of 'saving the environment' from further degradation (Hobley 1996:75). This falls under the 'eco-doom era' termed by Hobley (1996:77).

Box- 4.2: Panchayat Forest (PF) Rule 1978 and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) Rule 1978

The PF and PPF Rules officially initiated the implementation of a CF program in Nepal. Forest lands without trees were handed over to local *panchayats* as "Panchayat Forest" and with trees as "Panchayat Protected Forests." Once the forests were handed over as PF and PPF, political bodies were required to conduct the following tasks:

- Sowing of seeds and planting of seedlings;
- Implementation of a scientific forestry management plan prepared by the local Forest Administrations in consultation with the Panchayat;
- Protection of forest products against theft and smuggling;
- Protection of forests against fire hazards;
- Protection of the forest from girdling, lopping, resin tapping, debarking or other damage; and
- Protection against removal of stones and gravel, soil or sand from the forest area.

Source: Kanel *et al.* 2006:70

Over time, the management authority of *panchayat* was found to have several limitations for livelihood-oriented forest management, such as often the benefits were taken by political allies of the *panchayat* leaders. Later, the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector in 1989 reformulated the concept, and community forestry took a new direction under the present concept of forest user group model. The plan provides a window of opportunities for handing over all accessible forests to the local forest user groups, if they would be able and willing to manage the forest.

Box- 4.3: Provision of community forestry in the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector of Nepal, 1989

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) was approved in 1989 providing a 25-year policy and planning framework and remains the main policy and planning document for the continuing development of the forestry sector. Regarding

⁶ Village Panchayats were the lowest level of administrative-political unit before the reinstatement of a multiparty democracy in 1989. The Village Development Committee has now replaced the Village Panchayat.

community forestry programs, some of the important highlights of MPFS are:

- All accessible hill forests of Nepal should be handed over to user groups to the extent that they are willing and capable of managing them;
- The priority of community forests is to supply forest products to those who depend on them;
- Women and the poor should be involved in the management of community forests; and
- Forestry staff should act as extension service providers and advisors. Forestry staff should be provided with reorientation training so as to deliver the services needed by the Community Forest User Groups.

Source: HMG/N 2000

In 1990, the *panchayat* polity was lasted and democracy restoration succeeded in Nepal. The situation changed dramatically following the abolition of *panchayat* era, since when a new range of forestry approaches was adopted. Historically the development of the FUGs goes back to the mid-1970s, however, its expansion started only after restoration of the multiparty system in 1990. The Constitution of Nepal in 1990 has directly emphasized the principles of community-forest management including the fundamental rights of Nepali citizens to utilize local natural resources. Community forestry flourished only after the changes taking place in the political system in 1990, which led to the formulation and promulgation of the Forest Act of 1993 and Regulations of 1995.

The Forest Act of 1993 and Forest Regulations of 1995 gave a new direction to people's participation and are the main legal instruments that govern community forestry in Nepal. The Act defines community forestry as:

“Community forests are parts of national forests, which are managed and utilized by local users organized as Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), legitimized as independent and self-governing institutions by the government” (Forest Act, 1993).

The Act supposedly gives autonomy to the community forest user groups (CFUGs) to decide how to manage their forests, and how to use or dispose of the forest products derived from them. Under its provision, CFUGs may be formed to “develop, conserve, use and manage forests, sell and distribute the forest products by independently fixing their prices, according to an approved Work Plan or operational plan” (Section 25), CFUGs “may make timely amendments according to the needs of the working plan related to the management of community forests, and should inform the DFO accordingly (Section 26, subsection 1), “using the forest products for collective benefits ... in the prescribed manner” (Section 41). “A users’ group shall be an autonomous and corporate body with perpetual succession” and “may acquire, use, sell or transfer, or otherwise dispose movable and immovable property like an individual” (Section 43), and “shall have a separate fund of its own” which “shall be operated in the prescribed manner” (section45). The codification of these rights in the national legislation is one of the unique features of

community forestry in Nepal. The Forest Act of 1993 has also limited the role of the local Forest Administration (e.g. District Forest Office-DFO) to that of supporter, facilitator, monitoring and regulator of community forestry. The main features and spirit of community forestry according to the Forest Act and Forest Regulations are as follow:

Box- 4.4: Main features of community forestry

- Any part of government forests can be handed over by the District Forest Office (DFO) to the communities who are traditional users of the resources;
- The right of forest management and use is transferred from the Forest Department to the users, not the ownership of land itself;
- A part of the national forest can be handed over to the Forest User Groups irrespective of the size of the forest and number of households in the CFUG;
- Handing over national forests to communities has priority over leasehold forests;
- CFUGs have to manage the CF as per their Constitution and Work Plan which are subject to approval by the DFO;
- CFUGs are recognized as independent and self-governing entities with perpetual succession;
- CFUGs are allowed to plant short-term cash crops including non-timber forest products such as medicinal herbs;
- CFUGs can fix prices for forestry products under their jurisdiction, and sell the forest products;
- CFUGs can transport forest products under their jurisdiction anywhere in the country;
- CFUGs can accumulate their fund from grants received by HMG and other local institutions, from the sale of CF products and money received from other sources such as fines. CFUGs can spend funds in any kind of community development work;
- CFUGs can establish forest based industries;
- FUG can punish misusers (encroaches and thieves), who offend against the rules of the Work Plan;
- CFUGs can amend Work Plans by informing the DFO;
- In cases of forest offences, CFUGs can punish their members according to their Constitution and Work Plan; and
- If forest operations deviate from the operational plan resulting in damage to the forests, then the DFO can withdraw the community forests from the users. However, the DFO must give the forest back to CFUG, once the committee is reconstituted.

Source: Forest Act of 1993 and Regulations of 1995, Nepal

In addition, Community Forestry Operational Guidelines 1992, Community Forestry Directive 1996, Revised Forestry Sector Policy (2000), Community Forestry Inventory Guidelines 2001, Forest Management Guideline 2002 and Community Forestry Guideline 2008 enforced by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC), have proved to be useful tools to facilitate the community forestry process. These regulations clearly legitimize the use rights

of the forest to the users while land ownership remains with the state. The most recent Revised Forestry Sector Policy (2000) crafts provisions on how to grow commercial forest crops, where appropriate growing conditions exist inside community forest-land and establish forest-based processing enterprises outside the community forest. It also focuses on providing livelihood opportunities to poor and landless people in forestry-related activities and pays immediate income to the rural poor who used to collect raw materials like medicinal and aromatic plants for industries.

4.4.1. Formal process of transferring community forests to user groups

In order to allow for a conceptual understanding how forest management rights is transferred to local communities, it is necessary to understand some basic steps of community forestry formalization processes. Figure-4.1 shows step-by-step the process of community- local Forest Administration interactions in CF formalization processes

Letter of Interest to the District Forest Officer (DFO):

Firstly, the local community members living around the forest have to initiate the process by forming voluntary ad-hoc groups and apply to the DFO expressing their interest in managing the particular forest surrounding them.

Figure-4.1: Formalization processes of community forestry

<p>Stage I <u>Initial stage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self identification of users • Ad-hoc group formation • Letter of interests to the DFO 	<p>Stage II <u>Formal handover</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer investigation(feasibility study) • Forest user group (FUG) formation • Constitution writing • Users' group registration • Work plan preparation • Formal hand-over community forests to the FUG
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Source: Own elaboration 2010

Transfer investigation:

Once the DFO receives the letter of interests, a ranger (forest technician) is sent for the feasibility study. In this stage, the Ranger could consult local leaders, forest users, neighboring villagers to know the traditional claims of the forest. He/she also helps the community to identify the traditional users of the forests so that they are not excluded from the user group.

Users' group formation:

Once all the traditional direct users are identified, a Constitution to form a CFUG is prepared. Then, the users in a group have to give an application to the DFO according to the format mentioned in the Forest Rules of 1995. With the information on the user group, the Constitution generally contains: (i) objectives of forest management, (ii) rights, duties and responsibilities of the user group, (iii) forest protection measures and (iv) fund utilization measures. The forest users group will be officially legitimized when its Constitution is registered. After registration, a 'certificate of registration' is given to the users as a proof of the users' group formation.

Box- 4.5: Registration of the Users' Group:

1. For the registration of the users' group constituted pursuant to Section 41, an application should be submitted to the District Forest Officer in the prescribed form along with the Constitution of the users' group.
2. On the receipt of the application pursuant to sub-section (1), the District Forest Officer shall make necessary enquiry and register such users' group as prescribed, and shall have to be given the certificate of registration in the Prescribed form.
3. The users' group undertaking the management of the community forest pursuant to the Work Plan under the Forest Act, 1961, shall also have to submit an application for the registration pursuant to sub-section (1) within one year from the date of the commencement of this Act.
4. The District Forest Officer may provide necessary assistance for the purpose of sub-section (3).

Source: Section 42, Forest Act of 1993 Nepal

Work Plan (or Operational Plan) preparation:

According to users' needs, and depending upon the productivity of the forest, the users prepare a management plan for the forest, and the local ranger helps them with this process. A Work Plan preparation is very important because the users will have to follow it in managing the forest and extracting forest products. Detailed forest inventory with estimation of annual yield is mandatory for preparing a plan. The Forest Regulation of 1995 requires user groups to have a Work Plan which should include detailed information as follows: the forest's name, boundaries, area, type and condition; a map of the forest; the objectives of forest management; disaggregation of the forest into management blocks, together with each block's name, boundaries, areas, aspects, slopes, soil types, types of the forest, main species, detailed inventory statistics and silvicultural or forest management prescriptions to be followed in managing each block of the forest, methods of flora and fauna protection, the provision of penalties against offenders, product distribution and utilization methods, provision relating to the use of income earned from the sale of forest products and other services. After preparing a plan, users have to submit it to the DFO for approval.

Transfer of the forests:

If the DFO finds that the Work Plan confirms the rules and procedures, then it is approved, and a transfer certificate is given to the user group in a format prescribed in the Forest Regulation of 1995. Once approved, the rights and responsibilities of forest management are handed over to the community, and this concludes the initial state of community forestry implementation. Subsequently, the users have to manage the forests and utilize the forest products according to the approved Work Plan. If the Plan has to be amended, the user group can do this by informing the DFO (according to the Forest Regulation of 1995). In case, if the Work Plan is not followed, the government may reclaim the community forest, but it has to be handed over to a reconstituted CFUG. In other words, once a forest is transferred to a community, the government cannot use it as a government-managed forest. It has to remain a community forest.

4.4.2. Formal objectives and achievements**a. Formal objectives:**

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) of 1989 in Nepal clearly explains and emphasizes the need of local people's participation in forest resource management, which combines an environmental objective to protect against land degradation and deforestation with social and economic objectives. The social and economic objectives are to meet the people's basic needs for fuel wood, timber, fodder and other forest products on a sustainable basis; and to contribute to food production through an effective interaction between forestry and farming practices (HMG/N 1989). The plan prioritized on policy decentralization, empowerment, employment generation, people's participation, and public/private partnership.

To fulfill the stated policy objectives, the government's community forestry has laid primary and supportive program. The main program includes management of national forests and enrichment planting of degraded forests, both as community forests; and establishment and management of community forests in open and degraded areas. The supporting programs are designed to backstop the main programs which include updating legislation and encouraging people to accept full responsibility for the development, management, and protection of community forests; strengthening the forestry organizations to lend full support to the program; reorienting and retraining forestry professionals and technicians to the changeover; drafting management plans at both district and community levels and establishing resource databases to support planning; and establishing an effective monitoring and evaluation system (HMG/N 1989). The plan also expects a large sum of foreign aid to achieve the governments' community forestry objectives. The programs and their respective estimated costs in percentage are in Box-4.6.

Box- 4.6: Programs and estimated cost in percentage: Primary programs

- Community and Private Forestry (46.6%)
- National and Leasehold Forestry (20.2%)
- Wood-based Industries (4.7%)
- Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (4.6%)
- Soil Conservation and Watershed Management (6.7%)
- Conservation of Ecosystems and Genetic resources (9.0%)

Source: HMG/N 1989

The MPFS emphasized Community and Private Forestry (CPF), with 46.6 percent of the total estimated forestry sector budget. It is explicit that the aims and programs focus on basic needs of the forest users. To achieve the aims and facilitate programs, this forest policy contains some explicit statements about the government's intention for the management of CF (see Box-4.5 in the previous section).

b. Achievements:

The introduction of community forestry in Nepal represents an attempt to devolve management of forest resources through the direct involvement of local forest users in decision-making and benefit sharing. Substantial number of studies highlighted the achievement of devolved forest management rights and responsibilities over the past 30 years in terms of legal security, better forest condition, local economy, empowerment and institutional building at the grass root level. Security of tenure played an important role in the success of community forestry in Nepal. CFUGs had been clearly stated on the law of 1993, which has provided them with legal identity and a high degree of autonomy from arbitrary bureaucratic actions. Moreover, CFUG's independent legal status has enabled them to seek out collaboration with any civil society or private-sector organization of their choice, rather than relying solely on the government forest department for diverse services (Ojha *et al.* 2009).

The program was claimed as a successful one in increasing the planting of degraded sites, in forming local level institutions for resource management, in increasing the biodiversity, in improving the supply of forest products to farmers and in improving the environmental situation in the hills of Nepal (Acharya 2002:150). The CF program brought a big impact, not only in environmental conservation, meeting basic needs and economic development, but also in other sectors. The concept had been used in soil and water conservation, wildlife conservation, vegetable and livestock farming, drinking water, irrigation, roads and so on.

Over the past two decades, there has been a noteworthy increase in the number of CF managed by user groups. Moreover, community forestry is now the most enlarged sector including government, professional associations, the private sector, and the non-government sector as well as various community based organizations (CBOs). Forest user groups have established networks, such as the Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN) at

the micro, meso and macro-levels. Currently, at national-level, a total of 14,457 CFUGs (795 women only CFUG) have been formed covering an area of 1,233,012 hectare (average being 85.28 ha. per CFUGs and 0.74 ha. per households) with the involvement of 1,661,483 (average of 115/CFUG) households (DoF 2010).

Table-4.2: Summary indicators of community forestry impacts in Nepal

Indicator	Number	Share
Households directly affected	1,661,483	32% of total population
Number of CFUGs	14,457	
Number of women only managed CFUGs	795	5.5% of total CFUGs
Number of districts with CF operations	75	100% of all the districts
Potential CF area identified	3,551,849	61% of total forest area
Area of forest under CFUG management	1,233,012	26% of total forest area and 34% of potential CF area

Source: DoF 2010

4.4.3. Stakeholders and their role in Nepalese community forestry processes

A number of forestry related state, collaborative agencies and non-state stakeholders have been involved in community forestry processes to address the multifaceted issues related to the forestry in general and community forestry in specific. The type and level of stakes may be different from one group to the other. While there is a broad level of commonality in interests, priorities and concerns within each stakeholder group, depending upon different sets of socio-cultural, economic, political and institutional circumstances, there may be many sub-groups. They are operating at three different levels; micro (local), meso (district) and macro (national and international)-levels. Table-4.3 shows list of those agencies/stakeholders and sections beneath describes the description of stakeholders and their role in community forestry processes.

Table-4.3: Stakeholders in Nepalese community forestry

I. Governmental stakeholders

Agency/Ministry	Department/Units	Responsibilities on forestry
Constituent Assembly of Nepal	Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Means (CNRM)	Monitor and supervise the actions of the government in the area of natural resources including forestry and give advices and directives to the government on forestry-related issues
National Planning Commission (NPC)	Agriculture and Rural Development Division	The Division is responsible for facilitating formulation of sectoral plan under its jurisdiction including forestry

Forest Administrations	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC); Department of Forests (DoF) and its line agencies	Forest management, protection and community forestry
Other Forest Agencies	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	Soil conservation and watershed management
	District Plant Resource Office (DPRO)	Research and application of sustainable utilization, development and production of plant resources mainly medicinal and aromatic plants
Other Government agencies	Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR), District Agriculture/ Livestock Office (DAO/DLO), District Cottage and Small Industry Development Office (DCSIO)	Coordination, incentives and capacity building (training)
Local Government agencies	District/Village Development Committees (DDC/VDC), Municipalities	Coordination and monitoring of forestry activities

II. Collaborative stakeholders

Coordination committees	District Forest Coordination committee (DFCC)	Coordination, networking, monitoring and evaluation
	Range post level coordination committee (RLCC)	

III. Non-governmental stakeholders

Stakeholders	Units	Responsibilities on forestry
Forest users, users' groups and their committees	Users, users' groups and users' group committees	Formation of group, device rules and plan, and implement plans (conservation, protection and utilization)
Users Federation	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	Advocacy, lobbying and pressure group
Associations	Nepal Foresters/Rangers Association	Influence forest management policy through lobbying, initiation of lawsuits, and other means
	Chamber of commerce	Lobby their position on commercial interests
	Local (community and district level) NGOs	These NGOs will either lobby the politicians or even execute tasks on behalf of the state
	National NGOs	These NGO work on behalf of national and international NGOs, and also work as a partner with government
	Regional NGOs	Research, networking, capacity building, program implementation, policy lobbying
Donors	Donor projects	Sustainable management of forests, poverty alleviation and research
Forest based enterprises	Furniture industries, sawmills, wood contractors	Commercialization of forest products and employment
Political parties	Major political parties: Nepali Congress, Communist Party of CPN-UML and UCPN(M)	Lobby their positions in policy making, conflict resolution
University and research institutions	Institute of Forestry (IOF)	Education and research

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

I. Governmental stakeholders

a. Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Means

The Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Means (CNRM), under the chairmanship of a parliamentarian, oversees government action in natural resources (forest, land, water) and agriculture. Being a legislative subunit, CNRM can give directives as well as can ask for information and clarification from the executive branch of the government. CNRM is headed by an independent chairperson elected by the Committee members from among the members of the Constituent Assembly of Nepal. The committee does not deal specific community forestry cases but they oversee national issues of community forestry and give advices to Ministry of Forests and other government agencies.

b. National Planning Commission (NPC)

NPC is an autonomous government body responsible for formulating policies on overall national and sectoral development. Headed by the Prime Minister, NPC includes a vice-chairman and six members nominated on an individual basis, as well as a few ex-officio members. It is primarily an advisory body with limited executive authority. NPC tasks include: preparing the national five-year development plan which comprehensively outlines the national development goals, objectives and strategies; presenting detailed sectoral, sub-sectoral and cross-sectoral development strategies and programs; and providing estimates of financial resources allocations to the programs included in the Five-Year Plan. NPC scrutinizes and approves the annual programs of all the ministries and para-statal and it regularly monitors progress. All development programs and projects undertaken in the public sector are subject to endorsement by NPC prior to implementation. As part of the regular NPC mandate, all forestry policies including community forestry, programs and projects in the forestry sector are subject to review and approval by NPC, before they are come into power.

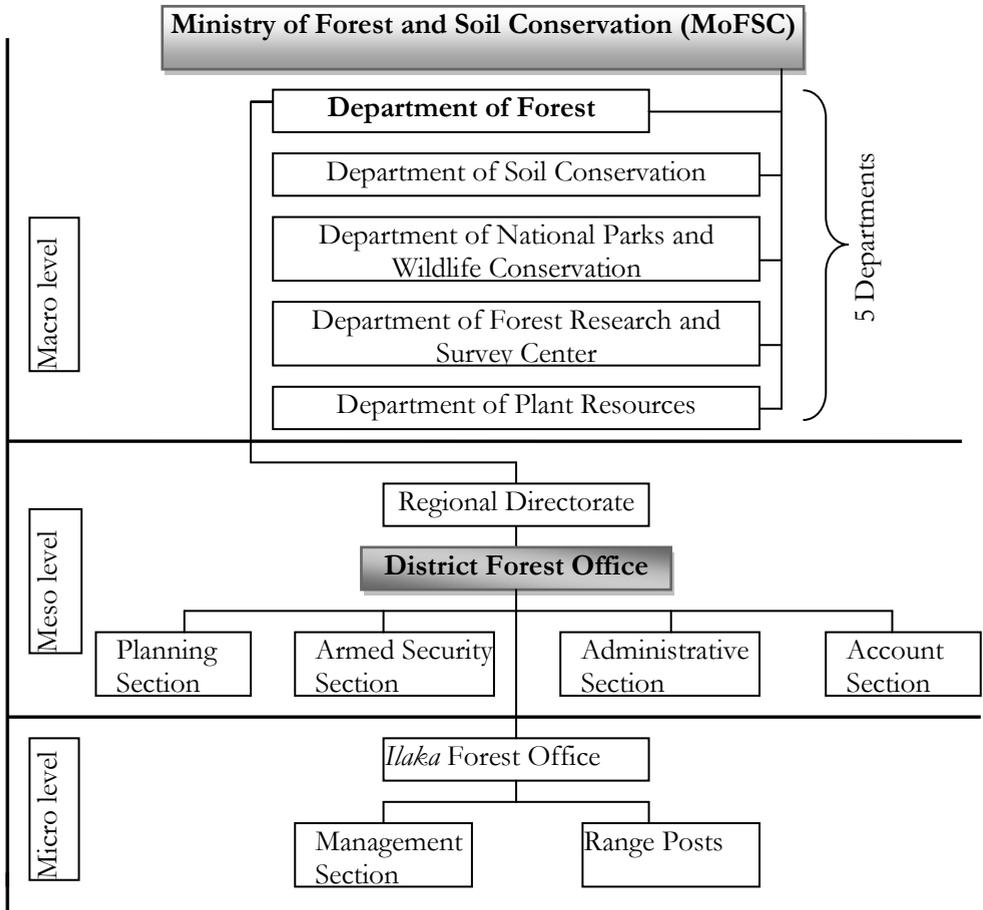
There is an Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) Division within NPC, which is responsible for overseeing and coordinating inter-sectoral activities related to planning, program budgeting and the monitoring of forestry-related actions. Among the policy-level institutions, ARD acts as a legislative entity since it is a parliamentary body. It can give directives to the government, and can question the performance of the government and other entities with respect to their mandates. There are also cases that NPC has allocated fund to the FUG for special programs, for example: under-construction 'Martyr Park' in Yagyadole FUG⁷.

⁷ Yagyadole FUG also among the twelve studied cases under the study.

c. Forest Administration

Forest Administration is the ‘state’ body who is primarily responsible for forestry activities as the owner of the state forest. Nationalization of forest in 1957 emerged as a first step towards forest bureaucratization in Nepal. Then after, they are supposed to coordinate and supervise forestry activities including planning, administration and monitoring of forestry actions from micro to macro- levels. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and its departments, field offices and para-statal constitute the forest bureaucracy in Nepal. The Ministry of Forests, established in 1959, is the apex of the forest bureaucratic hierarchy. It designs and implements forest policies. The ministry has five departments and plays a leading role while designing and implementing forest related policies. The organizational structure of the forest administration in Nepal is presented in Figure-4.2.

Figure- 4.2: Forest Administration in Nepal



Source: Own elaboration 2010

Department of Forests (DoF) headed by Director General (DG), is the most important unit within the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. This post constitutes the apex of an administrative pyramid of DoF and generally the most senior officer in the forest service. Under the DG there are major divisions headed by Deputy Director General of Forests (DDG), which include: i) community and private forest, ii) national and leasehold forest and, iii) planning and training. Each of these divisions is headed by senior foresters. As assistants and advisors to the DG, all DDGs are responsible for implementation of policy guidelines and instructions of the DG.

The central division of the Community and Private Forestry Program (CPFP) is headed by one of the DDGs, a senior forest officer, who is directly responsible to the DG. This officer, more commonly referred to as the 'Community Forestry Chief', deals with all matters in the CPFP and coordinates with other government departments and international donor agencies. Three forest officers assist the Community Forestry Chief and are in charge of its routine management.

The Regional Forest Offices are the second administrative levels in the forest bureaucracy. Recently, they are positioned directly under the Ministry (not under the DOF). The Regional Directors (RDs) are placed in five Regions, and assisted by the Deputy Regional Director (DRD) and two to three junior forest officers. As director for all forestry activities within his Region, the main official responsibilities of RDs are coordinating, planning and the monitoring of all districts activities within a Region. The RDs are also responsible for supervising and directing the operations of the various districts. However, they have little resource and executive function. Neither have they had direct authority over subordinate line officers.

The Department of Forests (DoF) has a nationwide organizational set-up in form of District Forest Offices (DFOs) in 74 out of 75 districts. Districts are the third administrative level of Forest Administration in Nepal.

District Forest Office (DFO):

The DFO is the principal executing agency of all forestry activities including community forestry. Directly responsible to DoF, this office is headed by a District Forest Officer who is the primarily responsible for the routine work of forestry administration and management, and has complete responsibility for the entire district. In addition, the District Forest Office has direct planning and implementation responsibilities for the district level programs. For most of the routine work, the Officer is expected to be his own specialist and also has to perform a coordinating role with other district level office activities.

Each District Forest Officer is assisted by one to three Assistant Forest Officers (AFOs), one is based in district headquarters and two are based at *Ilaka* Offices. *Ilaka* Office simply has a linking role between District head quarter and Range-Posts. Every *Ilaka* is divided into Range Posts, and each *Ilaka* administers six to thirteen Range-Posts depending upon the area and

resource availability. These are the smallest geographical sub-divisions in the forestry administration and are the operational unit for program action. *Ilaka* Offices were established as part of DOF's restructuring program in 1993 for carrying out Community Forestry activities.

The Range Posts, prior to 1993 named as Range Offices, have previously been the contact points for local people. Range Post is headed by a Ranger, the lowest-ranking professional forester directly accountable to the District Forest Officer at a district. Every Ranger at the Range Posts is assisted by five Forest Guards in each hill district and 10 to 20 armed Forest Guards in each Terai district. As the name implies the Forest Guard is basically a policeman who guards the forests. They are recruited on the basis of physical fitness and no forestry training is required. These are the people who interact directly with the local people. Following the introduction of the new community forestry policy the role of the Forest Guard, at least on paper, has also been changed. Each Range Post covers four to six village development committees (VDCs), a political administrative unit.

The District Forest Office (DFO) staffs are supposed to facilitate the process of hand-over. This involves the establishment of FUGs, decision-making and preparation of a Work Plan (called Operational Plan) and implementation of the plan to manage forests and receive livelihood benefits on an equal basis. The forest legislation has been promulgated for the purpose of providing a legal framework, while operational guidelines are provided to the field staff with regard to how they are supposed to facilitate the initiation, establishment, and implementation of CF processes. The revised forest policy in 2000 highlights the support from donors, NGOs (non-government organization), local governments and civil society as helpful for FUGs in implementing CF activities. The formal role and responsibilities of forest administration in community forestry is tabulated in Table-4.4.

Table- 4.4: Role and responsibilities of forestry institutions in community forestry

Level	Institution	Main roles and responsibilities
Macro	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate and modify policy as appropriate
	Department of Forest and Regional Forest Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets and conditions for forest handover • Monitor development of CF, and highlights issues and concerns
Meso	District Forest Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-over forests to FUGs • Elaborate and revise OPs according to CFUGs wishes • Ensure CFUGs manage forests according to OPs • Provide managerial and technical skills to CFUGs

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve conflicts where possible
Micro	Range-Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist to FUGs for forest hand-over process • Assist to FUG to prepare Constitution and Work Plan • Monitoring CFUG activities

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

d. Other Forest Agencies

District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO):

In recognition of conserving soil and watershed of the country, Government of Nepal established the Department of Soil and Water Conservation in August, 1974, as another line agency in Ministry of Forests. In 1980, it was renamed as Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management (DSCWM). At present DSCWM is providing service to 60 out of the 75 districts of Nepal through 56 District Soil Conservation Offices (DSCO). Through a team of multi-disciplinary professionals, such as foresters, agriculture technicians, civil engineers, chemists and geologist; DSCWM implements soil conservation and watershed management programs. Roles of District Forest Offices and District Soil Conservation Offices seem conflicting in many areas such as plantation, and soil and watershed conservation. Although, DSCO does not play any formal role while handing over the community forests, during implementation they also collaborate with forest user groups to carry out soil and watershed management activities. As soil conservation and watershed management was recognized, also a priority program in the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector in 1989, make seem important the roles of District Soil Conservation Office in community forestry. In addition, Nepal's five year development plans from eight five years plan in 1992/97 to three years interim plan in 2008/010 also clearly highlighted public participation in the soil and watershed management.

District Plant Resource Office (DPRO):

The Ministry of Forest has established Department of Plant Resources (DPR) in 1960 in order to conduct research and provide services in the field of plant resources (mainly medicinal plants). The department has expertise especially in research and management of NTFPs and medicinal herbs in activities like nursery management, harvesting, storage, processing and other value addition techniques. The department has two divisions, three central level office and seven district offices. Through district-level offices, DPR distributes seedlings of medicinal and aromatic plants to the forest user groups.

e. Other Government Agencies

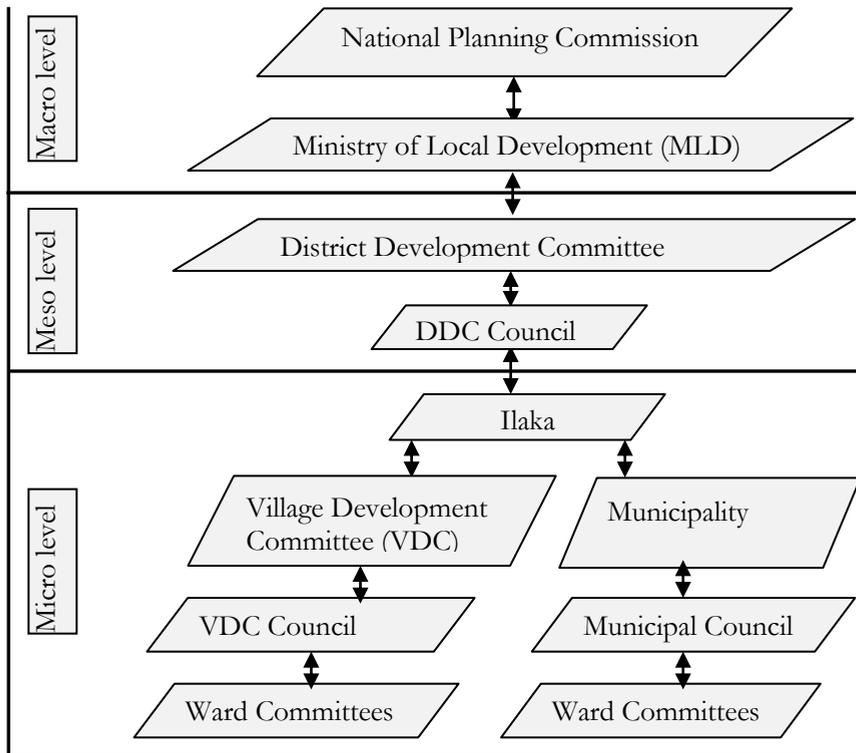
As forestry is connected to multiple disciplines, other government agencies such as Agriculture, Livestock, Women Development, Cottage and Small Industries are also involved mainly in coordination, capacity building and

provide incentives in specific community forestry cases. Among them, District level agriculture and livestock offices have close cooperation with forest user groups to integrate agriculture and livestock programs in forest and farm land of forest users. They distribute seedlings of fodder, grass and fruit trees in order to support users' livelihood.

f. Local Government Agencies

The Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) of 1999 and associated Rules of 2000 give clear provision of decentralization in Nepal. They provide a legislative platform for other initiatives to strengthen decentralized governance in Nepal. Nepal has a two-tier system of local governance, with village and municipal bodies as the lowest body and the district ones are the highest. The village bodies are called Village Development Committees (VDCs) with municipalities serving the same function in town areas. The LSGA stipulates an elected District Development Committee (DDC) in every district. The organizational structure of local government is presented in Figure-4.3.

Figure-4.3: Structure of local self-governance bodies in Nepal



Source: Own elaboration 2010

All VDCs are divided into nine wards, however, municipalities are divided into a minimum of nine wards but the maximum number is not specified. Wards are the smallest units of local governance. Each district is divided into nine to seventeen *Ilaka*, which cover clusters of VDCs and municipality. Each ward has a ward committee (WC) made up of five elected members, one of which must be a woman. VDC committees and municipal committees run Local Governments' (LG) affairs. Village councils (VCs) and Municipal councils (MCs) meet biannually to approve or question VDC and municipality policies, programs and budgets. There are 3913 VDCs, 58 Municipalities and 75 DDCs in Nepal (MLD 2001).

The LSG Act and rules have given LGs some taxation and revenue authorities, for example: raise land taxes, charge fees for services, and charge land revenues. The DDCs are authorized to share revenues with the government from land registration, tourism, electricity, and forest products as well as other natural resources. However, the revenue collection areas remain weak because of the overlapping authorities of line agencies and LGs. The LGs have been given responsibility for delivering local services such as education and natural resource management, but the finances for delivering these services are routed through the line agencies. The LGs do receive grants from the central government, but these are grossly inadequate for the LGs to properly carry out the functions expected of them.

Local Government and community forestry:

A wide participation of people in development activities is one of the main aims of the LSG Act 1999 and the Rule 2000. The Act and Rules devise a plan whereby the works performed by these institutions are carried out through user groups⁸. In many instances, the DDCs and VDCs work closely with local CFUGs, and with other stakeholders, such as FECOFUN and local NGOs, to deal with forestry and broader community development initiatives. Some CFUGs, in fact, are financially better off (from membership dues and the sale of forest resources and products) than their VDCs, and are able to complement VDC's community development activities.

II. Collaborative stakeholders

a. District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC)

In Hills and Terai Districts, where donors are active in forestry, a new level of coordination between the line agencies (forestry and others) and the local governing bodies is being experimented, in the form of District Forestry Coordination Committees (DFCCs). It is a multi-stakeholder platform, where different representatives are members as; the Ministry of Forest line agencies (District Forest Office- DFO, District Soil Conservation Office-DSCO,

⁸ Local Self Governance Act Nepal (LSGA), 1999 S 41-45, 119, 208-09

District Plant Resource Office – DPRO), local government bodies (District Development Committee- DDC, Village Development Committee- VDC, Municipality), other government agencies (such as Women Development Office- WDO), political parties, NGOs, community forest user groups (CFUGs), Women groups, the chamber of commerce and other agencies are the members. The Chairman of the District Development Committee (DDC)⁹ chairs the committee, and the DFO is the member secretary. These bodies perform only advisory services, as a discussion forum of development initiatives in the forestry sector. According to the DFCC guideline approved by the Nepalese government on July 5th 2005, the role of DFCC defines the facilitator and coordinator of the conservation, management and sustainable use of natural environment and bio-resources of forest sector in the districts. The committee is also supposed to be a platform to discuss and share common issues of forestry sector and contributes towards developing a common understanding of influencing necessary institutional and policy reforms. Among the study districts, DFCC was formed in Chitwan and Makawanpur by BISEP-ST, a program funded by SNV.

b. Range-post Level Coordination Committee (RLCC)

Monitoring and evaluation of forest user groups are the key challenge of Forest Administration. In-order to make effective monitoring and evaluation of the FUGs, District Forest Office Makawanpur has adopted Range-Post level networking mechanism by forming Range Post level Community Forest Coordination Committee. Ranger of the specific Range-Post coordinate the committee and one representative from each community forest under specific Rang-Post are members of the RLCC. According to the yearly monitoring and evaluation report of DFO Makawanpur of 2007, the roles of RLCC mainly deal with coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the forest user groups. The committee is also supposed to act as a pool between FUG and Forest Administrations, and expected to monitor illegal activities within FUGs in their command area.

III. Non-governmental stakeholders

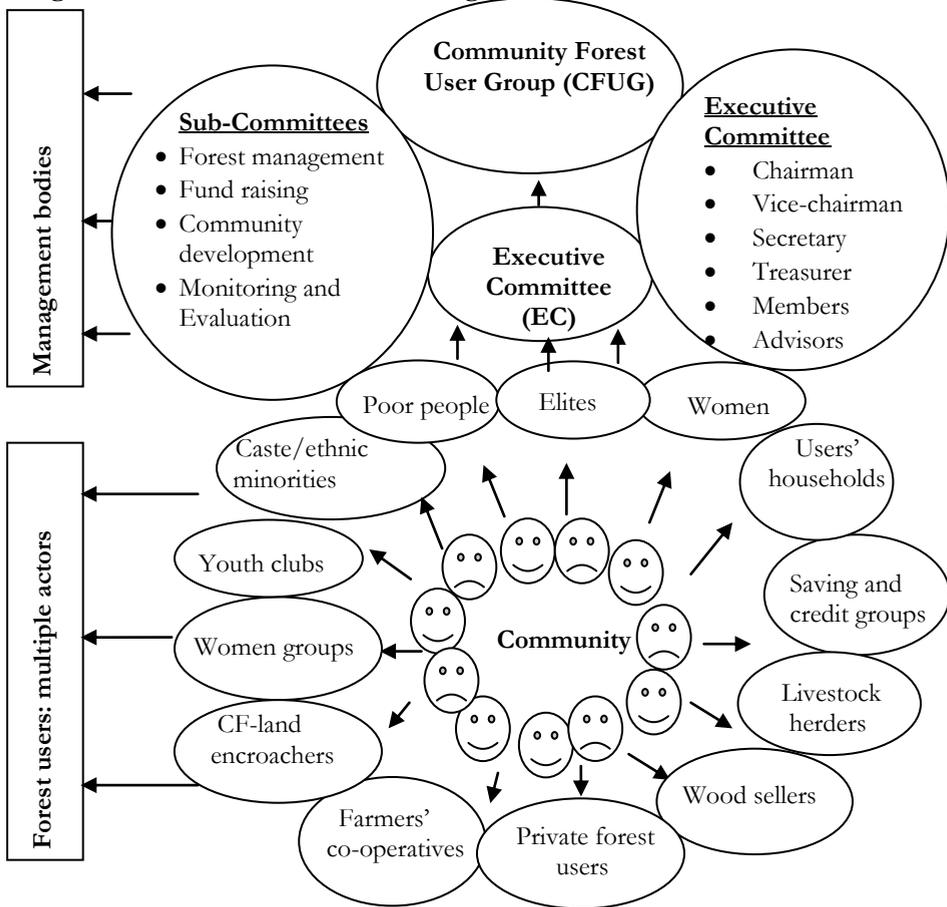
a. Forest users, users' groups and the committees

Forest Act (1993) and Regulation (1995) made provision for improved resource management through community involvement, via forest handover to local communities. This process involves identification of users and the creation of a formal association of users' association called a community forest user group

⁹ Currently, because of the absence of elected chairman, Local Development Officer (LDO) chairs the DFCC

(CFUG¹⁰), which is then fully responsible for protecting the forest (subject to District Forest Officer oversight). The organizational structure of the CFUG is presented in Figure-4.4.

Figure-4.4: CFUG formation and organizational structure



Source: Own elaboration based on field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

The group includes a general assembly of all members, and an executive committee that, by law, must include 33% female members. The policy gave FUGs a strong independent legal foundation. Furthermore, the legislations have provided FUG a local level decision making forum, which can serve as a basis for local level development planning. The most important right that the CFUGs get once they begin to manage the CF is the use right. User groups have *de jure* access, use, management, and exclusion rights. They have no

¹⁰ Groups of people who have mutually recognized rights to use a particular forest, known as a forest user group (FUG) (Forest Act of Nepal, 1993)

alienation rights (i.e. the right to sell community forest land) because ownership of handed-over forestland remains with the government. The CFUGs rights of use of the forest products include the determination of price and sale in or out of the community, which have also been recognized by the law.

The group writes a Constitution and prepares a Work Plan (called Operational Plan in practice) based, in part, on a forest resource inventory. The Work Plans are most often prepared with the assistance of a ranger from the District Forest Office (DFO). When a CFUG's Constitution and Work Plan are acceptable and certified by the DFO, the local forest is formally handed over to the group to manage and utilize. Each CFUG is amendable and renewable on a five-year basis. The group has the right to manage the resources and share benefits, but ownership of the forest land remains vested with the government.

The general assembly (GA) directs or guides the executive committee on how to run the forests and should evaluate and monitor the committee's work. During a general assembly of users, the forest user group committee (FUGC) is formed, and the Constitution and Work Plan are developed and approved by majority. A committee of CFUGs formed normally by election or selected by the user members for effective implementation of the day-to-day activity of CFUGs. It comprises approximately 11 members and they constitute the executive wing of a CFUG. The committee has no rights according to the Forest Act and rules. However, they exercise rights as authorized by the user groups and as mentioned in the Work Plan. The committees coordinates and negotiate with the Forest Administrations and other external stakeholders, document activities, overlook the users, take decisions, and implement community and forest development programs, and also regulate forest product distribution based on the accepted rules. In practice, the users' committee leaders' act as gatekeepers of direct users' access to forests, and to capture many of the benefits associated with community forestry.

b. Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)

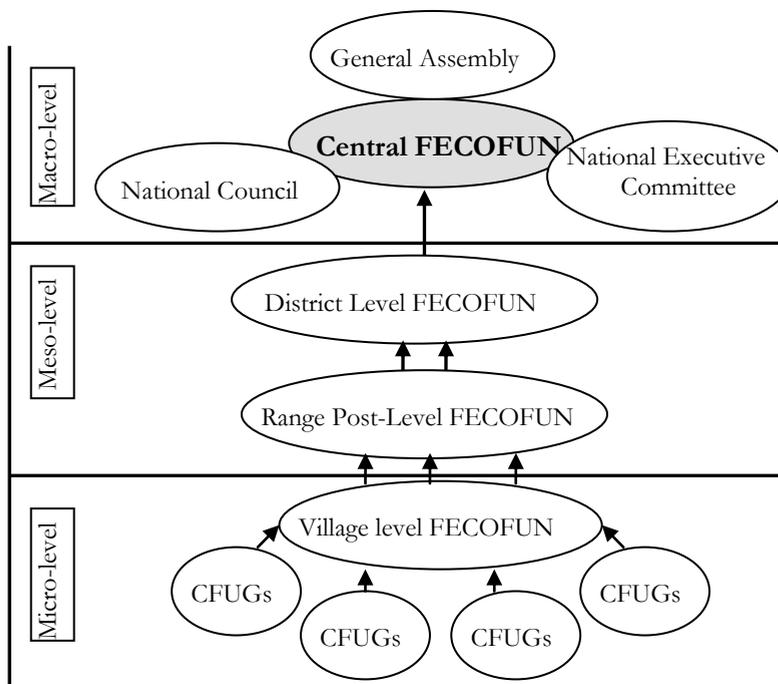
The Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) is an umbrella organization of CFUGs represented in all 74 districts (see Figure-4.5). The FECOFUN is a national association founded by and for the CFUGs in 1995. At present there are more than 14,000 CFUGs in Nepal out of which about 9,000 are affiliated with FECOFUN through its 74 district branches¹¹. According to the web page of FECOFUN, more than 30 institutions, primarily working in community forestry, have collaborative linkages with them. FECOFUN also received support from a numbers of donor agencies such as Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) and Livelihood and Forestry Project (LFP) funded by DFID.

FECOFUN has been active in advocating policy formulation and amendments in favor of community forestry. It is also equally vocal in

¹¹ Available on FECOFUN database 2009 at FECOFUN office, Kathmandu, Nepal.

providing rights to the users in decision making and benefit sharing (Bhattarai and Khanal 2005 in Kanel 2006). When the government banned handing over of large blocks of forests as community forests in the Terai during 2000, FECOFUN arranged a series of protests processions in the streets of Kathmandu. The organization is also working through its representatives as a service provider and facilitating agents for community forestry user groups in the districts. However, FECOFUN also blamed as a highly politically rooted institution as they advocate political interests rather than interests of the local forest users. Due to political ideologies backed by national political parties and disputes over the election process, FECOFUN in their recent general convention (8-10 June 2010) was split up by forming two parallel committees. FECOFUN factions aligned with the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal -Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), which formed committees separately while each faction released a separate press statement to claim legitimacy of the union.

Figure-4.5: Organizational structure of the FECOFUN



Source: Own elaboration 2010

Other network supporting community forestry is Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWANTI) in also the part of network of CF studied. Their role and activities are close to the FECOFUN, besides, they advocate women rights and women representation in resource management.

c. Associations

Association other than NGOs:

An unpublished report estimates that there are around 35 regional and national associations in Nepal dealing with forestry issues in direct and indirect ways, among which, Foresters Associations (e.g. Nepal Foresters Association, Nepal Rangers Association) and Political parties (Devkota 2006). According to the web page of Nepal Foresters' Association (NFA), it is one of the leading professional associations in Nepal founded in 1974. They claim the representation of professional foresters in Nepal and have a mission to see sustainable natural resource conservation and management through participatory and scientific approach. Rangers' Association of Nepal (RAN) is a professional organization of forest Rangers in Nepal. Both associations are established to promote their professional ethnics and rarely deal with forestry issues.

NGOs:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been seen as a key partner while implementing forestry programs in Nepal. NGOs in Nepal operate at different levels; they can generally be categorized into four groups across the studied cases:

NGO category	Example in cases	Roles
Local NGOs (operating at community and district-levels)	Seed Foundation-Kaski; Environmental Conservation Society (ECOS)- Chitwan, Nepal; Seed Tree Nepal-Chitwan; Ecology, Agriculture and Rural Development Society (ECARDS) – Dolakha	FUG networking, service provider (technical and managerial), incentives (financial and material)
National NGOs	National Trust for Nature conservation (NTNC)/ Biodiversity Conservation Centre (BCC), Chitwan	Service provider (technical and managerial)
NGO networks	NGO network, Tanahun	NGOs coordination, facilitate FUGs
Regional NGOs	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	It works in biodiversity and community development mainly through forest based enterprises. They provide technical, managerial and financial support to the forest user groups and forest based enterprises. Policy lobbying through networking is also its priority interest.

The legal foundation for the operation of local and national NGOs in Nepal is laid by the Social Welfare Council Act 1992. All newly created domestic NGOs are required to register with either the appropriate government office or the Social Welfare Council (SWC) or the District Administration Office (DAO). So far, more than 30,000 NGOs reported to exist in Nepal, 16,425 are registered with the SWC and about 15,000 with DAO. The focus of most of these organizations is community development; and services to youth, women and environmental projects (Kobek and Thapa 2004).

Despite the rapid proliferation of national and local NGOs working in various development sectors since 1990, only a few work exclusively in forestry and, in particular, CF. As the scope of community forestry has gradually expanded from an emphasis on forest conservation to livelihood oriented forest management, the interests and involvement of local NGOs in this sector have increased (Biggs and Messerschmidt 2003).

The Tenth Five-year Plan (2002-07) and Interim Three Years Plan (2008-2010) of the Government of Nepal, emphasized the role of INGOs, regional NGOs and CBOs for carrying out economic activities, infrastructure development and service delivery wherever possible, both in partnership with central and local governments and agencies and to complement the role of the government. NGOs working in community forestry basically deliver services in: policy advocacy, awareness, extension, trainings, skill development, networking; program implementation, infrastructure and enterprise development, as well as research and documentation.

d. Donors and their projects

The current role of donor agencies with regard to community forestry reflects a change in philosophy of assistance to the forestry sector in Nepal. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed an overwhelming emphasis on halting deforestation and increasing the forest cover in Nepal through what may be called 'technical forestry'. This emphasis was partly in response to a worldwide concern about environmental degradation in developing countries. While the philosophy of forestry practices in 1980s and 1990s, represent changes in development ideology not only Nepal, but also worldwide. The top-down governance and, finance-heavy assistance was not helpful and mostly detrimental to long term development goals. The emphasis shifted toward development work at the grassroots-level, and community forestry was born from this paradigm shift in a development world.

Since its inception, donor assistance was presumably significant in Nepalese community forestry (Ives, 2006:52). Initially World Bank and FAO, then a group of bilateral and international stakeholders - GTZ-Germany, DFID-UK, AusAid-Australia, DANNIDA-Denmark, USAID-United States, SDC-Swiss, CIDA-Canada, JICA-Japan, FINIDA-Finland, ADB-Asian Development Bank are the main international aid agencies assisting Nepalese governments to reformulate the policy and promote community forestry programs in different

locations. A detailed table of community forestry aid agencies in Nepal is presented in Annex-5.

Example: Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP):

The Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) is one of the bilateral support projects in Nepal, which has supported community forestry programs since 1990. Presently this project is implemented in three hill districts of Nepal; Dolakha, Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga. The current 'transition phase' (2008-2011) is focused on local governance and livelihoods issues of CF. The project has been operated within the framework under the agreement on Technical Cooperation between the Government of Nepal and the Swiss Federal Council signed on August 18, 1972. On behalf of the Government of Nepal, the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation and its Department of Forests, and from the Government of Switzerland, Intercooperation (IC), a non-profit making non-government Swiss Development Foundation is responsible for the implementation of the project. Intercooperation Bern and its representation office in Nepal provide the project team with the necessary guidance, expertise and back-up support for smooth functioning of the project. The current phase of the Project has been steered and coordinated through a national Project Coordination Committee (PCC) and District Coordination Committees (DCCs), which are formed in every project districts as well as Village Coordination Committees (VCCs) in selected VDCs of the project districts.

The project has supported the community forestry programs in the study district since 1990 to make the community forest user groups (CFUGs) and grassroot organizations- institutionally, economically and ecologically sustainable and to improve livelihoods of the disadvantaged groups through community forestry. The major areas of intervention include: pro-poor livelihoods, governance, forest resources promotion, sustainable forest management and enabling environment. The Project implementation follows a multi-partnership approach with government, non-governmental institutions, private sector agencies and local resource persons. Apart from the implementation of regular community forestry programs through different partners, the Project designs and implements action-research activities in different issues, mainly: sustainable forest management; pro-poor livelihood and policy development. According to the web page of the project, it focuses on gender and social equity, peace building and disadvantaged group's livelihood issues under the umbrella of CFUGs. A pro-poor entrepreneurship approach was initiated to bring disadvantaged people into forest product-based enterprises, and business of extra economic opportunities. Active and productive forest resource management and good governance at all levels are the basis of all pro-poor activities in CFUGs.

e. Forest based enterprises

Forestry sector policy in 2000 recognizes the role of private sector to promote forestry enterprises and their involvement in the controlled harvesting and distribution of wood and other forest products. Forest enterprises, business firms, individual suppliers, and contractors are allowed to get forest products under the prevailing rules and regulations mentioned in the FUG Work Plan, Forest Act of 1993 and Regulations of 1995. Legally, timber trade, fuel wood, medicinal plants, and a number of other non-timber forest products, such as resin, are controlled by the Forest Department through licenses. So, the interested bodies should get licenses in order to collect, harvest and transport forest products. The objective of licensing is to prevent the overexploitation of resources, control illegal felling or collection, and raise revenues through collection of royalties (Hill 1999).

f. Political parties

Political parties concern mostly on state matters and thus enact a player in forestry sector. Local politicians do not normally think of forest management as a political domain. Even if they do they present opportunist ideologies. For the politicians, forest users are voters who give votes in favor of the most top interested politicians. In practice, they treat genuine forest users and illegal doers equally. As a result, leaders of political parties (both in and outside government), exercise tremendous power and privileges when they work for their constituencies and the people who elect leaders hardly question the non-deliberative exercise of power. Political leaders use a variety of strategies to influence the community forestry processes including forest use and product marketing. The political leaders in the government have mostly been engaged in lobbying with other political parties, bureaucrats and foreign donor agencies to pursue their own political interests (Malla 2001). Three major political parties: Nepali Congress, Communist Party Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) and the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), have direct or indirect engagement in the current practices of community forestry in Nepal, are discussed in chapter six.

Chapter Five

Power Networks and Strong Stakeholders in Community Forestry

5.1. Quantitative power networks of community forestry stakeholders

As discussed in the methodological section, we used ‘individual relative power- X_i ’ and ‘dominance degree- D_i ’ calculation to identify the powerful group of stakeholders in each community forestry network. The stakeholders’ ranged up to the highest dominance degree value, are evaluated as powerful stakeholders (coded as ‘1’) and remaining stakeholders are considered as the group of weak stakeholders (coded as ‘0’) for qualitative assessment. The following tables (Table-5.1 from 1-12) present the summarized results of networks of twelve community forests under this study. The first two columns of each table show the number and typology of stakeholders in each case, and the remaining columns explain power status of the stakeholders’ based on three power elements: coercion, trust and incentives. The percentage value in the parentheses shows the maximum value that each stakeholder can get through the evaluation of all other stakeholders in the network which is called ‘individual relative power- X_i ’. The amount is evaluated for each power elements separately. The maximum strength of each power element is determined through the possible total answers what one stakeholder can get from others in the network. Hence, each stakeholder can accumulate maximum 100% value from each source of power in each network of studied community forests. The graphical results of quantitative power networks of the studied twelve community forests are shown in Annex-4.

Table-5.1: Quantitative power network of community forests (1-12)

1. Bheteripakha Community Forest User Group, Boch VDC-1, 2 and 3, Dolakha District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (40)	0 (27)	0 (10)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (30)	1 (67)	0 (0)
3	District Development Committee (DDC)	0 (10)	0 (12)	0 (10)
4	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)	0 (0)	1 (80)	1 (80)
5	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	0 (0)	0 (43)	1 (50)
6	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (10)
7	District Soil Con. Office (DSCO)	0 (0)	0 (20)	0 (10)
8	Ecology, agriculture and rural development society (ECARDS)	0 (0)	0 (30)	0 (20)
9	The Himalayan grassroots women's natural resource management association (HIMAWONTI)	0 (0)	0 (23)	0 (0)
10	Village Development Committee (VDC)	0 (0)	0 (10)	0 (0)
11	Bhimeshwar paper industry (P. Enterpirze)	0 (0)	0 (23)	0 (10)
<p>Note: Quantitative analysis shows that only four stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of eleven stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion: DFO and CFUGC • Trust: Swiss Project and CFUGC • Incentives: Swiss Project and ANSAB 				

2. Pachabhैया Community Forest User Group, Leknath Municipality-11, Kaski District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (83)	0 (50)	0 (33)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (66)	1 (94)	0 (33)
3	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (39)	0 (33)
4	Seed foundation	0 (0)	0 (17)	0 (33)
5	Institute of Forestry (IOF)	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (17)
6	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	0 (0)	0 (39)	0 (0)
7	The Himalayan grassroots women's natural resource management association (HIMAWONTI)	0 (0)	0 (22)	0 (0)

Note: Quantitative analysis shows that only two stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of seven stakeholders:

- **Coercion:** DFO and CFUGC
- **Trust:** CFUGC
- **Incentives:** None

3. Tiprikot Community Forest User Group, Hemja VDC 7, 8 and 9, Kaski District Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (75)	0 (50)	1 (25)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (25)	0 (92)	0 (0)
3	Institute of Forestry (IOF)/ Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya (ComForM)	0 (0)	0 (67)	1 (25)
4	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (25)	0 (0)
5	Village Development Committee (VDC)	0 (0)	0 (17)	0 (0)

Note: Quantitative analysis shows that three stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of five stakeholders:

- **Coercion:** DFO and CFUGC
- **Trust:** None
- **Incentives:** DFO and IOF/ComForM

4. Akala Community Forest User Group, Vash Municipality-1, Tanahun District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (60)	0 (40)	0 (20)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (40)	1 (80)	0 (0)
3	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (40)	0 (0)
4	NGO Network	0 (0)	0 (26)	0 (20)
5	District Agriculture Office (DAO)	0 (0)	0 (13)	0 (20)
6	District Livestock Office (DLO)	0 (0)	0 (13)	0 (20)

Note: Quantitative analysis shows that only two stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of six stakeholders:

- **Coercion:** DFO and CFUGC
- **Trust:** CFUGC
- **Incentives:** None

5. Yagyadole Community Forest User Group, Gokarna VDC, Kathmandu, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction	1 (55)	0 (70)	1 (44)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (33)	0 (59)	0 (0)
3	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC)	1 (33)	0 (26)	0 (11)
4	National Planning Commission (NPC)	1 (33)	0 (44)	1 (33)
5	District Forest Office (DFO)	0 (11)	0 (33)	0 (11)
6	District Development Committee (DDC)	0 (0)	0 (37)	0 (11)
7	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (4)	0 (0)
8	Political party- Nepali Congress (NC)	0 (0)	0 (30)	0 (0)
9	Political party- Communist Party Nepal, United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML)	0 (0)	0 (26)	0 (0)
10	Political party- the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)	0 (0)	0 (26)	0 (0)
<p>Quantitative analysis shows that only three stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of ten stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion: Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) • Trust: MoPR, CFUGC and National Planning Commission • Incentives: MoPR and National Planning Commission 				

6. Gitawor Community Forest User Group, Chatiwan VDC-8, Makawanpur District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (75)	0 (58)	1 (50)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	0 (0)	0 (58)	0 (0)
3	Range post level coordination committee (RLCC)	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (0)
4	Wood contractor	0 (0)	0 (33)	1 (25)
5	Village Development Committee (VDC)	0 (0)	0 (8)	0 (0)
<p>Note: Quantitative analysis shows that two stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of five stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion: DFO • Trust: None • Incentives: DFO and wood contractor 				

7. Raniban Community Forest User Group, Devghat VDC-4, Tanahun District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (60)	0 (33)	0 (20)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (20)	1 (73)	0 (0)
3	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (27)	0 (0)
4	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	0 (0)	0 (7)	0 (20)
5	JB Saw mill	0 (0)	0 (20)	0 (20)
6	Environment conservation society (ECOS)	0 (0)	0 (13)	0 (20)
<p>Quantitative analysis shows that only two stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of six stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion: DFO, CFUGC • Trust: CFUGC • Incentives: None 				

8. Piple-Pokhara Community Forest User Group, Hetauda Municipality-5, Makawanpur District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (70)	0 (50)	1 (20)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (30)	0 (53)	0 (0)
3	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)	0 (10)	0 (7)	0 (0)
4	District Development Committee (DDC)	0 (0)	0 (27)	0 (0)
5	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (23)	0 (0)
6	District Plant Resource Office (DPRO)	0 (0)	0 (30)	0 (10)
7	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	0 (0)	0 (40)	1 (50)
8	District forest coordination committee (DFCC)	0 (0)	0 (40)	1 (50)
9	Range post level coordination committee (RLCC)	0 (0)	0 (13)	0 (0)
10	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	0 (0)	0 (26)	0 (10)
11	Hetauda Municipality	0 (0)	0 (16)	0 (0)
<p>Quantitative analysis shows that only four stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of eleven stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion: DFO, CFUGC 				

- **Trust:** None
- **Incentives:** DFO, BISEP-ST and DFCC

9. Pashupati Community Forest User Group, Manahari VDC-3, Makawanpur District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (50)	1 (46)	1 (25)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	0 (12)	1 (58)	0 (0)
3	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)	0 (12)	0 (8)	0 (12)
4	Wood Contractor	0 (0)	0 (16)	0 (12)
5	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	0 (0)	1 (37)	1 (37)
6	District forest coordination committee (DFCC)	0 (0)	0 (25)	1 (25)
7	Range post level coordination committee (RLCC)	0 (0)	0 (17)	0 (0)
8	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	0 (0)	0 (17)	0 (12)
9	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (17)	0 (0)
Quantitative analysis shows that only four stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of nine stakeholders:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion: DFO • Trust: DFO, CFUGC • Incentives: BISEP-ST, DFCC and DFO 				

10. Parewashowri Community Forest User Group, Piple VDC-6, Chitwan District Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (71)	0 (43)	0 (14)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	0 (14)	0 (52)	0 (0)
3	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)	0 (14)	0 (14)	0 (14)
4	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (43)	0 (0)
5	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	0 (0)	0 (33)	1 (28)
6	District forest coordination committee (DFCC)	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (0)
7	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)	0 (0)	0 (19)	0 (14)
8	Kalika Saw Mill	0 (0)	0 (9)	0 (14)

Quantitative analysis shows that only two stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of eight stakeholders:

- **Coercion:** DFO
- **Trust:** None
- **Incentives:** BISEP-ST

11. Dudkoshi Community Forest User Group, Birendranagar Municipality-7 and 8, Chitwan District, Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (40)	0 (43)	0 (10)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (20)	1 (60)	0 (20)
3	District Development Committee (DDC)	0 (10)	0 (33)	0 (10)
4	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)	0 (10)	0 (7)	0 (10)
5	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (43)	0 (10)
6	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	0 (0)	0 (43)	1 (50)
7	District forest coordination committee (DFCC)	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (30)
8	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)	0 (0)	0 (23)	0 (10)
9	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	0 (0.00)	0 (33)	0 (10)
10	District Cottage and Small Industry Development Office (DCSIO)	0 (0.00)	0 (13)	0 (10)
11	Village Development Committee (VDC)	0 (0.00)	0 (7)	0 (10)

Quantitative analysis shows that only three stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of eleven stakeholders:

- **Coercion:** DFO, CFUGC
- **Trust:** CFUGC
- **Incentives:** BISEP-ST

12. Satanchuli Community Forest User Group, Bharatpur Municipality-1, Chitwan District Nepal

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (67)	0 (44)	0 (17)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	0 (0)	0 (67)	0 (17)
3	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (55)	0 (0)
4	Devghat Area Development Committee	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (17)
5	National Trust for Nature Conservation	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (17)

	(NTNC)			
6	Chitwan Saw Mill	0 (0)	0 (22)	0 (0)
7	Seed Tree Nepal	0 (0)	0 (11)	0 (17)
Quantitative analysis shows that only one stakeholder represents the most powerful group in the network of seven stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion: DFO • Trust: None • Incentives: None 				

The above given examples (Table-5.1, case 1-12), the network of twelve community forestry cases show very interesting results. Across cases, distribution of power elements is uneven and often concentrated within one to four stakeholders. Out of twelve CF networks, in eleven cases, the Forest Administration (District Forest Office-DFO) has the highest coercion values which clearly indicate their high coercive control in community forestry activities. The distribution of power elements 'trust' and 'incentive' seem more even in comparison to 'coercion'. The results reveal that in most of the cases users' committee and donors (in donor supported case) are highly trusted to the fact that they are regarded as very trustworthy by a large group of partners in the networks. Likewise, in the donor supported CFs, donors are in powerful position because of their various incentives to the network stakeholders. It is remarkable that in most of the cases stakeholders do not have the same impact on all power elements, i.e. stakeholders who are in powerful group due to coercion are not in powerful group due to trust and incentives or *vice versa*. In general, from the reference of above tables, we can say that coercion is the most decisive power elements in each network of community forest under this study. We can also say that, where the power practices are not coercively determined, they are the outcomes of a negotiation; which are power due to trust and incentives. Succeeding sections discuss the results of quantitative power networks.

5.5.1. Results of quantitative network analysis

The quantitative networks of community forestry give a clear indication that some stakeholders play leading roles, while others play supporting roles, or are just extras. Looking this unequal power relation specifically, it is central to our study because the distribution of power in the network influences community forestry activities and its outcome derived thereafter. In the following discussion, I present summarized overview of stakeholders based on their typologies and power status.

I. Typology of stakeholders

As discussed in chapter four, both state (governmental) and other (non-governmental) stakeholders have potentiality to influence the community forestry processes. While conducting complete network survey during field

visits in 2008 and 2009 a large numbers of stakeholders were identified, that have been directly involved in community forestry processes of the studied CFUGs (see Table-5.2):

Table-5.2: Stakeholders in the network of community forests

S.N.	Typology of stakeholders	Examples	Total number in twelve CFUGs
1.	Government (9)	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC)	1
2.		Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR)	1
3.		National Planning Commission (NPC)	1
4.		District Forest Office (DFO)	12
5.		District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	6
6.		District Livestock Office (DLO)	1
7.		District Agriculture Office (DAO)	1
8.		District Cottage and Small Industry Development Office (DCSIO)	1
9.		District Plant Resource Office (DPRO)	1
10.	Local Government (3)	District Development Committee (DDC)	4
11.		Municipality	1
12.		Village Development Committee (VDC)	4
13.	Users/Users' Committees and Federation (3)	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	12
14.		Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	11
15.		The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWONTI)	2
16.	Collaborative stakeholders (3)	District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC)	4
17.		Range post level coordination committee (RLCC)	3
18.		Devghat Area Development Committee (DADC)	1
19.	Donors/Donors' Project (4)	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)	1
20.		SNV funded Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	4
21.		Netherlands Development Organization (SNV)	4
22.		Danish funded collaborative research Project "Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya (ComForM)"	1

23.	Associations-NGOs (7)	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)	3
24.		Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	1
25.		Ecology, Agriculture and Rural Development Society (ECARDS)	1
26.		Environment Conservation Society (ECOS)	1
27.		Seed Tree Nepal	1
28.		Seed Foundation	1
29.		NGO network	1
30.	Political parties (3)	Nepali Congress (NC)	1
31.		Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) (CPN-UML)	1
32.		The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN(M))	1
33.	Private sector (3)	Saw mills	3
34.		Wood contractors	2
35.		Paper industry (Bhimeshwar paper industry)	1
36.	University/Research Institution (1)	Tribhuvan University, Institute of Forestry (IOF), Pokhara	1
Total			96

In the network of twelve community forests, were identified ninety-six stakeholders ranged from five to eleven in each respective case. Some stakeholders such as Forest Administration, users' committee, users' federation (e.g.FECOFUN) were repeated across cases, therefore, just thirty-six are belongs to both governmental and non-governmental organizations: government (9), local government (3), users' committees and federations (3), collaborative institutions (3), donors/ donors' project (4), associations-NGOs (7), political parties (3), private sector (3) and university (1).

II. Power status

By using the quantitative analysis (dominance degree-Di calculation, see details in chapter three), stakeholders in each network of community forest were further classified in to the 'group of powerful (i.e. coded as '1') and 'group of weak' (i.e. coded as '0') (see details in Table-5.1:1-12). The summarized result of the powerful stakeholders is presented in Table-5.3.

Table-5.3: The powerful group of stakeholders in the network of studied CFUGs

S.N.	Typology of stakeholders	Powerful stakeholders	Powerful cases		
			Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	Governmental	District Forest Office (DFO)	11 (12)	1 (12)	4 (12)
2		Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)

3		National Planning Commission (NPC)		1 (1)
Local Governmental		None		
4	Collaborative stakeholders	District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC)		2 (4)
5	Users/Users' committees and federation	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	7 (12)	7 (12)
6	Donors/donors' project	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)		1 (1)
7		SNV funded Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)		1 (4)
8		University of Copenhagen funded collaborative research Project "Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya (ComForM)"		1(1)
9	Associations-NGOs	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)		1 (1)
Political parties		None		
10	Private sector	Wood contractors		1 (2)
University/Research Institution		None		

Note: The number in the parentheses shows the total number of studied CF, where the respective stakeholder was present in the network.

From the thirty-six different typologies of stakeholders identified in twelve community forests network, I have extracted ten stakeholders as 'powerful group' by using 'dominance degree value' (see Table 5.1:1-12 and Table-5.3). Further grouping of ten stakeholders were done based on the classification of stakeholders (see chapter four for classification of stakeholders in this study) and the results were presented in Table-5.4. According to the figure, Forest Administration, users' committees and donors are the most common group of powerful stakeholders in the network of twelve community forests. The other groups such as: other government stakeholders, NGOs, collaborative stakeholders and private sectors secure powerful position only in one to two cases. Although being a partner in the networks, stakeholders groups such as: users' federations, association and university/research institutions seem weak in community forestry processes.

Table-5.4: Group of the most powerful stakeholders in the network of studied CFUGs (TN=12)

Stakeholders	Observed cases	Powerful cases			Total powerful cases
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives	
Forest Administration	12	11	1	4	11
Other Gov. Stakeholders	8	1	1	2	1
Users Committees	12	7	7	0	9
Users Federation	11	0	0	0	0
Donors	6	0	1	6	6
Associations (NGOs)	7	0	0	1	1
Local government	6	0	0	0	0
Collab. stakeholders	7	0	0	2	2
Political parties	1	0	0	0	0
Private sector	6	0	0	1	1
University/ Research Institution	1	0	0	0	0
Total		12	7	8	

The identification of powerful groups of stakeholders by using the quantitative network analysis is just serving as an indicator in the power process. In the next step of our research, by using standardized questionnaire, we investigated and validated the power elements of the most powerful groups of stakeholders in each community forestry network by written documents, field observation and external sources like statistics or reports. In general, three stakeholders: Forest Administration, users' committees and donors' field project, are dominating more than 90% of the studied community forests networks. Therefore, in the fore-coming section, I will try to bring detailed power assessment of these three stakeholders together with specific power processes based on three power elements: coercion, trust and incentives in community forestry cases. In some community forest networks, stakeholders which, fall under the 'weak group' due to quantitative power network but are playing influential roles in reality (e.g. political parties and the private sector stakeholders) are also considered for further assessment.

5.2. Qualitative power assessment in community forestry networks

5.2.1. Coercion

Coercion is one of the dominant power elements in the network. By definition, by using coercive capacity, powerful stakeholder (s) in the network tries to alternate the behavior of a weak stakeholder (s) without recognizing a weak stakeholder's wills in community forestry processes. Here, coercion is defined as the application of direct pressure through communicating adverse consequences of non-compliance to encourage specific behaviors of stakeholders. Coercion stems from the expectations of weaker stakeholders who will be punished by the most powerful stakeholders, if the former ones fail to obey to the order of the most powerful ones. Providing approval for a specific task, providing uncheckable information, imposing threats, non-decisions, sanctioning the community forestry activities and at the top imposing control through regulatory instruments and non-legal decisions are the most common features of coercion in community forestry processes. Nonetheless, the strengths of coercive potential of stakeholders depend on the perceived probability of the coercive act by the most powerful stakeholder and the level of punishment or threat they can exert. In comparison to the other features of coercion 'threat' will result in lower levels of compliance than other types of influence (Payan and Nevin 2006).

As we see in the quantitative power networks of studied community forests (Table-5.1 in section 5.1) the distribution of coercion value is very uneven across the twelve community forestry power networks. In the following section, based on the qualitative information, the discussion will be focused on the reasoning of coercion of the most powerful stakeholders across cases.

5.2.1.1. Forest Administration and coercion in the network

Forest policy documents such as Forest Act of 1993 and the Forest Regulations of 1995 define distinct territories through which the Forest Administration penetrates directly to the community level on forest related issues. Under policy documents, Forest Administrations not only claim territory but also prescribe and intensify the jurisdictional authority by enacting and enforcing regulations and by expanding its bureaucratic apparatus (Morris 1998: 265, Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 388, Barber 1989: 34). Policy documents enacted from 1960s onwards in Nepalese forestry sector indicate that there is continuity in the formulation and prescription of forest laws and regulations. The stated objectives of enacted policies were preliminary improving forest management and providing access to forest resources of the people. However, due to lack of compliance and inconsistencies in laws and regulations which served as technical problems require Forest Administrations' attention and engagement

in the forestry processes. The following discussion presents how Forest Administration has been continuously engaged in constructing the problem as 'technical' specifically by giving the example of Forest Act 1993, Regulation 1995 and other policy documents in the context of community forestry processes in Nepal. The chronology of forestry policy documents is presented in Table-5.5.

Table-5.5: Chronology of forestry policy documents in Nepal

Date	Policy documents	Effects on ground
1957	Private Forest Nationalization Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationalize all Forest of Nepal, no compensation • Indiscriminate cutting of forests • Conversion of private forest into farmland in the Terai plains
1961	Forest Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorization of forest • Forestry officials empowered • Operationalizing state control
1967	Forest Conservation Act (special management act)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicial powers to forestry officials • Strict regulation of peoples' right to forest products,
1976	National Forestry Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift of focus to hill forest • Recognition of people's participation in forest management • Concept of village Panchayat Forest
1977	Amendment of Forest Act 1961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest
1978	Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of national forest to village Panchayat (elected village body) • Formal recognition of rights of local people for forest management
1982	Decentralization Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority to district and village Panchayats • Promotion of users' committee concept
1987	Revision of PF and PPF Regulation 1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earnings from Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest channeled back to the concerned Panchayats
1989	25 Years Master Plan for the Forestry Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation of program approach in the forestry Sector • Provision of users' committees for forest management • Detailed planning and vision developed for each aspects of forestry development
1993	Forest Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of quasi-judicial authority of forestry officials reduced • FUGs empowered for forest management • Act oriented towards people-based management

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal basis for formation of Forest User Groups
1995	Forest Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legalization of the process of CF • Process of CF outlined • Forestry staff's role changed from custodial to facilitator • FUGs were able to be registered in the District Forest Office
1999	Revision of Forest Act, 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control mechanism for violation of operational plans by FUG members developed • Provision for spending the FUG fund in various developmental activities
2000	Forestry Sector Policy, with emphasis on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revision of CF Directives, 1994 2. Revision of MPFS, 1988 3. Government decision on new concept of forest management in Terai, Inner-Terai and Siwalik regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for compulsory inclusion of growing stock of CF and annual allowable cut in operational plans • Collaborative management of national forests on the basis of the landscape planning approach • Management of degraded and open forest areas in the Terai and Inner-Terai regions • Conservation of Siwalik forests
2002	CF directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guideline for CF formation processes, forest management
2003	Collaborative forest management guideline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was brought in to implement the new forest policy for the Terai with limited rights given to local communities compared with community forestry
2005	Forest inventory guideline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compulsory guideline for inventory of community forests was enforced with mandatory technical forestry processes without mechanisms to incorporate local knowledge and deliver services.
2009	Community Forestry Guideline (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guideline for CF formation processes, forest management and role of service providers

Source: Department of Forest (DoF) 2010¹²

Acts and Regulations illustrated in Table-5.5 provide authority to the Forest Administration officials to control and also facilitate community forestry processes. Authority is thus the expected and legitimate possession of power (Lasswell and Kaplan 1952:133). It is 'expected' because the actual power

¹² <http://www.dof.gov.np/>

structure does not necessarily coincide with that described in the political formula (such as Forest Act) and 'legitimate' because the formula is the source and basis of legitimacy. Hence, Forest Administration has authority to say that they actually has no power but that the Act and Regulations assigns them power. Furthermore, the possession of authority is itself effective power, whose weight varies with intensity of the situation in which it is exercised. Collectively such rules constitute more a framework for the management of forests rather than a straitjacket that defines local forest management practices (Agrawal 2001:18). Here, we can take a example of resource poor and resource rich CFs, in resource rich CFs exercise of authority is naturally more intensive because of the 'expected incentives'.

Forest policy documents such as: legislations, formal definitions, Work Plans, and guidelines, comprise only parts of the institutional framework, while their implication in day to day activities of the individual forest users, can only be possible to measure their effectiveness. Frequently, formal rules and regulations are not known; if known not understood; and if understood sometimes ignored. Clearly, such rules and regulations, if not known, have little effect; if not understood mainly not informed-and sometimes even confound-individual choice making; and are ignored when they mean nothing to the cost-benefit calculus of individuals. Community forestry approach clearly does not suffer from lack of legislation, in terms of sheer volume. What is not so clear is how successful the articulation of community forestry legislation-well intentioned as it now may be – has been, and what explains the variations in outcomes observed in diverse locations under the purview of various community forestry efforts (Varughese 1999).

Various studies in community forestry postulated ideas why Forest Administration controlled the formation of users' groups and developing the Work Plan of forest management (see Gilmour and Fisher 1991, Ribot 2002, Shrestha 2005). Shrestha (2005:220) mentions four key reasons of such control: firstly, the process was controlled because it was a pragmatic necessity of the DFO, which is required to apply uniform legislative guidelines in practice. Secondly, the field staff may have controlled the process to achieve annual target within a given time limit and resources constraints so that they could receive incentives (or escape official recrimination). Thirdly, the DFO controlled the process because at the very beginning, the processes were complex and not easily understandable for the majority of illiterate users. And finally, the control may have been rooted in the culture and structure of the forest bureaucracy, because despite the change in policy there have been no significant changes in the conventionally trained forestry staff, upwardly accountable and target-oriented bureaucracy with the institutional priority on forest protection. Then, it was the issue of necessity, and legislative and institutional requirements that made the DFO's ownership and control over the handing over process inevitable. This is an empirical challenge to many scholars who frequently argue that rational participation of local forest users in planning

and decision making processes are the success factors of community forestry. The underlying issue is essential on the custodial culture and scientific tradition of the forest bureaucracy that heavily informs the policy and legislation, rather than the problems of the implementation (ibid: 220).

The implementation of the community forestry programs requires decision-making at various levels, ranging from Ministerial decisions through decisions of seniors bureaucrats in the Forest Ministry, Forest Department and decisions by DFOs, down to decisions by the field staff. The decision-making authority to the Forest Administration increases their power status in the community forestry processes. Furthermore, they also collaborate with other stakeholders, who are mainly donors, forest users, political parties and private sectors in order to secure their positions in community forestry processes. Thus, the coercive potential of the Forest Administration comes mainly from regulatory instruments, technical requirements of forest management, donors' assistance in community forest management and collation building with other stakeholders. The following section discusses how the Forest Administration applies different instruments and means to control the forestry activities on the ground.

I. Coercion based on regulatory instruments

Legal documents such as: Work Plans of the FUGs, the 1993 Forest Act and the 1995 Forest Regulations serve as the enabling binding rules for community forestry in Nepal. In addition, forestry sector policy in 2000, central-level circulars such as: ministerial orders, cabinet-level decision and departmental guidelines are the strong regulatory instruments being used by the Forest Administration while implementing community forestry. However, implementation of such rules in practice is increasingly reinterpreted in ways that limit devolution power over community forests and various legislations seem to contradict each other and create confusion in community forestry implementation. The following section deals with different features of coercion based on regulatory instruments:

a. Work Plan- a legally binding contract as sources of coercion :

Before forestland was formally handed over, a user group should have had a Work Plan and Constitution that would have been approved by the District Forest Office. A Work Plan is the legally binding contract between the District Forest Office and forest user group committee, and it governs use and management of a community forest. Community forestry handing processes get formalized when the District Forest Officer and Chairman of a specific community forest user group (CFUG) committee sign the contract and the Officer grants the certificate of a CF handed over to the forest user group. The plan expires after five to ten years and must be amended or renewed. Without a valid Work Plan, CFUG cannot legally harvest or otherwise utilize forest resources. During the interview with District Forest Offices in the cases studied

districts, all foresters have the same understanding that guide forest management and maintain sustainable utilization of forests, which are the two most important uses of the Work Plan (IDFO1-12 2008).

Box- 5.1: Provision relating to community forestry in Forest Act of 1993

Article 25 of Forest Act 1993- Handover of the community forest:

1. The District Forest Officer may handover any part of a national forest to a users' group in the form of a community forest as prescribed entitling to develop, conserve, use and manage the forest, sell and distribute the forest products independently by fixing their prices according to Work Plan. While handing over a community forest, the District Forest Officer shall issue a certificate of alienation of the community forest.
2. The District Forest Officer may constitute a users' group as prescribed by mobilizing users and provide technical and other assistance required to prepare the Work Plan for the purpose of sub-section (1).

Article 26 of Forest Act 1993- Amendment in the Work Plan

1. As per requirement the users' group may make timely amendments in the Work Plan related to the management of the community forest, and shall inform the District Forest Officer regarding such amendments.
2. If any amendment made in the Work Plan by the users' group pursuant to subsection (1), is considered likely to affect adversely in the environment in a significant manner, the District Forest Officer may direct the users' group not to implement such amendment within thirty days from the date when he receives such information. It shall be the duty of the users' group to comply with such directives.

Source: Forest Act 1993

Ideally, the arrangements in the Work Plan and Constitutions are not imposed from the Forest Administration but they are negotiated agreements that rest upon a solid consensus, which are a product of a through and often lengthy dialogue within the community, and then between the community and Forest Administration officials. However, in practice, the process laid out for implementing the contracts effectively in CF, reinforced Forest Administrations' control over forest resources. The content analysis of twelve different Work Plans and Constitutions in the case study CFUGs, prove that all of them were nearly identical. As authorized, their role in the initial stage to handover and to operate normally, involvement of Forest Administration in the Work Plan preparation and also the same office is authorized to approve the plan provides them with ample scope of authority abuse and rent-seeking opportunities. As the District Forest Office (DFO) retains the authority to approve the Work Plan, there are instances when the staff did not give sufficient or accurate information about the new requirements related to forest inventory and annual auditing (ICFUGC1-12 2008, 2009). Hence, forest user groups forced to accept any conditions offered by forestry staffs in order to get approval of the Work Plan.

b. Issuing threat: suspending forestry activities and taking back the handed over community forests:

To impose its interests, Forest Administration most likely uses various ways of threat through regulatory instruments, such can be either soft as for example; suspending activities of community forestry, issuing warnings (see Box-5.2) or hardly trying to take back the community forests (see Box-5.3). Threat is considered as the last resort or the easiest means of establishing control over people and resources when Forest Administration is unable to control forest and people through negotiation (Peluso 1993:201).

Box- 5.2: Suspending the forestry activities

Parewashowri CFUG, Chitwan: example 1

- 15th May 2006- Forest Ranger noticed that the FUG had felled green standing trees without the prior approval of DFO.
- On the same day, the Ranger sent a letter to the FUG users' committee mentions that the committee required sending written justification within 5 days.
- Users' committee has submitted a report on 20th May 2006 to the Ranger.
- The case is settled after having informal negotiation between the Forest Ranger and users' committee.

Parewashowri CFUG, Chitwan: example 2

- 22nd Nov. 2007- The forest patrolling team of District Forest Office (DFO) found some felled green trees within the area of FUG.
- The team reported the case to the DFO and also sent a letter to the users' committee asking the reasons why FUG felled trees without prior approval of the DFO.
- 9th Oct. 2007- District Forest Officer issued a letter to the users' committee asking to stop activities within the CF.
- 2nd Feb. 2008- FUG appealed the case to the DFO, FECOFUN and right activists.
- 25th Feb. 2008- District Forest Officer took back his decision and asked to carry out regular activities without answering what was wrong in the previous decision.

Source: Records of Parewashowri CFUG, field survey, Nepal 2008

According to the provisions made in Forest Act of 1993 (section 27) and Forest Regulation of 1995 (rule 37), Forest Administration can take-back control of the handed over forest if she/he determines that the Work Plan is not being followed or that the group is following destructive practices. The legislations include the following provision:

- ✓ **Rule 37 (sub-rule1):** In case it is learnt that the user group has been unable to work according to the Work Plan or has done anything that has a substantial adverse effect on the environment or has not complied with the Forest Act, this Regulation and the conditions prescribed by the Government, the District Forest Officer shall depute an employee as soon as possible as a result of an immediate inspection and take actions as follow based on the report.

- Sub-rule 1a: In case the report shows that the users' group has been unable to work according to the Work Plan or has done anything that has a substantial adverse effect on the environment or has not complied with the Act, this Regulation and the conditions prescribed by His Majesty's Government, an explanation shall be demanded from the users' group by providing it a time limit of Fifteen days.
- Sub-rule 1b: In case the explanation submitted by the users' group is not satisfactory or in case the immediate inspection report holds a resumption of the community forest as appropriate, the District Forest Officer may resume such Forest and cancel the registration of the concerned users' group.
- Sub-rule 1c: The concerned users' group shall be informed about the resumption of the community forest and the cancellation of its registration within Fifteen days.
- ✓ **Rule 37 (sub-rule2)**: Any users' group dissatisfied with the decision to resume the Community Forest and cancel its registration pursuant to sub-rule (1) may file a complaint with the concerned Regional Forest Director within 35 days from the date of receipt of the notice of such a decision.
- ✓ **Rule 37 (sub-rule3)**: The decision on a complaint filed pursuant to sub-rule (2) shall be given within Ninety days from the date when it is filed.
- ✓ **Forest Act (Section 27, sub-section 2)**: The decision made by the Regional Forest Director in respect to such complaint shall be final.

One important example in this context is given below: Box-5.3. The case of Pachabhaiya community forest which is also under our case study:

Box- 5.3: Taking back the handed over community forests

Example: Pachabhaiya CFUG, Kaski

On 11th. Dec. 1998, during their regular monitoring, District Forest Officer (DFO) noticed that FUG had carried silvicultural operations without prior official approval. On the same day, DFO sent an inquiry letter to the FUG executive committee. After three days, he assigned his subordinate to investigate the case. The investigation found out that the FUG carried out silvicultural operations in a forest block which was not prescribed for the respective works taking place. After a few weeks, on 11th. Feb. 1999, the handed over forest was taken back by DFO.

The Forest Act 1993 allows a forest user group to appeal to the regional forest director against the district office decision to take back community forestry as a governmental forest. The defunct Pachabhaiya users' committee appealed to the Regional Forest Director to reclaim the forest as community forests. Within two months of this appeal, the Regional Director asked the District Forest Officer to reinvestigate the case once again. At that time, the District Forest Officer who took the decision was already transferred to another district. In June 2000, the forest user group was prepared to send the case to the Court. While at the same time, the new DFO also started negotiations with the FUG, finally after a series of discussions with the villagers and forming a new users' committee when the forest was re-handed over at the end of 2000.

Source: Records of Pachabhaiya CFUG, Field survey, Nepal 2008

The example given above clearly reveals that restrictions placed on the use of community forests largely derive from the power that the Forest Administration has over user groups. Therefore, the Work Plan imprints the idea of state control on the forest landscape and is an instrument through which the Forest Administration reconfirms its territorial jurisdiction over land and people. While handing over forests to villagers, the Forest Administrations has retained its right to forest ownership and provided villagers only a tenancy right from which they can be easily evicted if any condition of the tenancy is broken (Shrestha 1999).

In the studied districts, more than dozens of community forests are under a scanning process of the Forest Administration to take back from communities citing the latter's poor performances on forest management, fund misuse and violation of the approved Work Plan. The interviewed forest officers claimed that the forest users' groups failed to protect handed over community forests and committee leaders themselves involved in encroaching upon forest land and selling timbers to the timber mafias (IDFO1-12 2009). Hence the process and chaos of 'forest handover and taken back' confirmed that through the written agreement on Work Plan and Constitution, the forest agency provides villagers a set of obligations and a tighter control on forest use rather than an independent decision making authority.

c. Use limitation as an example of coercion:

In the Constitution and Work Plan of studied FUGs, penalties were prescribed for the use of forest products without FUG committee sanctions or without prior approval from the District Forest Office. Even if the FUG allows collecting the products, they cannot sale to the market and use rights are non-transferable. For example, timber is the most valuable commercial commodity in the resource rich community forests. However, even after handing over the CF, again despite no basis in law, Forest Administration imposes control on tree harvesting, which is already approved in their Work Plan through issuing permits and second 'hammer marks' on the timber (Bampton and Cammaert, 2006). As prescribed by the Forest Regulation of 1995, the decision to harvest a major forest product must come through foresters with a proper rubber-stamp in order to mark trees for felling, order to collect logs, bring them to depots as well as order to saw logs and sell it. There are also use limitations, permits¹³, collection bans of forest product other then timber. For example: rotational grazing, silvicultural operation in prescribed blocks, fuel wood collection only in a certain time period are the common examples of use limitations in the studied community forests (see details on chapter seven, section 7.2). Forest Administration thus continues to be directed toward control on forest users' activities through use limitations.

¹³ Annex 16 of the Forest Regulation provides the format for issuing permits.

d. Prohibition as an example of coercion:

The forestry legislations and provisions in the approved Work Plan of the studied community forests have clear specifications that the user group shall not take any of the following functions in the community forest, besides those functions which are prohibited by the Work Plan. Through applying regulatory compliance, communities are entrusted to use forests but only in such ways which are marginally productive to them.

Box- 5.4: Prohibited functions in the community forests

- To destroy the forest or mortgage or otherwise transfer the ownership of the land covered by the community forest.
- To clear forest areas for agricultural purposes, build huts and houses
- To take any action which may cause soil erosion,
- To capture or kill wild-life in violation of prevailing laws,
- To extract or transport rocks, soil, boulders, pebbles, sand etc.
- Shall not collect, sell and distribute products which are not pursuant to the Work Plan
- The Forest Products shall not be collected, and distributed exceeding the quantity of collection and distribution specified in Work Plan for the whole year.
- Shall not collect and transport forest products without approval from FUG committee
- Lighting fire in the forest
- Charcoal making
- Non-users are not allowed to bring their livestock inside the forest, users can bring their animals only in the specified blocks
- Entering the forest except allocated time period
- Selling forest products allocated for domestic consumption
- Shall not collect products other than specified in the permission
- Destroy seedlings, saplings in the plantation areas.
- Function which are forbidden in the prevailing forest and related legislations.

Source: Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008

e. Controlling financial transaction as an example of coercion:

The Forest Act and Regulations provide for oversight of user groups by requiring group accounts to be audited and the annual report of the performance of the group and status of the forest to be submitted to the District Forest Office. Across the cases, FUG has operated their bank account through the joint signatures of the two officials of the group (generally, chairman and secretary) designated by the users' group. However, the authorized officer from the local Forest Administration may inspect the accounts of income and expenditure maintained by the users' group from time to time, which have the capacity to control the activities of user groups if they find some misappropriation of the group fund. In addition, users' committee should submit their yearly audit report to the local Forest Administration.

f. Coercion through 'ban on community forest handover':

The ministerial decision taken on 28th April 2000, was another attempt where the Forest Minister had suspended the handover of the management of forests in Terai region, underlying failure for the underprivileged communities' benefits and need for policy revision. After facing criticism from every corner, on fifth October 2008, the Forest Ministry has decided to resume the handover of the community forests to the forest users groups, which were registered to District Forest Office before June 2006, in Terai region. But so far, none of the already registered groups received community forests formally. One of the forest user groups (Satanchuli CFUG, Chitwan) of this study, faced the problem of getting formal handover although it was registered prior 2006 at the District Forest Office, Chitwan.

g. Coercion by imposing 'ban on tree felling':

The forest ministry in September of 1999 had taken a decision to ban harvesting of all green trees mostly in Terai districts, based on the illegal harvesting of trees. A follow-up circular, issued in September 1999 requested the District Forest Offices to stop "marking, felling, selling and transporting tree products from community forests for commercial purpose (DoF 1999). These directly contradict of the Forest Act and Regulations in fact allow user groups to sell their forest products. The ban on felling of live standing trees and its associated ban on commercial sale of community forest products were later revised due to the pressures from community forestry user groups, their alliances and advocates, which also included protests and demonstrations in the capital and districts.

After 10 years, on 21 May 2010, the Nepalese Ministry of Forest took similar decision by referring rampant deforestation in community and government management forest in Terai. The Ministry has banned cutting, selling and export of trees and other forest products for commercial purpose from all types of forests (see Box-5.5).

Box- 5.5: Ministry outlaws tree-cutting

Source: Kantipur news, 27 May 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu - A high level meeting of officials of the Forest Ministry on 21 May decided to ban cutting, selling and exporting of trees and other forest products for commercial purposes in community and government managed forests. The decision is taken in the wake of rampant forest encroachment and timber felling by smugglers. The ministry has instructed the district forest offices of 74 districts to stop felling, sale and export of trees and other forest products until a team formed by the Ministry prepares a final report after the investigation of the cases of rampant felling of forests in Terai and other parts of the country.

Later, after 10 days, because of the pressure from timber entrepreneurs, the Ministry of Forest decided to lift the ban, and exceptional was for six districts where rampant deforestation was observed. The ministry claimed that on 21

May they took the harsh decision because of unabated deforestation and illegal encroachment of forestland reported in most districts in Terai and the Chure range in recent months. However, amidst severe criticism over widespread deforestation, the cabinet meeting of Nepalese government on 16 June 2010 again slapped a ban on felling trees across the country for two months, and also decided to form a committee to investigate deforestation and formulate the new policy (see Box-5.6).

Box- 5.6: Nepal bans logging for two months

Source: : Kantipur news, 18 June 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu- Nepal has banned people from cutting down trees for two months (mid June to mid August 2010) after reports of massive deforestation in its lawless southern plains, a government spokesman said Friday. The government made the ruling after receiving reports that more than 100,000 hectares (250,000 acres) of forest had been razed in the past few months alone, he told AFP. "We have received reports of tree-felling on a massive scale and illegal trading in forest wood," Information Minister Shankar Pokharel said.

During the two weeks of time period, from 16-29 June 2010, the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Means (CNRM) of the Constituent Assembly (CA) of Nepal has conducted field inspection both in community forests and national forest across the country and publicized several evidences of involvement of users' committee members, Forest Administration officials, political leaders and timber mafias on illegal harvesting of high value timber species. Based on their report and intensive media reporting, the Government again imposed a ban of timber harvesting for another two months from mid August to mid October 2010 (see Box-5.7).

Box- 5.7: Government extends ban on logging for two months

Source: Kantipur news, 30 June 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu- The government has extended the ban on logging and cutting-down of trees by two more months. Two weeks back, the government had banned people from cutting down trees for two months. A Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday decided to extend the ban to stop the massive deforestation in the country, Minister for Information and government Spokesperson Shankar Pokharel said.

h. Informal use of authority as an example of coercion:

The existence of authority systems provides considerable discretion to the Forest Administration staff like District Forest Officers and permits the substitution of their preferences for that of subordinates or, more importantly, of forest users. Opportunities abound for those who wish to abuse their position of authority or determining powers for personal gain. Studies quote forest users as having said that Forest Administration staffs, who have been entrusted with 'licensing and policing' roles, have long-established methods of carrying out their jobs with a degree of graft and corruption (Stone 1989, Gilmour and Fisher 1991). Such staff has also a strong vested interest in

maintaining the *status quo*. The existence of unequal decision-making capabilities potentially gives incentives and opportunities to foresters to exploit the efforts of forest users and they (forest users) are forced to accept any decisions from foresters even it is beyond the existing laws.

Furthermore, in the resource rich area, forestry staff seeks and develops an alliance with the elites of users' committees (in most of the cases chairman and secretary) to serve their interests in having control over regular sources of income (see Box 5.8 and 5.9). The alliance and personal relations maintained with forest officials enable committee members to retain their position and continue benefiting (Paudyal 2008). On the other hand, local forest officials benefit cash and non-cash incentives derived from the committee as reward for their involvement in such alliances. Therefore, honest implementation of CF concept also depends upon the honesty of foresters.

Box- 5.8: Foresters deny abetting logging

Source: Kantipur news, 13 July 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Gulariya - Bardiya District Forest Office, breaching the law, has allowed locals to fell trees in a forest of Tepari that was handed over to community two weeks earlier. The office denies the charge. The rule is that a forest office can grant such a permit to the community concerned only one year after a forest handover. Following the decision, the forest adjoining Nepal-India border has allegedly seen a massive scale of deforestation. The Forest Ranger has claimed only eleven trees to cut in the forest. The District Forest Officer said the office could issue felling permit at any time as the forest has been handed over to the community. "There is no rule mentioning the time frame for the issuance of the permit," he argued. The incident comes at a time when the government is investigating rampant deforestation throughout the country. The first-hand study conducted in various parts of the country by panels formed under the parliamentary Natural Resources and Means Committee have already implicated forest officials of their involvement in deforestation along with timber smugglers.

Box- 5.9: Forest office behind deforestation drive

Source: Himalayan times, 3 July 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Itahari: The District Forest Office was found involved in felling of Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Saj (*Terminalia tomentosa*) and Khayar (*Acacia catechu*) trees remaining in the forests of Charkoshe forest area in Sunsari district. Such valuable trees were found felled down in the inner community forests far away from the road. This was revealed after the immediate study of the forest, and involvement of the political parties, District Forest Office and community forest officials was found, said Constituent Assembly Natural Resources and Means Committee (NMRC) members. Community forest officials have admitted that the District Forest Office itself ordered community forest officials of Sunsari to fell trees down

II. Coercion based on technical rationale

a. Forest inventory as an example:

According to the forestry sector policy of 2000 all community forest user groups must complete a detailed technical forest inventory as part of their Work Plan. The Community Forest Inventory Guidelines (CFIG), first prepared in 2000, were updated in 2004 beyond the inventory, giving conservative silvicultural prescriptions based on Annual Allowable Cuts (AACs) as a percentage of estimated existing Mean Annual Increment (MAI). These policy documents confirm the supremacy of ‘scientific’ knowledge and concern only for forest conservation. This increases the control of ‘expert’ through enormous opportunities to the foresters to interpret the forest stock and fix the annual allowable harvest trees (ICFUGC1-12 2009 and 2009). The amendment also directs CFUGs to spend 25% of their income on forest development activities, although a clear definition of what forest development activities are remain elusive within the local Forest Administration and users’ committee infer this technical terms as per circumstances.

The forest inventory requirement made by the Forest Administration ensures a role for foresters and is a way to: i) restrict activities of CFUGs, ii) set quantitative and therefore ‘scientific’ limits on harvesting within forests, and iii) place CFUG under great control of DFOs. The forestry sector policy together with forest inventory guidelines effectively constraints CFUGs by making them vulnerable to legal actions if they try to actively utilize their forests under an expired Work Plan. Because the local Forest Administration only recognizes the legitimacy of inventories completed by their staff, the policy also ensures that user groups are dependent on the Forest Administration. The forest inventory requirements thus increase the coercive potential of Forest Administration by giving them key oversight roles which they can use as a control tool to the forest user groups.

The Forest Administration justifies the forest inventory requirement as vital to its forest protection goals. During the field interview, District Forest Officers claim the policy will increase users’ efficiency in managing forest and thereby improve user groups’ ability to meet their basic needs for forest products (IDFO1-12 2008 and 2009) . In the forest user groups under this study, technical forest inventories are beyond the capacity of use groups, requiring government foresters or forestry consultants to prepare the forest inventory. However, in practice, because of resource constraints, local forest offices cannot keep up with demand for Work Plan amendment as per the new rule. In effect, the local Forest Administration uses this opportunity as a bargaining tool for more resources with central Forest Administration and donors and even with forest user groups. It is a clear example of coercive action of the foresters towards local forest user groups through highly regulative technical requirements.

b. Silvicultural operations as an example:

Regardless of Forest Acts and Regulations, in some cases the district level Forest Administration also formulates technical operational guidelines prescribing more stringent rules in regard to community forestry operations (see Box-5.10)

Box- 5.10: Technical directives of Forest Administration

Case: Tanahun District Forest Office Directives in relation to silvicultural operation in community forests

Regulations to be fulfilled prior to silvicultural operations (SIO):

1. In order to conduct SIO, the concerned FUG should request technical support from the local Range-Post.
2. The Ranger in the respective *Ilaka* (unit) Forest Office must review the Work Plan of the concerned FUG and give opinion to the *Ilaka* Forest Officer in this regard.
3. After receiving opinions from the Ranger, *Ilaka* Forest Officer will send the Ranger in the FUG to provide technical service to the FUG in SIO work plan (i.e. proposal) preparation.

In case of singling and thinning including tree felling:

4. The *Ilaka* Forest Officer will give directive to the FUG to submit a report to *Ilaka* Forest Office once the FUG with the help of the Ranger has marked with FUG stamp any dead, dying, diseased and suppressed trees to be removed for technical reasons. After receiving the report from the FUG if the *Ilaka* Forest Officer deems it right to allow SIO then the *Ilaka* Forest Officer should forward the file with his opinion to the concerned District Forest Officer. The District Forest Officer retains right to approve or not approve the SIO proposal.

In case of weeding and cleaning:

5. The *Ilaka* Forest Officer shall ask to the FUG to submit a report to the *Ilaka* Forest Office with details about the proposed method of SIO. After reviewing the report if the *Ilaka* Forest Officer deems it right to allow SIP activity, then he/she will approve the SIO proposal submitted by the FUG. The *Ilaka* Forest Officer retains the right to approve or not to approve the SIO proposal. If approved he/she will forward a copy of such approval to the District Forest Office for notification.

Regulations to be fulfilled during harvesting and distribution of forest product under silvicultural operation:

Ranger and/or Forest Guard will provide supervision while the FUG undertakes SIO activities. While selling and distributing the cut and/or removed forest product under the SIO the FUG will provide prior notification to the District Forest Office and *Ilaka* Forest Office.

Source: District Forest Office-Tanahun, field survey, Nepal 2008

The technical specification mentioned in Box-5.10 specifies that only those FUGs with an approved Work Plan from the District Forest Office will be permitted to undertake silvicultural operations. The word directive clearly suggests that the Forest Administration retains coercive capacity to give permission while doing any forestry operation, although the forest is formally handed over to the forest users' group. The rationale in Box-5.10 also informs

that foresters believe that their jobs would remain more secure if they made a rule that would require their approval prior carrying any forestry activities. Foresters would like to see user groups to be required to obtain such approval; otherwise they would lose control over FUG activities. Thus, although forests are formally handed over to the communities, foresters are searching for means which would provide them more power *vis-à-vis* FUGs in the implementation of community forestry programs. In such a context, technical rationale would be the best formula to maintain their power over people and forests.

c. Micro-partition (block divisions) of the community forests:

While formulating the Work Plan, the Forest Administration asked to divide the CFs into different management blocks to manage resources within these units and create regulations delineating how these blocks can be used. Across the cases, handed over community forests are partitioned into smaller blocks regardless of the total forest area and total number of users' households (see Table-5.5). In the Work Plan, similar justification was given behind the delineation of such blocks in all CFs of this study such as: natural boundary, species composition, settlements etc. Under the Work Plan, the FUG could undertake management activities in the specific block only in each year thus restricting receiving immediate benefits from harvesting in other blocks. User groups might face serious consequences if they don't follow their plan (see Boxes-5.2 and 5.3). Such rationale through the micro-partitioning of the forest is an act of 'use limitation' that directs the villagers with detailed rules on how each of these parts should be used or managed. During interviews with users' committees, they do not perceive the importance of block division because there have been no attempts to raise awareness among them. They claim that blocks have been divided on paper at the request of the forest Ranger (ICFUGC1-12 2008).

Table-5.5: Micro partition of the community forests

Name of CFUGs	Total CF area in ha.	Total user hhs.	Forest area per households in hectare	Total number of forest blocks
Bhiteripakha, Dolakha District	362,31	243	1,5	11
Tiprikot, Kaski District	119,75	244	0,5	5
Pachabhैया, Kaski District	235,23	413	0,6	8
Akala, Tanahun District	38,7	320	0,1	5
Yagyadole, Kathmandu District	20,60	760	0,0	2
Dudkoshi, Chitwan District	686,45	1015	0,7	6
Parewashowri, Chitwan District	1311,9	601	2,2	5

Pashupati, Makawanpur District	167	211	0,8	5
Piple-Pokhara, Makawanpur District	230,5	1248	0,2	2
Gitawor, Makawanpur District	553,25	370	1,5	5
Raniban, Tanahun District	139	152	0,9	5
Satanchuli, Chitwan District	1412,65	560	2,5	5

Source: Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

III. Donors' involvement increase coercive capacity of the Forest Administration

a. Donor's funding increase coercive capacity:

Since the inception of community forestry, forestry donors' projects in Nepal have shown continuous willingness to help the Forest Administration irrespective of their recognition of poor performance in revenue generation and forest protection. The increasing trend of donor support in forestry sector tends to help legitimize the Forest Administration as an agency, essential to administer the forests and delivering technical skills. Till the beginning of 90s, most of the donor agencies worked directly with local communities to implement own designed forestry programs, however, from mid 90s government tried to channel donor funding through forest bureaucracy mechanism. As a result, now a very small portion of donor money goes through direct funding. The provisions mentioned in the forestry sector foreign aid policy guidelines also clearly stress that direct funding should be kept in absolute minimum (see Box-5.11 and 5.12).

Box- 5.11: Provision relating to donor finance

Foreign Aid projects should generally constitute about 60% of the total project cost as program cost to be implemented at the field level. The remaining, which is around 15% should be allocated for capacity building of service providers (both HMG/N staff and NGOs/CBOs) and up to 25% should go for administrative cost (or overhead cost) including the salary and allowances of project staff and expatriates. Foreign aid projects should be promoted to use the budget line through HMG/N system and make it transparent as far as practical. Direct funding should be kept in absolute minimum for the program costs and should be executed transparently.

Source: GoN/MoFSC 2004

Box- 5.12: Conditionality of the foreign aid programs in the forestry sector foreign aid guideline

The foreign aid conditionality should abide by the existing government policy and programs such as Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) of 1989; National Conservation Strategy (NCS) of 1988; Nepal Environmental Policy and Action Plan (NEPAP) of 1993; Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP) of 1995; the revised Forestry Sector Policy of 2000; Tenth Plan of 2002; Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of

2002; HMGN Foreign Aid Policy of 2002 and National Biodiversity Strategy of 2002. However, the conditionality should not constrain the use of innovative and cost effective technology.

Source: GoN/MoFSC 2004

The greatest part of the Department of Forests (DoF) operational budget is supplied by international donor projects, about 51% in 2002 (GoN/MoF 2010). All effectively, if not intentionally, support the poor performance of the Ministry and Department of Forests, enable restrictive policy, and indirectly contribute to the various unequal relations that exist within community forestry (Thoms 2004). Donor financing through administrative mechanisms certainly added the value of Forest Administration to deal the program budget of specific donor projects and get opportunities to bargain for their own benefits. Because they know that since more than 40 years of donor funding in forestry sector donor has not brought expected economic and social changes. However, regardless of success in implementation, forestry projects already have some important effects at the relation of Forest Administration and local communities (Shrestha 1999). The non-achievement of project goals confirms the need for channeling more resources and honest efforts. Consequently, new project efforts crop up once again with new names. The initiation of the project after it ties up local people and resources in bureaucratic rules and formalities. To cope with the reality of the expanding bureaucracy, villagers have no choice but to organize themselves as forest user groups and request the government to handover management responsibility for their village forests before neighboring villagers, who have a chance to restrict access to the use of their village forest (ibid). The clear example we can see in the case of resource poor CFs where the interest of the donor projects and forest agencies play a major role while handing over the forest to local communities.

b. Donor formed alliances strengthen coercive capacity of Forest Administration:

Donors in community forestry used to construct alliances from macro to micro-levels such as: program coordination committee (PCC) or central support unit (CSU) at central-level to coordinate their program with government line agencies, district coordination committee (DCC) or district support unit (DSU) at district-level to coordinate the field-level programs with government and non-government service providers and in some cases field-level coordination mechanisms also exist to facilitate the project activities. Donors' projects use such alliances to get 'symbolic acceptance' from partner organizations in order to reduce the possible future risk of conflicts. Although the participating stakeholders in the alliances have no capacity to alter the already approved donor programs, in most of the cases, the powerful stakeholders such as 'state Forest Administrations' in our case use such a platform to get field level information and strengthen their role by informing

'bureaucratic procedures' to the participating stakeholders who are lacking regulatory instruments in community forestry processes.

c. Technical solutions of donors strengthen coercive capacity of Forest Administration:

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) of 1989 is the most comprehensive guideline of the forestry sector of Nepal, which recognized the need for local people's participation in conservation and management of the country's forest resources, which was possible because of the support from Asian Development Bank and Finish Technical Assistance. The decisions of subsequent governments further strengthened the regulatory framework and technical requirements of community based forest management in line with MPFS. There are evidences which indicate donor funded forestry projects, which have pushed many of the key concepts that today define community forestry (see example below):

Example: Forest inventory requirements:

Donor assisted projects can also reinforce the power of the government related to CFUGs by supporting less than ideal policy. The forest inventory requirement is a prime example. New forest user groups must have a detailed forest inventory completed at the time of forest handover, and existing user groups must have such an inventory completed when renewing their Work Plans. Such detailed, technical forest inventories require specific training and are beyond the capacity of all most user groups, requiring that trained foresters prepare the forest inventory. It is interesting to note that the NSCFP began supporting forest inventories in community forests years prior the current requirements. The purpose of the Swiss Project was to empower CFUGs to be able to demonstrate success at forest protection with a baseline for comparison, which could serve as evidence against any attempt by the Forest Administration to take community forestry back. It may be that the government policy was inspired by the work being done at Swiss project districts.

5.2.1.2. Community forest users' group committees and coercion in the network

In the studied community forests (CFs), each forest user groups (FUGs) has formed an executive body to oversee forest management activities, making a decision on the basis of the approved Work Plan and to coordinate with District Forest Offices and other stakeholders in the CF processes. Hence, users' committee is an important stakeholder in community forestry networks. An executive committee is the key decision-making structure of the CFUGs. Each members of the FUG are responsible for helping the executive committee to implement decisions. A person has to be a member of the CFUG to be eligible for selection to the executive committee. The committee is responsible for organizing the general assembly meeting at least once a year to make

decisions about forest use and management, use of income and benefit sharing. The members of the committee are supposed to be elected in the general assembly meeting. However, in practice, the names for the executive members are generally proposed by the key people (i.e. chairperson, treasurer, secretary of the CFUG) and even the external facilitators (e.g. representative of the Forest Administration) and selected (without voting) during the general assembly meeting of FUG. Sometimes, firstly the committee is formed and its members prepare and implement the plan, and sometimes the plan is prepared with participation of all users and a committee is then selected to improve it. The involvement of the committee on forestry affairs and dependence of other stakeholders to committee enhanced their coercive potential in the network. The coercion of the committee can be learnt from: legally binding (such as legal authority through formal contract) rules, resource status of the handed over CFs, rule enforcement capacity and information provider to the external stakeholders.

a. Legal authority through formal contracts:

Studied CFUGs and their executive committees are guided by the Forest Act of 1993, Forest Regulations of 1995, and other related legislations which provides legal legitimacy through formal contract with District Forest Office. These regulatory instruments have legitimized the FUG as an independent, autonomous and self-governing institution responsible to protect, manage and use of forest resources within the defined boundary. The formal forest handover contract signed by the District Forest Officer (DFO) and countersigned by the chairperson of the FUG defines the legal rights and responsibilities of FUG including executive committee to the CF. Legal authorities of the FUG/committee is the main reason of getting coercion value in the network, but this value in practice is based on their bargaining capacity with the Forest Administration. Through approved Work Plan, the committee is authorized to take action against FUG and non-FUG members in case of rule violation (see Box-5.13):

Box- 5.13: Prescription against rule violation

1. The individuals should file the case if he or she noticed any individuals of the FUG or committee members did any activities which are against the rule.
2. The FUGC can ask the accused to provide clarification for violating the FUG rule.
3. If the offender does not agree upon the decision of FUGC, the general assembly of the FUG can review the case as per the written application from the offender; the decision from the assembly will be final and re-appeal then after is not possible.
4. If the offender does not pay penalties decided by FUGC and/or general assembly, then a written request will be forwarded to the district forest office for the resolution of such case/conflict.

Source: Work plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Providing decision-making authority to forest user group through users' committee is the key regulatory instruments in CF. Theoretically, it plays a critical role to craft the solutions of problems based on the needs and priorities of local people (Malla 2000), however, in practice the dominance of local elites and external powerful stakeholders in decision making processes heavily undermine the interests of real forest users in CF resources. The practice of 'elite domination' demonstrates that the practice of CF not always reflects the rhetoric of community forestry concepts.

b. Forest resource status determines coercive potential of users' committees:

Community forest user groups are uniquely positioned and involved to protect forests at local-level across the studied cases. However, the statuses of the forests are not the same, generally community forests in the Hills are poor resource condition and community forests in Terai are resource rich. According to the data-base of Community Forestry Division of Department of Forests, more than 90% of the handed over community forests are located on mountainous and hilly areas where most of the forests were severely degraded during 70s. Community forestry in Terai, which are considered as resource rich, are now the prime interests of many stakeholders because of high value Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and associated species.

Our cases results gives two different pictures of coercion value in resource poor and resource rich status CFs. In resource poor status CFs such as: Tiprikot and Akala CFUG committees have higher coercion value where as in resource rich status CFs such as: Raniban and Gitawor CFUG committees have lower coercion value in comparison to the Forest Administration. In the first two cases, as mentioned above, the motivation for starting the community, the forest appeared to be the degraded condition and Forest Administration wants to restore the degraded lands. Whereas, in the later two cases well stocked forests were handed over to the users and the Forest Administration imposed numbers of control while harvesting and utilizing the products in order to limit commercial selling.

Therefore it is evident that the executive committees of resource poor CFs are powerful because the Forest Administration does not see alternatives to restore forest lands without active involvement of the local people. However, although the forest was handed over with devolved management and decision making rights, executive committees in the resource rich CFs have lacking of 'rule making' and 'resource utilization' autonomy as they need approval and permissions from the Forest Administration. Such devolution of management and utilization rights is highly relevant in resource poor CFs and provides coercive capacities to the committees that they are legally entitled to enjoy benefits occurred from the forests and also can exclude non-members to use the forests.

c. Rule enforcement capacity determines coercive potential of users' committees:

Rule enforcement capacity of the FUG committee also plays a decisive role in their coercive potential in the CF network. Reviewing of the minutes of the meeting of the studied CFs, indicate that resource poor CFs show higher level of rule enforcement mechanisms than the resource rich CFs. In resource rich CFs external pressure, mainly from Forest Administration, is high and in most of the cases they even monitor activities of FUG. The Forest Administration provides external monitoring on how the users' committee implements activities and extracts forest products such as if the committee decides to cut down trees. External monitoring is generally used as 'rent seeking opportunities' by foresters. While internal rule enforcement mechanisms are stronger in the resource poor areas where harvesting of the high value forest products (e.g. timber) are negligible.

All the studied CFUGs hired forest guards for the daily monitoring that is salaried by the FUG fund which is accumulated from the forest products mainly timber in resource rich CF and members contribution in resource poor CFs. The Work Plan of the studied CFUGs has a provision for these expenses as part of the forest management programs. The forest guards are selected from the user groups, hence it makes easier to the forest guards to identify who are users and non-users of the specific forest user group. The users' committees have a responsibility to monitor physical condition of the resources and activities occurred inside the forests. In co-ordination with users and sub-committees, committee also patrols the forest time to time to monitor suspected rule violations.

Across the cases, in the Work Plan there is a detailed prescription of punishments for different kinds of rule violators, for both members and non-members in order to minimize illegal activities in the forest. However, if the committee cannot reach into consensus or the violation is serious then the case can forward to the Forest Administration. The internal sanctioning varies from FUG to FUG and this may be financial or non-financial form. Non-financial sanctions include verbal chastisement, forced public apology, or other social shaming. Financial sanctions may include fines, in-kind contributions of materials or labor, or restrictions on future harvesting. Further, in many forests the sanction varies by the severity of the violation and the number of times a violator has broken a rule. These explanation clearly show that how users' committee-Forest Administration alliances can monitor and control the forestry activities. From direct observation of the studied CFs, it is also clear to see that Forest Administration alone cannot regulate local forest users and their activities inside the forest, so users' committee prove as effective means to oversee forestry activities at local level.

One important issue identified during the discussion with FUG committees at this study is that, despite the participatory rhetoric of CF, the implementation of the policies at the local level has largely been based on the traditional and

semi-feudal social system which re-enforces the hierarchical system that hinders, rather than encourages, the participation of every section of the society. The dominance of committee in the decision-making and implementation has become “necessary in practice, no matter what the policy prescribes”. In all the studied CFs, the agenda setting remains the responsibility of the committee, in which the interest of the poor forest users rarely take into account, but the committee and elites impose their interests. There are also cases that the committees filter and poorly communicate information about the law and requirements of CF to the members which keep the committee in powerful position.

In community forestry, the success of executive committee generally measured to what extent they are able to limit accessibility of the forest users over valuable resources. Most elites, when they come to power, limit control over key resources to their own number (Lenski 1966:65). This situation causes great insecurity for local forest users of the middle classes, since their position of modest power and privilege is so largely dependent on the continuing goodwill of their committee.

d. Local information as sources of coercion:

Forest Administration and network partners depend on users’ committee for local-level information. The information is basically shared through meetings, workshops, yearly and quarterly reports. For example, each CFUG chairman or secretary has to prepare quarterly progress report and present these at the meetings and workshops with the Forest Administration and other partner stakeholders. The Forest Administration and donors field projects use these reports to monitor progress on each of the group that are part of the community forestry program. However, the truthiness of reports prepared by CFUG is rarely checked. It refers, in some cases; external stakeholders blindly believe the information provided by the users’ committee, mainly elites. In most of the cases, the elites transmit only that information (only after manipulation) which helps to meet their own interest.

On the other hand, except for a couple of notices asking the group to explain the felling of timber trees and the occasional annual visit from the Range Post, the officials at the Forest Administration do not come to the community’s settlements and, rather, rely on the chairman’s reports for information. The users’ committee leaders think that the government is shirking some of its duties by passing on the cost of forest management to villagers (ICFUGC1-12 2009).

In CF processes, information provided by the Forest Administrations goes to the FUG through the committee, but the information seems to be retained (or intercepted) by the key members of the FUGC. For example, when Forest Administration offers to participate on training, workshops, study visits, and even small grants for income generating programs, users’ committee leaders

(mainly chairperson and secretary) hide such information and try to grasp such opportunities by themselves.

e. Hiding information:

The FUG committee members also tend not to disclose information related to the FUG fund and the income and expenses in the meetings and assemblies, even when the users demand the information. As a result, very few people seem to know about the FUG account and how it is being used. When demanded by some members in the general assembly, the treasurer presented a statement of annual income and expenses, but the majority of users were unable to understand what it meant. The communities often enter into non-transparent transactions or even illegal activities, keeping two different records of forest products sale, and bribing officials in order to avoid cumbersome bureaucratic processes. Information such as legal provisions, access rights, financial transactions, timber and other products' sale, allowances and salaries to users' committee members and office bearer rarely transmit to the users and competitor of the committee elites. However, without strong ties with the Forest Administration such 'hiding' is nearly impossible. Users' committee leaders in the studied CFs successfully used such strategies in order to control community processes in collusion with the Forest Administration.

5.2.2. Trust

Trust is another key determinant of stakeholders' power in our analytical framework. Trust, by our definition is that one stakeholder freely believes the unchecked information by another stakeholder. The attribution of trustworthiness involves complex judgments about risk to the trustor's well-being about his or her vulnerability to harm. It combines judgments about the stake that is at risk and the likelihood that the stake will be successfully safeguarded by the trustee (Focht and Trachtenberg 2005:91). Ullmann-Margalit (2002) presents a convincing argument that full trust requires meeting three conditions: i) positive intention (the trustee intends to act to promote the trustor's interests), ii) right reasons (the trustee will act on the trustor's behalf even if the trustor's interests conflict with the trustee's own interests), and iii) competency (the trustee is able to protect the trustee's interests).

There are many reasons that stakeholders in the network are trustworthy such as: good experiences in the past, possible future benefits, information and expertise and shared value. The trustworthiness of the stakeholders depends on the balance of the bargaining power and access to power resources. The outcome of unequal relationships with a basis of trust is closely linked to the extent of competition and choice available to forest users due to powerful group of stakeholders in the network. Here, I argue that the trust building process is a social exchange in community forestry network. Social exchange relations evolve in a slow process, starting with minor transactions in which

little trust is required because little risk is involved and in which both partners can prove their trustworthiness, enabling them to expand their relations and engage in major transactions (Blau 1964). This description of social exchange gives a picture of the exchange as it takes place in business relationships. Thus, I argue that trust is a result of good experiences in the past, possible future benefits, information and expertise and shared value mechanisms in the network. These mechanisms include information exchange and regulatory factors involved in the community forestry processes. Sharing information demonstrates trust which may lead to a higher level of commitment and a better atmosphere in community forestry. Thus, trust is affected by the stakeholders' previous dealings with each other.

In a broader look at quantitative power network in chapter four and Annex-4, it is clear to see that the distribution of trust value is unequal; some stakeholder accumulates more than others. When the focus is shifted from the amount of trust to the reasons why trust is distributed unevenly, several interpretations can be made, however, here focus is given only to stakeholders' judgment towards the higher or lower level trustworthiness of the most common powerful group of stakeholders: Forest Administration, users' committee and donors.

5.2.2.1. Forest Administration and trust in the network

The first goal of the Forest Administration in community forestry is to gain acceptance from the forest users both in the immediate situation and in the long run. As 'trust' is described as a type of expectation that alleviates the fear that one's exchange partner will act opportunistically (Bradach and Eccles 1989:104), forest users are willing to accept the conditional cooperation of the Forest Administration. However, the risk of opportunism must be present for trust to operate. Lewis and Weigert (1985 cited in Bradach and Eccles 1989:104) contend that the trust is characterized by a cognitive "leap" beyond the expectations that reason and experience alone would warrant where opportunism might be rationally expected and trust prevails. Studies also suggest that the most effective state-public strategies begin as non-coercive approaches that seek to gain cooperation without raising the threat of the possible application of force (see Axelrod 1997). The primary benefit of a cooperative strategy is that it minimizes the number and degree of confrontational encounters, while a dominance approach heightens resistance among all those with whom an authority interacts (Tylor 2001). When forest users trust that Forest Administration is acting in good faith, they are less likely to respond to their actions negatively or counter active way.

By Forest Act and related legislations, forest authorities are obliged to provide various supports to the forest users because it is 'supposed' that they have expertise and access to the resources. This allows them to act in the interests of members of the FUG. But members of the FUG are seldom in a position to monitor the behavior of the Forest Administration, or to make

informal evaluations of it. As Tyler (2001) mentions that the public cannot follow the police to see if they actually do not do their jobs, nor can they evaluate the legal correctness of a judicial decision. The public can only make inferences about the ‘good faith’ being manifested by such authorities via the sincere effort of these authorities to do what they can to solve problems. Such good faith is the central element of motive-based trust’. Therefore, the key to create trust to the Forest Administration in our case is ‘authority’ and their ‘access’ to the handed over forest to the local communities. Because protection of the forest is traditionally a major task of the state (Krott 2005:118) and people’s judgments about motive-based trust are linked to their evaluations of the procedures by which state authorities act (Tyler and Degoey 1996).

By evaluating the formal programs and informal practices of Forest Administration, the most common explanations of forest user group committees and donors’ field projects for higher or lower-level of trust toward Forest Administration are presented in Table 5.6.

Table-5.6: The most common explanations of the powerful stakeholders for higher or lower levels of trust toward Forest Administration

Trust level	Forest user group committees	Donors’ project (NSCFP, ComForM, BISEP-ST)
Higher-level of trust (+ve explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal authority • Facilitation • Information/ technical support • Know Forest Officers/Rangers/Forest Guards personally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal authority • Alliance partner • Professional affiliation
Lower-level of trust (-ve explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distrust the government in general • Bad experience(s) with rangers • Lack of transparency (or hidden intentions) • Incentive seekers • Lack of information flow • Unfair restrictions through Work Plan • Unfair enforcement • Administrative hurdle • Social distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distrust the government in general • Lack of transparency • Incentive seekers • Administrative hurdle • Lack of technical knowhow • Unfulfilled promises

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

The complex set of reasons of higher and lower level of trust towards the Forest Administration in Table-5.6 explains its power status in the networks of

community forests. The higher level of trustworthiness of Forest Administration has explained mainly due to their legal authority in CF processes, information/technical support during and after the handover of CF, alliance partners and professional affiliations. The dominant explanations are based on legal authority and technical support in CF processes. As community forestry in Nepal began with numbers of non-confrontational strategy showing the attractive offers to the users (such as ‘control over resources by users’, ‘livelihood improvement through CF’, ‘users will be managers’, ‘green forest as wealth of nation’), there were basically two reasons affecting the development of trust. Firstly, CF practices placed Forest Administration and service providers in the role of ‘facilitator’ to local communities, rather than the ‘command and control’ function. Secondly, the willingness of Forest Administration and service providers entered into partnerships with local people by financial and technical support enhancing the participation of forest users in forest management activities. These aspiring concepts generally work well in establishing trustworthy environment between foresters and users in CF processes while handing over degraded forests to the local communities. However, at a later stage of forest management, even immediately after handing over the ‘wishes’ of Forest Administration switched into highly regulative practices, alter the trustworthiness and are explained as ‘lower level of trust’ in Table-5.6. The following section discusses how Forest Administration utilizes various sources of trust to gain power in the community forest networks:

I. Reasoning of higher-level trust

a. Legal authority as an example of trust:

Forestry legislations (Forest Act and Regulations) define functions of Forest Administration in community forestry processes and also emphasize their role in forest management through community mobilization. So there is legally constituted bonding between the Forest Administration and forest users through users’ committee in community forestry processes which facilitate dialogues and negotiations between these two stakeholders. Section 25 (2) of Forest Act 1993 gave legal authority to Forest Administration that they could constitute a user group as prescribed above, by mobilizing users and provide technical support and other assistance required to prepare the Work Plan. The Forest Administration drafts the Work Plan based on the discussions taking place with the users’ committee and they also involve or facilitate forest inventories that allow forest users to discuss and debate various management options. These processes can be helpful to lay foundation of trustworthiness between these two stakeholders.

Legally defined function of the Forest Administration and users’ committee also share ‘shared value’ because without recognizing each other’s roles community forestry is nearly impossible to implement. As Kelman (1961) mentions people’s attitudes and behaviors result having the same values as another person or group. Shared values influence relationship commitment and

trust. For example in CF networks, the stakeholders have common beliefs about what behaviors, goals and policies are important or unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate, and right or wrong. Thus, it is possible to posit powerful stakeholders in the network, who also share some 'shared values' and are likely to have a certain degree of trust relations without which community forestry cannot be materialized.

On the other hand, donor projects, however, depend on the Nepali government to allow them to operate in Nepal and fulfill the public trust of their home governments. Because of this dependence on the goodwill of Nepal, donors do not want to alienate the Nepali government or the Forest Administration. This, partly explains why all of the donor responses of the forest inventory policy contain an implicit acceptance of the policy, even though it undermines the devolutionary character of community forestry.

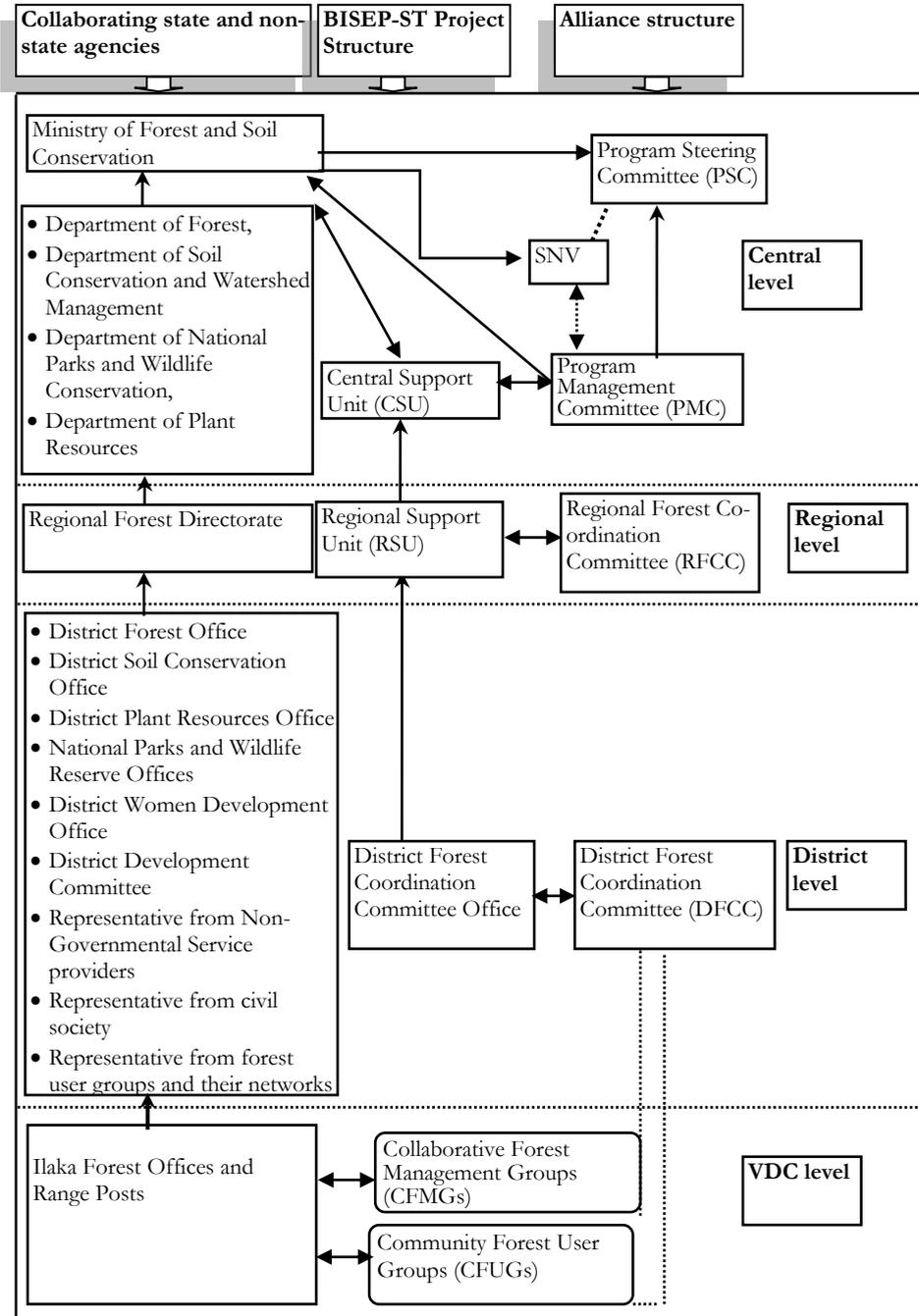
b. Alliance partners:

Alliance formation at different levels of community forestry processes are mainly driven by donors' projects. Socialization among the stakeholders through alliance or network formation represents particularly important types of activity in order to build trust. The trust that was built through alliances enabled the participants to aware others role and their activities in community forestry. The formal and informal alliances formed or initiated either by external or by users' committee providing space to the Forest Administration to facilitate the community forestry activities. As an alliance partner, other stakeholders such as users' committee, NGOs and donors' project have opportunities to tap expertise and information from Forest Administration and also help to come up with solutions in certain issues; such as local disputes over forest management and utilization. Forest Administration, as a legal body, also bears certain administrative or symbolic role to legitimize the activities of network stakeholders such as programs of donors' field project. To get an acceptance, donors generally form alliances with governmental and non-governmental partners from macro to micro-levels which directly or indirectly act as a platform to build trust among them. Macro-level alliances generally compose experts of specific fields such as: forest management and forest policy in order to make favorable environment to run the programs at meso and micro- levels.

Example- Biodiversity Sector Programme for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)

The Biodiversity Sector Support Programme for the Siwaliks and Terai (BISEP-ST) is executed by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation of Nepal and funded by the Netherlands Government through SNV Nepal. BISEP-ST covers the eight Terai, Inner Terai and Siwaliks districts of Nepal's Central Development Region. The Figure-5.1 provides an overview of the programmatic structure highlighting the alliance structures at different levels.

Figure- 5.1: Biodiversity Sector Programme for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST): Project structure and alliances with partners



Source: BISEP-ST 2005

The project aims to fulfill the goal: “Forestry sector contributing to poverty reduction through sustainable resource management. To fulfill this goal two purposes are formulated: promoting good forest governance as a means of enhancing forest and biodiversity conservation, and enhancing livelihoods opportunities for poor, forest dependent people in the programme districts. The BISEP-ST has been supporting forestry programs such as collaborative forest management, leasehold forestry, community forestry, private forestry and public land forestry. The project has established a network from macro to micro-levels to implement its programs such as: program support units (PSU) and program management committees (PMC). Such units and committees from macro to micro-levels work in close collaboration with Forest Administration and other network partners.

c. Facilitation:

The growing arrays of stakeholders with diverse interests increasingly make community forestry prone to conflicts which are characterized mainly by power disparities. Conflicts commonly arise over disagreements of tenure, access, control and distribution of forest lands or products (Means *et al.* 2002). Devkota (2006), in his study from five FUG in low lands of Nepal, identified four different broader types of conflicts (conflicts within forest user group, conflicts in benefit sharing, conflicts between user groups, conflicts between FUG and other stakeholders: DFO, DDC, VDC, NGO) where Forest Administration plays the role of a ‘facilitator’. In most of the context, because of the current political unrest and deep rooted political clash, resolution of conflicts become harder to the users’ committee, hence, third party involvement in conflict resolution has been increasing. Generally Forest Administration and NGOs, as a mediator help to facilitate negotiations. The willingness to allow Foresters to mediate local disagreements rests on forest users’ beliefs that they are competent, impartial and responsible. To the extent that the foresters are successful at brokering a solution to the policy problem, stakeholders may come to appreciate their mutual willingness to negotiate, thus improve trust in the network. The following table (Table-5.7) shows the examples of disputes at different CFUGs where Forest Administration was directly involved for a resolution.

Table-5.7: Involvement of Forest Administration in conflict resolutions in the studied CFUGs

Name of CFUGs	Sources of conflict	Role of District Forest Office (DFO)	Decision makers
Bhiteripakha	Boundary dispute with other FUGs	Facilitator	DFO and users’ committee
Tiprikot	Membership dispute	Facilitator	Supreme Court
Pachabhaiya	Land disputes with hotel owners	Facilitator	DFO

	Hunting inside CF	Facilitator	DFO
Akala	Land dispute: forest boundary and private land	Facilitator	DFO and users' committee
Yagyadole	Land dispute: forest boundary and private land	Facilitator	Users' committee
Dudkoshi	Boundary dispute with other FUGs	Facilitator	DFO and political parties
	Misuse of FUG fund by ex-committee chairman	Facilitator	DFO and Chief District Officer (CDO)
Parewashowri	Forest benefit sharing	Facilitator	DFO
	Leadership dispute- committee election	Facilitator	DFO and political parties
	Illegal tree feeling	Facilitator	DFO
Piple-Pokhara	Boundary disputes: FUG and private land owners	Facilitator	DFO
Pashupati	Leadership dispute: misuse of fund by ex-committee chairman	Facilitator	DFO
Satanchuli	Forest boundary, forest land encroachment and forest handover (conflict with DFO)	Decision has not made yet	
Gitawor	Misuse of fund by ex-committee	Facilitator	Decision has not made yet
Raniban	Access road inside the forest	Facilitator	DFO and wood contractor

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

d. Information/ technical support as a source of trust:

Another major factor influencing trust is information flow, which can be defined broadly as the formal, as well as informal sharing between networks of community forestry stakeholders. The frequency and quality of information exchange is a significant factor in determining the degree to which the stakeholders understand each other's goals and co-ordinate their efforts to achieve those goals (Krott 2005). According to Barber (1984), trustworthiness towards a stakeholder depends through both a judgment of technical competence and fiduciary responsibility. This statement can be interpreted: the Forest Administration is trusted if both their ability (competence) and motives (discretion) are judged as trustworthy.

Reasons of higher level of trust to the Forest Administration vary from one to another powerful stakeholder; where the most frequently mentioned reasons were information about forest use, management, legal system, and benefit sharing. During the field study, I got to know that most of the network stakeholders did not know the provisions in forestry legislations, but they knew that forests were handed over to the local communities to protect, who are

dependent on the information supplied and interpreted by the Forest Administrations.

Consultation with committee members during the Work Plan preparation is another reason of trust. Although users' committees doubt the competence or good faith of forestry staffs, they are willing to cooperate in community forestry processes from handover to implementation stage. In CF processes, users' committee who are lacking professional knowledge of forestry is partly vulnerable because he or she is epistemologically disadvantaged in relation to the relevant knowledge base and therefore should trust the foresters to behave in non exploitative manner. In this case, effectiveness is improved when Forest Administration officials demonstrate in advance that their policy will safeguard forest users' interests. Therefore, trustworthiness towards Forest Administration will be increased if they demonstrate that they are willing to adopt policies that other stakeholders find acceptable.

e. Professional affiliations:

Downie characterizes a profession as having, amongst other features, a membership who possess specific skills and expertise and provides services to the public through a special relationship (Downie 1990: 154). Professionalism provides an alternative formal source of information about how much an individual could be trusted (Zucker 1986:94). Professions are considered to be characterized by the possession of knowledge or abilities not generally available to the general public and it is the existence of these that provide the basis of offering a service (Frowe 2005:42). Generally, one official belongs to one profession may consult other professional working in the same field. Professionals, for example foresters have to consult other foresters, if they cannot decide certain issues. Furthermore, most of the foresters in Nepal, wherever they work, have completed their university education from the same University, so most of them are familiar to each other, which also constitute as sources of trust in the CF network.

II. Reasoning of lower-level trust

The most common explanations of lower- level of trust towards Forest Administration officials involve a lack of meaningful positive interactions with local forest users, termed 'social distance'. The qualitative interviews and field observation revealed that the users' committees are losing their trust on Forest Administration due to its inactiveness. The interview with committee members exposed that the Forest Administration is responsible for the increasing rate of mistrust and lessening facilitation. Users' committees and even donor field projects mention that Forest Administration did not care for the demands and suggestions, where consequently these stakeholders have been losing their trust on Forest Administration.

There are stronger explanations for lower-level of trust towards the Forest Administration: bad experiences with Rangers, incentive seekers, lack of

information flow, restriction and control of the FUG activities, unfair enforcement of the legal authority and administrative hurdle, which are among them. It was also obvious in the discussion with the FUG committee and other network stakeholders that the field staff (Rangers and Forest Guards) were more interested in materials and monetary benefits from the FUGs. These are overwhelming response to distrust Forest Administration and we can categorize these responses as 'opportunistic behavior'. Opportunism can be defined as 'self/interest seeking with guile' (Williamson 1975). Examples of opportunistic behavior are such acts as withholding or distorting information and shirking or failing to fulfill promises or obligations (John 1984). Therefore, we can posit that when Forest Administration in community forestry processes engage in opportunistic behavior, such perceptions will lead to decreased trust or increase distrust to them. Such opportunistic behavior of Forest Administration results in 'distrust' relationships because other network stakeholders believe they can no longer trust them.

Development of trustworthy environment needs time however, frequent transfer of forestry staff from one district to another district or one Range-Post to another creates confusions and chaos to the network stakeholders mainly users' committee. Because, for example, if a Forest Ranger transferred to another place, the users' committee suddenly have to deal with a new Ranger about whom he or she may know little or nothing about the ongoing program of FUG.

5.2.2.2. Community forest users' group committees and trust in the network

Community forestry aims to develop partnership between local communities and external stakeholders, mainly Forest Administration and other service providers, for the sustainable management of forests on the basis of trust through mutually agreed rights and responsibilities. Therefore, in community forestry processes, users' committees bear formal role of 'bridging' between external stakeholders and forest users in the network. Forming users' group or users' committee itself is a trust building process in community forestry, because it is based on participation and collaboration with stakeholders. Meaningful devolution of forest management always based on some degree of trust between Forest Agencies and local forest users, where the former ones play the role of the facilitators and the later ones act as managers. But here is no doubt that some stakeholders wish to maintain their power over resources for their own benefits. Organizational or social arrangements that increase people's trust on each other are a major form of social capital, which is a resource that enables partnerships to work (Fisher, 1999). Therefore, in community forestry processes, it is essential to develop ways to increase the trust between Forest Administration and communities as well as with other network stakeholders.

Quantitative power network analysis in Table-5.1 (in chapter five) and Annex-4 indicate that the network stakeholders show higher level of trust on

the forest users' committee representing the users and users' group in CF management. The following table summarizes reasons of higher and lower-level of trust toward FUG committees from the perspective of the Forest Administration and donors' field projects (see Table-5.8).

Table-5.8: The most common explanations of the powerful stakeholders for higher or lower-level of trust toward FUG committees

Trust level	Forest Administration	Donors' project (NSCFP, ComForM, BISEP-ST)
Higher-level of trust (+ve explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Sacrifice from the poor forest users • Easy access: people and information • Local level monitoring as a reason of trust • Alliance partner • Agree with their mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Sacrifice from the poor forest users • Easy access: people and information • Support to poverty alleviation • Agent of community development • Alliance partner • Agree with their mission
Lower-level of trust (-ve explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transparency (or hidden intentions) • Incentive seekers • Elite dominancy and nepotism • Unfair benefit sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transparency • Elite dominancy and nepotism • Unfair benefit sharing

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

The most common explanations of the Forest Administration and donors for higher or lower levels of trust toward FUG committees do not varied so much. Participation of the forest users in forest protection, commitment of local people on forest management and easy access (both people and information) are the commonly refereed sources of trust. Trust of the Forest Administration to the users' committee, also depends upon their expected future benefits from the forest resources. Likewise, donors admit that due to an agent of community development and agree with their mission are the additional reasons of trust to the users' committees.

Though, FUG committees are highly trusted in the network, there are also negative explanations of the stakeholders about the performance and activities of FUG committees. Forest Administration and donors univocally said that internal governance practices of all the studied CFUGs are weak. They further

reveal that decision making, record keeping and information dissemination of most of the forest users' groups are not transparent. Across the studied districts, Forest Administration officials claim that most of the users' committee leaders are incentive seekers, getting personal promotion and benefits as their priority, then serving voluntarily in forest management; nepotism, elite dominance and unfair benefits sharing, which still remain the major bottleneck to make CFUG more inclusive (IDFO1-12 2009).

I. Reasoning of higher-level trust

a. Participation as a source of trust:

Community forestry in Nepal is grounded in the philosophy of 'participation' by direct forest users in various forest management activities. Forest restoration becomes an important component of community forestry; however effective restoration depends on active participation of forest users on management and protection of forests. Through planting indigenous tree species and fostering natural regeneration, forests are being restored. The Forest Administration and donors in the network believe that without the participation of forest users, restoration and protection of forest is nearly impossible because of limited financial, human and technical capacity of Forest Administration on forestry sector on one hand and other local institutions such as Village Development Committee (VDC) are not functioning well due to political volatility on the other hand. Facing difficulties in protecting the forests without people's participation, the Forest Administration has been compelled to hand over the forests to the local communities as CF. The active participation of forest users and their commitment to protect and restore the forests, enhanced their credibility in the network.

b. Sacrifice from the poor forest users as a source of trust:

Forest Administration and donors in our cases; categorize local people into two groups: clever leaders and innocent public. Clever leaders of FUG tend to engage in non-forestry activities such as building roads inside the forests and other personal businesses. External stakeholders argue that they could not remain satisfied only with the fact that forests are handed over to the communities because such a handover may marginalize the poor further. They argue that the clever leaders or elites are behaving as military dictators in local forest management and are trying to convince the local poor not to enter into the forests until the products have matured. Trusting their leaders, these innocent poor people have refrained from entering the forests and even those who used to make a livelihood from the forests have turned to daily wage work in quarrying stone etc. Foresters and donors see this as a big sacrifice on the part of the poor local people. They also foresee that these poor villagers may not benefit from forest protection even in the long run.

c. Easily accessible information as a source of trust:

Community based forest management is often promoted as a way to better connect traditional with modern ecological knowledge, as well as more effectively utilize local understanding and information developed over generations of extended environmental relationship (Kellert *et al.* 2000:710). Information is the basic and most common political instrument for regulating human action (Krott 2005:151) and also applies in community forestry processes. Forestry stakeholders at different levels need reliable information to make decisions about forest use and conservation. Indigenous knowledge on forest use and management practices can provide a valuable insight into planning and decision making. Therefore, to take forestry decisions, stakeholders can make direct contact with forest users' group committee or other concerned stakeholders including the forest users. Network stakeholders in this study; refer local FUG committees as reliable source of information, because either to collect information by them is costly or less accessible in many cases. They have admitted that a policy shift to community forestry is easy accessible to deal with forestry issues at the local level.

d. Local level monitoring as a source of trust:

The importance of local level monitoring is often remarked because of at least two reasons: first, it is related in providing checks and balances; and second, because monitoring can identify successful community-level managers and contribute, through the provision of good examples, to the building of trust and confidence (Fisher 1999). External stakeholders in the network believe that self monitoring of rule enforcement by local communities is effective in community forestry. Because they argue that professional (i.e. external) monitoring face a number of challenges, which mainly are: it is often costly to involve professionals in monitoring and professional monitoring can often be difficult, both logistically and technically at grass root level. Therefore, network stakeholders have higher level of trust to the users' committees because of their high dependence on information. It has been suggested that such locally-based approaches have considerable potential to complement professional monitoring (Danielsen *et al.* 2000). Specially, it should be possible to carry out locally-based monitoring at much less costlier than professional monitoring, and hence for it to be more sustainable. Perhaps the most important, will be locally-based monitoring focusing on management issues of huge concern to stakeholders, and is thereby likely to have considerable advantage over professional approaches in its potential to influence on ground management activities, as well as to empower and enhance capacity among local stakeholders. The different types of forest monitoring measures under practices within studied CFs are presented in Table-5.9.

Table-5.9: Forest monitoring measures in community forests

Monitoring measures:	Observed cases
Forest watcher- Number varied across cases (e.g. 1 in Pachabhaya FUG to 7 in Satanchuli FUG)	12 CFUGs
Patrolling by committee members and forest users on rotational basis	12 CFUGs
Fencing (Partial, live hedge and barbed wire)	8 CFUGs
Description of prohibited function inside community forests	12 CFUGs
Penalties against rule violators (types and charges varied across cases) and incentives to the informants	12 CFUGs

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

The most powerful stakeholders in CF networks see that forest monitoring is considered an effective method for challenging unregulated forest use. In the study area, there are five types of forest monitoring systems existing in practice:

- paid watcher to guard the forest;
- regular forest monitoring and patrol by users and committee members
- formation of sub-committees to monitor forest and forest management activities
- partial fencing of the forest land from possible encroachment and grazing
- sporadic forest inspections by foresters

Forest monitoring is usually a costly process. In the context of prior community forestry, Forest Administration rarely monitors the forests because of a few staff members and large territory coverage. However after CF, in all the studied community forests, FUGs have appointed forest watchers to monitor possible illegal activities from both members and non-members. The number of forest watchers in poor status CFs range from one to three, while, in the resource rich status CFs the number vary from three to seven. This indicates that internal control in resource rich CF is higher than in poor status CFs. Resource poor status CFs charge monthly fee to their members to raise funds to hire forest watcher in order to guard forest resources on behalf of the community.

The function of all kinds of monitoring is controlling irregularities from own members and free riders, keeping the record of forest harvest and provide information to the users' committees about the current state of the forest. If monitoring team or any individual person noticed any irregularities and informs the case to the users' committee, they take necessary action and the offender has to pay penalty to the committee. In the Work Plan of the studied FUGs, there is also provision to provide 15 to 50% of the cash paid by the offender to the informant (s) in each case of offence. This system of 'punishment and reward' create the atmosphere of checking 'member to member', although it invites conflict within forest users, prove as an effective means of forest control which ultimately help to conserve the forest in long-run.

It is clear that local forest users share the cost of monitoring; however all the stakeholders in the networks enjoy the benefits obtained from the forest

whether or not they contribute to the processes. Another example, in the case of degraded forests users may begin to develop effective rules and monitoring mechanisms, but it may take several years to restore the forest in good condition and at the time of utilization Forest Administration overloads many rules and sanctions which really can make harassment to the forest users. Thus, in practice, formation of forest user groups and formulation of rules, support governmental laws, so that their *de facto* activities generally reflect *de jure* rules and rarely violate the rules which jeopardize the forest management activities at local level. These examples, apparently, show that monitoring and management costs of the Forest Administration are lessening due to local participation.

e. Forming an alliances as a source of trust:

Community forest users' committee, representing users and user groups, at grass root level gaining opportunity to work with a broader network alliance and stakeholders. The alliances and personal relations maintained with forests' officials and other network stakeholders' enable committee members to retain their position and continuing benefiting from forest and network stakeholders. By using this relation, local forest officials' benefit with cash and non-cash incentives derived from the committee as a reward for their involvement in such an alliance. As the monitoring function of forest officials remained weak along the entire studied CFs, forest officials used such alliances to keep in touch with committees for required information. Such alliances made the committee more accountable to forest officials than to ordinary users, thus they gained trustworthiness in the network. Similarly, local officials were more accountable to a few committee members who were part of the alliance and who turned a blind eye when it was needed to regulate certain activities of the committee, especially the misuse of authority and inequity in benefit sharing. The finding is in line with Sundar (2001) who observed a similar lack of downward accountability of forest officials in joint forest management in India. The situation raises questions about the ability and real commitment of the Forest Administration, to help the poor through community forestry.

f. Community forestry- a synonym of community development:

External stakeholders, basically donor field projects and local government bodies, believe that many of the development components of community forestry may be better managed by FUGs, therefore, FUGs are treated as agents of 'local development'. Many studies have also highlighted the role of community forestry in community development mainly through utilization of income from forest products and from external assistance (e.g. Dev *et al.* 2004, Kanel and Niraula 2004, Pokharel and Nurse 2004). There are also cases that most of the FUGs interested to allocate their fund into local infrastructure development rather paying inadequate attention to the livelihood improvement and development of forest resources (e.g. Chapagain and Banjade 2009, Thoms 2008). Cases under this study also clearly demonstrate that 'community

development' is highly a prioritized program of users' committee as they are allocating more than 15% of their total income to various activities. The recent data-base of community forestry show that it covers more than 26 percent of the total forest land, hence, community forests bear the potentiality for lots of development inputs to the areas where government is supposed to be fully responsible. They are contributing to health, education, local infrastructure development, capacity building and livelihoods improvement programs (Chapagain and Banjade 2009). In recent days, development approach in rural areas of Nepal focuses on 'participatory' where local community needs to form management committee and government agency make agreement with them to implement and monitor the small to medium scale development programs. In such a context, as an experienced and legitimized group through Forest Act, FUGs have been actively participating as local development agents.

II. Reasoning of lower-level trust

The fundamental concept of CF is to actively involve all forest users in the process of decision making so that the implementation of decisions is effective and responsive to the needs and interests of the direct forest users. In formal programs, committees make decisions regarding month to month operations of the CFUG and usually develop initial plans that are then taken to the general assembly, which discusses new plans and ideas before deciding on them. However, the ongoing practice of community forestry in the studied CFs shows that users' committee is emerging as a supreme body and the FUG members are becoming as a helper for the committee.

Across the cases, many of the committee members are from wealthy families, who do not actually depend on the forest area for anything more than a marginal proportion of their basic needs. The poor and marginalized, rarely participate in forest user group committees. Studies also reveal that the local elite had control of the committees and the government forestry field staff had ties with the powerful people in the village (Thoms 2004, Malla 2001, Shrestha 1999, Carter 1992, Hobley 1991). One of the reasons for 'elite dominance' was because there had been "preset understandings with the DFO to assume that elites are the local kings and potential host for their field visits" (a NGO activist in personal communication 2009). Local elites are able to situate themselves as community "gate-keepers" because of their high status and education. Because they are better educated and have more free time than individuals from more marginalized groups, government Forest Rangers find local elites easier to work with them when forming user groups and when providing post-formation technical support (Thoms 2004:3).

The studies show that many disadvantaged members in community forestry perceive that the forest is given to users' committee, calling CF as '*Samiti ko ban*' (committee's forest) rather than '*Samuha ko ban*' (group's forest) (Devkota 2006, Bhatia 2000 in Shrestha 2005). A more serious and possibly more intractable problem across the cases is that community forest decision-making tends to

exclude marginalized group interests (see informal interests of users' committee in chapter six, section 6.4). Marginalized users have had low level of influence on FUG committee decision-making, and have often had their interests neglected. Many poor, women and socially marginalized users have been left out of the process (e.g. Khatiwada 2006, Graner 1997). For example, while I was discussing with the executive committee members at Pachabhaiya CFUG in their office, the two official women executive committee members sat next to the table, where they could hear what was being discussed but could not participate. Later I asked why the women were sitting apart. One of them said that she had no agenda for the meeting and was therefore just observing, and one of the men said that the women just signs documents. The situation of women participating in decision-making is not only the problem in Pachabhaiya CFUG, it is common across the studied cases where women are often marginalized from decision-making, and play token roles in CFUG executive committees.

The misuse of FUG fund is another concern of the network stakeholders. Officials of the District Forest Offices claim that the misuses of the FUG fund by users' committees are very common in forest users groups. For example, the ex-chairman of Pashupati CFUG has withdrawn Nepalese Rupees Fifty Thousands from the FUG account for forest management expenses, but he never spent that amount. The current committee approached to the ex-chairman several times, however, he denied paying back the amount and finally the case was forwarded to District Forest Office.

Stakeholders in the network also believe that activities within the FUG are not transparent, and record keeping is very poor, hence key persons in the committee can easily misuse FUG funds for their own benefit. There are also cases that the poorest households benefit significantly less than other households (e.g. Malla *et al.* 2003). Whatever the key persons in the committee promised with the users, personal benefits are their utmost priorities in the studied CFs. Moreover, in resource poor and even some resource rich areas where market facilities are not easily available, committee elites dictate the protectionist approach of forest management because of their limited dependence on CF. They often expect either possibilities of future exploitation of resources or getting sympathies from the Forest Administration in lieu of their 'good faith' in forest conservation.

5.2.2.3. Donors and trust in the network

In Nepalese context, donor agencies have played a crucial role to push community forestry practices into reality, because of increasing distrust to the centralized forest management approach due to forest degradation during 70s and their faith of sustainable forest management through community involvement. As a result of their commitment in forestry sector, forestry policies in Nepal have been reshaped and incorporated locals' participation in forest management. Donors have been claimed for the pro-poor nature of such

interventions but there is still much to be challenged about the substance of these claims and indeed whether community forestry as a whole is more likely to be pro-poor than the centralized forest management approach.

Forest Administration in Nepal is highly depended on donor agencies and international conservation oriented institutions (Karki 2008, Gilmour 2003, Larsen *et al.* 2000, Pokharel 1997, Hobley 1996). Assistance programs of many nations and some multilateral organizations operate in the forest-related sector in Nepal. These donor-aided programs range in size from bilateral projects covering a few districts, such as Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project in to three districts, to the largest- DFID funded Livelihood and Forestry Program-which provides technical assistance and financial support to fifteen districts. Different types of forestry aid through field projects in Nepal are in some ways a battle of resource dependencies between donors and the government. The Forest Administration needs basic resources to do any work in forestry and to secure control over forest resources. At the same time, bilateral donors need access to Nepal to spend their money and do “a good work” that generate a positive, international public image for their home governments. This co-dependency generates a situation of mutual influence between donors and Nepalese government (Thoms 2004).

The twelve CFUGs included in this study are in districts that have donor support (six CFUGs) and the management solely by the subordinate of Department of Forests. Table 5.10 presents several features of donors’ activities that make them trustworthy in the network of community forests.

Table-5.10: The most common explanations of the powerful stakeholders for higher or lower-level of trust toward donors’ project

Trust level	Forest Administration	Forest users’ group committees
Higher-level of trust (+ve explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance partner • Policy and program supports • Capacity building • Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation • Research and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance partner • Technical support • Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation • Benefits to elites
Lower-level of trust (-ve explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term projects • Huge project structure • Policy intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term projects • Creating social disparities • Elite favored process

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Donors’ projects, due to their various functions, are also highly trusted stakeholders in community forest networks. Their involvement in forestry

processes through technical expertise, research and building alliances from micro to macro-levels affect the amount and distribution of trust in the network. The following section describes the reason of higher and lower-levels of donors trustworthiness evaluated by the powerful stakeholders of community forest networks.

I. Reasoning of higher-level trust

a. Alliances building as sources of trust:

Alliance formation is a temporary partnering of groups in order to achieve critical agency for a given purpose. Alliances can bring together people from different facets of the community to achieve a common goal (Spangler 2003). Studies show that the formation of alliance refers to the main strategy of mobilizing power resource from the social arena (see Woods 1998). The involvement in alliance means that there are more people who have a better understanding of specific stakeholders' issues and more people advocating on his/her side (Spangler 2003). Through alliances more powerful stakeholders may take over the role of decision-making and defending their own interests. Furthermore, through alliances, communication and persuasion are effectively used to mobilize by powerful stakeholders. To explain how alliance formation strengthens trust between donors and other stakeholders in CF process, I examined the case of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) by explaining their two modes of working strategies:

a.1- The multi-partnership approach as a mean of alliance formation and sources of trust

The partnership is one form of donors' program implementation strategy, but it also means dealing with practical issues against the background of changing the focus of community forestry. Through this strategy, it is expected to balance the interests of other stakeholders with donors' formal aim on community forestry. In essence, this strategy is a concept of building mutual trust between donors' projects and involved stakeholders. The following section describes the formal processes of partnership approach of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) and its informal consequences by comparing the formal concept with the quantitative power network.

Since its inception, the Swiss Project provided technical and financial support to the Forest Administration and partner stakeholders in the community forestry development processes. The project has set networks at its various levels within which it had to work. At the national level, project officials frequently interacted with government officials, particularly from the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and Department of Forests. At this level, the project cooperates with other donor projects to try to influence government forest policy or promote reforms within the ministry itself or the respective department. At the district-level, the project staffs had to work in close

cooperation with District Forest Office staff, NGOs with which it has a partnership, local government and other partners. Finally, at the ‘bottom’, the project worked with and for community forest users and its groups. The project has developed multi-partnership approach in 1996 after realizing service-providers (NGO/CBOs or Private Sector agencies) role to carry out CF related activities (see Box-5.14).

Box-5.14: Necessity of partnership approach in community forestry: NSCFP experience

The partnership approach in community forestry arose out of the realization of projects/donors that needed to work with and through a range of local bodies or institutions (partners) in order to implement their programs. The alternative approach of implementing programs directly without involvement of any partners was generally considered both unsustainable and unacceptable. Existing institutions that already have defined rights, roles and responsibilities were weakened by such an approach. Multi-partnership thus means working with several partners in order to achieve programs outcomes.

Source: NSCFP 2007

The early phase of partnership approach:

During the early phase of community forestry implementation, it was considered that the role of the District Forest Office (DFO) was to establish and support CFUGs through providing inputs to them (supply driven). The Project’s role was to try to facilitate this relationship mainly by supporting the DFO. Whether the relationship between DFO and CFUGs could have been called a partnership, it was doubtful, since both institutions were inherently unequal with DFO, which held considerable power over CFUGs (see Figure-5.2). Hence, although the relationship between Forest Administration and CFUG was strong, it was one-sided and inequitable as powers were not distributed evenly (NSCFP 2007).

Figure-5.2: The early-phase of partnership approach

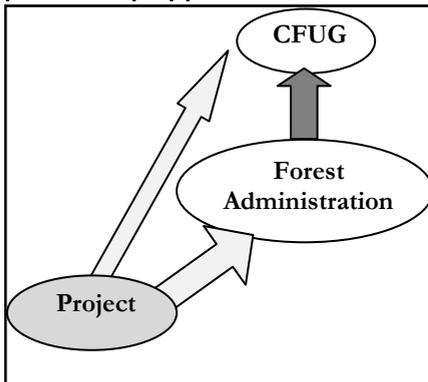
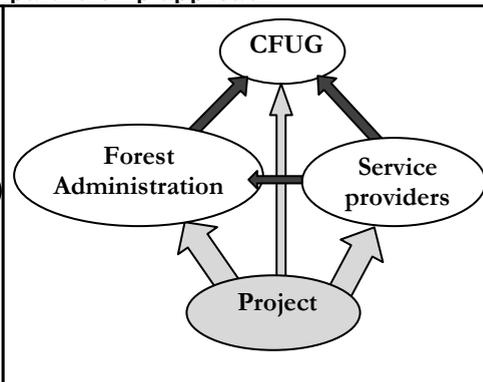


Figure-5.3: The mid-phase of partnership approach



Source: NSCFP 2005

Partnership approach during proliferation of community forestry:

After enactment of Forest Act of 1993 and Regulation of 1995, there was a rapid expansion of community forestry programs. Afterwards, it became apparent that DFO staffs were insufficient in number to provide the necessary support and services that CFUGs required, where at this stage NGO service providers became an option. From 1996, onwards, Nepal's armed conflict began to extend, eventually covering the greatest number of districts. This further exacerbated the limited 'reach' of DFO staff, since their movement in rural areas became increasingly restricted. To cork the gap of service delivery, NSCFP initiated multi-partnership approach, through which NGOs were given a role of service providers for FUGs as well as continuing with the existing partnership arrangements with DFOs (NSCFP 2007). This led to the three-cornered arrangement illustrated in Figure-5.3, where services were delivered to CFUGs by both government and by non-government service providers. According to NSCFP, initially, this multi-partnership approach was viewed with some mistrust by DFOs. However, over time, DFOs have increasingly come to recognize and value the role of service providers particularly in the conflict period when they could not operate in the field. In fact, in project areas DFOs themselves utilize service providers to implement certain aspects of their own programs (NSCFP 2007).

The current practice:

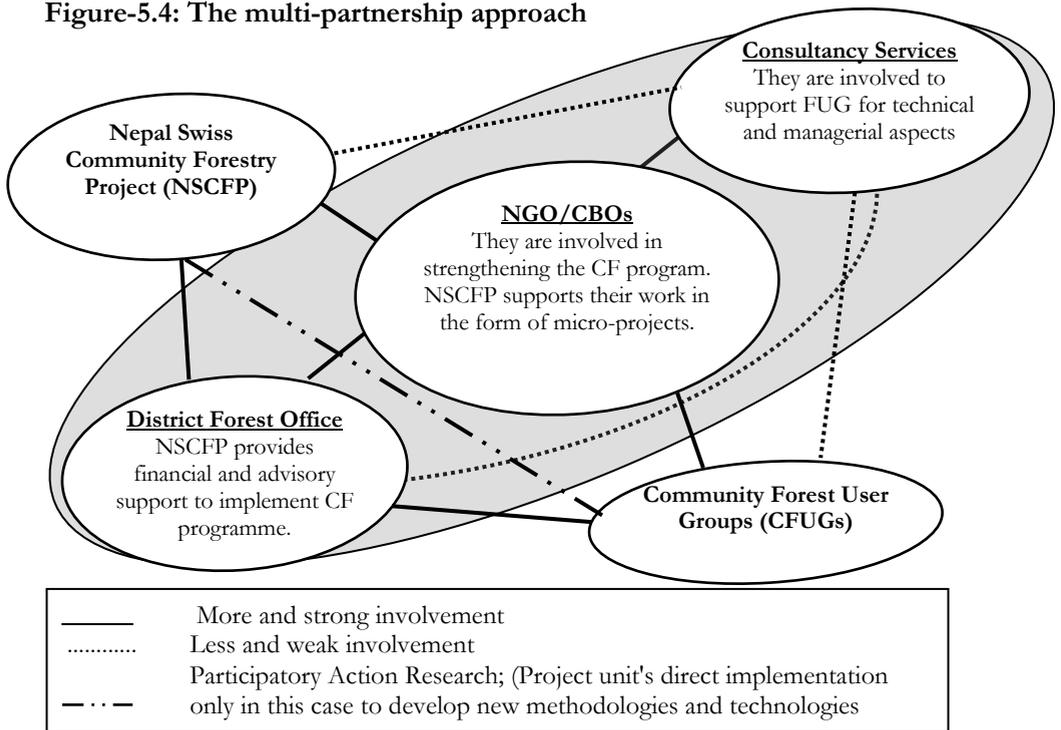
The current partnership approach of the Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) (Figure-5.4) has become more advanced, where services have been provided to CFUGs by: NGOs; professional associations (e.g. non-government rangers); private consultants; FECOFUN; and even CFUGs themselves. The project utilizes service providers to provide various services (e.g. technical, institutional, capacity building, skill development, income generation) to the forest user groups through granting 'micro-project' and consultancy. It was learnt that this approach provided a viable means of services to CFUGs to carry out forest management and development programs. The partnership approach was also used to be better informed about the ground reality. An important feature of the approach is that the role of the Forest Administration is to create a supportive enabling environment to ensure that services are delivered according to the needs and demands of forest users and their groups. However, the Forest Administration perception still persists that the project uses service providers because it doesn't trust government with funds (NSCFP 2007).

Box- 5.15: The assumed key features of multi-partnership approach

The project has formulated three key features of partnership approach in order to deliver effective services:

- A diversity of stakeholders (multiple partners), relationship and strong communication mechanism among themselves to ensure the sustainability of the framework in post- Project period,
 - A diversity of linkages between all the stakeholders (to ensure greater resilience and resistance to external pressures – robustness),
 - Sufficient space for civil society stakeholders through more balanced and equitable power relations governing the linkages between them and government (to ensure that principles of democracy and good forest sector governance can be sustained).
- Source: NSCFP 2007**

Figure-5.4: The multi-partnership approach



Source: Adopted from NSCFP 2007

The comparison of quantitative power networks with multi-partnership approach:

The partnership approach assumed that the forestry activities implemented by service providers with technical and legal support of the Department of Forest as well as the technical and financial support of NSCFP as supplementary to the programs of the District Forest Office. Furthermore, this approach has helped significantly to establish and strengthen the relationship between Forest Administration and NGO/CBOs in the project area. In fact, the process created a forum for regular meetings and environment of working together,

which has improved in mutual knowledge thereby mutual trust and finally team work (Gurung 2005). Furthermore, this approach also expected to balance power among participating stakeholders mainly: Forest Administration, CFUGC and other partner stakeholders and encouraged CFUGs to work with local government by safeguarding their autonomy (NSCFP 2007). However, in reality, this practice does not help neither the power balance of involved stakeholders nor safeguarding the autonomy of direct forest users on forest access and benefit sharing. Our quantitative power network (Table-5.11) and qualitative assessment reveals that distribution of power is very uneven due to power elements.

Table-5.11: The quantitative power network of Bheteripakha CFUG

S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Power status		
		Coercion	Trust	Incentives
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1 (40)	0 (27)	0 (10)
2	Community forest user group committee (CFUGC)	1 (30)	1 (67)	0 (0)
3	District Development Committee (DDC)	0 (10)	0 (12)	0 (10)
4	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)	0 (0)	1 (80)	1 (80)
5	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	0 (0)	0 (43)	1 (50)
6	Federation of community forestry users' Nepal (FECOFUN)	0 (0)	0 (33)	0 (10)
7	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	0 (0)	0 (20)	0 (10)
8	Ecology, agriculture and rural development society (ECARDS)	0 (0)	0 (30)	0 (20)
9	The Himalayan grassroots women's natural resource management association (HIMAWONTI)	0 (0)	0 (23)	0 (0)
10	Village Development Committee (VDC)	0 (0)	0 (10)	0 (0)
11	Bhimeshwar paper industry (P. Enterprize)	0 (0)	0 (23)	0 (10)

Note: Quantitative analysis shows that only four stakeholders represent the most powerful group in the network of eleven stakeholders:

- **Coercion:** DFO and CFUGC
- **Trust:** Swiss Project and CFUGC
- **Incentives:** Swiss Project and ANSAB

Source: Chapter five, Table-5.1 (1) of this thesis

Note: The first two columns of each table show the number and typology of stakeholders in each case, and the remaining columns explain power status of the stakeholders' based on three power elements: coercion, trust and incentives. The percentage value in the parentheses shows the maximum value that each stakeholder can get through the evaluation by all other stakeholders in the network.

If we look to the quantitative power network of Bheteripakha CFUG (Table-5.11) where the Swiss project has provided support in forest and community development programs through service providers, the distribution of power

elements: coercion, trust and incentives again is concentrated within few stakeholders like other community forest networks, where the multi-partnership approach does not exist. In essence, if the concept of multi-partnership approach works in practice, the distribution of power elements may be more even which means roles and responsibilities of involved stakeholders by being mutually negotiated and acting as facilitators in CF processes. However, in reality, this approach again seems to be utilized only by a few stakeholders and they are interested to grasp more benefits, both material and non-material, from the Swiss Project.

a.2 - The formation of a complex project structure as a means of alliance formation and sources of trust

Formation of a complex project structure is another strategy of donor project in order to gain wider acceptance of its programs and strengthen mutual trust within a network. This strategy is based on the formal program objective of donors' project on 'livelihood improvement, forest conservation and good governance'¹⁴, however, in reality, the practice has neither devolved decision-making power to the sub-ordinate nor can sub-ordinate influence donor programs. The following section presents the formal process and objectives of the project structure of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP).

The NSCFP is governed by various coordination committees from macro to micro-levels (see Figure-5.5). Each of these committees is expected to support and legitimize the project activities. At the top, the Project Coordination Committee (PCC) bears the responsibility to coordinate with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) and its Forest Department as the main implementing partners. In the district and villages, the District Coordination Committee (DCC) and Village Coordination Committee (VCC) are the main supervisors of the project who coordinate and acknowledge the implementation of the project through partners like the District Forest Office, NGO service providers, consultants and private sector stakeholders.

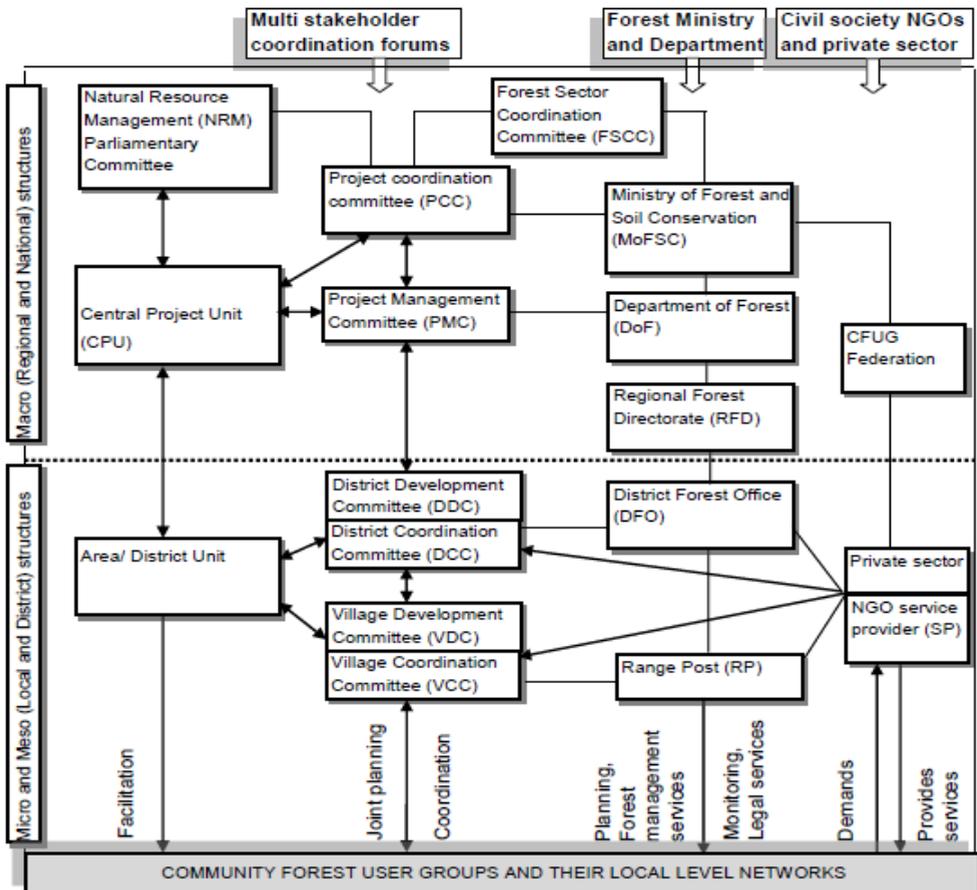
The Project Coordination Committee (PCC):

The PCC represents a forum where MoFSC, SDC and other stakeholders of the project can meet to review progress, consider Work Plans and discuss and resolve issues facing the project. A key function of the PCC is to examine the consistency of policy interpretation between the central and district levels and to take action in policy interpretations, which are found to constraint the achievements of the project aims and objectives. A supporting purpose is to steer the project at the conceptual and policy levels, and review planning and progresses. The PCC will also be able to co-opt people whose specialist knowledge may be required at particular meetings. The committee is supposed to meet twice a year. There is a provision to form 21 members in the PCC

¹⁴ See Chapter-6 (section 6.5) formal interests of donors' project.

being represented from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The committee is chaired by a Member of Parliament who is also a member in the Parliamentary Natural Resource Management of Committee (CNRM) (NSCFP 2008).

Figure-5.5: Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project- Project structure and alliances with partners



Source: NSCFP 2008

The Project Management Committee (PMC):

The PMC is constituted under the chair of the Director General of the Department of Forest on planning and smooth implementation of the project activities. The main function of PMC is to plan and review the Yearly Plan of Operation (YPO), which interpret the mandate of the project document into a more detailed strategic and operational plan for the coming operational year and also to act as a bridge between field level reality and the PCC (NSCFP 2008).

The District Coordination Committee (DCC):

The DCC is constituted in each of the project districts to ensure coordination of the project and government activities in the districts. The proposed 25 members committee is headed by a chairman or a member nominated by DDC chairperson with the representation of DDC/VDC/Municipality, national political parties, FUG network, FUG, disadvantage communities, NGOs, the private sector and the District Forest Officer who acts as a member secretary. The project unit office at the respective district is supposed to provide secretariat service to the DCC. The DCC is supposed to meet periodically and discuss advancement of CF in the concerned district and to advise the project unit about the district level operational plans and project budgets. The DCC also bears functions, becoming aware on awareness spread of CF in general, and NSCFP's concept and approaches in particular (NSCFP 2008).

Village Development Committee (VDC) level Coordination Committee (VCC):

Likewise, as in the case with DCC, the VCC is supposed to bring village level stakeholders in CF for sharing information on the progress and issues of CF in their constituency. The VCC has a specified task in raising local issues concerning further up taking in the coordination structures (DCC and PCC) and providing feedback to those structures. The VCC also functions as a platform where the results of the project are reflected and disseminated. The VCC is headed by the VDC chairperson or member of VDC nominated by VDC chairperson with representatives coming from VDC council, FUG network, FUGs, disadvantage community, private sector and DFO staff responsible for that VDC by acting as a member secretary (NSCFP 2008).

Although, the above mentioned structures framed at different levels are required for the formal process to get SDC funding and legitimizing project activities, which does not mean that each stakeholder has participated in the different committees by acting as independent evaluators of the project activities. The whole forestry sector in Nepal is highly depended on foreign aid in order to cover even their basic expenditures.

b. Project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as sources of trust:

Planning and implementation of forestry projects stem from the choice of planners' decisions and prospects of plan adoption. Project planning can be used to devise new products, services, internal operations or organizational policies, where power elements are often applied to aid planning and implementation phase of the project (Nutt 1983:600-1). The involvements of different stakeholders in such functions aim to build trust and minimize future risks of project failures. In reality, such a process is often controlled by powerful stakeholders because it is reinforced by enormous differences found in payments and status between the project and other involved stakeholders.

These processes are often manipulative because the project tries to manipulate the situation until the involved stakeholders are predisposed to support the plan. The project might apply various combinations of rewards and information in concert to pave the way to plan the implementation phase and its monitoring (see Box-5.16):

Box-5.16: Planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of NSCFP programs

The planning process of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) involved series of stakeholders and several phases, which could enhance the interaction of the stakeholders in different disciplines, as an effective strategy of trust being built between the project and the involved stakeholders. The project adopted bottom-up planning processes. The specific demand of the District Forest Office of the red book activities funds had to be presented to the Regional Directorate Office, by being compiled at the Department of Forests (DoF) and is forwarded to the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) for the final approval by the National Planning Commission (NPC).

Except for the joint pilot phase of DoF and NGOs partners, NSCFP staffs are not involved in direct implementation of the program, but assume a role as advisors to CF stakeholders by including CFUGs in the districts. At the national level, in addition to the government agencies, the Project cooperates with national NGOs and user groups' federation, the private sector service providers and consultants working for community forestry and livelihoods. In the selection of collaborating partners the project aims to promote SDC's workforce diversity policy. At the local level, the project works under the coordination of the VCC and DCC to promote community forestry programs.

The Yearly Plan of Operations (YPO) is the main planning instrument of the project. Fund allocation is based on the participatory planning process prior to the drawing of YPO. This is led by DFO, which conducts Range and District-level workshops in order to assess demands from CFUGs and plan other activities linked to national-level priorities and targets. After six months, YPO can be reviewed in the case of unforeseen circumstances on the basis of its needs. A reviewed YPO needs to be endorsed by the meeting of PCC. Furthermore, the yearly review and planning are key moments for all partners to participate.

The project also assists in programs' implementation by 'direct funding', which are identified by forest users' groups/committees and implemented by the support of NGOs or consultants. The selection of service providers is supposed to be done by CFUGs themselves (by advisory support of the project) but needs to be followed by NGO-Service Provider Guidelines of the project, in order to guarantee a transparent and competitive system of service provider that abide SDCs workforce diversity policy. A detailed annual progress report with three components (financial, operation and organizational) need to be produced and presented to the PCC, with the red book and direct-funded activities and expenditures, which are separately identified and presented. Regular project and activity monitoring takes place using the indicators mentioned and specified in the YPO.

Source: NSCFP 2008

c. Policy support as sources of trust:

The donor project exhibits an apparent variation in the modalities of their policy assistance, which, in turn, defines how deeply they engage with the Forest Ministry and Department of Forest (Springate-Baginski and Blaikie 2007: 48). There are claims that community forestry policy in Nepal has not come from the government itself and evidence suggest that it is a donor-driven policy (see Pokharel 1997). Policies are formulated in such a way that there will always be a need of donors to implement it. It is therefore doubtful that this will continue once donors withdraw their financial and technical support. From the process of the draft formulation phase, a broad range of consultation and input is sought from donors and their representatives. Guidelines or policy circulars are first proposed either by the Ministry, Department of Forest or some time even donors' project (Thoms 2004). Although some mechanisms for coordination between different forestry sector donors exist at ministry-level, the mixture of donors with different policies, strategies, approaches and procedures working more or less independently making forestry policy formulation and revision more complex (Springate-Baginski and Blaikie 2007: 50). The incorporation of the Forest Administration and donors' interests in crafting new and revising existing policies, are the product of their negotiations and mutual each others' trust .

d. Capacity building programs as sources of trust:

Donors offer various capacity building programs such as education, trainings and technical support to the network stakeholders in order to enhance stakeholders' knowledge and motivate them into sustainable forest management practices. Meanwhile, we can say that the capacity building is a power diminishing process; however, in practice, it is often combined with power processes, either with trust or incentives. Capacity building programs can be one of the power elements, which is either 'trust' if the stakeholders change their behavior by accepting donors' information', or 'incentives' themselves if they motivate the action of stakeholders, while if it is enabling only to do something, then it is not part of power processes. For example, if donors' projects could offer trainings on 'forest inventory' to FUGs and they want to see the Working Plan of the respective FUGs as part of their training guidelines, then this is a power process, while, if they do not have any interests on how FUGs utilize the acquired information then that is not a power process. Therefore, the capacity building could be used as an informational mean for their (donor) own judgment, or used to increase the power process of trust.

Education as capacity building programs:

Bilateral donors in Nepal's forestry started during the *Panchyat* era, which colored the nature of their involvement and intervention in particular ways (Pokharel 1997). For example, all community forest donor projects including NSCFP provided several scholarships for advanced degrees and foreign study

tours to forest officials. Pokharel argues that such provisions started as forms of strengthening the position of the privileged (e.g. Panchyat politicians and senior bureaucrats) – donors' alliances, where all these privileged officials had to agree on donors' assistance packages.

Capacity building through abroad study visits, study tours, trainings and other means such as vehicles, were the main criteria to approve donor proposals. This is justified in terms of capacity building as the solution to all Forest Administration's problems (Thoms 2004) and assumptions derived by its advocacy of capacity building as an important part of institution building (Pokharel 1997). As I got to know from the discussions with the Foreign Aid Department of Ministry of Forest and donors officials, the project approval could hinge on foreign study tours and scholarships rather than substance. However, government officials claimed this as a part of 'human capacity development' for the sustainable management of forests. During field visits, one District Forest Officer by sharing his experiences said that almost 70% of government employed foresters got the chance of higher education through donor channels. Foresters who have not worked directly with donor field projects, whenever possible to apply for a foreign study visit, they do not hesitate to ask recommendation letters from project directors (who are generally foreign nationals), to show that he/she is a competent applicant and have experience with development projects.

Provisions within donor project documents for foreign study tours are the core of human resource development within the DoF. Each project provides a certain number of these scholarships. I would argue that it actually diverts resources from activities that could directly benefit the poor. Because working in a project's district is a prerequisite to be considered for a higher education, where project districts are highly favored postings (Thoms 2004). In districts where there are no study scholarships, foresters want to work in other places. Therefore, supporting higher degrees is a strategy of donor projects to create and maintain trust with Forest Administration and even within a project structure.

Technical 'expertise as capacity building:

Donor agencies perpetuate officials' presumption believing that professionals in developing countries include foresters who need the knowledge of 'modern technology' developed in the West, which can be transferred only through training (Pokharel 1997). Various forestry crisis, raised in international media through donors, such as "The projection of Himalayan degradation" by Eckholm (1976) and later on fuel wood crisis followed by economic crisis and sustainability, provided donors with an opportunity to export technical expertise of donors, their products and people (Malla 2001). Moreover, donors' major support has been through Technical Assistance which is derived in part from a set of assumptions that 'training' activities are the logical site of capacity building of government organizations (Catlett and Schuftan 1994). In this

sense, like in the past further education and 'training' of foresters, it is assumed to be the best solution to build up the capacity of forestry institutions. Therefore, there are common practices of organizing trainings on technical aspect of forest management across the donor funded study districts, which stimulate the trustworthy environment between donors' projects and other stakeholders' by accepting and disseminating donors' 'technical package'. In practice, such packages foster to prepare technical forest management documents such as FUG Work Plan.

Capacity building to forest user groups:

Donor's field projects, through Forest Administration and other service providers, also provide capacity and institutional building support to forest user groups. Generally, the chairman and the secretary of the donor supported CFUGs, have chances of go on trainings, workshops and exposure visits, compared to other committee members. The support being provided for the users' committees in terms of trainings and workshops, strengthen the allies between the Forest Administrations and the users' committee. In addition, donor projects and programs have supported various capacity building programs at FUG level such as: scholarships to students belonging to the FUGs; training on income generating activities, institutional development and gender issues.

e. Benefits to elites as sources of trust:

Local elites use their status and connections to project leadership and position themselves as the entry point or gatekeepers of a community. In this way they represent 'the community' and become receivers, when outsiders such as, government, NGO and donors' project bring technical and financial assistance. The rest of the community then sees the local elites bringing development, even if that development tends to make local elites benefit more than others. The elite domination and marginalization of poor is quite common in 'participatory decentralized community focused development' especially when external assistance is rushed (Platteau 2004). Hence, users' committees believe, whether beneficial to the poor or not, that development projects are both synergy and energy to maintain their position and extend control to the forest users playing the role of gatekeeper.

f. Research and documentation as sources of trust:

Donors, directly or through their field projects, want to allocate enough percentages of their budget for research and documentation in order to increase information on technical, legal, institutional, social, economic and ecological aspects of community forestry. Generally donors through their alliances possess manpower and hire national and international consultants in order to conduct research and documentation activities in community forestry as follows:

- undertake a feasibility study of community forestry;
- support case studies, and other research activities, which provide a better understanding of the above aspects of community forestry;
- document research results in an appropriate language for different audiences;
- develop guidelines and case studies for research activities;
- provide an information centre for community forestry in their project offices;
- participate and maintain community forestry data base from micro to macro levels;
- Organize national and international forums to share their research findings.

(Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009)

There are mainly two reasons why donors are interested to conduct research and documentation together with their development assistance. Firstly, donors use their research findings as a bargaining tool with recipient countries in order to prolong their stay and home countries by getting additional funding ensuring projects' success, or perceiving success in the eyes of the home office. This requires more resources to hire leading consultants to produce detailed status reports and publications demonstrating progress. And secondly, the donor's Home Office evaluates the performance of the project on the basis of targets achieved, documents/reports submitted and partially on the quantity of funds disbursed. But it is important to note that research agendas usually are driven through the interests of donors' project in collusion with Forest Administration not being promoted after consultation with local communities. Boxes-5.17 and 5.18 illustrate the examples how donors project incorporate research topics into their programs.

Box- 5.17: The example of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)

The Project aims to cooperate with academic institutions, their faculty members and post graduate students jointly by conducting studies and research in project districts. The project also offers internship opportunities to young professionals especially from discriminated group of people and from remote areas; in this the project strictly follows SDC's internship guidelines. From its learning, the project also aims to offer sound knowledge to various relevant organizations on community forestry principles, policies and practices; governance coaching; gender and social inclusion, equity in natural resource governance, policy and so on.

(Source: NSCFP 2008)

Box- 5.18: The example of Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya (ComForM) Project

The Long-term research aims at producing knowledge on forest growth, yield and investigating the dynamics of people-forest interactions. The project started to establish permanent research plots in 2005, and expected to carry their onsite

research till 2015. The research is carried out by the Institute of Forestry (IOF), Nepal and Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen with the support of the Department of Forest Research and Survey (Nepal), and other stakeholders. The project identified a number of research topics during consultation with IOF faculty and other professionals in the Nepalese forestry sector. The project also includes provisions for strategic research grants and faculty exchange programs in order to develop the professionals in forestry sector.

(Source: ComForM 2009)

II. Reasoning of lower-level trust

Donor-funded programs are noticed to be, essential, although the results are different. While success has been seen during the term of a project or program, at the moment when some of these projects 'foreign experts' left, funding was terminated, and the investments began to disintegrate (Thoms 2004, Pokharel 1997). In addition, the greatest numbers of these programs are capital and material intensive, they last only four to six years (see Annex-5 for different donors project duration in Nepal), and their termination seem to have a major effect as a result of their inputs which are substantial and gathered in a short period of time. Byron (1997) mentions a couple of reasons why many donor funded projects fail to deliver real and lasting benefits to the target groups, firstly, because they are designed and driven largely by outsiders, donors, consultants and local officials. Secondly, projects tend to be concentrated on a single sector, in a single ministry or department and are therefore non-integrative and top-down. Finally, they are run very quickly in a substantial ignorance of the real situation of both the subject households and the implementation procedures (Byron 1997:66).

The sustainability of donors' programs is suspected in many instances, because of the basis upon which their assistant roles are conceptualized. While all donors have the objective of community development through community forestry, and all of them work with the Department of Forests, the approaches deployed vary from donor to donor. In most instances, these approaches are distinguished from the structure of their partnerships with the Department of Forests and the manner in which assistance is implemented at the local level.

Generally, donor project's structure of creating a huge technical team under direct donor control has been consistently a mechanism of donor support in Nepal, and this has left limited opportunity for local government and non-governmental organizations to develop their institutional capacity (Ojha 2003). They have used significant portion of their money in reforming government's forestry sector, including institutional strengthening and human capacity rights from the beginning of their nearly 30 year history of support in community forestry processes. In fact, the best thing is that they have worked with governmental organizations, presuming that later they are the only service delivering agencies. In his study, Ojha (2003) mentioned that there are strong doubts in believing that the enhanced institutional capacity of forest

department as a result of donor inputs, and some of the donor induced recent policy initiatives (such as Forest Inventory Guideline 2000 and revised in 2004) have actually gone contrary to what they hoped to achieve- strengthen community institutions for forest management.

Box-5.19: Forest inventory guideline 2000, as an example of policy intervention

The forest inventory requirement is a prime example. Recall that forest user groups must have such an inventory completed when renewing their Work Plans. Such detailed, technical forest inventories require specific training and are beyond the capacity of user groups, requiring the trained forest technicians. Donors' projects including Swiss funded NSCFP play a complicated role in this policy. It is interesting to note that the NSCFP began supporting forest inventories in community forests during 1990s before the current requirement. The purpose of NSCFP, was to empower FUGs to be able to demonstrate success at forest protection with a baseline for comparison, which could serve as evidence against an attempt by the government to take a community forest back. It may be that the government policy was inspired by the work being done in the Swiss project districts. Some donor roles initially formulating the forest inventory policy are therefore intimated, but not clear. Regardless of any donor role in formulating the policy, donors are trying to influence how the policy is implemented. Donor reaction is somewhat mixed but mostly there is concern on how the forest inventory requirement might negatively impact community forest user groups. Donors' project head officials are privately concerned that this policy restricts user groups' access on CF resource, which threatens 'democratization', by limiting user group authority in practice, by limiting livelihood benefits, and that the policy's impact on forest conservation is dubious.

Source: Own interpretation based on field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

The forestry sector in Nepal is heavily influenced by politics; anyone can easily notice political allies within Forest Administration. When changes takes place at the central level of the Ministry then we can expect a big turmoil within the structure of Forest Administration from central to Range-Post levels. The forest minister and secretary of the ministry, who in fact represent the interests of the ruling political party, bear the formal authority to deal with donors and negotiate aid assistance. The negotiation tactics follows the same way from center to field implementation projects. Furthermore, the 'politician-bureaucrator-donor' coalition also provides opportunities to politicians to employ their family members, relatives and cadre in the donor funded projects without regard to their merit or professionalism (Ojha 2006).

The lack of transparency is a major factor hindering better aid management and trustworthy environment between government of Nepal and donors. There is a widespread accusation toward donors, which claim that donors' service delivery systems are not transparent, accountable, simple and responsive to the needs of the people (see Ojha 2006). There are evidences that the availability and flow of foreign aid in forestry in general and community forestry in specific, have increased not only the incidence of corruption but also

transformed it into practice, for example: the choice of location of the project, scale and execution involved lot of transactions among stakeholders. Furthermore, corruption comes from procurements of materials, inclusion of unnecessary foreign travel opportunities, or consulting opportunities in the project; topping up the salaries of civil servants for their cooperation in project approval and implementation. For example SNV funded BISEP-ST programs provide topping salaries to government employees who are directly involved in program monitoring, evaluation and execution. Mr. Surya Nath Upadhyay, ex-Chief Commissioner of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) Nepal, during his speech in the forum of “Improving Donor Effectiveness in Combating Corruption (Paris, December 9-10, 2004)”, shed lights on how government- donor accuses each other on transparency issue:

“As per the report of Office of Auditor General (2002/3), a total of NRs71.22 billion (nearly one billion in US dollar term) involved in 4827 technical assistance (primarily experts, consultants, advisors) from various donors have not been accounted in the annual budgets of the government. Interestingly, donors accuse government for inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy, for corrupt politicians, lack of ownership and inability to prioritize development programs as factors responsible for breeding rampant corruption. The government, in turn, accuses donors for their high-handedness, policy encroachment and stringent aid conditionality as factors responsible for breeding corruption in Nepal. Interestingly, the accusations and counter-accusations have not stopped the flow of aid money in Nepal” (Upadhyay 2004).

The trend driven and short period programs of donors are also the reasons of lower-level of trust in the network. For instances, during mid 90s, donors’ approach was focused on capacity building in the District Forest Offices and other allies (e.g. FECOFUN and local NGOs) as well as promoting formation of CFUGs at the early phase of the project, thenafter turning capacity building, networking and pro-poor targeted programs. Heavy promotion of community forestry during mid 90s led to rapid spread of community forestry and its rapid spread was accomplished quickly, poor executed formation processes that led in many cases to boundary conflicts, and the exclusion of real users and elite domination (Thoms 2004).

A large number of forestry donors in Nepal work on improving the livelihoods status of the poor households. In practice, improving livelihoods is often interpreted as simply improving income so that the focus is the training in various income generating activities. Such trainings usually are focused on technical aspects as for example; creating cloth from nettles or raising edible mushrooms. These trainings often lack marketing components, and rarely assess demands for particular products in the first place. The problem is that providing trainings in such a knowledge vacuum makes them potentially pointless wastes of time and money if appropriate markets do not exist (Shrestha 1999). Furthermore, already advantaged households are more likely to have the time, money, and labor available to capitalize on opportunities emerging from such skills’ trainings.

5.2.3. Incentives

Incentives are recognized as being important determinant behind initiation of participatory forest management. Incentives, particularly in the context of developing countries where institutional environment is less robust, are considered as essential prerequisites for participation of stakeholders in the conservation of forest resources (Turyahabwe *et al.* 2007, Ostrom *et al.* 2002). Ostrom *et al.* (2002) mention that donor funding remains a dominant types of incentives which motivate stakeholders to participate in decentralized forest management. Elinor Ostrom and her team lists additional training, supplemental technical assistance, overseas travel opportunities, which are all incentives used in aid processes (Ostrom *et al.* 2002).

Before going at a detailed discussion, it is useful to discuss the broader overview of direct and indirect forms of incentives in community forestry. Direct incentives include inputs in community forestry such as: grants and subsidies, and material incentives such as: vehicles, equipments, plantation seedlings and any cost-sharing mechanisms. It is well known fact that unless forest income makes tangible economic sense to them, FUGs are unlikely to be willing, and indeed are frequently unable, to manage the forest resources. Therefore, in order to mobilize local people actively community forestry stakeholders mainly Forest Administration and donors offer different types of incentives, both direct and indirect, to the local forest users through users' committee. In the context of CF, economic incentives are concerned in making it more worthwhile in financial and livelihood terms for communities to maintain, rather than to degrade, natural resources in the course of their forest management activities as financial involvement, which would activate interests of the beneficiaries in sustainable forest management (Weiss 2000:250).

Indirect incentives include provision of technical advisory services to the network stakeholders. As community forestry in Nepal is diverting towards the technical management informally, stakeholders' need managerial skills of the forest such as: plantations, tending operations, harvesting, distribution and marketing. Donors through their technical advisors, experts and government foresters, provide technical assistance to network stakeholders through developing technical guidelines, training manuals, field based trainings and overseas trainings. In fact, both direct and indirect incentives are important in stimulating stakeholders' participation in community forestry. The following section discusses incentives mechanism in community forestry mainly: incentives through Forest Administrations to the community forest users' groups, and incentives through donors to the Forest Administration and forest users' groups.

5.2.3.1. Forest Administration and types of incentives in community forestry

Forest Administration may play a facilitating role concerning local initiatives in community forest management, including assistance and guidance to local forest user groups, especially financial and technical assistance for forest management. Ribot (2002) mentions that financial support from forest agencies to local communities help in forest management and also form a base for improvement of livelihoods of forest users. In community forestry of Nepal, as the government has few financial incentives or rewards to offer, there are mainly three ways to get financial needs to carry out forestry and development programs: support from donor (possible only in the case of donor funded project area), income generated from selling forest products (cases exist in resource rich status CFs) and cash contribution from forest users (cases exist in resource poor status CFs). The current forestry legislation also assigned to the Forest Administration to provide technical assistance in the form of trainings and technical support to the forest user groups. The following section discusses the observed incentive mechanisms across the studied FUGs (see Table-5.12) at this study with the following examples:

Table-5.12: Types of incentives received by users' committees from local Forest Administration

Incentives in the form of:		Observed cases*
Resource poor status community forests (total number of cases 5)	1. Financial support	
	• Plantation: seedlings purchasing, seedling transportation	4
	• Partial financial support for forest protection	4
	• Study tour	4
	2. Training	
	• Plantation	5
	• Forest nursery	2
	• Silvicultural operation and harvesting	5
	• Forest inventory	3
	• Account keeping	3
	3. Technical support	
	• Forest boundary mapping	5
	• Forest inventory and writing a work plan	5
	• Silvicultural operation and harvesting	5
	• Fire line construction	5
	4. Material support	
	• Seedlings	5
	• Barbed wire	2
	• Forest operation tools: saw, measuring tapes	3
	• Extension materials: pamphlets, brochures,	5

Resource rich status community forests (total number of cases 7)	activity calendar, forestry legislations	
	• Office stationeries	4
	1. Financial support	
	• Small grant for forest protection	3
	2. Training	7
	• Plantation	6
	• Forest nursery	2
	• Silvicultural operation and harvesting	7
	• Forest inventory	5
	• Account keeping	6
	3. Technical support	
	• Forest boundary mapping	7
	• Forest inventory and writing operational plan	7
	• Silvicultural operation and harvesting	7
	• Fire line construction	7
	4. Material support	
	• Seedlings	5
• Extension materials: pamphlets, brochures, activities calendar, forestry legislations	7	

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

* Note: The cases refer to the number of CFUGs, where a specific incentive practice was observed, in total twelve CFUGs were selected at this study.

The above given table (Table-5.12) presents examples of financial, material and technical mode of incentives, which have been provided by Forest Administration to forest users' groups through users' committee. The information was collected during interviews with twelve forest users' groups during field visits in 2008 and 2009. The members of forest users' group committees, particularly the chairman and secretary, were asked to list the different kinds of support they had received after the forest was handed over to them. Later, the information from users' committees was triangulated through evidences available with users' committees and local forest offices. Finally, the information collected through interview and captured evidences in the form of photocopies and photos were clustered into: financial support, training, technical and material support.

The Forest Administration believes direct incentives are most likely to be important from the initial stage of raising awareness to implementation stage of motivating forest users in the protection and management of the forests particularly in the resource poor status community forests (IDFO1-12 2008 and 2009). However, as the Forest Administration depends on international agencies for its program and development budget, direct financial assistance to local users' committee is very negligible as field evidences show only four

CFUGs (resource poor status) out of twelve that have received little amount of financial support for plantation, forest protection and to conduct study tours.

Technical advisory services in the form of trainings and technical support are the most common types of incentives that local Forest Administration offers to the users' committees. As community forestry is associated with various technical activities, needed to be done before and after handed over, the demand to carry out remains always high. The most common examples of technical assistance in the form of training and technical support are: forest boundary mapping, forest stratification, species identification, forest inventory, biomass calculation, calculation of allowable cut, tree marking, tree felling, forest nursery, identification of plantation sites, plantation, fencing, silvicultural operation, accounting of income and expenditures. As we discussed in the previous section, technical rationale through formal and informal ways limits the use rights, referring either to resource generation (e.g. plantation) or to control use access in order to protect the forest from over harvesting and improve the condition of forest. Although, technical assistance was labeled as a means of 'capacity building, through different assistance Forest Administration wants to meet their interests on community forestry through motivating local people in forest management, legalizing forest management activities by approving Work Plans and informing users about rules and regulations to limit forest uses.

The Forest Administration also offers various material incentives to forest users' groups which quantitatively vary from case to case. Extension materials, such as forest activity calendar and legal documents, seedling to plant inside CF and in private land, are the most common forms of material incentives among the case studies. They also provide barbed wire to protect plantation sites from grazing, however, the case was observed only in the two CFs (Akala and Pachabhैया CFs). Some forest users group also received tools for forest measurement and harvesting, and office stationeries such as leaser books and folders. Both, demand based on formal request of users' committee to the Forest Administration (e.g. application for asking seedlings, technical support, financial support) and supply based on direct offer to the users' committee (e.g. plantation in degraded areas, participants for trainings) which are observed in the studied CFs. However, the final decision always is made according to the interests of the provider, i.e. the Forest Administration, rather than to the needs of the FUG.

Impose tax to the forest products as negative incentives in community forestry:

A Cabinet-level decision taken in summer of 2000, limits community forestry in Terai by declaring that only detached, degraded forest patches shall be handed-over to the users' group and intact forest blocks will remain national forests under a protected category, with 25% of revenue shared with local government units (HMG/N 2000). On the other hand, decisions could also impose 40

percent of the earnings from surplus timber sold by community forest user groups outside the FUG from Terai, Siwaliks and Inner Terai to be collected by the government for program implementation. Later, the government policy decision was challenged by the FECOFUN¹⁵ and sending the case to the Supreme Court in 2001. The case was against the cabinet decision to levy 40 percent earnings on the sale of surplus timber from community forests in Terai. The Supreme Court gave a verdict (on March 2003) against the cabinet decision by imposing the provisions of the Forest Act. The government later inserted a provision in the Finance Act to levy a 15 percent tax on the sale of surplus timber (*Shorea robusta* and *Acacia catechu*) of community forests across the country. In addition to this, CFUGs are obliged to pay 15% VAT on the same sales, although exactly how this is calculated is still a mystery (Bampton and Cammaert 2006). This policy might create disincentives to harvesting and marketing forest products. It further discourages active management of community forests and thereby further constrains the potential of community forests to improve rural livelihoods in Nepal (IFECO-Dudk6 2008). Recently, referring to the unchecked tree harvesting in a few community forests, government is preparing to impose 50% tax from the existing 15% of the forest products sold to non-users (see Box-5.20).

Box- 5.20: The forest ministry proposes to levy 50 percent tax

Source: The Himalayan Times, 19 June 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Kathmandu: The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) is preparing to amend the existing law of community forest to curb rampant deforestation by increasing the revenue from community forest user groups from the existing 15 percent to 50 percent. In 2000 the ministry had made the provision that the 40 percent income of the community forest can be used by its user's group. However, later in 2003 it was decreased to 25 percent and in 2005 it was fixed to 15 percent which is only applicable to the tree species *Acacia catechu* (Khayer) and *Shorea robusta* (Sal).

The current preparation of the ministry to amend the law will force community user groups to pay fifty percent of the income to the government. The ministry had forwarded this concept to the Prime Minister a week ago. "The communities are using their income haphazardly and they are working like commercial groups. So, the ministry is forwarding a new law to bar them from using the forest commercially and curb deforestation," said Yubaraj Bhusal, Secretary, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. "The current step of the ministry has not been discussed with the forest community groups," said Ghanashyam Pandey, ex- president of FECOFUN. Ministry officials claim that the communities are not complying with the rules. "So we are compelled to increase the revenue from the community forest user groups," officials claimed. According to a source of the ministry, it is planning to bring new policy and programs regarding community forests.

¹⁵ FECOFUN is the Federation of Community Forest User Groups Nepal

5.2.3.2. Donors and types of incentives in community forestry

Foreign Aid has been contributing to socio-economic development of Nepal. Forestry sector has remained as one of the priority areas for the investment of international development aid especially since 1970s for the promotion of rural livelihoods through the conservation of Himalayan ecosystems. During mid of 70s Nepalese government was able to initiate community forestry pilot projects with financial and technical support provided by the World Bank and diverse group of bilateral donors and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

Although at the global level the dominant development paradigm following 80s, remained the neo-liberal market approach, donor funds still poured into the community forestry sector in Nepal in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals (mainly goal 1, 3 and 7)¹⁶. This paradox is explained as follows: though neo-liberals dislike government interventions, they mostly care about the following: “foreign aid and technical assistance as extremely important instruments of influence which can be utilized to impose their policies on less developed nations...” (Cypher and Dietz 2004: 199). Economic crisis in developing countries and less attention to the forestry sector further fueled the need of donor assistance, for example Nepal’s Forest Administration receives much of its budget from international aid through bilateral and multi-lateral donor projects.

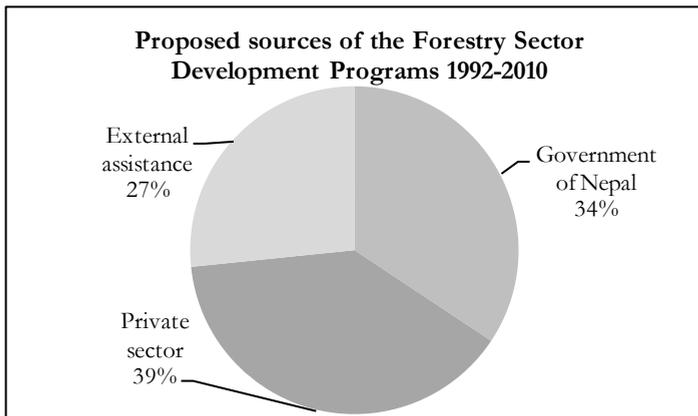
Since inception of community forestry, there was a heavy involvement by foreign aid agencies in plan formulation, by ensuring their further involvement and 'need' for external resources for years to come. The first 'official' Community Forestry Development Project was initiated in 1980 with the establishment of the Community Forestry Development and Training Project funded by the World Bank and technical assistance provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Shortly thereafter, the Australian Agency for International Development (Aus Aid) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) since 1978; Britain, Denmark and Finland since 1980s, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) since 1990, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) since 1992 and the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) since 2002 started funding community forestry projects in Nepal. The large number of foreign donors in the forestry sector clearly show that community forestry is (was) one of the most preferred sectors and there were many more projects that used the institution of CFUGs as the entry point. These agencies have been providing both technical and financial support to the government’s Forest Department in planning and implementing forestry programs both at the national and in the

¹⁶ Goal 1- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Goal 3- Promote gender equality and empower women, and Goal 7- Ensure environmental sustainability.

field-levels. By the end of 1980s, approximately 50 percent of all donor assistance to forestry sector in Nepal was being invested in community-based initiatives (Poffenberger 2000:64). Following the enactment of the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector in 1989 and the Forest Act of 1993, donor support further enlarged in the forestry sector.

International financial aid to the forestry sector in general and community forestry in particular is sizeable in Nepal. For example, the share of foreign aid totally at government expenditures during 2001/02- 2008/09 was 19.9 percent in an average whereas the share of foreign aid on capital expenditure in the same period was averagely recorded 69.1% (MoF 2010). Furthermore, analysis of donors' aid reveals that in ten years period (1996-2006) forestry sector in Nepal has received approximately 140.4 million USD as development aid, 85% of which is in the form of grant assistance (NSCFP 2008). The government forestry plan has also clearly stated the need of international funding to accomplish their forestry programs. For example, the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) in 1989 seeks a major portion (27%) of the total budget allocated for forest sector for twenty years period time to be borne by the donor agencies (HMG/N 1989, see Figure-5.6).

Figure-5.6: Proposed sources of forestry budget in MPFS



Source: HMG/N 1989

Significant direct and indirect involvement by international stakeholders in almost all community forests in Nepal suggests they have considerable influence on forest policy and practice. Moreover, we can say that community forestry processes and practices in Nepal is highly control by donor agencies by presenting their 'scientific evidences' from their staff of highly paid 'experts'. The influence of donor agencies is plainly visible through their programs (see Annex-5) and contribution in the DoF's budget (Table-5.13).

Table-5.13: Donor contributions in the forestry sector budget in Nepal (amount in million NRs)

Year	Government allocation		Foreign aid	Foreign aid % as of development budget
	Regular budget	Development budget		
1987/88	14.6	449.6	206.5	45.9
1988/89	15.7	556.7	145.06	26.1
1989/90	17.3	547.2	180.6	33.0
1990/91	17.4	460.1	207.8	45.2
1991/92	22.6	884.3	389.7	44.1
1992/93	21.3	928.8	171.2	18.4
1993/94	23.4	966.5	329.8	34.1
1994/95	381.9	408.4	180.9	44.3
1995/96	481.4	378.7	80.8	21.3
1996/97	512.9	463.8	219.2	47.3
1997/98	539.6	410.4	192.5	46.9
1998/99	731.8	480.5	189.2	39.4
1999/2000	790.9	519.0	210.0	40.5
2000/2001	829.4	478.9	123.1	25.7
2001/2002	1007.8	630.9	227.0	36.0
2002/2003	1021.2	623.9	321.4	51.5
2006/2007	702.7	697.3	402.3	36.6
2007/2008	909.8	781.2	578.5	42.5
Average contribution of foreign aid in development budget				37.7

Source: GoN/MoF 2009

Information on the proportion of the foreign aid money in Nepal's forest sector budget over the last two decades makes clear that donors' dependency of forestry development programs is very high. On an average, since 1987, foreign aid has contributed with about thirty eight percent of Nepal's total development budgets for the forest sector and has ranged from eighteen percent in 1992/93 to fifty one percent in 2002/2003 (see Table-5.13). Study shows that when there was a boom of forest user groups formation during mid 90s, over 90 percent of the community forestry development budget was provided from donors (DoF 1994). Pokharel (1997), in his study at eastern Nepal, found that about 96% of the total annual budget of the District Forest Office came from donors' project and he raised a serious question: "what will happen once donor agencies withdraw their financial support to community forestry programs?"

The trend of financing is always up and down and mostly depends on the political turmoil and forest policy reforms. Nevertheless, it is clear that without the foreign aid, the state Forest Administration would have been unable to manage Nepal's forest sector effectively and achieve the goals outlined in the forest policy documents. Even though, this sector is attracting the donors as stated earlier, and widely held that foreign aid has not brought economic and social development as it was expected to deliver. Foreign aid is also blamed for raising the expectations and false promises to the targeted project beneficiaries (GoN/MoFSC 2004).

Different stakeholders, directly or indirectly, are interested to use donors' assistance. For example, politicians and elected members in the parliament may seek to target development projects in certain electoral districts and want to target development aid to their followers and supporters. Bureaucrats also hold preferences over the types of aid given by donors. The kinds of aid preferred relate to the incentives that specific bureaucrats face in their various positions. In general, top level bureaucrats are interested in expanding their power. Thus, they are more interested in projects that extend their duties, staffs and budgets. Lower-level bureaucrats, meanwhile, see donor-funded aid projects as career opportunities, and as opportunities for getting extra (legal or illegal) income (Gibson 1999 in Gibson *et al.* 2005:59). Donors on the other hand have their own interests which they want to fulfill through project implementation and utilizing funding from their home country. The ability to embed the interests in CF has been found to make an important contribution to power differentials. If the concern is financial, for example, high dependency makes stakeholders weak in 'power network'. However, power is not a static process, it constantly changes within network and depend how well the stakeholders are able to maintain their status. The following section discusses the types of incentives which have been offered by donors' forestry project in the studied districts (Table-5.14).

Table-5.14: Types of incentives to forest users' committees and Forest Administration from donors' project

Stakeholders	Incentives
Forest Administration	Financial support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Through budget allocation for administrative and program expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget allocation to support forestry development programs • Travel and daily allowances to the foresters B. Infrastructure development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office building • Office equipments C. Study scholarships D. Travel grant and allowances for within and abroad study tour, trainings and visits

	<p>Technical support through training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest boundary delineation • Forest inventory and writing a work plan • Silvicultural operation and harvesting <p>Material support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office materials (e.g. furniture, computer, printer, fax, photo copy) • Field gears for foresters • Forest inventory equipments • Vehicles • Extension materials: pamphlets, brochures, books
Users' committees	<p>Financial support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plantation: seedlings purchasing, seedling transportation, subsidy for labor contribution • Partial financial support for forest protection • Study tour, training and workshops fees • Livelihood programs: seed money for income generation • FUG office building, furniture and office materials <p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plantation • Silvicultural operation and harvesting • Forest inventory • Account keeping <p>Technical support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest boundary delineation • Forest inventory and writing a work plan • Silvicultural operation and harvesting • Marketing <p>Material support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seedlings • Improved stoves • Forest inventory equipments • Forest operation tools • Extension materials: pamphlets, brochures and others

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Three types of donors: Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP), SNV funded Biodiversity Sector Programme for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST) and University of Copenhagen funded Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya (ComForM) project, are the studied community forests networks. Although their working modality differs case by case, these donor projects have been providing different types of incentives in community forestry programs of the studied cases. The NSCFP and BISEP-ST

are working in close collaboration with Forest Administration while ComForM deals with community forestry programs directly with FUG.

Donor funded projects, through the development aid, provided direct financial support to government forest offices, trained government foresters, and supported them in numerous small ways such as providing forest inventory equipments, computers, printers and copiers and so on. Similarly, their various supports also go forest users through their committees. The following section presents how these different incentives have been flowing to the network of stakeholders:

a. Financial support as an incentive in community forestry:

The motive of stopping the perceived environmental crisis in the hills, were not the only reason for donor interventions in forestry sector of Nepal. The weak capacity due to lack of means resulted in high dependency of the Government of Nepal on donors, in delivering environmental protection services. The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MOFSC) was always under budgetary constraints and did not have effective control of all the 39% of the country's land under its jurisdiction Blaikie and Springate-Baginski (2007a:8). Donor agencies' support, especially financial assistance, has become crucial in the development and management of Nepal's Forest Sector, especially in planning and implementing community forestry programs. Financial support is mentioned as an important incentive that motivates local organizations to get involved in community forestry processes. Local organizations largely depend on financial support from donors and hence their activities are designed partly to meet the interests of donors. The fact that local organizations receive international funding for forestry activities, highlights the role of donors and international organizations in promoting community based forest management. According to the District Forest Officer of the respective districts, the budgetary support from the government is not sufficient to implement forestry programs; therefore dependency on external assistance is both need and compulsion. The former Finance Minister of Nepal wrote in one of his articles, by mentioning that how foreign aid dependency rooted in Nepalese bureaucracy:

".....our bureaucracy needs foreign aid to do routine things like drafting simple legislation. Without foreign aid, many public offices are now unable to do the simple things that they have been doing all along. It is distressing that in the name of decentralization, we might now be making the local bodies also dependent, physically and psychologically, on foreign aid (Pandey 2004:47)".

As the forest agencies have failed to generate revenues from its own resource through 'effective' resource management, rather has mastered to tap readily available foreign aid leading to donor dependency. They have continuously sought funds and other incentives, mainly from the field projects, in the name of community forestry. They use the community forestry program to justify the use of these funds despite the fact that they only partially implement

community forestry in the field. Therefore, they happily accepted incentives provided by the field project to promote community forestry program, although they may use the project incentives to meet their own interest rather than to achieve the community forestry policy objectives. This subsequently has led to the situation that the Forest Administration is more accountable to donor agencies such as the World Bank than the local people. This provided the donors with an opportunity to ‘assist’ the government in implementing CFM without restrictions. For this reason, “the power to enact legislation, writing manuals and shaping the practice of forest management on the ground, is more diffuse and less concentrated in Nepal’s Forest Administration” (Blaikie and Springate-Baginski 2007a:8). The above given explanations indicate that much of the accountability of the Forest Administration is therefore, focused toward on donors, in order to get more resources to carry out development and administrative activities.

Example: Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)

The Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) – which has been working in Nepal in community forestry sectors since 1990– is delivering financial support to the local communities (at micro level), District Forest Office (DFO) and other service providers (at meso-level) and central government (at macro-level) to promote good governance and sustainable forest management. Through offering different types of incentives to the alliance partners, NSCFP strengthen its role in community forestry as a powerful stakeholder.

Table-5.15: The summary of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project budget -Phase VI

Theme	Year (budget in CHF'000)			Total Full phase	Percentage-full phase
	2008/09	2009/010	2010/011		
A. FUG level					
Governance	182.6	189.9	193.5	564	15
Livelihood improvement	135.1	131.2	133.2	399.5	10.7
Sustainable forest management	110.6	113.2	116.1	339.9	9.1
Commercialization of forest resources	69.3	71.4	73.6	214.3	5.7
VDC-FUG interface	107.2	109.1	111.1	327.4	8.7
B. Policy level					
Policy level programs	211.5	210.6	212.1	634.2	16.9
C. Total program budget					
	816.3	823.4	839.6	2479.3	66.11
D. Project management and administration					
	208.9	233.2	231.7	663.7	17.7
E. Implementation agency and technical assistance					

	251.2	189.6	166.2	607	16.2
F. Grand total phase VI budget (C+D+E)					
	1276.4	1336.2	1237.5	3,750	100
Total in Nepalese Rupees'000 (1CHF=56 NRs)				210,001	

Source: NSCFP 2008

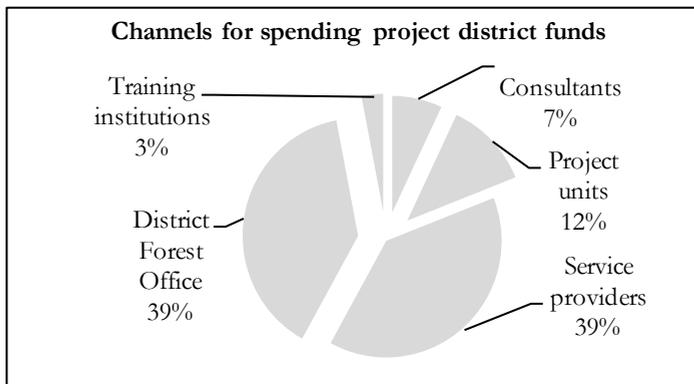
The project is operated as a bi-lateral assistance project, partly funding the government of Nepal red book programs and also having directly funded activities. The budget of the final phase (phase VI, 2008-2011) of the project is allocated as program component, cost for the project management and administration, and cost for technical assistance (see Table-5.15). The project adopted multi-partnership approach through which the program budget has been spent; therefore, dependency of allies to the project is high in the sense that each of them is interested to get more program budget. Under the programs' budget, the project aims to enhance the capacity of FUGs and partner stakeholders through capacity building, skill development, various trainings and other possible support. For example, under the governance program, the project has allocated a special budget for following items: CFUG institutional set up; awareness about Constitution and Work Plan to forest users; trainings, workshops and governance coaching to CFUG members. Livelihood promotion through community forestry is a highly prioritized objective since the beginning of the programs, despite the budget under which this program is focused: well being ranking, capacity development of disadvantaged households, few scholarships to complete school education of girls of poor families, partial support to implement household plans of poor forest users, sub-group formation and study tours of the poor members of FUGs.

The above mentioned examples certainly raise the question, how far it is possible to enhance the livelihood of forest users only through capacity building and coaching programs. To answer this question certainly a detailed impact study of project activities is necessary, which is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, through scanning the project's budget scheme what is clear is that the direct funding for income generating activities to the poor forest users remains minimal and funding through direct/indirect channels mostly focuses on trainings, networking and awareness raising which may not have direct impact on the poverty alleviation of the direct forest users. On the other hand, support to the Forest Administration through capacity development, trainings, visits and further study is prioritized in the proposed budget. The allocated budget, directly or indirectly, supports forest conservation aim at the Forest Administration, as for example: forest management trainings to the FUG members, preparation of forestry sector plan, promotion of non-timber forest products, conservation and monitoring of biodiversity, forest certification, forest inventory and partition of forests in to management blocks. These diverse ranges of programs financed by the project, in most of the cases,

enhanced reputation of the project as ‘incentive givers’ which made allies more accountable to the project rather than local forest users.

The project uses multiple ‘qualified’ service providers to implement its program, which is termed as ‘multi-partnership’ approach (see details on multi-partnership approach in section 5.2.2.3 of this chapter). The annual report of 2004/05 of NSCFP mentions five different channels through which the budget was spent: through DFO (red book funding), through NGO-service providers, through private consultants, through training institutions, and directly by the field project office (see Figure 5.7). Most of the expenditures of DFO are made toward themes of governance and forest management. The other four channels have had expenditures in four themes (pro-poor livelihood, forest resources promotion, national level enabling environment and effective project management), whereas most of expenditures on the 5th theme of the national enabling environment goes through the project's head office in Kathmandu.

Figure-5.7: The channels to spent NSCFP district funds



Source: NSCFP 2005

There are four apparent reasons to use different channels: firstly, it reduces the risk of political conflicts at the field level, because of the influential ‘qualified’ groups who get at least some programs in the name of service providers, secondly, it gains political support at local level as service providers also affiliate local politics, third, it fosters the establishment of several non-governmental organizations which later can act as promoters of community forestry programs, and finally, it reduces the possible negative image of the project as the moral responsibility distributes among the allies.

b. Technical assistance (trainings and direct technical support) as incentives in community forestry:

Technical assistance, which aims recipients can build their own competence over time, is the major component in any kind of foreign aid in forestry. The objective of technical assistance refers to the effective mean of knowledge

transfer and capacity building of the stakeholders in the recipient country (Byron 1997). There is an illusion that technical expertise can open the way to change, which improves the condition of the forest and livelihood of the forest dependent people. Access to the forest products and decision making, and fair benefit distribution is always given a little attention while developing community forestry projects.

Providing technical support through private consultants, hiring governmental foresters for such purpose or through own experts of the projects are common ways of delivering technical services to the stakeholders in community forestry processes. At macro (national)- level, technical assistance generally is offered for national policy review and making national strategy of forest management and preparing technical guidelines of forest management, while at the meso (district)-level, consultancy services are used to prepare district level forestry plan and document socio-economic profiles of the district. Donor offers diverse the range of technical packages at micro (community)-level, mainly focusing on forest users and its committees, which include: technical support while handing over the forest (forest survey and boundary mapping, forest stratification, forest inventory, biomass calculation, Work Plan preparation) and post-handover or post-formation support (forest management, institutional and capacity development, networking, income generation activities, marketing of forest products, biodiversity conservation) through service providers and from their own human resources (NSCFP 2008, BISEP-ST 2005).

c. Material support as sources of incentives:

Donors in community forestry process also offer non-cash incentives in the form of office materials (e.g. furniture, computer, printers, fax machine and copier), field gears to the government field staff and forest inventory equipments (height and diameter measuring equipments) and vehicles. Donors generally purchase these materials and equipment from their home country. In addition, the recipient country has to exempt from duties and levying taxes to all vehicles, goods and equipments supplied or financed by the government of the donor home country.

Extension and training materials on community forestry are widely used in donor funded study districts. Before any activities in community and forest management, local people are interested to take part in the trainings or any extension programs. Therefore, extension and training materials are often seen as a 'change agent' by introducing workable ideas and innovation to the local forest users. It is intended that through extension programs the institutional capability of forest user groups and involved stakeholders will be strengthened in better managing the resources and yielding motivation of local people. Therefore, donors used to publish by themselves or through service providers, mainly Forest Administration, extension materials such as brochures, leaflets, activity calendar, and forest diary into national and local languages.

Chapter Six

Interests of the Powerful Stakeholders in Community Forestry

6.1. Interests as a driving Force in forestry

Forestry can be seen as a complex field defined by the structures and the system of relationships through which all the different stakeholders play their part in the application, evolution or modification of their interests through actions. Scientific statements from Krott (2005:20) try to make clear that interests provide an orientation for forest stakeholders, concerning the state of the forest and its evaluation. For example, stakeholders can see various benefits beyond those of 'forest products' and they want to be able to decide for themselves how they use forests. Stakeholders' willingness to involve themselves in public participation processes depend on their interests, on prior experience with public participation, and on their trust to other stakeholders of the processes (Janse 2007). Thus, stakeholders 'interests' assessments remain very useful in community forest because they serve well by explaining actions taken by various stakeholders who use or protect forests (Krott 2005).

Interests, depending upon the context, can be formal and informal. The formal task of the stakeholders and their informal interests are among the most important factors deciding on the sustainability of forestry (Krott *et al.* 2000: xi). In essence, formal interests are openly codified, in the sense that they are established in the form of formal documents and widely accepted as official. Whereas, informal interests are equally known but not laid down in the formal documents and tend to be more persistent than formal interests. In practice, informal application of interests also accompanies the formal interests of the stakeholders involved in forestry and mostly informal actions take place outside the framework of the formal atmosphere. To fulfill their informal interests,

stakeholders use different instruments, such as: position, expertise, regulatory deficits and forming alliances (Krott 2005).

Stakeholders interest, either formal or informal, lie within the sustainability concept of forestry on social, economic and ecological dimensions. Each of these dimensions is an important goal of formal programs of forestry, nevertheless, in reality they are informally supported by strong stakeholders and the balance of these three interests only can meet the goal of sustainability. In fact, the realization of one's own interests is closely connected to the potential benefits from the forest. For example; the economic interests on forestry mostly focus on profit maximization or the realization of forests as source of financial capital; social interests comprise 'non-material' aspects, such as freedom of decision making, regarding forest use and management; and the ecological interest of stakeholders lies in the 'protection' function of the forest and 'ecological forestry' is the main domain under this category.

In this study, assessing formal and informal interest of the stakeholders rests upon the extent to which interests of the powerful stakeholders coincide or are compatible with the formal program objectives of community forestry. In specific terms, interests' assessment serves for two functions into this research. First, a formal analysis provides a new way of looking at community forestry. This is useful because it poses old questions in new forms, it raises new questions, and it suggests what new measurements are needed to be taken to answer these questions. And second, such assessment leads to the testing of research hypotheses, i.e. 'interests of the most powerful stakeholder determine community forestry outcomes' of this study. Thus, the following section deals with the formal and informal interests of the powerful group of stakeholders which are identified through quantitative power network analysis (i.e. Forest Administration, users' committees and donors) and boundary or hidden stakeholders that are in weak position due to the quantitative network analysis but are powerful in practice (i.e. political parties and wood contractors).

6.2. Forest Administration and their interest in community forestry

After 1978, the government of Nepal accepted community based forest management as their primary objective to restore the degraded land and expansion of forest area. Theoretically, the development of community forestry is changing the role of Forest Administration *vis-a-vis* the local forest users in forest management. While the pre-CF role of the Forest Administration was regulative and controlling, this role though is still important, has been expanded to include provision of assistance and support to facilitate forest management and capacity building of forest user groups. Largely due to the success of community forestry in protecting the forest and developing a commercial surplus, the role of community forestry is changing in the national policy.

However, there are disconnections between central interests and interests of the local Forest Administration while implementing forest policies.

Based on analyzing Nepal's forest policy documents, available records with various stakeholders and interviews with forestry stakeholders during the field work in 2008 and 2009, the formal (or stated/direct) and informal (or unstated/indirect) interests of the Forest Administration can be grouped in to following nine categories:

Table-6.1: Formal and informal interests of the Forest Administration

Formal (stated/direct) interest	Informal (unstated/indirect) interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest protection from further degradation • Providing basic forest product needs to the rural populace • Participation in decision making and sharing of benefits • The protection of environment and valuable resources • Meeting international obligations on climate and environmental agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent seeking- community forests as source of additional income • The maximum access to forests through a limiting accessibility of direct forest users • Extension of control through allies • Capturing incentives and opportunities from donor projects

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

I. Formal (or stated/direct) interests

a. *Forest protection from further degradation:*

Studies on community forestry clearly tell us that '**forest protection from further degradation**' is the primary and foremost stated interests of the Forest Administration behind this concept (see HMG/N 2000 and 1989). Before the introduction of CF in Nepal, forest degradation was believed to be widespread. In the studied CFs, forests were degraded because there was no effective forest management prior to handover. The state's forest policy introduced a "control and command" system to exclude local people although users' livelihoods were closely dependent on forest resources. Users often covertly challenged the state's forestry system by disobeying rules and continuing their practices. This was because the forest management system was unfair as it was not attentive to the needs of forest dependent people and was therefore ineffective to halt the forest degradation. The state forests often became *de facto* open access as government failed to enforce rules (see Heltberg 2001).

The Forest Administration as a public agency has the mandate to improve the condition of the forest either by mobilizing the forest users or by using appropriate coercive means. However, conservation and maintenance being a labor intensive task to the Forest Administration hence these activities were

largely carried out through community forestry by deploying villagers' voluntarily. For the state, it is a good strategy to turn over forests that are already degraded to communities. The community provides the labor and protection to enable the forest to regenerate (negative tradeoffs), and the state receives an improved forest by minimal operating costs. District Forest Officers across the studied district argue that forest degradation could be altered by mobilizing local people; hence they started handing over degraded forest lands to local communities (IDFO1-12 2008). To mitigate the degradation, local communities worked jointly in forest regeneration both by natural and artificial ways. Despite the process being controlled by the Forest Administration, the handing over of the forest to communities was considered as a good initiative because it helped the protection of forests, which was highly valued because many users had witnessed the forest degradation and faced adverse consequences. In the entire CFUGs studied, users cooperated with the Forest Administration staff to restore the forest area (ICFUGC1-12 2008). This implies that if the outcome is likely to be improved through an initiative, users welcome the initiative and cooperate with foresters, regardless of the process being controlled by the Forest Administration.

b. Providing basic forest product needs to the rural populace:

Basic need approach to poverty alleviation is one of the priority interests of the Forest Administration behind the initiation of community forestry. Such interest became apparent when fuel wood crisis in the Hills of Nepal drawn attention of international community's during 1970s. Various forest policies in Nepal suppose that the community based forest management play a major role in meeting people's needs for forestry products and improve livelihoods. The policy documents states also that forestry resource of Nepal will be managed and utilized in a way which gives priority to the production of products and best meets the basic needs of the people (see forestry sector policy 2000). The priority products are fuel wood for cooking, timber for housing, fodder for domestic animals, and medicinal plants for health issues. The Forest Administration assumes that promoting the establishment of permanent users as managers of forestry resources, will gradually eliminate the present uncontrolled use of forestry products from national forests as open property (HMG/N 2000).

c. Participation in decision making and sharing of benefits:

The Forest Administration's evaluation of forestry sector is interesting; in the forestry sector policy of 2000 it is written that "an excessive concentration of decision-making power in the higher echelons inhibits the enthusiasm and self-reliance of the people. In addition, opportunities to misuse power are created and people's suspicions are aroused. The immense energy and numerous resources of the people can be released and mobilized into constructive management activities through participatory forestry programs". The state

believes that when decision-making is taken from the users who depend mostly on forestry resources, the decisions taken have good chances to be adequately implemented. The users can be motivated to rationalize their land and forestry use only if they themselves benefit from better management of the resources, improve harvesting methods and from their afforestation efforts (HMG/N 2000). The Five-Year Development Plan of the government from 1990s onwards also emphasizes that effective conservation and utilization of forestry resources can be enhanced by encouraging people's participation in forestry programs, such as community forestry. These policy statements show the explicit interests of Forest Administrations on people's participation in forest management.

d. The protection of environment, biodiversity and valuable resources:

“Conserving ecosystems and genetic resources” is one of the long terms stated objectives and interests stated in the Master Plan for Forestry Sector in 1989, in Nepal. The plan also emphasizes that in order to protect environment, biodiversity and valuable resources and at the same time meeting the basic needs of the people on sustainable basis, people's participation is mandatory. Hence, the protection of ecosystems and genetic resources also geared the attention of the Forest Administration while handing over forests to the local communities. Such interests are clearly reflected in the Work Plan of the studied CFUGs through prescription of the restrictive rules in forest and biodiversity conservation. Other stakeholders, such as donor projects and NGOs, also support to governmental programs on conservation measures through financial and technical assistance.

e. Meeting international obligations on climate and environmental agreements:

Nepal has adopted integrated model of forest policies that were supposed to integrate forests in rural development efforts and balance economic and environmental needs among national, local and international interests. So, in principle, community forestry policies and practices are also affected by, local, national and international concerns. Important changes in Nepal's forest policies began in 1970s, when the growing awareness of how local communities depend on forests, and of the importance of small-scale forest industries, prompted efforts to strengthen local participation in forest management, programs and activities. By 1980s, after the World Forestry Congress in 1978, in Jakarta, Nepal began to recognize that forests have a global role in the stability of the ecosystem, in the maintenance of biodiversity and in the protection of threatened indigenous and traditional cultures. Thereafter, international donors have put pressure on the government to search for ways to balance growing international critics of Himalayan degradations.

Nepal signed the UNFCCC on 12th June 1992 and ratified it on 2nd May 1994. After the Rio Summit in 1992, community forests were the primary focus

of policy debates about poverty alleviation. International donors working in Nepal have shifted their interests from basic needs fulfillment functions of community forestry, to poverty alleviation agendas. Since Nepal ratified the Kyoto Protocol in September 2005, the government has been interested in participating in carbon trade. Nowadays, community forestry is framed under the discussion of Kyoto-Protocol and in the context of REDD. Remarkably, this frame does not seem to stem from local people, but from the political realm of Forest Administration and their alliances who are directly or indirectly collaborating to implement community forestry programs.

Three-Year Interim Plan (2008-2011) under the 2007 Interim Constitution mentions in the Environment Science and Technology sector the promotion of carbon trade (Karki 2008). The Plan further adds under the Forestry Sector for the need to recognize carbon trading as an opportunity to enhance poverty reduction and promote conservation (NPC 2008). The government shows commitment to formulate climate change-related policies and national adoption programs through their annual programs in the fiscal year 2010/011¹⁷.

II. Informal (or unstated/indirect) interests

a. Rent seeking- community forests as source of additional income:

Existing forest bureaucratic system gives the forestry officials both power and prestige in society, however the job itself does not provide sufficient income for their own and their family's livelihoods. They need other sources of income. Forestry officials often see forests as a source of additional income, and they tend to strive to go to those districts where valuable forests lie. For this, they may even seek political influence, as they know very well that political leaders are also keen to use the country's forest resources to generate income for themselves and for their parties. For example, when government or ministry portfolio is changed, the forestry officials attempt to persuade the new forest minister to transfer their postings to a resource rich district, where the valuable forest resources lie. The forestry officials, in return, provide the minister with a portion of his/her earnings from the forest (personal communication with forest officer). The placement of a forester in the resource rich district is considered to be an incentive for the district forest officer (DFO) and he/she is considered to be an ally of the minister. According to Drishsti (dated 19 April 2000 in Timsina 2002)- a Nepalese national weekly newspaper, it was estimated that up to one million rupees could be involved in bribing for a posting of a District Forest Officer in a resource rich district, depending upon how important the district is from the forest resource perspective. This is significant amount, compared with the annual salary of a Forest Officer, which is less than two hundred thousand rupees.

¹⁷ Policies and Programmes of the Government of Nepal for the Fiscal Year 2066/067

However, corruption without having strong allies with local communities, costs more money to the foresters. Therefore, they form allies with local elites, local wood traders and local politicians to harvest timber even from the community forests. As a result, in some districts, deforestation rate is still alarming though the forests which are already handed over to the local communities. Referring to the government source, The Kathmandu Post (a Nepal's English Daily newspaper) on 21 June 2010 mentions that more than 100,000 hectares of forests were destroyed in fiscal year 2009/010 this year including 88,000 hectares in last fiscal year 2008/09. The published news in the national newspaper (see Boxes-6.1 and 6.2) clearly demonstrate the rent seeking interests of the foresters from community forests.

Box- 6.1: The ministry suspends 'corrupted' forest officials

Source: Kantipur news, 22 May 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu- The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MOFSC) on 21 May 2010 suspended four senior officials of Sarlahi and Panchthar for their involvement in timber smuggling and promoting deforestation and corruption at the local level. The ministry has also banned all sorts of forest related trade in community and national forests until the investigation committee finalized field investigation.

Box- 6.2: The forest officers found guilty of deforestation

Source: Kantipur news, June 30 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Banke- Forest officials and rangers in Banke District have been found guilty of causing deforestation in various government and community forests. A panel formed by the parliamentary Natural Resources and Means Committee (NRMC) has indicted Banke's forest officials, including the Director of Mid-Western Regional Forest Directorate and forest officers at District Forest Office (DFO). "Such massive deforestation would never have occurred if they have not been involved," said probe panel coordinator Ram Kumar Sharma.

The panel has accused district forest officers (DFOs) of arbitrarily registering community forests and condoning deforestation. The duo jointly okayed registration of 34 community forests in one year, thus providing leeway for deforestation. The connivance of senior officials at the Forest Ministry and Forest Department is also suspected in timber smuggling racket. "The silence maintained by the ministry at a time when the forest officers were on a deforestation rampage suggests that high level government officials are also involved," said another member of the panel.

The locals said that forest officers and timber smugglers colluded in a massive tree-felling drive for the past nine months. Nineteen community forests at Kusum region were denuded. The DFO had permitted 74 community forest groups of Banke to cut trees. Nearly two-fold the permitted numbers of trees were cut, yielding around 500,000 cubic feet of timber. The panel is preparing to initiate prosecution against the guilty ones. "This is a huge crime and no one, not even the forest officers will be let off the hook," Sharma said.

Over the past years, several forestry staff members have been suspended for misappropriation of timber belonging to a local forest users' group (see, The Rising Nepal news, published on 14th. September, 2008) and because of their direct and indirect involvement in timber smuggling and corruption (see Box-

6.1). However, state employed foresters argue that Forest Officers and Rangers are “forced” to work under a “corruption trap” set by the political parties, the administration, security agencies and the bureaucracy itself (see Box-6.3).

Box- 6.3: The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation promoting a corrupt system: Foresters

Source: Republica news, 4 January 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu- Foresters’ associations of the country have said that forest officials and rangers are “forced” to work under a “corruption trap” set by the political parties, the administration, security agencies and the bureaucracy. At a press conference organized by the Junior Foresters’ Association of Nepal (JFAN), Rangers’ Association of Nepal (RAN) and Nepal Foresters’ Association (NFA) Monday, the foresters raised a strong voice against the frequent transfer of District Forest Officers (DFO) and other employees, who got “confused” and worked in “low morale”.

“The system is such that when the government changes, all brokers of the political parties engage in a racket and work to place their own people in important positions,” Devesmani Tripathy, President of NFA, said at the press meet. “How can the forests be safe when the system is corrupted?” Tripathy asked. The speakers said that politicization and the pressure exercised from the parties is hampering the real work in forests by causing delays in decision-making. “The truth is that Rangers work in extremely dangerous circumstances,” pointed out Tripathy, by adding that, “Even armed groups and the employees themselves are involved in illegal lumbering.”

The private sector, who deals with business from local to national levels, also argues that corruption in forestry sector is skyrocketing, and without bribes it’s very hard for them to get any approvals and permissions from the Forest Administration (IWOODC1-2 2008 and 2009). The recent case of Rautahat District also proves that in case of extreme conflict between contractors and foresters how bribery issues spread in the media (see Box-6.4).

Box- 6.4: Timber contractors vandalize District Forest office

Source: Kantipur news, 28 January 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Rautahat- Local timber contractors in Rautahat district vandalized the District Forest Office Monday alleging that a forest officer was demanding bribe. The timber contractors alleged that that Assistant Forest Officer Jaya Mangal Gupta declined to comply with the official procedure while supplying timber. The contractors said that the officer was asking bribes to complete the necessary official procedure to clear the timber for the last fifteen days. The enraged contractors vandalized the forest office located in Chandranigahpur after they failed to take the timber for processing due to the delay. The contractors also padlocked the office. However, the Deputy Officer was on leave and the District Forest Officer was in Kathmandu. After the reported incident, the police started the necessary investigation based on the contractors’ complaints.

In their recent investigation report, publicized on 20 June 2010, the National Vigilance Centre (NVC), Nepal said that the involvement of District Forest

Officials and other forest officials backed up by different political parties is responsible for rampant deforestation and encroachment in 15 districts of the country. The Center has revealed that the forests have been destroyed by taking advantage of the transitional period facing the country. The report came at the time when Government of Nepal has banned cutting down trees for two months after reports of massive deforestation in southern plains and some Hilly districts. The government also suspended four forest officials suspecting their involvement in illegal timber trade¹⁸.

b. The maximum access to forests through a limiting accessibility of direct forest users

Limiting the accessibility of local forest users by forming and imposing regulations was unstated and indirect but highly motivated interests of the Forest Administration. Many scholars in community forestry repeatedly have mentioned that forest conditions have been improved in the community managed forest (Tachibana and Adhakari 2009, Kanel 2008, Nagendra *et al.* 2008, Gautam 2006, Thoms 2006). The reason is clear that local people are forced to limit their access rights and forest conditions are improved because of the imposed restrictions. Back to the history, Nepal's Forest Administration was largely incapable to manage government forestland due to lack of human, managerial and financial resources. Although the initial impetus behind community forestry was to protect resources and provide daily needs of local people, Forest Administrations later employed their subordinate administration to organize surveillance, gather information about the population, and organize close control over people's access on forest. In effect, by handing over forestland to local forest user groups, the government actually brings that forestland into its sphere of control. Therefore, handing over management authority to local users with restrictive access rights could be a viable alternative to fulfill the formal interests of "forest protection from further degradation".

In most of the resource rich community forests, minor forest products, which are apparently needed for the daily needs of the local forest dwellers, are promoted to address the subsistence needs and divert the attention of local people on valuable forest resources which are allocated to the powerful stakeholders. Dove (1993:18) has termed this process as a 'conservationist agenda', which he further mentioned that local forest users inhabit a resource which is coveted by groups that are more powerful than they are. Hence, the acceptance of any condition for the sake of losing accessibility is major concerns of local people in community forestry.

c. The extension of control through allies:

The formation of alliances is also an interest of the Forest Administration. During the nationalization period (1957 to mid 70s) the government lost

¹⁸ <http://www.ekantipur.com/2010/06/18/intl-coverage/nepal-bans-logging-for-two-months/316687/>

contacts with local institutions at the community level. After implementing the community forestry programs, the users' committees of FUGs were supposed to work as their intermediaries for forest protection and monitoring. Thereafter, the government foresters were interested to reinforce relations with users' committee because most of the committees were symbolically constructed by foresters and also heavily dominated by local elites. Foresters, during CF processes, tend to consult local elites first, and oftenly when conducting fieldwork phases of CFUG formation and later on by providing services to a user group. Forest Administrations are also increasingly able to use other types of networks (such as Project and Forest Coordination Committees at different levels), established by donors and NGOs, to control FUG activities at local level. Hence, though different types of alliances are formed in order to deliver services to the local users, ultimately it fosters to buttress the supervision of Forest Administration to the forest and local forest users.

d. Capturing incentives and opportunities from donor projects:

Being a poor country and highly diverse in terms of geography, economy, and social constructs, '***capturing of international fund***' is the apparent desire of the state (Wallace 1988). Though, the Forest Administration has a legal mandate to implement the CF program, which is resource poor and has a limited budget. Their motives in carrying out the community forestry program seem to take control and utilize additional resources being offered by the international aid organizations in the guise of community forestry. Therefore, since the beginning of CF practices, international donors began sponsoring community forestry programs with different 'technical modalities' in Nepal.

The administrative culture of the Forest Administration is used to enjoy 'green money' so they expect support from donors for implementing changing policies of the sector. The main factor of motivating young professionals and other government officials to work in a foreign aided project is to use 'new brand' vehicles and the facilities of foreign aid, to obtain abroad scholarships for higher studies, exposure trips, trainings and also subsidiary incomes from travelling and other allowances. These hidden factors are behind the emotional interests of Forest Administration to initiate community forestry practices tremendously in Nepal (Pokharel 1997). Furthermore, the government guidelines of donor funding also clearly stated that "funding which supports international training and purchase equipments to improve the capability of forestry professionals will also be welcomed" (HMG/N 2000). Integrated Development Systems (IDS) report on "Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal" gives very interesting facts of Forest Administration–donor interplay while negotiating development assistance, the report mentions that "the Ministry usually welcomes a donor's proposal mainly by looking at the appendix of the proposal, particularly by anticipating the number of vehicles, study visits to the donors' home country and number of overseas courses to be awarded (see IDS 1983).

6.3. Forest users' group committees and their interests in community forestry

Forest users, users' group and committees are not the homogeneous groups as there are several stakeholders and diverse interests within and among groups. Their interests and actions may contradict one another, and consequently this may affect the ways in which the concerned forest may or may not be used and managed (see Timsina 2003). For analysis purpose, the FUG members have been grouped into three interest groups: individual forest user, users' groups and users' committees. The individual users are members of a specific forest user group; who bear the responsibility of participation in forest management and conservation activities. Individual users also have voting rights in general assembly. Forest user group (FUG) stands as an organizational structure of community forestry and in reality it is not a stakeholder. Within users, users' groups and committees might be diverse groups such as rich-poor, male-female, higher caste- lower caste, illiterate-illiterate, employed-unemployed and others. Analyzing the interests of each group is beyond the scope of this study. As the users' committees represent the forest users and their groups, formal interests of the users' committees are also the formal interests of the users' group while there are no informal interests of the users' group because they are not a stakeholder in reality, but there are informal interests of users' committee. Based on the forestry legislation in Nepal, available records from the studied forest users groups and other network stakeholders, and interviews with network stakeholders during field visits in 2008 and 2009, the formal (or stated/direct) as well as informal (or unstated/indirect) interests of the forest users' group committees can be grouped into the following ten categories (Table-6.2):

Table-6.2: Formal and informal interests of the forest users' group committees (CFUGCs)

Formal (or stated/direct) interests	Informal (or unstated/indirect) interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining access to the forest and resources • Livelihood promotion • Community development • Maintaining cultural and religious values • Forest protection from further degradation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic benefits (rent seeking from CF) • The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users on forest use and benefit sharing • Capturing incentives and opportunities from donors • Maintaining political basis • Maintaining relation with forest agencies

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

I. Formal (or stated/direct) interests

a. Obtaining access to the forest:

The forest user group, by Forest Act of 1993, is the owner of the handed over forests. As Krott (2005:44) defines ‘the forest owner is the stakeholder who has the immediate power of control over a certain forest’. Being an owner of the handed over forests, the immediate interests of the FUG and its committee, is to maintain direct access to the forest resources, or obtaining land use rights to the forest lands. The direct accessibility of FUG can ensure the sustained supply of the forest products to the users, and also can provide capitalized income value to the FUG. Without recognition of their rights they imply, that they have no authority to stop outsiders conducting destructive activities in their forests, or at least are unwilling to accept such roles. Handing over the forest to the local communities has made the users feel a sense of ownership, a responsibility’ realization and proud to reach the achievements even if they may not have become benefited from CFs. Users’ committee also believe that locals should have access to the forest land prior than to think about receiving equitable benefits of forest use and management (ICFUGC1-12 2008).

b. Livelihood promotion:

Livelihood promotion states that CF could be a viable source of economic promotion to FUGs and forest users as well. The 1993 Forest Act and Forest Regulation of 1995 also have made clear that CF is not limited to basic needs fulfillment. The issue of economic benefit from the CF is the main conflicting interest of the users’ committee and the local Forest Administrations in the studied community forests. The villagers’ interest in participating in the forest management is connected, in part, to expected benefits such as the collection of medicinal plants and other non-timber forest products. These could be used as incentives for monitoring and protecting forests from outsiders. However, the degree of accessibility and freedom of decision making determines the economic benefits from the forests.

c. Community development:

The objective of CF in Nepal originally wanted to produce sufficient forest products for the needs of FUG members. Later, the objective expanded to include the mobilization and empowerment of FUGs in a broader development of their local communities. Beyond the benefit of harvesting products for the community consumption, FUGs and its committees are authorized to sell forest products outside the community and benefiting their community development from resources generated (Forest Regulation 1995, Rule-36). Using revenue generated from various sources (e.g. forests, forest users, service providers) for community development activities are also the priority interests of the forest user groups and its committees across the cases (ICFUGC1-12 2008). CFUGs not only manage forests for direct benefits to household livelihoods but also have emerged as a local agency for community

development including to improve drinking water distribution, construction of village roads, community building, using forest products for schools or other public building constructions, or providing micro financing for community members in all studied cases; rural electrification (e.g. in Bhiteripakha, Dudkoshi, Pashupati, Parewashowri and Gitawor CFUG), improving irrigation canals (Dudkoshi, Gitawor CFUG), construction of small low cost bridges (e.g. in Bhiteripakha CFUG). Moreover, all the studied CFUGs have used their funds to support the education infrastructure by providing funds for teachers' salaries, school construction, furniture, scholarships, nutritional and youth programs.

d. Maintaining cultural and religious values:

Many aspects of Nepali culture reflect the close integration of spiritual values and beliefs with the natural environment, e.g. forest area is considered as sacred abodes of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. There is a deep-rooted belief that spirits reside in the body of certain trees, plants, and animals, while certain species are protected as the incarnation or favorites of Hindu and Buddhist deities. Areas of forest or lakes are traditionally preserved close to places of worship and sites of religious significance, and killing animals around such places is totally prohibited. Such cultural values are favorable for the conservation of biodiversity (Hill 1999).

Nepalese forests in hills and mountains since Vedic times have been regarded as a vast repository of medicinal plants and other resources. All Hindu families in Nepal have to perform *pujas* (religious rituals) on certain occasions. There is no religious ritual, which does not require plants and their products. Hindu Books such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, Veds, all put their intention to preserve forests as a part of the cultural heritage.

As there is more than 90% of forest users in the studied FUGs belonging to Hindu religion, community forest management into practice is also influenced by religious norms. The construction of temples inside CFs (e.g. in Pachabhaiya, Akala, Tiprikot FUG), allocation of forest area for religious functions (such as in Pashupati, Raniban, Pachabhaiya, Akala, Tiprikot, Bhiteripakha CFUGs), plantation and protection of religious trees (e.g. *Ficus religiosa*) in community forests, name FUGs according to the name of a Hindu God (e.g. Pashupati- 'lord of cattle' is an epithet of the Hindu deity Shiva, Akala-is a form of Devi, the supremely radiant goddess), giving donations for religious purpose are the examples of religious attachment of forest, forest users and users' committees in community forestry. Furthermore, the trees and plants are regarded to be incarnations or symbols of Gods or deities, and therefore tree worships have become more common across the studied CFs.

Cultural values also underpin many of the indigenous forest management practices which have existed in Nepal for many years, particularly in remote areas. Communities have regulated access and harvested a wide range of forest products, often based on the cultural values of a group attached to particular

products. For example, indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants is held by specific groups who have traditional rights to harvest, while in some areas mushrooms are collected by one group, even though others have access to the same area of the forest.

e. Forest protection from further degradation:

Stakeholders in the studied CF network have clear statement that local people have demonstrated that they can manage the forest better than the government does. They point out that the community forestry program has been successful in rehabilitating forests. During the field observations, forest users mentioned that their CF has become dense and availability of forest products has increased since the forest is controlled and managed by users' groups. The users have started to feel the forest and they have also emotions toward it. The secretary of Bhiteripakha FUG has mentioned the following:

“Many of us were involved in deforestation in the past, but now we have understood and are committed to conserve forests. Acute scarcity of forest products and fuel wood due to forest degradation was the motivating interest which fostered us to participate in the community forestry program”. (ICFUGC- Bhit1 2008)

Besides, although the majority of committee members have explained that poverty alleviation is their top priority in engaging community forestry (ICFUGC1-12 2008), the hidden interests of the local elites are mainly related on controlling resources in their communities in order to maintain their position and status. The elites are different from other forest users not only in power, but also in needs and interests. As Timsina (2002) mentions, committees do not seem interested in the accessibility of the forests, as they are much more interested in the protection of the resources, partly because they feel that their credibility seems to lie in the effective protection rather than utilization of the resource. They are interested in securing a position for themselves on the FUG committee, as this provides to them respect and prestige in the village.

II. Informal (or unstated/indirect) interests

a. Economic benefits (rent seeking from CFs):

Attention to economic incentives derived from community forests has become one of the most important reasons for increasing the interest of local elites being involved in forest users' committee, even when their dependence on common forest for their subsistence needs is far less than that of poor. Local elites have got involved because they have found it lucrative to attend seminars, workshops, to do plantations, tree harvest and forest protection related activities. This aspect of hidden incentives, related this economic benefit, as well as present and future-oriented political positions, are important in

explaining the tremendous interest of the privileged ones to participate in user groups and surplus extraction through community forestry processes.

In resource rich areas, in most of the cases, FUG committee leaders are involved in selling and even smuggling forest products outside the group without informing the users. Such leaders indulge in economic incentives from the beginning of formation of Work Plan to forest inventory, building partnerships with local or regional contractors and Forest Administration staff for undue advantage and non-transparent sales procedures (see Boxes-6.5 to 6.7).

Box-6.5: The involvement of users' committee in smuggling

Source: The Himalayantimes, 17 May 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Terathum: Contractors in collusion with members of community forest users' committee here have smuggled Khayar (*Acacia catechu*) logs worth millions of rupees from Tumlingtar Community Forest in Bhadaure and Myanglung area of Terathum District. According to Mr. Kaji Subba, the district chairman of FECOFUN said that the logs have also been smuggled from other adjoining community forest. "About 2,000 Khayar trees have been felled in the area". "Members of community forest and smugglers work with hands in one glove to smuggle logs from here." Subba demanded stern actions against those involved in smuggling. Forest officials and users however were unaware of the smuggling process. One of the forest users, Mr. Bishwoprasad Tumbahamphay, also said that forest users' committee was directly involved in felling trees. "The smugglers lure them of a good sum of money," he claimed. The District Forest Office had prohibited two months ago the export of Khayar logs from the district.

Box- 6.6: Rampant deforestation in community forests

Source: The Himalayantimes, 5 May 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Parawanipur: In collusion with the District Forest Office, Brahmasthan Community Forest User Group Committee has felled thousands of trees, including sal (*Shorea robusta*) and khayar (*Acacia catechu*), worth millions at Arnedanda of the Chure range in Parawanipur VDC, said the Chief District Officer (CDO) Shambhu Ghimire. The trees, according to him, are worth 23.5 million Nepalese rupees. In this connection, a team under CDO Ghimire has seized 680 sal and 4,500 khayar logs from Chisapani of Parwanipur VDC-9 along with two motorbikes and a tractor- all used for timber smuggling. Shrikrishna Jayaswal, an Assistant Forest Officer, said his office had given a go-ahead for felling of old and fragile trees in Arnedanda by renewing a two-year-old clearance fiat.

Box- 6.7: Users' committee vice chairman held for timber smuggling

Source: The Himalayantimes, 13 August 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Biratnagar- Hari Rai, the vice-president of Morang's Suseli Community Forest Users' Committee, has been arrested on the charge of smuggling timber worth Rs. 10 million. The District Forest Office, Morang, said Mr Rai was arrested in connection with illegal felling trees of the community forest. A case has been filed against him on the charge of chopping down 47 trees in Aaptar area by forming a forest user committee on his own. The forest office also issued arrest warrant against Himal Rai, the chairman of the community forest and some other members on the charge of

cutting more than 3,300 cubic feet timber. The District Forest Officer Arun Sharma Poudel said Rai has remanded to custody for further investigations. He was arrested by police force help.

b. The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users on forest use and benefit sharing

It is also apparent that informally committee members are interested to impose restrictions on forest product collection. They often decide to punish the infringers by calling meetings, similar to those used in a bureaucratic government organization, as most committee members are leaders of political parties, government employees and school teachers. Across the cases, there is hardly any example of the FUG committee's decisions that were in favor of the poor and disadvantaged users.

For example, during the last three Nepalese fiscal years (06/07, 07/08 and 08/09), Parewashowri FUG took the decision on 493 agendas in a total of 32 meetings. Among these 45 had 'access limitation' to the forest (e.g. grazing restriction, allocation of fuel wood and fodder collection), for the other 42 were taken legal actions toward members and non-members who violated FUG rules, for 115 other decisions were taken regarding forest product distribution, 149 referred different programs (mainly on administrative, forest operation, forest management, community development) where 50 dealt membership issues, 30 were concerned on the implementation of directives and orders from Forest Administrations, 12 were related in providing financial support to the poorest users, 9 provided free timber to the poor households and 41 are miscellaneous. Within decisions on 'programs', where were taken 25 decisions by asking each household to provide free labor or to pay the cash equivalent to the local wages of laborer. These kinds of decisions visibly have affected the poor users, especially those who are paid on daily basis. By these examples, it is clear to see that majority of the decision favor non-poor in comparison with the poor.

c. Capturing incentives and opportunities from donor projects:

Different incentives and opportunities from donors, either channeling through local Forest Administrations or directly through field projects, are also priorities of users' committees in donor supported CFs. In order to materialize their interests, users' committees in the project area form alliances with donors through FECOFUN, NGOs and even through local Forest Administration. Generally, donors' projects and NGO offer various community development, forest management and capacity building programs through users' committee, which became highly attractive to the rural elites as the part of FUGs' executive committees. These local elites in CF processes emerged as 'powerful brokers' between donor projects and forest users. If the elites were not cooperative, taking decisions for donors' project has been a problem in terms of program design and implementation.

When elites control, they tend to make decisions that benefit themselves, and may place restrictions on forest use that actually harm the poorest. In such a situation, poorer, marginalized households may become more desperate, which could lead them having even less time to participate in forestry activities and giving elites even more power. Platteau (2004) explained that poor people accept domination and possible abuse by elites because they see elites bringing development resource to the community and accept elites taking a large share of the benefits as an acceptable and appropriate payment for services. Therefore, community forestry can help local elites to solidify their positions and power by giving them legal-rational authority and command of resources. This can increase relative poverty and further disenfranchise marginalized groups in community forestry processes.

d. Maintaining political basis:

The chairman and the secretary of all FUG committees who are part of this study are active in political parties at some level. The same members of the community occupy key decision-making positions in user groups, the local political structure and other community self-help groups and organizations, notably in school management committees, youth clubs, irrigation user groups and women's groups. The political leaders within the group and elites in the users' committee also often use committees and forest users to fulfill his/her own political interests, such as: asking the forest users to attend political rallies and protest programs by arranging support or opposing government decisions. Though, some groups devised rules that 'one people- one position' is not applied into practice.

The background of the elites reinforces their propensity in making decisions addressing their own needs and interests, which may disadvantage other people (Bruins 1999). The process used for CF handover also favored local elites, so there has been a big gap between real users and so-called managers; which in the course of CF these elites will not be responsible for local users. The chairman of Satanchuli CFUG, who is also a district level political activist, shares his opinion as follows:

“Being a political activist, I have not anything to offer to the party workers and voters. But the involvement in the committee provides opportunities to serve local people. Now people come to my home and ask me if I can help them to get access forest products or loan from the FUG fund. As a committee chairman, I can raise their concerns in the meetings and can do my best to help them. This could be a reason that I have experienced increase social respect from the villagers. It encourages me to be more involved. I have become more active now both in politics and in village-level affairs”. (ICFUGC-Satan12 2009)

The interviewed chairman from the studied FUGs share similar experiences of increased social status in the village, after their involvement in the executive committee (ICFUGC1-12). In addition, the chairman (women) of Dudkoshi

CFUG has experienced increased leadership skills and self-confidence from their involvement in the committee. She has mentioned her experiences as:

“I used to hesitate to speak in front of outsiders before I got involved in FUG activities. Since I was nominated as FUG chairman, I developed my skills because of the opportunities offered. Now, I speak in front of anyone in the village. I do not hesitate to give directions to committee members and put my concerns even among externals. I do not fear foresters, because we women are the managers of our forest”. (ICFUGC-Dudk6 2008)

While reviewing the financial audit report of the studied CFUGs, the committee has provided some donations to political parties and their sister organizations, which also confirm that leaders in the committee like to maintain allies with political parties in order to secure their positions. For example within the fiscal year 2007/08, users’ committee of Parewashowri CFUG of Chitwan District has provided donation to five different political parties to organize political functions.

e. Maintaining relation with forest agencies:

In most of the studied FUGs, committee members are more interested in improving their relations with the District Forest Office and service providers mainly donors’ project rather than representing the concerns of the rest of the FUG members. In order to win the confidence of the DFO, the committee members even don’t hesitate to misuse FUG funds. Formally users’ committee with its sub-committees and FUG members representing the diverse interests play ostensibly the central role of program execution and coordination, while informally, local elites as committee members are accountable to the Forest Administration instead of forest users. Their power and legitimacy emanate more from Forest Administration than from local communities (Mongbo 2008). These elites were extracted from their communities and incorporated into vertical ties with some immediate and non-durable gains from forest products and other sources (see Lund 1990 in Mongbo 2008). In most of the cases, they are not interested in forest development and securing access to the forest users but enjoy their status as brokers, intermediating between the Forest Administration and donor projects on one side and the foresters and the local communities on the other.

6.4. Donors' interests in Nepalese community forestry

During the seventies, the projection of Himalayan degradation as a serious environmental crisis (Eckholm 1976¹⁹) created increased moral pressures on international environmental institutions and western governments to contribute to the conservation of the degrading Himalayas (Ojha *et al.* 2008). This led to an environmental turn of development discourse away from an emphasis on infrastructure and technology transfer (Cameron, 1998 in Ojha *et al.* 2008). Clearly, community forestry implementation in Nepal is influenced by the environmental agenda expressed in international environmental media in the 70's. So, it is clear to understand that community forestry implementation in Nepal is influenced by the environmental agenda framed in the international environmental media during 70s. Since then, donors' project in Nepal center mostly around the discourse on environment, development, biodiversity protection, peoples' participation and good governance. As the forestry programs in Nepal depend largely on the support of donor projects, the donor agencies have been able to influence the decision making processes from within the government's Ministry and Forest Department to field level activities such as community forestry and, at times, have played a major part in shaping the country's forestry policies. In Table-6.3 we can see the donor programs as they appear in their formal program documents, which we find upon reviewing the project documents in the CFs analyzed.

Table-6.3: Formal programs of donors' projects in community forestry

Name of project/ program	Program priorities		
Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)	Forest management: The sustainable management of forest resources.	Livelihood: Improved livelihoods of the forest- dependent poor through community forestry.	Policy: Support the Nepalese government in the adoption of legislation and regulatory framework favoring forestry to benefit the poor.
SNV-funded Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP- ST)	Biodiversity conservation: Biodiversity conservation through support for the forestry sector	Livelihood: To enhance livelihood opportunities for poor, forest-	Policy: Assist and facilitate the development of appropriate rules and regulations

¹⁹ In: *Losing Ground: Environmental Stress and World Food Prospects.*

		dependent people in the program area.	in the forestry sector
Denmark based University of Copenhagen (KU) funded ComForM	Local participation: Improved forest and natural resources management, based on local participation	Research and capacity building: Producing knowledge on forest growth and yield and investigating the dynamics of people-forest interactions	

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

The formal programs of donors' project univocally stress the need of sustainable forest management and livelihood promotion through participatory forest management. Their main objective is also to help the Forest Administration to plan effectively and implement the government's community forestry policies, donor agencies, as argued by Malla (2000), also have their own agendas and conditions for the ways in which they provide support. It is therefore important to understand the interest of these donor agencies in Nepal's community forestry. According to the program documents of the donor projects and after discussion with representatives of the respective donor field projects, we find that a number of their formal (or stated/direct) and informal (or unstated/indirect) interests are identified as follows (Table-6.4):

Table-6.4: Formal and informal interests of the donors' project

Formal (or stated/direct) interests	Informal (or unstated/indirect) interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental protection • Promotion of international environmental agendas (e.g. Climate, REDD) in community forestry practices • Livelihood improvement • Social justice/good governance • Research, publication and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of own agendas against wishes of direct forest users • The use of project facilities to train own manpower • Generation of scientific knowledge through local (traditional or indigenous) knowledge • Creation of income for the donor agency

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

I. Formal (or stated/direct) interests

a. *Environmental protection:*

One of the major concerns of outside donor agencies in Nepal is rapid deforestation and its negative impact on the environment in general. The solution to this problem is seen to be rehabilitation of the degraded sites and proper management of the existing forest resources. Therefore, the primary

objective of the most field projects is to protect the forest resources. In other words, the donor agencies' support is driven by the assumption that the community forestry approach 'is inherently an ecologically sustainable forest management strategy ...' (NUKCFP 1999). Indeed, there have been reports suggesting that community forestry field projects have contributed to the improvements of the country's forest situation, through the rehabilitation of degraded sites and improvements in the condition of the existing forest resources (for example, see Carter 1992, Jackson and Ingles 1995, Branney *et al.* 1994).

Community forestry pilot projects during the 80s were supported by donors and focused initially on the training of local people in forest conservation, plantation and nursery practices. Foresters were generally contracted to draw up the management plan and obtain legal authorization. Donors provided expertise, staff, and resources to user-groups, by working intensively with villagers in order to form user-groups and to plant trees (Gilmour and Fisher 1991, Graner 1997).

Box- 6.8: Swiss experiences toward progress in forest management

According to the Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) webpage (www.sdc.org.np), its main stated interest is to help protect the district environment through proper management of the district forest resources. The external review of the project in 2007 highlighted some key issues:

- Forest protection remains as successful as ever – 99% of CFUGs have already established systems.
- The change of local perceptions in resource management indicates that most CFUGs see positive impacts on biodiversity, livestock management, agriculture and water. Photo-monitoring carried out by the project. There are also shown significant resource cover changes over more than 17 years of project support.

Source: Hobley *et al.* 2007

b. Promotion of international environmental agendas (e.g. Climate, REDD) in community forestry practices:

Due to the considerations of international issues in environment and climate, donor projects in Nepal have started to integrate their programs in conjunction with carbon trading mechanisms such as Reduced Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). Donors in forestry of Nepal believe that REDD mechanism could potentially realize substantial financial profits from ongoing forest conservation efforts, in which forest users have played a key role. The government, being supported mainly by donors, have already established an inter-ministerial advisory body; a multi-stakeholder working group with representatives from the government, civil society and donor organizations; and a "REDD and Climate Change Cell", housed in the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, responsible for developing a national policy and institutional framework for REDD. Concurrently, various donor organizations and NGOs are implementing piloting activities to demonstrate

the viability of REDD in Nepal. For example, DFID recently announced \$80 million grant to Nepal on climate change which also confirmed the interest of international donors in environmental agenda (see Box-6.9).

Box- 6.9: Donors' interest on climate change

UK Department for International Development (DFID) announces \$80 million grant to Nepal on climate change

Source: Kantipur news, 13 November 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu- The UK government has extended a financial assistance of 80 million USD to Nepal, through the Department for International Development (DFID) to deal with the climate change and improving the lives of poor people. DFID will spend the amount over the next 10 years to help tackle the climate change and improve the lives of poor people in the country, as they are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. "Countries' rights across the world need to take urgent and radical actions to tackle climate change. The poorest and most vulnerable countries need our help to do so," said the UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown speaking in the UK. "That is why we are announcing today a £50 million (\$80 million) package of support to work with Nepal to tackle climate change and deforestation." And with less than one month to go before Copenhagen it is time for the world to step up and make the bold decisions we need to secure a global, comprehensive and binding climate change deal."

A total of USD 66 million of the 80 million package financial support will for the protection of Nepal's forests by supporting a National Forestry Program with other donors. This will help some of the world's poorest people to earn a living from forests' natural resources (such as thatch, fruits, wood and essential oils) and reduce the forest degradation and deforestation that contributes to over 70 percent of Nepal's green house gas emissions. Nepal's new National Forest Program aims to help increase the incomes of around 1.2 million people by 50 per cent and will also capture CO₂, potentially attracting millions of pounds annually through international carbon trading. A further USD 16 million of the UK financial support will be used to help increase Nepal's resilience on the impacts of climate change.

c. Livelihood improvement:

Donors' aid in forestry sector has been considered as a pathway of mobilizing the potential of forestry to contribute to poverty alleviation. Arnold (2001) mentions three potential areas through which foreign aid to forestry has had a direct or indirect aim of alleviating poverty:

- *Participatory management of forests in order to make the latter more responsive to their needs, and to increase the benefits flowing to them:*

Probably the main area where aid programs have attempted to target the rural poor has been in the paradigm shift towards transferring more of forest management to the local level. The arguments in favor of participatory forest management have become more prominent as it recognizes active management of the forest an increasingly local control over forest benefits and common decision making.

- *Support to tree growing on farms:*

Programs to encourage and support local level tree growing—in order to reduce pressures on remaining forests, restore forest cover, and enhance their access to benefits—have generally had disappointing results.

- *Processing and trading forest products:*

Forestry provides potentialities on improving access to marketable raw materials, which can be supplementary income to the rural population. However, generally these access constraints with better access to markets and marketing as government have set policies and regulations to limit rather than encourage collections and sale marketable products from the forest.

The above given examples, show that forestry donors places high hope on poverty alleviation through resource management, hence they have a clear emphasis on meeting basic forest product needs and promoting sustainable forest management through livelihood improvement by local participation. Institutional strengthening especially capacity building of forest agencies has been another important aspect of many forestry projects currently in operation. However, despite continuous efforts made towards strengthening the capacity of the Forest Administration, the project formulation exercises continue to be handled by expatriates rather than by forest bureaucrat stating: “yes, we both agree that this is what you want” (Wallace 1988:25). Entrusting project formulation to expatriates and incorporating donor interests in project documents could be seen as evidence that Nepalese forest bureaucrats are in a weak position vis-à-vis donors (Wallace 1988). But it could also be interpreted as evidence that bureaucrats are merely trying to speed up new projects. Once the project is signed, it is in the hands of the bureaucrats to find ways to make the necessary manipulations to the project. Some studies criticizing that increasing donor resources are injected into the bureaucracy have only expanded its size to accommodate these funds, not its performances (Shrestha 1999, Seddon 1987, Pandey 1989).

d. Social justice and good governance:

Among international donor agencies, the word ‘social justice and good governance’ for years now is noticed to be a trend in official policies. Achieving ‘good governance’ also dominates today’s community forestry agenda in Nepal. Donors are particularly preoccupied with good governance as a pre-condition for poverty reduction and it is also reflected in the programs of the donor field projects. For example the focus of the Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project in their fifth phase (July 2004- July 2008) was on livelihoods improvements and pro-poor enterprise development programs mainly for disadvantaged households through improved governance of community forest user groups.

e. Research, publication and documentation:

In addition to the program implementation, donors in community forestry are also interested in research and publication. Documentation from the field, both success and failure stories, are often used to publish as a discussion paper, issue papers, project progress reports seminar and workshop papers and also through national and international medias. These reports, in most of the cases, are prepared by national and international consultants and used as a powerful bargaining tool to extend the project duration in recipient country and getting fund from donor country.

II. Informal (or unstated/indirect) interests

a. Promotion of own agendas against wishes of direct forest users:

Donor countries have their own policies in supporting the developing countries. Therefore, they have their own agenda to be promoted in the countries where their field projects are in place. For example, in early 1970s till 1980s, environment protection was the main agenda in donor countries and they attempted to influence developing countries by assisting them to revise their forest policies with emphasis on the need to protect the environment. During that period, Nepal received a priority on planting trees and afforestation programs. From the beginning of 1980s until the early 1990s, the participation of local communities in tree planting was the main policy objective of the donor agencies and Nepal's national forest policies and programs were designed accordingly. Similarly, from mid 1990s, the people's livelihoods started to become a major agenda of the donor agencies to be placed in developing countries. To implement this policy, the forestry programs and projects, especially community forestry were designed to integrate forest activities with both livelihoods and environmental concerns. Recently, climate agendas (e.g. REDD) have become a priority issue, and donor projects in forestry try to integrate climate as a precondition while issuing financial supports. For example, Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) started its forestry field projects in Nepal in the early 1990s and it is still operating, however, the objectives of the project have been changed over the years, which in fact reflect the changes in their own government's policy objectives.

Donors have a strong presence on their field projects, which claim to deliver services to communities in forest management, facilitate policy development, and sustainable development goals linked to poverty reduction, as established through the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, bilaterally funded forestry projects have pushed forward many of the key concepts that today define community forestry (Thoms 2004:10). For example, Australian aid helped with the pilot project in testing the users' group approach that is now central to community forestry. United States aid in the nineties promoted development of forest-based enterprises, which is now a central topic among those working to improve community forestry. The Swiss pilot forest inventory

in community forests, and the Department of Forests now require that all community forests complete a forest inventory, although this policy is having unpredicted consequences (ibid:10).

Since 1970s international donors invested thousands of dollars to improve the organizational structure of the Forest Administration and professional capacity of government foresters, however, in practice their understanding on forest and people remain unchanged. Actually, developing technically sound guidelines and manuals is much easier than changing deep rooted corrupted culture of forest bureaucracy and extreme poverty in rural society. Hardly any foreign-aided projects, so far, have given due attention to the real problem: governance and poverty. It is interesting to note that, most of the forestry donor agencies, since the beginning have never stopped their rhetoric that their main objective is coming to Nepal to promote livelihoods of rural people through sustainable management of forest resources. In fact, they are interested to continue to work with their own agendas and development thinking.

b. The use of project facilities to train own manpower:

As Nepal's community forestry program is considered successful, examples of participatory resource management, donor projects in community forestry have used opportunities to train their own manpower in different disciplines such as forestry, environment, anthropology, sociology and geography. It became an important learning ground for the donor agencies in order to gain more and more experience through various experiments of community based resource management. For example, community forestry under the same regulatory framework has been practicing into different modalities by different donor projects and each project adopted their own modality of community forestry practice. Furthermore, the field projects use the project resources to engage national and international experts to undertake these project initiatives and to create their own organizational structures, which are normally very different than those of the Forest Administration. A significant amount of the project budget is used to maintain the project structure, equipment and to pay the salaries of the national and international consultants and advisors.

c. Generation of scientific knowledge through local (traditional or indigenous) knowledge:

It was evident that approaches of natural resource management in Nepal that are based exclusively on externally-generated knowledge are inadequate, and that ignorance of indigenous knowledge and perspectives have culminated in the failure of many well intended projects (for example: plantation projects in early 1980s). Since then, to come up with practical solutions, some donor projects started to use action research to identify best practices by using indigenous knowledge (for example Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project during 90s). They recognize the existence of indigenous knowledge because they expect to benefit from it by making available new information

about natural resources, techniques of utilization, management practices as well as the ethical and cultural role of resources. Donors are interested to use local knowledge because they are easy to acquire without consideration of providers' intentions.

d. Creation of income for donor agency:

Securing long term financial sources are the foremost informal interests of the donor agencies. For example, in many developed countries high volumes of the international development cooperation are supported by the majority of citizens (see Bandstein 2007). To sustain this support it is important for donor agencies to show concrete examples for what the development assistance is used. Also, the donor's home office evaluates performance of the funded project on the basis of targets achieved, documents/reports submitted and partially on the quantity of funds disbursed. Therefore, donor agencies use different alternative modalities of financing in order to secure funding from their home country such as 'conditionality' on funding (e.g. push recipient country to change their policy, commitment on governance); direct funding; technical assistance; monitoring and evaluation by the respective home country consultants; promotion of business by providing equipments, vehicles and materials from home country. Donor countries in most of the cases prefer direct funding in order to show financial transparency to the government and citizens of their home country, for that they used different tricks such as: community-driven approach (e.g. community forestry, participatory rural development). Likewise, many of the donor agencies usually propose more expatriate experts, consultant visits, equipments and monitoring activities from the donors' side (see budget of NSCFP in Table-5.15 in chapter five). The reasons for these are partly that it is easier to spend money on administrative work such as overseas training and visits, hiring consultants, procurement of equipment rather than on small scale support programs demanded by local staff and poor rural communities. Also, the representatives of the donor organizations want to allocate enough resources for activities such as monitoring, as they have an interest in ensuring that the project is successful, or is perceived to be successful in the eyes of the Home Office. This requires more resources to hire leading consultants to produce detailed status reports and publications demonstrating progress (Catlett and Schuftan 1994). Therefore, many donor agencies used to publish success stories, project activities, and response of the local people in an attractive way in order to convince their hard work at its Home Office.

6.5. Political parties and their interest in community forestry

Political parties, who are in the parliament, determine the process of forest policy made at national level. However, their specific orientation is highly influenced by their goals of achieving a majority in elections and participation of their programs (Krott 2005). Generally, political parties recruit local elites, who can be entrusted by local people, as candidates for the election. The parties play the leading role in the legitimization of all forest policy decisions and the recruitment of forest policy decision-makers (Krott 2005). Political parties, even with a strong popular base, treat ordinary people as a means of political power. They expect people to follow them but do not feel it necessary to consult them before making decisions. Once leaders are elected as a member of parliament or in other political bodies, politicians' think links with local people is unnecessary. As a result, members of parliament have had a very limited interaction with the concerned civil society groups during the drafting and debating of the Forest Legislation. It showed that political leaders were guided more by 'administrative will' than by 'public will' (Ojha 2006).

The current political practices in Nepal give enough space to the political leader to pursue their political goals through their control over the bureaucracy. At the central level, one distinct tension between bureaucrats and politicians is about the appointment of political advisors to Ministers. Technically, senior bureaucrats' are interested in spreading forestry activities (such as community forestry) across the country as the evidence of bringing development and ensuring votes for the ruling party (see Li 1999). They are responsible and accountable to the top political leadership and so they can be seen as advisors to the politicians. A key priority of the elected leaders (such as ministers) is to use the forest agency and its resources in order to remain in power. It is necessary for them to be as informed as possible about the continuation of bureaucracy so that they can have a good command over it. Hence it is not surprising that a newly-appointed minister often comes along with a personal political advisor and some other persons whom he/she trusts. The appointments of political advisors suggest not only some lack of trust between political leaders and the bureaucrats, but a necessity to solidify the minister's hold over the bureaucracy. Senior bureaucrats see the political advisor positions needless, unconstitutional and the creation of a power parallel to the bureaucracy. So these officials, while feeling obliged to serve the political leaders, do not see it as necessary to cooperate with the advisors. So they often feed political advisors incomplete information making the political leaders and the advisors vulnerable to and continuously dependent on the bureaucrats for advice, assistance and winning votes for the party (Shrestha 1999). Politicians' collusion with bureaucrats thus becomes a necessity.

6.5.1. Political parties and their nexus in deforestation

Nepal community forestry processes is strongly based on political interests, such as the concept of *panchayat* forest and *panchayat* protected forest were initiated to extend political will of the *panchayat* leaders to the grass root levels during the end of 70s. As Krott (2005) mentions, the issues of deforestation, which were the issues of forest policy conflicts into the background, came to force as a political agenda. The *panchayat* politics at that time drew 'deforestation' as political programs and they signaled alternative management from 'state control' to 'participatory' as political agenda during elections. However, their nexus with foresters strengthened because foresters used to consult with local political leaders as local elites to design participatory programs.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the nexus between political leaders and foresters was further strengthened as elected leaders have direct access to the policy decisions and recruitments of forest policy decision-makers. Unlike in the past, now many political parties compete for votes and public approval. Intervention in the bureaucracy has become a means toward that end. If bureaucracy has remained independent of the politics, the change in government would have little effect in the change of bureaucracy (Shrestha 1999). New appointments or staff transfers in the forest ministry take place every time the government changes, as the ruling party government tries to place its favorites in the bureaucracy so that it can use forest as income for party politics and recruit their cadre into different posts and locations. To access easily timber rent, there are common practices across Nepal, where political parties have begun appointing their own representatives to lead the users' committees of FUGs. Hence community forestry processes also become a battle field for political parties. In some places, severe conflicts between political parties have also been noticed (see Box-6.10).

Box- 6.10: Gun fire on community forestry election

Source: Kantipur News, 28 February 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Makawanpur- Few rounds of fresh fire poured during the election of forest users' committee. After the election for the users' committee of Jyamire Kalika Community Forest Users' Group, conflicts turned to gun battle between the youth members of two political parties. The locals said that both parties wanted to capture the vital post in the users' committee. However, no casualties were noticed.

Foresters on the other hand seek symbolic acceptance from political leaders mainly from ruling government in order to get transferred into resource rich areas and even they don't hesitate to pay large amounts as bribes. Once transferred, they search ways to fell down more timber illegally. In fact, there are hectic competitions among forest officers who seek positions in the resource rich districts.

There are a bunch of cases why forests in various location of Nepal are victimized because of nexus between forest officers, political parties and wood mafias (see Box-6.11). The former Director General at the Department of

Forests, in his interview in one national newspaper said that loggings cannot be controlled because thieves have political protection. "When you arrest an offender, you get a call from the Prime Minister instructing to release him, what can you do?" In most of the cases, loggers are released because of political pressure of being caught red-handed. A recent study done by Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Means (CNRM) of the Constituent Assembly (CA) of Nepal has reported that the current Forest Minister misused his power and gave direction to harvest thousands hectares of forests illegally²⁰.

Box- 6.11: Parties 'conniving with' timber smugglers

Source: Kathmandu Post, 21 June 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kailali - Political parties in Kailali District have been accused of aiding timber smuggling that is rampant in the district. Their involvement was earlier revealed after locals seized 129 cubic feet of freshly cut trees being smuggled out of the district-based Trishakti Community Forest on the night of May 20. Six persons, including the chairman of the community forest, were detained in connection to the incident. They were, however, released two days after district leaders of Communist Party of Nepal- United Marxist Liniest (CPN-UML) and Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN Maoist) came to their rescue. More recently, the DFO arrested three persons for cutting down at least 50 trees inside the proposed Panchawati Community Forest. As expected, the district leaders of CPN-UML and UCPN (Maoist) started exerting pressure on District Forest Officer for the release of the trio. The involvement of political parties in the shady timber trade starts right exactly after the forest users' committees are formed. Parties appoint their supporters in such committees. According to Netra Khanal (secretary FECOFUN- Kailai), a majority of community forests in Kailali are run by the committees formed by parties.

Political parties in community forestry processes do not bear formal influential roles; however, the above mentioned three Boxes clearly demonstrate that there were strong political influences in the community forestry processes. These cases are just some examples that surmise what is wrong with our much-feted community forests today: interference from political parties; rampant corruption; irregularities in management; and rapid deforestation. One of the major problems in community forest management is the lack of transparency and sense of accountability among officials, users' committees and local political leaders. Although users' committees are elected from among the users, many do not follow a proper election process. In some cases, the users' groups are so big that holding elections is similar to have elections for local bodies. In other cases, although the number of forest users is not high, resource rich CFUGs also suffer from such problems.

²⁰ <http://www.nagariknews.com/society/nation/18325-2010-09-16-10-34-51.html>

6.5.2. Political parties and their nexus in CF policy formulation

Forest management, both from technical and socio-economic perspectives, rarely becomes a major issue of the political parties; they have been seen forest as a source of income and vote. Based on their political ideologies (such as democrats, communist, ethic based), understanding community forestry also differ among parties. For example, Ojha (2006), in the context of Terai (low lands of Nepal) forest management, mentions that Members of Parliament (MPs), are divided according to the constituencies they represent- with Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist- Leninist) politicians oriented mainly towards community forestry concepts and its federations, while Nepali Congress and Sadbhawana (a Terai centre party) mainly leaning towards collaborative forest management. Recently, The Unified Democratic Madhesi Forum's (the forum of Terai centre parties) had demanded to promote the concept of collaborative forest management in the low lands of Nepal in order to grant access rights to the distance users²¹. However, as far as I understand, the understanding of political parties about forest and its management system is based on personal interests rather than strong backup from professional advisors as they hardly allow intellectuals to engage in political processes. The following box (Box-6.12) describing the recent example of politicization community forestry in Nepal.

Box- 6.12: Political party protests proposed change to forest acts

Source: REPUBLICA, 17 August 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu: Communist Party of Nepal -Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN- UML), the third largest party of Nepal, has suggested to the prime minister not to make any amendments to the existing Forest Act which curtails the rights and privileges enjoyed by forest user groups. It further said that the proposal to increase the tax amount from 15 to 50 percent is an attempt to weaken the groups. The ruling party has pressed the prime minister at a time when the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) has said that the user groups are misusing their rights and restoring deforestation. The amendment has proposed drastic curtailment of the rights of forest user groups. Submitting a memorandum to the prime minister on Monday, the UML has strongly raised concerns of the Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) and its objection to the amendment proposal. The party's natural resources management department's letter stated that the MoFSC is attempting to hide its own corruption by shifting the blame on forest user groups. The party has also demanded action against the Ministry officials involved in deforestation in the Terai as per the findings of the National Vigilance Center and the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority.

²¹ Source: The Himalayantimes, 27 July 2010 under 'UDMF forestry rider kicks up row'.

6.6. Wood contractors and their interests in community forestry

The forest sector in Nepal contributes quite a lot to the national economy and in 2007/08 alone the revenues from the forest products were about US \$ 7.3 million (DoF 2009). FAO has estimated that Nepal's forestry sector has contributed 3.5% to the GDP of the country in year 2000 and 4.4% for the period of 1990 to 2000 (MoFSC 2008). But it is estimated that the forestry sector alone has contributed 15% in the GDP of the country. In the formal discourse, the function of forest is always referring as a source of national revenue, hence justifying the role of technical control of forest management (Ojha 2006).

It is estimated that 86 percent of all timber consumption takes place outside industrial units, i.e. rural consumption (FAO 1997). Industrial sawmilling is done by private sawmills, they are licensed without giving timber quotes and dependent on Timber Corporations of Nepal (TCN, para-statal company), District Forest Offices (DFOs), community forests and private forest for forest products. As the administrative procedures are complex to get timber from TCN and DFOs, wood contractors nowadays prefer to buy timber from community forests.

Wood business in Nepal is highly dominated by the private sectors, mainly saw mill owners and individual contractors; hence they have monopolized timber business. They hold the strong control in wood business strategies and government decisions on forest management. Most of the wood contractors at meso to macro-levels generally have their own sawmills, sell depots and timber or fuel wood based industries, contractors at the micro-level generally work as a broker and agent of district or national level traders. They have largely economic interests in community forestry. They like to involve in community forestry since the formation of users' groups. There are many cases in Nepal where forests were handed over to the local communities due to the direct involvement of wood contractors and saw mills (see. Box-6.13). Therefore, the private sector stakeholders are often perceived as one of the most powerful group in community forestry because they are able to influence decisions over forest handover, getting permission for timber harvesting from the Forest Administration and marketing of the forest products.

Box- 6.13: Forest officer- smuggler nexus causing deforestation

Source: The Rising Nepal, 7 July 2010, Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepalgunj- Wood mafia in Banke District have registered national forests as community forests with a view to cut down more trees than instructed by the government to rake huge money overnight. A report on the condition of community forests recently revealed that trees value several million rupees belonging to community and national forests have been felled down in Banke district with the involvement of Forest Officers and other employees.

According to the forest office sources, Forest Officers, Rangers, middlemen and

smugglers had hatched a clandestine plan to register national forests as a community forests enabling to cut down huge number of green trees and collect millions of rupees by selling them in Nepali and Indian markets. The source claimed that most of the community forests did not follow the rule and regulations during the time of registering the forests as community forests. They seemed to be in a hurry to register the forest so that they would be able to cut down trees valuing millions of rupees, trees of the forests that once belonged to a certain community. The huge amount of commission money is the core reason behind the massive cutting of trees in the district. Likewise, the leaders of various political parties are involved in safeguarding the wood smuggler. According to a report, the office can give permission to cut down only 2250,000 cubic feet of woods at a time but it was found that about 600,000 cubic feet of timber is being cut down at the community forests.

Forestry legislation of Nepal has provisions regarding the collection and sale of various forest products from different types of forests. In the case of community forests, Forest Regulation of 1995 (Rule: 32 and 33) provide legal authority to forest users' group to collect, sale and distribute forest products in coordination with local Forest Administration. The Regulations further mention that users' group shall collect, sell and distribute only those products which are mentioned and approved in the Work Plan. So within the ceiling of approved Work Plan, community forest users' group can sell forest products to the forest users and surplus products to the outsiders mainly to the contractors.

6.6.1. The formal process of timber trade in community forestry

Formally community forestry is known as 'subsistence' forestry; therefore, the focus lies on 'basic needs' to fulfill the local people needs for small scale timber, fuel wood and fodder. In case, if there are surplus forest products, user groups are allowed to sell such products to outsiders. User groups need to follow several steps while selling their products to the non-members which include:

- Before cutting down the tress the users' committee should forward a request letter to the District Forest Office;
- After getting approval, trees at will be harvested need to be marked at a certain point from the bottom of the tress. This would enable the forest agency to check the number of harvestable trees;
- After harvesting, in case any forest products is available in accordance with the Work Plan it should be consumed by the user group itself, the user group needs to prepare a receipt in triplicate and hand over one copy to the buyer and the other copy to the concerned Area Forest Office, and remaining copy by itself;
- In case, if the users' group wants to sell the surplus forest products harvested within the limit of the approved Work Plan, users' committee should require prior approval from the District Forest Office;
- After getting formal approval, users' committee needs to be announced wood biding in details at daily newspaper;

- The collected sealed bidding forms need to be open in the presence of bidders or contractors, representatives from District Forest Office and users' committee members;
- The committee shall issue timber collection permit to the highest bidder;
- The contractor should deposit royalties and other legal charges to the District Forest Office before collecting timber from community forests;
- The users' committee shall have to maintain accurate records of forest products sold from their forest as well as their accounts of income and expenditures;
- The users' committee shall prepare an iron stamp for the purpose of transporting the timber from the community forest and submit an application to the District Forest Office for its registration;
- For the purpose of transporting the timber outside the FUG, users' committee need to mark the timber with the stamp issued by the District Forest Office and issue a release permit;
- Then the contractor is allowed to transport permitted timber only after informing the concerned Forest Office in advance and having the matter endorsed by check posts located en route.

6.6.2. The politics of timber trade in community forestry

The formal procedure of timber trade does not allow any misappropriation, both within community and the Forest Administration. However, in practice timber trade in community forestry is not transparent and controlled by nexus of committee elites, Forest Administration, contractors, political leaders, local administration, police, media and local goons. The wood contractors reportedly enjoyed political and administrative support, so field staff and villagers could not do a lot to stop them. There are cases that, mainly in the context of resource rich status CFs, where local wood contractors initiate the forest registration process in collusion with local political elites and foresters, tree felling is carried out immediately after the forest is handed over (see Box-6.13 in the previous section).

Nearly 30 years after the state began to hand over Nepal's forests to local communities for protection and management, the program appeared to be a victim of its own success. There are evidences that wood traders, forest officials and members of the local community forest users' group (CFUGs) are involved in illegal logging in many districts of Nepal (see Box-6.14). Furthermore, news reports in Boxes-13 (in previous section) and 14 unveil that the government officials and influential members of the forest users' group are making millions by selling the timber at a much reduced price than determined by the government to the timber traders. In order to make illegal trade wood contractors, foresters and users' committees are also paid commissions to the local journalists, political activists and individuals who are helping to cover up the scam.

Box- 6.14: Nepal's community forestry movement is threatened by corruption and greed

Source: Nepali Times, Issue 509 (02 July – 08 July 2010), Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu- Political fluidity and a breakdown in the rule of law have led to rampant logging nationwide and threatening to undermine Nepal's internationally recognized community forestry programs. Trees are being felled by logging groups that enjoy political patronage and protection from district forest officers (DFOs). Community forestry user groups, on the other hand, have been colluding with timber poachers and corrupted local officials to harvest trees.

Illegal logging is now so rampant and blatant that Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal summoned the Minister of Forests and Soil Conservation, Deepak Bohara, and asked for clarification. The ministry then recalled DFOs from two districts, but no one has been charged.

In Dadeldhura District contractors, with the help of district forest officials and users, are trying to get large tracts of national forests handed over to the communities so they can sell the trees. "When the regulators and protectors of forests are hand-in-glove in destroying the forests, who can stop them?" asked Resham Bahadur Dangi, joint secretary at the Ministry of Forests. History has shown that Nepal's forests have always suffered during periods of political transition. The current weak state and the breakdown of the rule of law have allowed a nationwide network of timber mafias to flourish. Since timber harvesting is allowed inside community forests, they have become a vulnerable target.

The evidence in Box-14 is just the symbolic; there might be many more hidden cases in reality. During interviews with the Forest Administration in Makawanpur and Chitwan Districts, Forest Officers also accepted that only less than 30% of FUGs are operating lawfully in the timber business. It gives the impression that initial presumption of pro-poor forestry and forest conservation through community forestry, seem a manipulative strategy of policy designers.

Chapter Seven

Explaining Community Forestry Outcomes in Nepal

Forestry is not about trees, it is about people. And it is about trees only insofar as trees can serve the needs of people' (Westoby 1987: ix).

7.1. Introduction

Forest resources directly contribute to the livelihoods of 90% of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty of the world and indirectly support the natural environment that is essential for agriculture and the food supplies of nearly half the population of the developing world (World Bank 2004). According to Hobley (2007):

“Forests are a source of wealth and power. They are also a locus of poverty. For many millions of people forests and forest products and services provide both direct and indirect sources of livelihood, providing a major part of their physical, material, economic and spiritual lives (Byron and Arnold, 1997:3 in Hobley 2007). They often occur in remote rural areas with poor infrastructure, access to markets and other basic services, the last frontier of unallocated land and at the furthest edge of state reach. The livelihood options in such areas are highly circumscribed”.

Forestry, which is about people, is broader than forestry simply as a supplier of commercial, or even public, goods and services. Forests represent a major source of potential income in terms of both the products they contain and the land they cover. Thus, they are the locus for competition between multiple interests (Krott 2005) as well as multiple policies and paradigms for development, particularly between economic growth, conservation of biodiversity, and livelihood development of the poor (Hobley 2007).

In the light of various outcomes that community forestry produces for different stakeholders, one might attempt to develop comprehensive methodologies, with which the various outcomes can be covered. For instance, Ritchie *et al.* (2000) has apparently followed such an approach. Nonetheless, evaluations on the outcomes of the program should look back at the idea of community forestry which rests on linking forest resources and the people living in their vicinity. Therefore, the evaluations should ideally be focused on the two components: the people and the forests. For this purpose, we rather sense the logic of Krott and Stefanov (2008) in seeing the importance of limiting the focuses accordingly to the core policy objectives. Here, we focus on the outcomes which are relevant for the analysis based on theory, particularly on those in clear relation to the objectives of community forestry policy covering economic, social and ecological dimensions. In fact, community forestry is very much connected to the following three objectives of: 1) alleviating the poverty of forest users, 2) empowering them, and 3) improving the condition of the forests (among others see Wiersum 1984, Charnley and Poe 2007, Karmacharya *et al.* 2008). The first two objectives are closely linked with the people, while the last is connected to the forest resources.

Agrawal *et al.* 2008, Agrawal and Chhatre 2006, McKean 1992, and Ostrom 1990 identified several variables which shape outcomes of community managed forests, among which institutional, resource characteristics and biophysical variables are important. Resource characteristics and biophysical variables form the context within which socio-political and economic characteristics of users and institutional variables shape resource management outcomes. Agrawal and Chhatre 2006 used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model according to which forest condition is a linear function of biophysical, economic, demographic, institutional and socio-political variables. Recent study by Chhatre and Agrawal (2009), Coleman and Steed (2009) and Gibson *et al.* (2007) have found that major variables affecting forest outcomes are rule making autonomy and forest ownership rights of the local forest users. However, above-mentioned studies do not take into account of the effects of external environment such as external stakeholders mainly Forest Administration and national regulatory environments. Regarding to the evidences worldwide, they highlight that the formal regulatory and informal control, which mainly comes from taxes on forest products, technical management plans and price-tags to major forest products, are a huge barrier for poor people to benefit from forestry practices (Hobley 2007). In principle, Forest Administration is the guarantor of community forestry and so the role of foresters is critical to determine the forestry outcomes. The question should focus on who determines and shapes the expected outcomes of local forest management.

7.2. Paradoxes of community forestry outcomes in Nepal

The outcomes of community forestry are discussed intensively and partly controversial in literature. Nepal is a country where about 35 percent of the population lives below poverty line and livelihoods are forestry based, hence, research on actual contribution of forestry on livelihood seems more worthy. Various forestry related policy documents in Nepal highlighted community forestry as forestry decentralization, participation of local forest users in decision making, forest for meeting basic needs of rural peoples, and the conservation and sustainable utilization of forest products (e.g. Malla 2000, Hobley 1996, Gilmour and Fisher 1991). However, the translations of policies into practices that address these issues remain weak. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the origin of the community-based natural resource movement which did not emerge from a pro-poor agenda but from a strong anti-state position (Silva *et al.* 2002 in Hobley 2007).

Plentiful empirical studies from 1998 to 2009 on community forestry in Nepal have clearly indicated that community forestry served as an effective approach for the conservation, restoration of degraded forest lands and ultimately improving the condition of the forests (Tachibana and Adhakari 2009, Kanel 2008, Gautam 2006, Thoms 2006, Chakraborty 2001, Branney and Yadav 1998). Significant studies also highlighted community forestry interventions by providing positive outcomes regarding local empowerment and poverty alleviation (see Pokharel *et al.*, 2008, Springate-Baginski and Blaikie 2007). There is however a severe deficit: in his study 'Conservation success, livelihoods failure? Community forestry in Nepal'. Thoms (2006:170) pointed out that the actual contribution to improve the livelihoods of the poorest are limited in so far that unequal power relations favor strict protection over active use. Such strict protection often come at the cost of the poorest households, which leads to loss of access to daily forestry needs (Thoms 2006, Dev *et al.* 2003, Malla *et al.* 2003). Thus, despite the advances that have been made in CF program in Nepal since the late 1970s, Nepal's experiences to date do not go far enough accounting for the complex social dynamics underlying community-based approaches to ensure livelihood focused outcomes (Upreti 2001).

Field evidences suggest that in many community forests, there are sufficient resources to meet at least the poorest households' subsistence needs, and many even contain sufficient resource to be exploited commercially (Thoms 2006). However, anecdotal evidence combined with hard data suggests that the vast majority of CFUGs in Nepal practice only "passive" management, rather than active production oriented management (see Malla *et al.* 2003, Yadav *et al.* 2003, Edmonds 2002, Larsen *et al.* 2000). CFUG focus on conserving and protecting forest resource rather than developing forest-based industries or manipulating forest conditions to improve the availability of especially useful or valuable products. Thus, meeting subsistence needs through community forestry is less a supply problem than a management problem (Thoms 2008).

Thoms (2008:1462) identified three apparent management problems of community forestry processes in Nepal. Firstly, heavy involvement of government foresters biased toward traditional timber-oriented strict protection forestry lead CFUGs to believe that they are only allowed to make limited use of their forests. Secondly, there is a limited technical forest management knowledge and capacity even among government foresters. For example, conducting forest inventories requires literacy, numeracy, and trainings, however, only very few user groups can afford and conduct an acceptable inventory. And finally, those most dependent on community forest resources and therefore most interested in their active utilization (i.e. the poorest households) are the very same groups who tend to be excluded from decision-making. The evidences suggest that elites are 'causing in' on community forestry at the expenses of marginalized groups. To some extent, community forestry is simply maintaining the *status quo* in terms of differential power within a community (Thoms 2004:209).

7.3. Indicators for community forestry outcomes

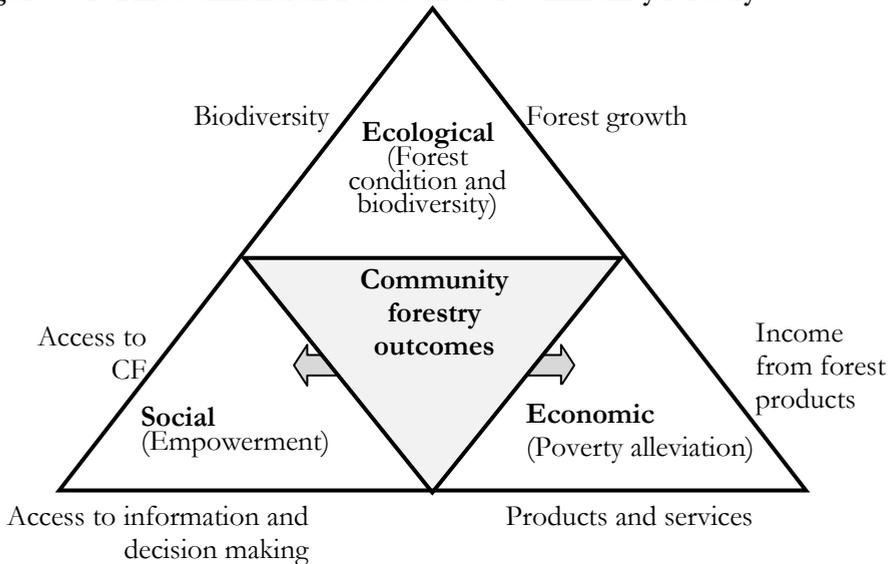
The assessment of community forestry outcomes calls for an understanding of the changing role of forest and trees in livelihoods and forest conditions. Community forests produce various outcomes that we see the need for limiting the outcomes which are relevant for the analysis based on theory. Therefore, in this study, we only look at outcomes which are in clear relation to goals formulated in public programs for community forestry. Using the overall goal of sustainability, such goals can be classified into social, economic, and ecological dimensions. Thus, this study measures the contribution of community forestry to social, economic, and ecological goals based on twelve community forestry cases from Nepal.

Outcomes in community forestry are the reflexive process between what is supposed to happen under 'participation' and its actual daily practice (Blaikie and Springate-Baginski 2007b:374). It is useful and also necessary to distinguish 'output' and 'outcome' in community forestry. In specific terms 'output' is the activity of community forestry comprising technical, economic and social means, while 'outcome' refers to the effect of outputs on the forest and direct forest users on social, economic and ecological dimension. In reality, 'outcome' is influenced by the decision-making by the internal and external stakeholders. The different types of outcomes are defined by distinct criteria, but they can stay in conflict dependent from the potential of the forestland area. The outcomes are not comprehensive but focus on relevance on interests in addition the different types are meaningful for the concept of sustainability. The hypothesis is that the external stakeholders are dominant.

Social outcomes are the 'accessibility' of forest users on decision-making and forest itself, which determines the 'empowerment' effects of community forestry. Economic outcomes of community forestry are mainly to create

income for direct forest users for poverty alleviation. It is the benefit for the direct forest users whatever the products and services are. The economic outcome is qualitatively analyzed and partly measured in natural units and/or partly in money. Ecological outcomes are natural conditions defined as natural requirements for forest growth and biodiversity. They depend from social and political preferences. They are measured by asking the knowledge of powerful stakeholders in the network of each community forest about their existing programs for forest growth and biodiversity. The factual measurement of ecological outcomes is an indicator for their importance for a special group. The framework for assessing different outcomes is presented in Figure-7.1.

Figure- 7.1: Three dimensional outcomes of community forestry



7.3.1. Social outcomes “empowerment”

Nepal’s community forestry policy has considered participation as a means for achieving the goal of empowering people especially poor and marginalized. In practice, local forest users are seen as objects, who participate for the community forestry (CF) program designed by outsiders so that it helps to fulfill outsiders’ objectives rather than villagers’ own objectives. Our experiences in the studied community forests clearly remind that the empowerment processes within the FUG is not solely depending upon the participation of the users and internal environment of the CF, the ‘facilitation’ of external stakeholders in regulatory, informational and economic processes shapes the level of empowerment at local level.

It is widely argued that sustained community forestry practices depend on accessibility of the direct forest users on decision making processes in order to

control the access and use of their forests. Therefore, social outcomes are the empowerment of the direct forest user. Empowerment enables a direct forest user to influence the forest and forest use. Empowerment in this study is measured by the extent a direct forest user can: 1) access (inclusion and exclusion) to decision making, and 2) access and ownership rights over forest land and resources and to exclude others for using them. Changes in access to the forests are thought to profoundly affect the livelihood of the people (Chomitz 2007). Thus, secure access and control is seen here as the principal key of empowerment. Such depends on knowledge, information, legal restrictions, technical materials, money and informal access to the forest. In the assessment, attention is also given to distinguish the empowerment of the individual forest users from the empowerment of their group as they can compete in many ways.

7.3.1.1. Access to decision making

Across the studied cases, practices of decision-making were modeled on the local pattern of rural power structure. Hobley (1991:117) has clearly explained how the social structure affects the process of decision-making:

“The rural elite, who were politically powerful and wealthy, had developed certain necessary skills and experiences which ensure that they had direct access to government officials and immediate control over projects in their villages. As Gow and Vasant (1983:435) state: ‘even when groups are formed specially to serve the interests or defend the rights of the most disadvantaged, effective leadership is most likely to emerge from those individuals who are relatively more advantaged and closely allied with the local power structure’. This will act as an immediate barrier to the inclusion of the disadvantage community in decision-making. These groups will not be allowed to function without the acceptance of the local elite. The sustained vitality of the committee and their continued representation of all forest users were dependent on local power structures. Ultimately, it was these structures which determined the success or failure of participatory forms of forest management?”.

The question of rights on forest resources is complicated in relation to the balance of power, authority, and decision-making within a community of forest users. Class, caste, and gender may differentiate communities. Often, those most dependent on forests resource have the least power of access and the most limited role in decision-making (Timsina 2002, Hobley 1987, Metz 1989). For example, women are the primary collectors of non-timber forest products, but men take the decision about it in public meetings, where women have no or little representation (Ford Foundation 1998). Khatiwada (2006) and Agarwal (2001), in their studies in Nepal on community forestry concluded that women are excluded from the benefit of the community forestry process as the social structure allows the men to control over the process.

The culture and structure of the Nepalese rural societies adopt the traditional social structure, where the elders and male members dominate the decision making process. Even when a poorer household member gets a chance to become a committee member, he/she has no influence on the FUG decision-making process (Khatiwada 2006). The poor household members in

the committee do not even seem to know what their role is in the committee and how they are supposed to represent the concerns of the poorer households. Barnett (1979 in Chambers 1983) mentions: “poor people rarely meet; when they meet, they often do not speak; when they do speak, they are often cautious and deferential; and what they say is often either not listened to, or brushed aside, or interpreted as a bad light”.

Normally, FUGs make decisions at two levels: at committee meetings and FUG general assemblies. Both of these forums of decision-making do not seem to take into account the needs of poorer households.

Composition of the users’ committees: how inclusive are they?

Users’ committee and general assembly are the forums where forest users make and endorse the decisions. The former body is responsible to implement and monitor the activities approved in the Work Plan and decisions of the general assembly. In her study from three community forest in Nepal, Paudyal (2008) found that among 129 user households surveyed about 50% of users do not attend user’s assemblies regularly and among those who attend very few stay at the meeting until decisions are made. In practice, however, the committee carries out all these functions. Studies reveal that users’ committee, mainly chairpersons and secretaries, are the real decision makers in community forestry (Thoms 2004, Baral 2002). Without direct or indirect wishes from the local Forest Administration, and without motivated and actively involved members of the political party, it is nearly impossible to become a committee member, hence, these members can use any means through Forest Administration or political parties if any conflict rises against their decisions. Therefore, representation in the committee is important, as these are the people whose decisions and actions affect both the forest condition and the welfare of user households.

Though the assembly retains the power to reject initiatives for endorsement, across the studied community forests, there is no evidence where the assembly has used this power, or taken its own initiative against the committee. However, there are many cases that the committee members even seem to be able to overturn decisions made at the FUG assembly. For example, in Pashupati CFUG, the FUG assembly dated on 2nd Jan 2007, decided to rollover the contract system to the non-users; however, after one month of the assembly decision users’ committee decided to issue the contract to the outsiders under pressure from the Forest Administration. Likewise, FUG assembly of Parewashowri CFUG dated on 25th December 2008 took decisions on the rate per cubic feet round logs and maximum limits for each user household, however, after three months the committee revised the rate citing high labor and transportation cost during forest operations.

Table-7.1: Composition of the users' committee based on gender and economic status

Name of CFUGs	Total HHs in CFUG	Composition of FUG committee			Economic status of member HHs in %		
		Total	Male %	Female%	Poor	Medium	Rich
Bhiteripakha	243	13	84.6	15.4	23.1	38.5	38.5
Tiprikot	244	11	72.7	27.3	18.2	36.4	45.5
Pachabhैया	413	11	54.5	45.5	36.4	27.3	36.4
Akala	320	11	72.7	27.3	18.2	27.3	54.5
Yagyadole	760	19	84.2	15.8	10.5	31.6	57.9
Dudkoshi	1015	11	0	100	36.4	45.5	18.2
Parewashowri	601	17	58.8	41.2	29.4	41.2	29.4
Pashupati	211	11	63.6	36.4	45.5	18.2	36.4
Piple Pokhara	1248	11	72.7	27.3	9.1	27.3	63.6
Gitawor	370	13	69.2	30.8	30.8	38.5	30.8
Raniban	152	13	84.6	15.4	23.1	46.2	30.8
Satanchuli	560	17	70.6	29.4	17.6	35.3	47.1
Total (executive committee)	6137	158	67.1	32.9	24.1	34.8	41.1
Economic status of the FUG member households in %					40.6	39.7	19.7

Source: Constitution and Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

A comparison of the socioeconomic composition of the user groups with that of the committees (Table-7.1) clearly indicate that the percentage of poor and medium economic status members are higher than of those economically better-off members in the executive committees of the studied FUGs. However, except in Dudkoshi CFUG, amongst the committee members, key decision-making positions like that of chairperson, secretary and treasurer are often dominated by males of relatively economically better-off and better educated class compared to other members of the committee. Although, the representation of women can be seen nearly thirty-three percent (Table-7.1) as prescribed by legal documents of community forestry such as Community Forestry Guideline of 2009, in practice, representations of women in the executive committees were done just to fulfill the legal requirement as men dominate the committees' composition in all FUGs.

Participation in the executive committee meetings:

Forestry legislations in Nepal such as the Forest Act of 1993 and the Regulation of 1995 give considerable 'autonomy' to CFUGs to determine how they manage their community forest, though "everything" CFUGs want to do, should be included in the Work Plan. In principle, users are supposed to make decisions through regular meetings and general assembly including the selection and change of the FUGC. However, in reality, there are number of constraints on the decision-making freedom of CFUG imposed by subsidiary regulations and the dominant paradigms of CF in Nepal, as well as the practice of CFUGs not always reflecting the formal program (Bampton and Cammaert 2006). The most common constraints are: regulatory pluralisms (e.g. Forest Act and Decentralization Act, which both deal with resource management through local participation), multiple stakeholders, vested interests, administrative hurdles, technical requirements, highly depend on donors and elite dominance (Devkota 2006).

The Work Plans of the studied CFUGs elaborate the collection and distribution of the forest products, their prices, and marketing of the surplus forest products. During the discussion with FUGs' committees, when I enquired about the process of decision-making I found that it was actually the chairpersons and secretaries who were the main decision-makers (ICFUGC1-12 2008). As executive committees in practice are the key decision making bodies, I have analyzed the percentage of the participation of CFUGC members, belonging to different economic groups on committee meetings in the last three Nepalese fiscal years (06/07, 07/08 and 08/09) (see Table-7.2), which could be an indicator to analyze decision making processes in community forestry.

The figure in Table-7.2 shows 76.7% committee member were attended in total of 381 meetings held over the last three years in twelve CFUGs. Furthermore, the presented figures also give some interesting results, for example, if we see the composition of CFUGCs, representation of rich, medium and poor are distributed as: 41.1, 34.8 and 24.1% respectively (see Table-7.1), while, if we look their attendance in the monthly or bi-monthly meetings attendance percentage was not distributed 'proportionately', where attendance percentage of rich, medium and poor were: 91, 72 and 58% respectively (see Table-7.2). These figures tell us that even there was representations of poor in the CFUGC, their attendance in the committee meetings seem very weak. This situation exists for all user groups. To overcome this problem, some (e.g. Bhiteripakha, Pashupati, Gitawor CFUGs) have made their own rule (such as meetings allowances, snacks and travelling cost) in which if a member is absent in a meeting, he/she pays fine in cash. There are evidences of such rules increasing members' attendance in committee meetings (e.g. Bhiteripakha, Pashupati, and Gitawor CFUGs); however, evidences do not exist in change of decision-making culture.

Table-7.2: Participation in the committee meetings based on economic status of the members

Name of CFUGs	Total number of meetings in the last 3 years	Total members in CFUGC	Total possible attendance in total meetings	Actual attendance in total meetings	Actual attendance in %	Total possible attendance of poor in total meetings	Actual attendance of poor in %	Total possible attendance of medium in total meetings	Actual attendance of medium in %	Total possible attendance of rich in total meetings	Actual attendance of rich in %
Bhiteripakha	36	13	468	306	65.4	108	42.6	180	51.1	180	93.3
Tiprikot	33	11	363	235	64.7	66	37.9	132	50.8	165	86.7
Pachabhैया	25	11	275	182	66.2	100	41.0	75	69.3	100	89.0
Akala	30	11	330	263	79.7	60	48.3	90	78.9	180	90.6
Yagyadole	37	19	703	587	83.5	74	52.7	222	76.1	407	93.1
Dudkoshi	35	11	385	254	66.0	140	66.4	175	58.3	70	84.3
Parewashowri	32	17	544	460	84.6	160	66.9	224	87.1	160	98.8
Pashupati	29	11	319	225	70.5	145	67.6	58	74.1	116	72.4
Piple-Pokhara	30	11	330	293	88.8	30	56.7	90	87.8	210	93.8
Gitawor	24	13	312	249	79.8	96	69.8	120	78.3	96	91.7
Raniban	29	13	377	293	77.7	87	59.8	174	77.6	116	91.4
Satanchuli	41	17	697	567	81.3	123	62.6	246	76.4	328	92.1
Total	381	158	5103	3914	76.7	1189	58.1	1786	72.1	2128	91.0

Source: Meeting minutes of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Users' committee members, who just play the token roles in the meetings, expressed their dissatisfaction in different ways. For example, a woman member in Raniban CFUGC said: *'We just endorsed the agendas brought by the chairman and the secretary'*. She further elaborates: *'General users are forced to follow their decisions, you can see the case of plantation or forest protection mechanism of this FUG, poor and illiterate users have active participation in forest management activities, however, they have no voice in decision making'*. Likewise, a member who belongs to the poor group in Gitawor CFUGC said: *'Our views are not listened and they (indicating chairman and secretary) are not interested to hear anything from us, and what the chairman and secretary bring has to be endorsed'*. He further elaborates: *'The chairman and the secretary tend to channel the forest products in their own benefits rather than fulfilling the users' demand; and if the market offers a better price they give second priority to users'*. The Forest Ranger, who is responsible to oversee Gitawor CF, also agrees with the statement of committee members and said: *"The chairperson makes the decisions, not the members. Why? Because more than 50% of the forest users and also the committee members are illiterate and he is the in-charge who deals with the decision in the Forest Administration and has to bear all the responsibilities"*. These statements follow a

study by Agrawal and Yadama (1997), who, in their sample of 279 communities located in Forest *Panchayats* in Kumaon India, found that the most important form of user participation was the level of investments by the user group in plantation, protecting and monitoring activities. Similarly, Menzies (2007:187) also explicitly emphasized that ‘exclusion’ of local voices is a barrier of empowerment in community based resource management. Some stakeholders in the CF network of this study, mainly donors’ projects, and NGOs, however, believe that although most of the decisions come from the chairpersons and the secretaries, forest users are organized and interact more frequently than ever before (INSCFP, IBISEP, IANSAB 2008). Conversely, Ojha (2006:214) and Khatiwada (2006) argue that physical representation alone does not automatically lead to deliberation in CF decision-making processes, which is suppressed by the background inequalities in power.

Many descriptive analyses based on community forestry practices point out the widespread phenomenon of different forms of ‘elite capture’ that ultimately deny access to resources and to decision-making by the poor and other marginalized groups (e.g. Biggs and Messerschmidt 2003). We also experienced that the power differential within the users’ committee limits the decision-making authority within the hand of few people mainly chairperson and secretary as committee elites.

7.3.1.2. Access and ownership rights over forest land and forest products

The concept of ‘access’ analyzes who actually benefits from community forestry and through what processes they are able to control access to the resources. Access retains an empirical “... focus on the issues of who does (and who does not) get to use *what*, in *what ways*, and *when* (that is, in what circumstances)” (Neale 1998:48 cited in Ribot and Peluso 2003:154). Ribot and Peluso (2003:153) define access as “the ability to derive benefits from things,” broadening from property’s classical definition as “the right to benefit from things” access is more akin to “a bundle of powers” than to property’s notion of a “bundle of rights”. The ‘bundle of power’ lies within the hand of local communities may ensure the right to decide who is allowed to utilize the resource, when and at what rate, as well as right to market forest products and to receive and dispose of a share of income (Gollin and Kho 2002:114).

Dev *et al.* (2003) found that community forestry has affected the vulnerability context in Nepal by ensuring the stable supply of, and access to, essential forest products. This is the most relevant for the poorest who are the most dependent on forest resources. However, there are possible problems with community forestry vis-à-vis poor households (Dev *et al.* 2003, Malla *et al.* 2003, Richards *et al.* 2003, Timsina 2003). Dev *et al.* (2003) mention three broader problems of forest accessibility of poor in community forestry: first, it may be that some genuine users of a forest are excluded during forest handover. Second, a broader issue is that forest restrictions disproportionately affect poor groups who are the most dependent on forest resources for

livelihoods. Finally, a more serious and possibly more intractable problem is that community forest decision-making tends to exclude marginalized group interests. They mention that the genuine inclusive decision-making exists only in a minority of the case study FUGs and marginalized group experiences have generally been that they have had a low level of influence on FUG committee decision-making, and have often had their interests neglected (Dev *et al.* 2003:75).

Access to and ownership rights over the forest resources are the precondition of users' empowerment in community forestry; deprivation of access to forest resources may have serious impacts on rural livelihoods, both in terms of subsistence and economic enhancement. Gilmour and Fisher (1997) argue that community focused forestry is essentially about access to and control of forest resources, which are frequently contested given the value of those resources. It is common across cases that interests, motivation, and power of various stakeholders play a decisive role while shaping the pattern of resource form of rights and extent of access of the forest users on different types of rights (see Table-7.3).

Table-7.3: Different type of rights and accessibility in community forestry

Types of rights		Accessibility of direct forest users	Who defines the right?
Access rights	Enter the CF area and enjoy non-subtractive benefits.	Limited access	FUG assembly, FUGC
Withdrawal rights	Define what forest products the forest users is authorized to harvest, this right also specify how and/or when harvesting should be done.	Limited access	FUGC, Forest Administration
Management rights	Rights to decide on the harvesting, management and transformation of the resource.	Limited access	FUG assembly, FUGC, Forest Administration
	Rights to enforce rules, monitor resource use and sanction violators.	Limited access	FUG assembly, FUGC, Forest Administration
Exclusion rights	Determine the extent to which the forest users can exclude others from the resource.	Limited access	FUG assembly, FUGC, Forest Administration
Alienation or transfer right	The rights of sale, lease and bequeath access, withdrawal, management and exclusion rights.	No access	Forest Administration

Source: Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

As we see in Table-7.3 user groups have *de jure* access, management, and exclusion rights. They have no alienation rights (i.e. the right to sell their forestlands) because ownership of handed-over forestland always remains with the government. CFUG members may select or elect the membership of the user group's executive committee, sell and set prices for forest products harvested from the community forest, and enforce use and access rules. However, there *de jure* rights are often curtailed in practice because of user uncertainty regarding their rights, local elite domination, or *de facto* control by forest agency.

Community forest is supposed to meet forest users' basic forest products needs. However, in the studied FUG there are deficits (mainly in resource poor CFs) between the amount of forest products they need and the amount of that they receive from CFs (ICFUGC1-12, IDFO1-12 2008 and 2009). There are two possible causes for forest products deficits in the studied CFUGs. On one hand, CFUGs place serious limitations on the use of their forest land, perhaps because of the ideological view of the Forest Administration on 'sustainable forest management' or interests of the committee elites or the combination of both. On the other hand, the forest inventory requirement made by the Forest Administration ensures a role for foresters and is a way to: restrict the activities of FUG and set quantitative and therefore "scientific limits" through regulative access rules on harvesting within forests favors strict protection rather than active management. The regulative rules of exclusion from and access to resources have benefited some (such as the Forest Administration and users' committee elites) while causing others (such as poor and marginalized forest users, fuel wood sellers, livestock herders, NTFP collectors) to lose their livelihoods in the FUG. These facts prove that while strict protection seems effective in regenerating forests, it often comes at the cost of the highly depended forest dwellers sacrifice on vital forest resources. A complex system of forest opening times, fines and charges, and techniques relating to the extraction of different products, which have been practiced across the studied CFUGs, further hinders the accessibility of the direct forest users to the CF in practices.

For the detailed assessment, 'accessibility' of the direct forest users in this study is categorized into four classes: free access, limited access, restricted access and access banned, and examined in the studied community forestry cases (Tables-7.4).

Free access (FA):

Access granted through agreed Work Plan to the FUG members without disturbing the forest growth and regeneration; it is not same as 'open access'.

Limited access (LA):

- *LA on grazing*- allowed only on specified blocks and seasons.
- *LA on ground grass collection*- need permission from the users' committee and need to pay access fee specified by them, collection is allowed only on specified forest block (s) and seasons.

- *LA on leaf-litter collection*- access is free but only on specified seasons.
- *LA on fodder collection*- need permission from users' committee and need to pay access fee specified by the users' committee, collection is possible only from specified tree species.
- *LA on dried fallen/ standing branches*- collection with permit is allowed only for certain days on specified seasons; need to pay specified fee for each bundles of wood; only sickles are allowed to harvest branches.
- *LA on poles and woods for agricultural purpose*- permit and permission are obligatory from users' committee; need to pay fee for per unit products and quantity is limited.
- *LA on dead, dying, diseased, and fallen trees/ timbers*- permit and permission are obligatory; quantity is limited to each applicant member household; need to pay specified fee for specified unit; total annual harvest must be within the sealing of approved Work Plan.
- *LA on wood to make charcoal*- specified quantity to blacksmith within FUG to make charcoal.
- *LA on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) having commercial value*- permit is obligatory from the users' committee; quantity is limited to each applicant member household; need to pay specified fee for specified unit; total annual harvest must be within the sealing of approved Work Plan and only from specified forest block (s).

Restricted access (RA):

- *RA on green fuel wood*- only from silvicultural operations, need to pay specified fee for specified unit, limited quantity to each household based on total harvested quantity.
- *RA on poles and woods for agricultural purpose*- only from silvicultural operations within specified forest block (s); need to pay specified fee for specified unit; limited quantity to each applicant member household based on total harvested quantity.
- *RA on dead, dying, diseased, and fallen trees/timbers*- only from silvicultural operations within specified forest block (s); quantity is limited to each applicant member household; need to pay specified fee for specified unit; total annual harvest must be within the sealing of approved Work Plan.

Access banned (AB):

Access is banned through Forest Act of 1993, governmental and ministerial decision at different times, and approved Work Plan of the studied CFUGs. Penalties are prescribed for any case of rule violation.

In tables (Tables-7.4) demonstrate that the community forest user groups (CFUGs) under this study heavily regulated their forests for the collection and utilization of forest products. Furthermore, we can see that extent of accessibility in resource poor CFs are highly regulated than in resource rich CFs through where, when and how long users are allowed to have access to certain parts of the forests for different forest products. Block divisions or the partitions of the forest into smaller units are commonly applied across cases in order to regulate the access.

In the studied community forests, the distribution of major forest products mainly fuel wood and timber is based on 'equal distribution' among the applicant member households. Because of such practices, disadvantaged users

are likely to suffer more because of the limited alternative sources to fulfill their demand of such products due to their low financial and material assets. Furthermore, strict restrictions are imposed to access for certain products which are of no interest to the wealthy and powerful, but which are important to the marginalized forest users. Only in some CFs, e.g. Dudkoshi and Bhiteripakha there are separate arrangements for the poorest forest users. These indicate that limiting access to the forest and restricting the use of forests products have usually been the first activities in community forests.

Table-7.4: Accessibility over the forests and forest products in resource poor status CFUGs

Name of CFUGs	Users access on forests and forest products													
	Grazing	Ground grass	Leaf-litter	Fodder	Dried fallen/ standing branches	Green fuel wood*	Poles and Woods for agricultural purpose	Dead, dying, diseased and fallen trees/ timbers	Green standing tress/ timber	Wood to make charcoal	Medicinal plants for own use	Non-timber forest products (fruits, nuts, mushrooms..)	Non-timber forest products having commercial value	Cultivation of agricultural crops/ hunting/ mining/ infrastructure construction
Bhiteripakha	FA					RA								
Tiprikot	AB	LA	LA	LA	LA	RA	LA/RA	AB	LA	FA	AB/LA	AB	AB/LA	AB
Pachabhैया														
Akala														
Yagyadole														
Dudkoshi	LA	FA	FA	FA	FA	RA	LA	AB	LA	FA	AB/LA	AB	AB	AB
Parewashowri														
Piple-Pokhara														
Pashupati														
Satanchuli														
Gitawor														
Raniban	FA													

Source: Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Differentiated social structures, such as poor-rich, men-women, higher caste-lower caste, have unique access, needs, and use of various goods and services from community forestry. For example, blacksmiths in the studied CFUGs, a socially weak and marginalized group, need periodic access to the forest resources to make the charcoal vital for their livelihoods; while more socially privileged and wealthier households in the same community defined, forest users can afford strict closure of community forests. As marginalized sections of the FUG (such poor, women, blacksmiths, and fuel wood sellers) who used to have relatively free access to the forest before it was formally handed over to the FUG, being regulated at the local level. It is impossible for the marginalized sections to access and use forests according to their wish, even if their essential needs are not met by the CF. Similar stories can also be learnt from fuel wood sellers, in Parewashowri, Akala, Tiprikot and Pachabhaiya CFUGs. Because of the strict rules in their forest, poor households now either forced to move to the government managed forests (which is generally illegal but the local people rarely care about it) or to fulfill their forestry needs, or change their occupation. This has undermined the possibilities of community forestry to contribute the livelihood needs and villagers' priorities. The following section further assesses the accessibility of users on different types of forest products in the studied CFs:

a. Access to subsistence forest products (grazing, ground grass, leaf-litter, fodder and fuel wood):

Grazing in forest has been a concern of sustainable forestry in Nepal. Still, under the Forest Rules of 1995, grazing in government management forest is a crime. There are also evidences that 'no grazing' is a precondition while handing over community forests in Hilly areas of Nepal and note that Forest Administration has continuously condemned grazing activities in CF. Therefore implementation of community forestry infuriated many forest users, as it resulted in loss of access to grazing land in the CF. As grazing is commonly seen as a main impediment in forest regeneration, regulating or banning forest grazing is aimed to improve the forest condition. Except three cases (Bhiteripakha, Gitawor and Raniban), in other CFs grazing access is either regulated (four cases) or banned (three cases). In the Work Plan, there are also prescriptions that the forest users who violate the rule of grazing shall be punished according to the rules laid down in the Work Plan. In some CFUGs, they used barren lands for animal grazing. As many CFUGs have regulated community forestland to graze, for poor households that depends on "free" access to such resource, keeping livestock become untenable. As a result, the number of livestock owned by the poorest households noticed decreasing (personal communication with forest users in the studied CFUGs 2008).

In resource rich CFs, ground grass, leaf litter and fodder collection have been freely granted to the FUG members throughout the year. Free access for such products is considered as an effective approach to promote stall feeding,

increase agricultural productivity and reduce grazing pressure in the forest. While in resource poor CFs, except Bhiteripakha where most of the forest area are far from the village, FUG regulates these activities by imposing permits and fee systems (except fodder collection in which certain species are allowed freely). Furthermore, the collection has been restricted to particular seasons, such as ground grass during rainy season (June to September), leaf litter during dry season (February to May) and fodder collection (throughout year from specified species). For example, in Akala CF, each household is required to get a coupon of NRs 10 for leaf litter collection and NRs. 50 for ground grass collection for one season from the particular forest block(s). Though everyone, who is a legitimate user, is allowed to collect these minor forest products from CF, poorer household requirements for fodder and grass is always minimal or zero compared with economically better off families. The households who do not use these low value products, generally poor, are not allowed to harvest for commercial purposes. It is noteworthy that these low value biomass go as input into some productive assets, for example agricultural fields or livestock. Rural farming system is always integrated with some kind of agro forestry system, so the availability of such low value products from the forests will be the supplementary product for their daily needs and also for the agricultural production. However, the dependencies of such forest products are inextricably associated with the socio-economic status of user-household (Adhikari 2005:14). This implies that household's use of biomass appear to be driven primarily by agricultural land holding and cattle ownership (ibid 2005:17).

Across rural parts of Nepal, fuel wood is the main source of energy for cooking as very few households have access on alternative sources of energy like, LPG gas, biogas, and electricity. In the fiscal year 2008/09, consumption ratios of traditional, commercial, and renewable sources of energy remain at 87.1 percent, 12.2 percent, and 0.7 percent respectively (GoN/MoF 2010). It proves the continuous high dependency of Nepalese economy on conventional energy sources such as fuel wood, agricultural waste and animal dung. Supply conditions and distribution patterns of fuel wood are not the same in the studied CFs. In the resource rich CFs, such as Pashupati, Raniban, Satanchuli, Parewashowri and Gitawor, users can collect dried fuel wood at any time without paying the fee to the users' committee. While, there are restrictions (except in Bhiteripakha) to collect dried braches in the resource poor CFs such as Akala, Pachabhaiya, Yagyadole and Tiprikot CFs, as users' committee of the respective CFUG open forests only for certain days periodically, the collection is limited and users have to pay certain fees. In the resource poor CFs, the poor and women who have few alternatives to supplement the requirement of fuel wood suffer most from the anomalies. When the fuel wood distribution takes place, the quantity of fuel wood allocated by the users' committee does not consider differences of family size, composition and its requirements. Users who have high landholding and have possibilities to get sufficient fuel wood from their own sources are also equally liable as compared to poor users who

totally depend on CF for energy sources. It indicates that those who do not need fuel wood make the decisions related to its use because village elites and economically better-off members dominate users' committees across the cases. In contrast, those who mostly depend on fuel wood obtained from community forests (poor and women) have little control over the decisions related to the product access and sharing.

Harvesting of green fuel wood, except from silvicultural operations, is strictly prohibited across cases. In resource poor CFs, during thinning and pruning time, committees either mobilize forest users or hire daily paid labors. Harvested fuel wood from silvicultural operations generally piled in certain locations and distributed equally to all the applicant member households after paying specified fees to the users' committee. While in resource rich CFs, users are allowed to collect the harvested fuel wood free of charge.

In resource poor CFs, before the establishment of community forests, poor households have never faced scarcities of fuel wood as they could harvest it and when required (personal communication with forest users in the studied CFUGs 2008). With community forestry, the scarcity increased among poor households as regular access to the forest was banned. On one hand, for non-poor households, buying fuel wood from community forest has become more profitable as the prices are lower and more reliable than in the market because members have legal access to it. On the other hand, poor households who earn cash by selling fuel wood to the market have lost their source of income and have been forced to leave the village in search of alternative employment. For example, in Parewashowri and Pashupati CFUG, discussions with users' committee reveal that about ten male members of the users' households were displaced from fuel wood business and migrated to local cities and district headquarters to work as construction workers while women at village have worked along the riverside as stone crushers.

b. Access to high-value forest products (timber):

Timber harvesting in CF is heavily regulated, more formal and exclusive than those of other forest products, and is conducted only under FUG committee supervision. Harvesting of green, healthy, standing trees is forbidden across cases citing Forest Act of 1993 and the Work Plan of the CFs studied. The actual rights of direct forest users on timber from community forests are presented in the following section:

Pricing system:

An analysis of meeting minutes and discussions with committee leaders reveals that assemblies never discuss and set the price of timber. Rather, it is always decided in the committee meetings then it is endorsed forcefully in the forthcoming general assembly. Informal mechanisms associated with unequal power relations between members of different economic groups tend to create a situation where those with higher economic and political status in the village

influence the decision of the committee and claim the required amount and quality of the products, while for others, membership and payment do not guarantee that they get access to their share of the product. Thus, lacking bargaining power and influence in the committee meetings reduce the poor's access to timber from community forests.

Table-7.5: Timber distribution and pricing system in the studied CFUGs

Name of FUGs	Max. amount of round logs per households in cubic feet	Max. amount of sawn timber per households in cubic feet	Price per cubic feet round logs in NRs		Local market price per cubic feet timber (min.-max.) ²²
			Price for low value species	Price for high value species	
Bhiteripakha	As per committee decision		10		400-1000
Tiprikot	30		10	AB	550-2000
Pachabhaiya	50		20	AB	550-2000
Akala	20		50	100	570-2500
Yagyadole	As per committee decision		300		600-3000
Dudkoshi		50	150*	230*	570-2200
Parewashowri		150	21**	28**	500-2000
Piple-Pokhara	30	20	30	320**	470-1800
Pashupati	150		10	25	450-1500
Satanchuli		25	250*	400*	390-1650
Gitawor	50		10	50	230-850
Raniban	60		10	25	440-1900

Source: Work Plan and records of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

*Sawn timber, operation cost paid by the users' committees ** Sawn timber, operation cost paid by users, AB- access banned

Although timber is the most valuable forest product, a low pricing strategy has been adopted across the cases (see Table-7.5), in consideration of the access and purchasing capacity of poor households. The assumption of a low pricing strategy is that it will increase the access of poorer households to the product, since the socio-economic conditions in the local community are heterogeneous. In order to control the higher purchasing capacity of economically better-off households, in some FUGs (e.g. Dudkoshi and Pashupati), there have been fixed ceilings of timber quantity. Undoubtedly, a low-price strategy increases access for poor households, but it increases the rate of accessibility disproportionately in favor of wealthier households because decisions regarding timber distribution come from committees in which the dominance of elites

²² Minimum and maximum indicates price for low value and high value species. Local prices were recorded from the nearest sawmill and /or local wood traders within or outside the CFUG during Sept/Oct. 2009.

favors the demands of wealthier households. For example, an analysis of data for a period of three years on timber sale from Parewashowri CFUG shows that timber access is positively correlated with the economic status of the users. Records show that wealthier households purchased almost 70% of the total timber distributed within the user group. This is mainly because of three reasons: firstly, the inability of poorer users to afford timber though the price per cubic feet round logs are 23 to 70 (depending upon the species and wood quality) times cheaper than at a local wood market. Secondly, timber is used mainly for house construction and repair. This requires additional capital and manpower, and therefore this discourages the purchase of said timber, even at below-market prices. And finally, rules associated with timber access are more formal than those of other forest products are. In such a context, poor users, most of whom are illiterate and lacking cash, face difficulties in making formal requests which entail writing an application to the committee, paying a non-refundable application fee and making a deposit in advance on the price of the timber.

Distribution system and legal requirements:

Across cases, wood harvested under silvicultural operation or at other specified time in the Work Plan had to be distributed to the forest users at a subsidized price (see Table-7.5), and only that in excess of the demand of the user group and the neighboring village user groups could be sold outside the district by taking formal approval from the District Forest Office. No mature tree growing in a community forest can be removed without informing forest agencies in advance. Forest offices have the right to know about any trees sold or transported from a community forest. Wood from community forests can be harvested and distributed only by obtaining a permit in the format prescribed by Forest Regulation of 1995. Timber can be transported out of the village for sale only after informing the competent forest offices in advance and having the releases endorsed by forest check-posts en-route. The issuing of permits, either for harvesting or for transportation of timber is considered a lucrative job by most of the foresters. Community forest user groups are required to prepare a receipt in triplicate in the prescribed format; one copy goes to the buyer, the second to the area forest office and the third is retained by the user group itself. All pieces of the wood have to be marked with the user group stamp that has been duly registered at the district forest office otherwise wood will be assumed stolen. Furthermore, users' committee is required to maintain receipts and records of every forest product sale and distribution, to keep records of income and expenditure and to submit annual reports, along with audited statements of income and expenditure, to the District Forest Office.

In order to perform all the steps (marking trees, measuring volume, inspecting, hammering and maintaining records) in licensing timber, the Ranger has to go to the site at least four to six times (IDFO 7-11 2009) and users' committee leaders have to visit the District Forest Office at least five times (

ICFUGC 7-11 2009). Such marking and licensing procedures are developed, in principle, to recognize the exact source of timber (legal or illegal) which are available in the market. However, in practice this gives forestry staff an opportunity to seek rent (Pokharel 1997:114) and in most of the resource rich CFs wood contractors directly deals with Forest Officers and Rangers informally instead of users' committee leaders. The common practices of timber distribution across cases are presented in Box7.1.

Box- 7.1: The practices of timber distribution in the studied CFUGs

1. Forest users shall submit application, mentioning name of species, unit and quantity, to the FUG committee.
2. FUG committee shall make the final decision based on applicants' needs and availability from the forest.
3. In the case of constructing new building, the demand of timber shall assess in the FUG assembly and timber shall be provided based on the assembly decisions.
4. In cases, the users deemed more timber; he/she shall deposit the royalty mention in the Forest Act, 1993.
5. The additional quantity shall be provided upon the decision of FUG committee by considering the approved quantity in the Work Plan.
6. It is the duty of users' committee to clarify and notify the applicant about the details of timber; including total quantity, collection time and forest block.
7. Timber shall transport from the forest only after the inspection of Forest Ranger/Officials from the Forest Administration.
8. Non-users are not liable to claim timbers from CF. Users are also not allowed to sell timber to other users and outsiders. Neither, they can transport outside the villages. However, if there is surplus quantity of timber, the bidders shall transport bided timber for any purpose after the written approval from the Forest Administration and users' committee.
9. FUG committee shall fix the time for the collection and distribution of timber.
10. FUG shall impose restriction for the collection and distribution if they feel condition of the forest is becoming worse.
11. Users can collect the timber once they deposit the royalty of products to the FUG committee. After that the committee shall issue collection timber products distribution.
12. Governmental or non-governmental organizations shall also get timber if they want to use it within the boundary of CFUG. In that case, concerned organizations shall deposit Royalty which is mention at Forest Act, 1993, Appendix-2. FUG assembly and users' committee has right to decide the quantity to be released.
13. In the case of natural calamities, FUG assembly/ committee shall provide certain quantities of timber of free of cost. If the numbers of affected households are high, economic condition of the households shall be the criteria for the allocation. In the case of natural shocks, the FUG committee shall give timber to the non-users residing near to the FUG in case if District Forest Office sends a written request, committee shall charge royalty for the timber.

Source: Work Plan and meetings minutes of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008

Field evidences such as: forest inventory reports, interviews with users' committee and Forest Administration, and direct field observation tell that timber availability has increased in community forests since the protection has started. However, commercial exploitation of timber does exist only in resource rich CFs. In most of the resource rich CFs, except Dudkoshi who scraped the contractor system through users general assembly, users' committees are strongly motivated to sell timber to the local contractor in collusion with Forest Administration, local political leaders and local goons. Forest Regulation of 1995 also has made a provision that surplus forest products after being distributed within the FUG and seized products from illegal collectors shall be auctioned publically after the written information to the District Forest Office (DFO). In case if CFUG wants to sale such products to the non-members, auctions notice should be published once the FUG received written approval from the DFO. Formally, FUG retains the right to decide the bid in an auction; however, in practice Forest Administration and vested interests of the elites of committee members play a decisive role. Across cases, practices exist for providing timber of certain quantities free of cost to victims of natural calamities, community welfare such as schools, temples, community buildings, and bridges.

Resource rich CFs on this study are physically linked with the market, hence, users' committee often decide to sell forest products for cash rather than allocating products to their members for subsistence. There are four reasons behind it: i) timber is valuable in the sense that price per unit is many fold higher in the local market hence many stakeholder (e.g. Forest Administration, committee elites, political leaders and local goons) interested on its business for personal gain, ii) local contractors generally invest lots of money since the handing over process, because it cots high to get CF handed over (such as forest inventory and preparation of Work Plan) and local people can't afford, therefore committee elites interested to provide timber to the contractor, iii) community forestry is understood as a means of local development (constructing school, extension of electricity lines, supply drinking water and so on), therefore, selling of timber is prioritized to get cash, and iv) within the forest bureaucracy it is a culture that forest officers have to pay lump-sum amounts to get transferred in to the resource rich Districts, to recover their investment and fulfill their personal target harvesting at national and community forest is always into their top list. Therefore, interests of the Forest Administration, committee members, and ideology of CF for local development are the triggering factors behind the commercial sale of timber from community forests.

c. Access to the NTFPs and medicinal plants:

The Constitution and Work Plan of the studied FUGs regulate collection of NTFPs and medicinal plants, which have commercial values. Forest Act and other forestry legislations also imposed collection banned on some species.

Except for the households' purposes, forest users are not allowed to collect NTFPs and medicinal plants without the permission from the users' committee. In some CFUGs, sub-committees are formed for the commercial plantation of the non-timber species with special management plan (e.g. Bhitripakha FUG). Across studied CFs, interested users have to pay fee for the collection and also royalties of the collected products to the users' committee as per the provisions in the Work Plan. In most groups, the management and marketing of the NTFPs and medicinal plants are supported by the technologies of the donor projects, NGOs, and private sectors.

d. Access to the cultivation, mining and hunting:

Forest law and regulations prohibit forest users from undertaking any activities that may destroy forests, including clearing land for agriculture, construction of huts and houses, mortgaging or otherwise transferring ownership of the forest land. User groups are prohibited from mortgaging community forestland, but may use forest products as collateral to get bank loans to develop the forests. They are also prohibited from activities that may cause soil erosion. Capturing and killing wildlife, extraction or transportation of rocks, soil, boulders, pebbles, and sand from the forests are illegal. The Work Plan prescribes the process to be taken into action against FUG and non-FUG members for forest rule violations. Community forestry laws thus continue to be directed toward control.

7.3.1.3. Accessibility: before and after the introduction of community forestry

Many studies have assessed the state of country's forests since the introduction of community forestry in Nepal (e.g. Branney and Yadav 1998), but there has been little focus on how the people affected by this management regime (e.g. Adhakari *et al.* 2007:466). Some studies stated that the forests are becoming more accessible after management responsibility was handed over to the local communities (Poffenberger and McGean 1998, Adhakari *et al.* 2007); however, the contribution of CF to the forest users' livelihood is still controversial. For example, in their study Malla (2000) and Thoms (2004) have reported that community forestry has not been successful in improving the livelihoods of poorer groups in the community. It is also unclear whether reported forest products' collection will have increased or decreased as many studies have stated that closed management regimes have restricted access to the forest (Devkota 2006, Thoms 2004, Springate-Baginski *et al.* 1999, Garner 1997). Adhakari *et al.* (2007:466) mention that if the forests are still operating under a closed regime, a reduced collection rate can be expected, while an increased collection rate is anticipated if the forests are now more accessible due to the improved forest health. The apparent variations in access to the forest and forest products before and after the community forestry have led to explore the empowerment level of the forest users in this study. Table-7.6 shows the

accessibility system before (state controlled regime) and after the introduction of community forestry.

Table-7.6: Accessibility: prior and after community forestry

Management regimes	Users access on forests and forest products													
	Grazing	Ground grass	Leaf-litter	Fodder	Dried fallen/ standing branches	Green fuel wood*	Poles and Woods for agricultural purpose	Dead, dying, diseased and fallen trees/ timbers	Green standing tress/ timber	Wood to make charcoal	Medicinal plants for own	Non-timber forest products (fruits, nuts, mushrooms..)	Non-timber forest products having commercial value	Cultivation of agricultural crops/ hunting/ mining/ infrastructure construction
Prior community forestry (State controlled or <i>de-facto</i> open access)														
Access	FA						IA		FA		IA		AB / IA	
Pricing	NO						Yes		No		Yes			
After community forestry														
Access	FA (3), LA (4), AB (5)				R A	LA (9) RA (3)	LA, RA	AB	LA (8) FA (4)	FA	AB , LA	AB		
Pricing	No (7), Yes (5)				Yes			AB	Yes (2)	No	Yes	AB		

Source: Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

- FA- Free access, IA-Illegal access, AB-Access banned, LA- Limited access, RA-restricted access
- Number in the parentheses shows number of community forests practicing the specified access and pricing system.

Forest access prior community forestry:

Nepal's forest resources have sometimes (and at some places) been managed as a common property regime, and sometimes as an open access regime. Where villagers have believed that government was likely to claim the forest, it has been viewed as an open access resource, and overused (Wallace 1988:19). Common-access forests are the norm of Nepalese rural society, whether the forest administration impose coercive control or not. Nomadic herders, villagers, and fuel wood dwellers have free access and use rights to much of the forest land before handover. Although, defined illegal in the government policy, these practices have been tolerated because either policing is impossible or there is implicit approval (Davis-Case 2001).

The community forestry policy is about giving ownership of forest to the local people who derive benefits by managing and protecting the forest. Under state management, forest was prone to ‘the tragedy of the open access’; everyone had unlimited access any time because the state owned the resources (Karki 2008). As Berkes (1993) has pointed out, ‘open access is an efficient regime for the quick conversion of resources into money’. In the situation of open access, although it is illegal for instance, accessibility of forest users to the forest and products are high, where the property right is not clearly defined and people feel ‘public forest means nobody’s forest’. However, it does not mean that illegal access has been totally controlled within CF regime, but the fact is that intensity has been reduced due to local control through strict monitoring and sanctioning.

Forest access after community forestry:

The accessibility of forest resource use before and after the introduction of community forestry, mentioned in Table-7.6 give us a clear understanding that there has been a limitation of access since the introduction of CF. However, ‘use or accessibility restriction’ has been argued as a ‘necessary action’ to regain forest resources and manage CF sustainably. Our field observations show that once the forest was handed over to the group, accessibility has decreased due to restricted use and micro-partitioning of the forests into different blocks. After forest is given to the local users, the users’ groups have crafted rules of conduct such as forest protection measures, monitoring and sanctioning, as well as product use and distribution mechanisms. Closure of forest after handover is a common phenomenon across the studied community forest at this study. The apparent result of closure of the forest can be seen as an increased ground and above ground biomass. Furthermore, the pricing system is common across all cases in most of the forest products to regulate the forest use and distribution system. The price-tagging in most of the forest products further indicate that villagers are permitted to use the community forest only in a marginally productive way. As mentioned in Table-7.6, free access has been granted only to the forest products which have very low market value. Likewise, market use of forest products have not been clearly mentioned in the Work Plan of most of the studied CFUGs, thus dismissing any commercial use of the forests that the villagers are already involved in or might wish to undertake in the future; while, it provides space to the Forest Administration, users’ committee and alliances to monopolize the commercial sale in informal ways. Thus, as Peluso (1993:210) mentions, from the individual users’ perspective, both state controlled and committee controlled regimes may be seen as illegitimate controller of local resources.

7.3.2. Economic outcomes “poverty alleviation”

Several studies argue that forests can play a potentially important role in poverty alleviation and in the improved well-being of poor living in rural

communities (e.g. Hobley 2007, Larson and Ribot 2007). There is also a broad understanding that successful community forestry promotes equity and improved standards of living for users (Upreti 2001). Studies have shown that economic goals are the first expected outcomes of community forestry practices (e.g. Davis 2008:22).

It is generally assumed that local communities would benefit from community forestry in material terms. Understandably, the majority of local communities adjacent to community forests are poor and therefore their socio-economic conditions cannot be ignored. Two broad categories of material benefits for local communities have emerged: first, community forestry permits local population to access and benefits resources such as: grazing, fuel wood, fodder and forage, medicinal plants, and timber. The second and dominant category of material benefits refers to the generation of income and job creation through forest based micro-enterprizes. The non-material benefits, as it is non-excludable in nature, are associated with environmental services, which the local forest users can not be benefited much.

In community forestry, there are diverse ranges of products that local forest users can use as subsistence and cash incomes from “non-cultivated forest-related resources” by complementing other sources of income. Vedeld *et al.* (2004:12-13) have distinguished three different types of functions of forest income in rural livelihoods: i) safety nets (i.e. forest products are used to overcome unexpected income shortfalls or cash needs), ii) support of current consumptions (i.e. forest products are important to maintain the current level of consumption and prevent the household from falling into deeper poverty, this role would largely correspond with the term ‘coping strategy’) and iii) the pathway out of poverty (i.e. forest products provide a way to increase household income support to poverty reduction either through a ‘stepping out’ strategy). However, in practice, these three functions are interlinked and particular forest products can serve the three functions simultaneously, i.e. for the reduction of rural poverty. Vedeld *et al.* (2004) tries to summarize direct roles of forests in household livelihood strategies (Table-7.7).

Table-7.7: Direct roles of forests in household livelihood strategies

Poverty aspects	Function	Description
Safety net	Insurance	Food and cash income in periods of unexpected food and income shortfall.
Support current consumption	Gap-filling	Regular (seasonal, for example) shortfall of food and income
	Regular	subsistence uses fuel wood, wild meat, medicinal plants, and so on.
	Low-return cash activities	A wide range of extractive or “soft management” activities, normally in economies with low market integration.

Poverty reduction	Diversified forest strategies	Forest activities that are maintained in economies with high market integration.
	Specialized forest strategies	Forest activities that form the majority of the cash income in local economies with high market integration.
	Payment for environmental services	Direct transfers to local communities from off-site beneficiaries.

Source: Vedeld *et al.* (2004)

Although three functions: safety nets, supporting current consumptions and pathways out of poverty, are equally important to see the impact of community forestry on economic outcomes, in this study we will focus on poverty reduction function of community forestry to the direct forest users. Generally, there is a ground for some optimism that income from forest products can help to reduce rural poverty. For example, it requires that the per capita quantity or the range of forest products (e.g. fuel wood and timber) available to the rural poor expand, compared to a context of prior community forestry. However, a key question is to what extent forest users will be able to get access to the forest benefits and how the forest benefits contribute to the economic enhancement of the direct forest users. Such issues depend upon the secure tenure rights, democratic opportunity of control over resources and market opportunities.

In the literature of community forestry, we can find full a lot of loose words like 'pro-poor', 'livelihood based', 'local forest users', 'forest dependent community' and others. The use of the term has led to policy blankets that lump and ignoring differential effects, that have led to policy assumptions of an even equation between forest dependence and poverty (Hobley 2007). Hobley points out that although villages may be forest dependent it does not necessarily mean that they are the poorest, it does mean however that there are limited other livelihood opportunities to change the level of their poverty. Furthermore, she shed lights that the forest dependence argument is often framed in terms of forests as safety-nets for the extreme poor or stepping-stones for those who are already capable. The World Bank (in Vedeld *et al.* 2004: 66) in a recent worldwide survey has concluded that it is unlikely that incomes from the forests can be the principal means of poverty reduction in the short-term; and only in a few cases do forestry-related activities provide, on their own, a pathway out of poverty. Furthermore, Hobley (2007), giving a couple of reasons, describing why community-based management is not necessarily pro-poor, such as: naive understanding of community, customary authorities as guardians of the elites, incapacity of state institutions, differentiated communities and commons require exclusion. Similarly, in their recent work Belcher *et al.* (2005) demonstrates the limitations of NTFP commercialization for poverty reduction. They mention that markets are highly controlled often leaving the poorest in poverty trap and conclude that: 'it is simple, and often wrong, to assume NTFPs are important to the poor, and

efforts to develop it will help the poor' (Belcher *et al.* 2005:1446). Therefore, understanding of what makes a secure livelihood is often far removed from the reality of a poor forest users (Hobley 2007).

Community forestry practices are supposed to create household livelihood diversification and income generation opportunities, however, many of these opportunities are dependent on: i) access to the forest products and forest income, ii) marketable forest products, and iii) accessible markets (Devkota 2006). Furthermore, potentialities also exist to use exogenous support for skill development to poor households through donors' projects and NGOs and create employment through forest-based enterprises at local level. If the CFUG funds are mobilized for micro-credit lending schemes, CFUGs also can support small enterprise development. However, all of these potentialities are curtailed through direct and indirect ways mainly: i) limiting accessibility through highly regulative forest use, ii) monopolizing wood marketing through informal ways, iii) investing FUG fund into non-productive sectors which have minimal effects to the livelihood but high interests of the users' committee elites. Therefore, there are serious concerns that CF has worsened the livelihoods of marginalized section of the community in a way that wealthier households benefit at the expense of the poor (Thoms 2004, 2006 and 2008, Malla *et al.* 2003, Shackleton *et al.* 2002, Malla 2001).

7.3.2.1. Economic status of the forest users

In this study, definitions of poor, medium and rich economic classes are defined on the basis of food sufficiency level of the users' households. For example, a household who owns land that is good enough to feed the family only for six months or less is considered as 'poor', like wise a household who secures food production up to ten months is considered as 'medium' and up to a year or having surplus production is categorized as 'rich' status. As shown in Table-7.8, the majority of the forest users across cases fall under poor (40.6%) to medium (39.7%) economic classes; meaning that forest users have annual food sufficiency level less than six (poor) and ten (medium) months; among which the highest poor percentage was observed in Pashupati CFUG (because of the immigrant settlers from other districts) and the lowest at Yagyadole CFUG (because forest users are close to the capital city).

Table-7.8: Economic status of the forest users in the studied CFUGs

Name of CFUGs	Total HHs in CFUG	Total	Economic status of member HHs		
			Poor	Medium	Rich
Bhiteripakha	243	13	34.6	55.6	9.9
Tiprikot	244	11	19.3	73.8	7.0
Pachabhaiya	413	11	36.3	38.7	24.9
Akala	320	11	29.7	52.8	17.5
Yagyadole	760	19	7.5	38.6	53.9

Dudkoshi	1015	11	45.1	38.8	16.1
Parewashowri	601	17	44.4	40.6	15.0
Pashupati	211	11	83.9	11.8	4.3
Piple Pokhara	1248	11	43.8	40.2	15.9
Gitawor	370	13	74.6	17.0	8.4
Raniban	152	13	80.3	12.5	7.2
Satanchuli	560	17	37.9	45.4	16.8
Total			40.6	39.7	19.7

Source: Constitution and Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

7.3.2.2. Income of forest user groups (FUGs) as a basis to assess outcomes

Community forestry produces income for individual forest users and users' groups as a whole. It is the assumption that, in community forestry processes, the income accumulated by users' groups through users' committees goes to the individual forest users. In essence, the distribution of FUG income in favor of individual forest users determines the economic outcomes. Therefore, the following section shows the income pattern of FUGs; and succeeding sections describe the distribution (expenditure) pattern, and access of individual forest users on FUG fund and various community development services.

Forestry legislations in Nepal has granted autonomy to user groups to raise funds from selling products and to use them for forest management and community development programs. Resource conditions of the forest, accessibility to the forest products, marketing potentialities, ability to receive external financial assistance determines the financial position of forest users' groups. The various sources of income observed in the studied community forests are as follow (Table-7.9):

Table-7.9: Income sources of forest users groups (FUGs)

Income source	Remarks
Income from users:	It includes membership fee, membership renewing, new entry membership fees, cash contribution for forest watchers, cash contribution for plantations, cash contribution for silvicultural operations, cash contribution for fencing, and cash contribution for office building/furniture/stationeries.
Income from forest products:	It includes income from selling timber to the users and non-users, selling fuel wood to the users and non-users, selling of minor forest products such as grasses/medicinal plants/ and other non-timber forest products (NTFPs)
Support from Forest Administration:	It includes cash contribution from the forest agencies for any activities of FUG.
Support from donors:	It includes cash support from donor projects and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for any activities to the FUG.

Balance/ investment interest:	It includes interest obtained from the bank deposited FUG fund and interest/bonus/profit from any investments of the FUG.
Other sources:	Some income sources are not common across the cases and also said to be 'other' because these are not clearly mentioned in the audit report of FUGs. Examples are: cash support other than Forest Administration/ donors/ NGOs, donations from organizations, prize, entrance fee to the visitors, charge to the rule violators and selling of confiscated timber/tools

Source: Audit and financial reports of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Based on the annual audit and financial reports of the studied CFUGs during the last five fiscal years (2004/05 to 2008/09), the summarized income status is shown in Table-7.10.

Table-7.10: Income pattern of the community forest user groups (CFUGs)

	Name of FUGs	Income sources						Total income in NRs
		Cash from users	Income from forest products	Support from Forest Administration	Support from donor	Balance/ investment interest	Other sources	
Resource poor CFs	Bhiteripahka	12926	344567	11800	181360	849	23675	575177
	Tiprikot	221876	542060	41990	134245	36695	20400	997266
	Pachabhैया	310146	125835	12440	278715	6071	31665	764872
	Akala	495091	26219	0	0	749	39050	561109
	Yagyadole	127828	36425	27000	0	0	384416	575669
	Sub-total in %	33.6	30.9	2.7	17.1	1.3	14.4	100
Resource rich CFs	Raniban	15500	3481274	0	0	19720	22686	3539180
	Dudkoshi	914221	14740718	0	36840	42481	185515	15919775
	Parewashowri	125640	7402554	0	0	143427	272230	7943851
	Satanchuli	102104	11404331	10000	0	13816	161478	11691729
	Gitawor	3200	871911	0	0	3980	34300	913391
	Pashupati	19077	3253651	0	0	445	525843	3799016
	PiplePokhara	121251	2868290	35100	64795	13996	156224	3259656
Sub-total in %	2.8	93.5	0.1	0.2	0.5	2.9	100	
Total in NRs	2318154	45097835	138330	695955	282229	1856057	50388560	
Total in %	4.6	89.5	0.3	1.4	0.6	3.7	100	

Source: Audit and financial reports of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

The income status of the studied CFUGs given in the above table and figures is calculated based on their annual audit and financial report of the last five fiscal years (2004/05 to 2008/09). The total income of the CFUGs is calculated on the basis of income from forest products, cash contribution from users, support from donor in donor supported CFs, support from Forest Administration, interests from FUG bank balance and other sources such as donations, prize, charges to illegal collectors, selling of confiscated tools and others. Among the income sources, cash contribution is generated as the highest (33.6%) followed by income from forest products (30.9%) in resource poor CFs, while, forest products mainly timber generates the highest percentage (93.5%) then followed by other sources (2.9%) in resource rich CFs. The condition of the forest resources was observed as a determinant of having these vast arrays of income differences in the studied community forests. The following sections discuss the context of income pattern in resource poor and rich status CFUGs.

a. Context of resource poor CFs:

The initial (and still valid) objective of community forestry was mostly focused on restoration of the degraded forest land through locals' participation. Therefore, mostly degraded and denuded hills are highly prioritized for community forest in Nepal. As the state Forest Administration has lacking financial capital to support newly formed forest user groups for plantation and protection, users themselves in various parts of Nepal have initiated self donation schemes to protect and re-green their forests which is also very common across the resource poor status CFs under this study. In the Table-7.10 we can see cash contribution from direct forest users which are the main source of income in resource poor CFs (33.6% in average), where the figure ranged from the lowest 2.2% in Bhiteripakha FUG (rich forest status among the 'poor' group of studied CFs) to the highest 88.2 % in Akala FUG (poorest among the 'poor' group). The cash contributions of users to the FUG include fees for: membership, forest inventory, writing Constitution/Work Plan, forest protection and forest management activities. The collection and selling of various forest products mainly timber, fuel wood and non-timber forest products constitute the second largest source in the total income (30.9 in average) of the FUGs, where the figure ranged from the lowest 4.7% in Akala FUG to the highest 59.9% in Bhiteripakha FUG. The third largest source of income in resource poor FUGs is from 'donor support', Bhiteripakha FUG and Tiprikot FUG are the examples. In the case of Pachabhaiya FUG, a local NGO called 'Seed Foundation' channeling financial support being provided from a Netherlands based NGO. Additional income sources such as: support from the Forest Administration, interests of bank balances and 'other' sources in the studied FUGs. The share of income under 'other' sources in Yagyadole CFUG were highly observed than other income sources of this CFUG which have

been constructing the 'Martyrs Memorial Park' from the support of National Planning Commission and Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction.

b. Context of resource rich CFs:

Forest products, mainly timber, are the major source of income in resource rich FUGs, which constitutes more than 93 % of the total income (see Table-7.10). The highest figure can be observed in Raniban FUG (98.4%) and the lowest in Pashupati FUG (85.6%). The second largest (2.9%) source of FUG income is from 'other sources', which ranged from the highest (13.8%) in Pashupati FUG to the lowest 0.6% in Raniban FUG. The contribution of forest users generally from membership fee accounts only 2.8% of the total income, which is far lower than in comparison to the resource poor status CFs (33.6%). Forest user groups are also receiving incomes from sources such as grants from the Forest Administrations, donors, and interests from their balances or investments, which contribute less than 1% of the total income.

7.3.2.3. Expenditure pattern of FUGs

Forest users' groups of this study are able to generate and save money as a group fund. By Forest Regulations of 1995, 25% of the revenue earned from forest products must allocate to forest management activities of CF and remaining 75% of a user group's fund, may then be used for community development activities such as: building roads locally, schools, drinking water, community buildings, and rural electricity. According to the recent Community Forestry Guideline of 2009, FUG requires to set aside 35% of the total generated revenue from selling forest products for the poor and marginalized users through livelihood programs. Potentially, this is a direct mean of improving local livelihoods. However, because local elites tend to dominate CFUG decision making, CFUG funds tend to be managed by and for local elites, as well as channeled into activities that they benefit most.

Details of annual expenditures of the studied FUGs during the last five fiscal years (2004/05 to 2008/09) are shown in Table-7.11. The financial transactions demonstrate that the expenditure patterns in resource poor and resource rich status CF have not differed significantly. The highest expenditure can be observed mainly in four activities: forest operation activities (38.3%), FUG administrative and office management (18.4%), forest management (16%) and community development (15.8%) which indicate these activities are highly prioritized across all cases, whereas, expenditures on pro-poor activities such as livelihood promotion and social security programs have been weakly focused.

Table-7.11: Expenditure patterns of FUG fund

Name of FUGs		Expenditures items									Total in NRs
		Adm. and Office mgt.	Forest Operation	Forest management	Com. Development	Live.promotion	Social security program	Educ-ation	Forest Adm.	Other expend itures	
Resource poor CFs	Bhiteripakha	184243	46806	44040	0	94650	2500	30000	3500	32421	470581
	Tiprikot	114401	456008	207601	92792	20000	200	10600	0	16664	923366
	Pachabhैया	132247	51623	91475	264192	38207	0	0	0	66121	643865
	Akala	306312	0	189811	0	0	0	5700	0	35133	537356
	Yagyadole	159940	7000	47946	80000	0	0	0	0	190434	485320
Sub-total in %		29.3	18.3	19.0	14.3	5.0	0.1	1.5	0.1	11.1	100.0
Resource rich CFs	Raniban	372905	1183064	101698	492049	22500	5236	168720	20000	73263	2440135
	Dudkoshi	1608352	6961196	3099680	1998200	290566	310250	511380	14000	270171	15071896
	Parewashowri	872620	2745945	1081557	1380021	99000	58577	239829	3000	93429	6574178
	Satanchuli	2912939	3944361	1083522	1259976	0	24962	312357	0	820709	10362326
	Gitawor	175190	125356	79407	830000	0	0	160000	0	36214	1406167
	Pashupati	786885	810475	637419	400899	0	0	587000	51800	152682	3427360
	Piple-Pokhara	659999	884610	530098	318541	24745	6851	53300	10500	94352	2582996
Sub-total in %		17.6	39.8	15.8	16.0	1.0	1.0	4.9	0.2	3.7	100.0
Total in NRs		8286033	17216444	7194254	7116670	589668	408576	2078886	102800	1881593	44925546
Total in %		18.4	38.3	16	15.9	1.4	0.9	4.6	0.2	4.3	100.0

Source: Audit and financial reports of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

a. Expenditures on FUG administrative and office management:

The quantitative figure given in Table-7.11 and Table-7.12 show that the allocations of FUG fund for internal administration is more than 18% of the total expenditure. Under this activity, the proportion of expenditures in resource poor CFs is higher than that of resource rich CFs. Furthermore, within the resource poor CFs, the distribution of expenditure on internal administration is also not similar as the figure ranged from the highest (57%) in

Akala (the poorest with the group of poor resource status) CFUG to the lowest (12%) in Tiprikot CFUG (see Table-7.12). Common examples of administrative and office management expenditures across cases are: allowances for committee members, cost for committee meetings, cost for office stationeries, furniture, telephone, fuels, electricity, transportation, publications, salary of the office bearers as well as cost for the general assembly. The forest user groups of this study (except Akala CFUG) have their own office buildings and in some cases (e.g. Piple-Pokhara, Pashupati, Dudkoshi, Satanchuli and Parewashowri CFUGs) also maintain office staffs for example, helpers and office assistant. While having own office buildings, equipments and staffs indicate positive signals of the stronger CF organization, it also requires that a major part of the funds to be spent on administrative matters mainly salaries and allowances for office bearers and executives, which often comes by downsizing the expenditure for livelihood improvement activities.

Table-7.12: Expenditure patterns of FUG fund

Name of CFUGs	Expenditures in percentage (%)								
	Adm. and office mgt.	Forest Operat ion	Forest mgt.	Com. Develo pment	Liv. Prom otion	Social security program	Educ ation	Support to Forest Adm.	Other expend itures
Bhittrepakha	42	10.7	10.1	0	21.6	0.6	6.8	0.8	7.4
Tiprikot	12.4	49.4	22.5	10	2.2	0	1.1	0	2.4
Pachabhaiya	20.5	8	14.2	41	5.9	0	0.0	0	10.3
Akala	57	0	35.3	0	0	0	1.1	0	6.6
Yagyadole	33	1.4	9.9	16.5	0	0	0	0	39.2
Raniban	15.3	48.5	4.2	20.2	0.9	0.2	6.9	0.8	3
Dudkoshi	10.7	46.2	20.6	13.3	1.9	2.1	3.4	0.1	1.8
Parewashowri	13.3	41.8	16.5	21	1.5	0.9	3.6	0	1.4
Satanchuli	28.1	38.1	10.5	12.2	0	0.2	3	0	8
Gitawor	12.5	8.9	5.6	59.0	0	0	11.4	0	2.6
Pashupati	23	23.6	18.6	11.7	0	0	17.1	1.5	4.5
Piple-Pokhara	25.6	34.2	20.5	12.3	1	0.3	2.1	0.4	3.7
Total (100%)	18.4	38.3	16	15.9	1.4	0.9	4.6	0.2	4.3

b. Expenditure on forest operations:

Expenditure patterns presented in the above tables and figures show that the allocation of FUG funds for forest operations occupies more than 38% of the total expenditures, which is in fact higher than the other themes of expenditure. Because of the comparatively better forest conditions, forest operation expenditure of resource rich status CFs (39.8%) is doubled than in resource poor status CFs (18.3%) (see Table-7.11). The common examples of forest

operations across CFs include cost of forest technician fees, labors, tools, cost for access road construction, tree marking, felling, de-branching, de-barking, sawing, transportation to the depot, as well as piling. The maximum allocation in forest operations validates the high economic (informal) interests of users' committees' elites, Forest Administration and its alliances. As timber rent remains the prioritized informal interests, various stakeholders such as Forest Administration, committee elites, local political leaders and wood contractors wants to have this source of financial capital under their control by using power sources.

c. Expenditure on forest management:

Forest user groups are spending about 16% of their total income in forest protection and management activities. The figure is lower than the mandatory amount (at least 25%) mentioned in the Forest Regulations of 1995. The management activities include: forest protection measures (e.g. hiring forest watchers, fencing, and supervision by users and committee members), nursery management, plantations, silvicultural operations (cleaning, thinning and pruning) and fire-line construction. Cost for forest inventory mainly allowances to the technicians are also included at this respective activity.

d. Expenditure on community development:

Community development comprises 15% of CFUG expenses, which includes building community infrastructures such as: village road and trails, community buildings, drinking water systems, extension of electricity lines to village and other community infrastructure development. These activities are supposed to lead the increased livelihood opportunities to the local communities in general, and the poor and marginalized forest users in particular. However, evidences exist that most of these infrastructure development activities are not directly contributing to the livelihoods of direct forest users. For example, construction of temples (e.g. in Tiprikot, Pachabhaiya, Akala, Raniban, Dudkoshi, Yagyadole, and Piple-Pokhara) and community buildings (e.g. Dudkoshi, Piple-Pokhara, and Raniban) do not justify any pro-poor support from the FUG fund. In addition to a huge amount of investments, such activities further demand compulsory labor contribution from marginalized forest users, which forced to lose their daily income from labor work.

The construction or maintenance of village roads, which often refers as a basis of livelihood improvements, also remains the priority activity of FUGs. Meanwhile, it is important to note that the village roads are most useful to those who produce marketable goods, more likely already privileged households who hold large patches of productive lands in the village and can afford labor for production. While marginalized households, who are lacking enough land even to produce for their own consumption and depend on daily labor for daily expenses, are not benefiting from such activities. Investments on rural electrification also have mixed results; the economically better-off households

are benefiting much from its use on: agriculture (irrigation and cold store), information (television) and energy (light, cooking and heating), however, the poor households further plunged into economic debt due to additional investments on: labor and materials to fix electricity in their houses. Hunt *et al.* (1995) also reported the similar evidences and have mentioned that the practices of community forestry raising questions of equity as not all members in FUG do not benefit from the community development activities. Other studies on community forestry in Nepal particularly Pokharel (2009), and Kanel and Niraula (2004) have also observed that community development activities constituted among the highly prioritized activities of FUGs.

e. Expenditures on livelihood support and social security programs:

CFUGs are also spending their money on pro-poor programs though the amounts which are very low (livelihood support 1.3 % and social security 0.9%) in comparison to the investments on internal administration, forest operations, forest management and community development. Among the pro-poor activities, flows of loans for income generating activities such as micro enterprises, animal husbandry, and kitchen garden are very common. Other activities include, self-employment skills oriented trainings, exposure visits, processing of forest products mainly NTFPs, as well as allowances to the physically disabled users. Some FUGs such as Bhitripakha and Dudkoshi had also offered financial support to poor people. Although such activities offer direct economic benefits to the forest users, users' committees across cases are not interested to allocate more funds for such as it does not provide any incentives to the committee elites.

f. Expenditures on education:

Income generated by community forestry enables communities to support education of the family members of users' households across cases. Since government is not able to finance at a large scale, FUGs are investing a part of their income (4.6%) to construct and renovate schools, paying salaries to the teachers, donating educational materials as well as providing scholarships to the students from poor economic status. The records of the studied forest user groups show that they are providing financial and material support to schools (eight primary and four secondary) and two colleges. However, the beneficial effects of these services to the households of a particular FUG are still controversial. In most of the cases, schools are shared by many villages which are not necessarily the members of a specific CF. For example; it was observed that in an average just 30% of the students belonging to the specific FUG are benefiting from the investments on education.

g. Support to Forest Administration:

Large scales of financial support to the Forest Administration have not been observed through the formal documents of FUGs. Financial records of FUGs

show that only tiny portions (0.2%) of the total expenditures were allocated to Forest Administration mainly as donations to repair the furniture and telephone lines as per their demands.

h. Other expenditures:

CFUGs spend a high proportion of money (17%) under miscellaneous headings, which is an unidentified area of expenditure. Donations to various organizations such as political parties and their sister organizations, youth clubs, mothers' groups, police posts, and NGOs, are common across CFUGs of this study. Because of the high resource value of the forest and relatively large size of funds generated from it, most local organizations are interested to receive financial support from resource rich status FUGs. Furthermore, it is also observed that members of executive committees often have affiliations with other organizations and they demand donations to the user groups in the name of organizations they are involved with. Providing donations to other stakeholders is considered important to extend personal and organizational linkages and relations. In one sense, such relations are important if the user groups receive technical support and material support from these organizations. However, in most of the cases, giving donations to the organizations gives opportunity to the committee members to extend their own personal linkages and relationship with officials, which in turn pay them by increasing social and political status in the village (Paudyal 2008).

7.3.3. Social and economic outcomes for individual forest users

Formally, community forestry is expected to serve for two functions: forest protection and fulfilling users' subsistence need. Through the effective management of the community forests, the direct (poor) forest users can be actors in poverty alleviation rather than passive beneficiaries. However, unless explicitly designed to include the poor, community based resource management projects can turn into "externally supported control by elites" (Beck and Nesmith 2001:130), which are also common in the case study CFUGs. As I discussed earlier, direct livelihood benefits provided by forests include products and services. Forest products important for livelihoods and well-being include foods, fuels, timber, fodder, construction materials, medicines, bedding for animals and leaves for manure. In addition, benefits including social networking and skill development, income generation, community infrastructures (roads, trails, electricity, and drinking water) are also the means of livelihood improvement. While, how these activities are contributing to poverty alleviation at the individual level have not yet analyzed in details. Hence, the following section discusses on how individual forest users are benefiting from social and economic outcomes of community forestry.

The community forestry process starts by group formation, delineation of potential CF areas, and group registration. In practices, either donor funded field projects or NGOs or Forest Administration initiate these activities in

collusion with local elites. Without taking due consideration of local elites, the completion of such a process will be nearly impossible, therefore, decisions of local elites play a decisive role to the success or failure of registration of community forests at the beginning, hence, forest users just play token roles during these processes.

Forest handed over to the local communities, as a CF, is possible when the registered group is crafted a technically sound Work Plan. In fact, the technical requirements had forced villagers to choose leaders who can handle government functions rather than those whom they truly respect and trust. Across all cases, community forestry Work Plan was designed by the Rangers on the basis of a participatory process meaning that a few people from the community were involved with Forest Rangers. But the Work Plans designed in this way, mostly coded the interest of the forest agency rather than the villagers. After the handing over, the major decision referring to forest access and utilization also comes through the users' committee although it must be decided through general assembly of the users. During field visits, one user in Gitawor CFUG shared his disagreement like: *"Only in case of utilizing minor forest products for subsistence use, they (users' committee) consider our voice otherwise we really don't know who makes decision"*.

Most members of user groups, especially unemployed members, seek an opportunity to work in the community forest as office bearers. The office secretary, accountants, assistants, and forest guards are common positions to all user groups. However, the selection of a candidate for such a position depends upon the personal relations with the committee chairperson. This authority gives them the opportunity to enhance their own positions by employing relatives and people of own economic and political groups. Hence, access to employment by marginalized section remains very rare across cases. Nonetheless, the availability of employment during silvicultural and forest operations has become an important cash incentive for members in most of the FUGs. Most wage laborers working in community forests, such as in Dudkoshi, Satanchuli, Bhiteripakha are men and women of landless and poor households although such possibilities will not be available throughout the year.

Access to cash benefits now becomes increasingly a major attraction for forest users to participate in the users' committee, leading to the increased competition and conflict in the process of committee formation. Within the committee, becoming a chairperson and a secretary is considered to be a prestigious and influential position. Access to disbursement or allocation of fund for various activities depends upon the priority interests of committee elites. As shown in the previous section (Table-7.11) a significant portion of income (18.4%) is being spent on the running cost of the users' committee, mainly for meeting allowances and salaries for office bearers. Although, some groups (e.g. in Pachabhैया, Bhiteripakha and Dudkoshi FUG) have allocated their fund to poor forest users through income generating activities (e.g. goat-

keeping and vegetable farming) and direct cash support, coverage of such activities is very low in practice.

Apart from the direct cash benefits as mentioned above, CF also provides access to various forest products including timber. Generally, the products obtained by users from community forests are meant only for subsistence and not for profit, but the distribution practice favors economically better-off members than poor members. For example, because of low capital assets poor households cannot afford timber although the rate per unit timber is always very low than that of the local market price. The poor users contribute labor for the protection and management of their forests with the hope that they will benefit; however, the reality rarely reflects this rhetoric.

In some cases (e.g. in Gitawor, Pashupati and Satanchuli CFUGs), few influential committee elites continue making a profit especially from access to their share of timber, but it is difficult to get data and evidences about who has sold the timber and how much the profit was derived from it because selling timber is illegal as per FUG Constitution but local saw mill operators and wood contractors claim significant quantity of timber flowing from CFs through forest users and they sell it to the sawmill making a profit (IWOODC-Gita10, IWOODC-Pash8 and ISMILL-Satan12 2009). This phenomenon of 'hidden incentives' reduces the overall timber rent thereby undermining the potential investment for poverty alleviation (Bampton and Cammaert 2007). The ability to make profits through this 'hidden gateway' largely determined by elites economic endowment, mainly a regular flow of cash at hand and personal as well as political relations within and outside the user group. An 'informal alliance' exists in the above mentioned FUGs between committee elites and members of user groups who sell their share of timber, and sawmill owners who buy the timber, especially to maintain the confidentiality about the transaction. On one hand, this alliance works against the interest of poor users because it creates a situation where the demand for timber is always high among users, leading to the continuous rise in the prices and more formal (and rigid) mechanisms to follow which restrict access of the poor to timber. On the other hand, because of the cash incentives derived from this hidden subsidy, the committee (and even forest officials) fail to implement product rules and enforcement mechanisms effectively, especially in relation to the misuse of timber. It makes clearer that individuals with capital or a particular status can use a given resource, even the action is illegal. Others cannot use the resource even though they have formal rights to claim.

The 'expenditure' status of the studied CFs show that about 16 % of the fund is being invested in community development activities mainly for infrastructures' development such as: road, trails, temples, community buildings, drinking water and electricity. While it is to be greatly appreciated that forest user groups play a role that in fact should be played by local development bodies such as the District Development Committee (DDC) and Village Development Committee (VDC), the benefits derived from such

investments generally favors the economically better-off forest users²³. For example, investment in schools provide little benefits for the majority of the poor forest users, whose children either do not go to school or if they do go, end up school education in primary levels. Lack of access to alternate sources of income restrict the opportunities for children of poor households to attend formal education and thus to benefit from this investment. Likewise, investments on roads provide better opportunities of market to the economically better-off members who have better assets of production. And non-members may also equally benefit through roads and schools as these structures are non-excludable in the society. Therefore, albeit a better access, individual forest users have not been able to benefit from most of the community development activities.

Community forestry legislations clearly mentions that 75% of a user group's fund should be used for community welfare activities though development or income generation activities, which ultimately is a direct means of improving local livelihoods. However, local elites tend to channel the FUG fund into activities that they benefit most (e.g. office management, furniture, meeting allowances, general assembly). It shows that the power differentials in CF are limiting its contribution to improve livelihoods (maintaining *status quo*). Because the provisions of benefits' distribution is not monitored by Forest Administration and it is also not required by the policy. In fact, the Forest Administration is not much interested on how products are distributed within the community.

Hence, social and economic outcomes in the studied community forests are highly favoring other stakeholders than the direct forest users. As discussed above, a number of economic and social variables-including legal authorities, knowledge, capital, social identities and relations-can shape or influence access to forest resources. Although, articulating connections between poverty and the degradation of the forest resources, the management regulations were crafted in a manner that the CF could not alleviate poverty.

7.3.4. Ecological outcomes “forest conditions and biodiversity”

The question of securing ecologically sustainable forestry through community management is still a matter of debate. Studies have tried to assess whether forest and biodiversity conservations and socio-economic goals can be achieved simultaneously (e.g. Charnley and Poe 2007, Agrawal and Redford 2006, Kusters *et al.* 2006). A study from Charnley and Poe (2007) demonstrate that community based forest management can have positive ecological outcomes when local people play a meaningful role decision-making and forest management activities. Similarly, Davis (2008:19) argues that the success of a community forest to manage for more ecologically minded goals relies on the

²³ Village drinking water scheme is an exception. Investment on drinking water supply helps to reduce time to fetch water; thus, households can allocate additional time in other activities.

tenure system and the degree of local control over forest and resources. Therefore, granting access and decision-making rights to the forests are often main preconditions of community forestry practices in order to achieve ecological goals (Larson *et al.* 2008).

Concern about the forest restoration was a major focus while initiating community forestry during 70s but its goal in “biodiversity” conservation is a relatively recent phenomenon. Over the last few years, biodiversity conservation through community forestry has become an objective of developing countries, involved donors in such countries, local communities, and research institutions (Poffenberger 2006). In the social and political discussion around biodiversity conservation through community forestry, what is often at stake is not its conservation but who gets to claim it and use it and the institutional arrangements to regulate its use. This reframing of a conservation term into a largely political one has obscured the fact that stakeholder may have different understanding of biodiversity and have their own interests (Jones 2009).

Before assessing whether the CF practices improve the forest conditions and biodiversity, we need to define what we mean with ecological outcomes. As defined in our methodology, *ecological outcomes are natural conditions of the community forest in line with the stability of the forest ecosystem, and improvement of the forest conditions and biodiversity. The natural conditions are defined as natural requirements for forest growth and biodiversity of the forest.* The ecological stability in community forest requires that the handed over forest area does not shrink further and forest condition in terms of the stand density and diversity of species does not decrease. The standards depend from social and political preferences. In this study, ecological outcomes are not measured directly but indirectly by the knowledge which exists about the outcomes. The most important is the knowledge of powerful stakeholders. The factual measurement of ecological outcomes is an indicator for their importance for a particular stakeholder in community forest networks. This means that the reliance on the existing studies conducted by (strong) stakeholder (s) within each community forest network, if any.

Noss (1990) mentions a number of tools for assessing the ecological dimensions of forests, including: aerial photographs/ remote sensing, time-series analysis, physical habitat measures and resource inventories, habitat suitability indices, observations and censuses. Similarly, Zarnoch *et al.* (2004) suggest the use of tree crowns as indicators of the health and vigor of forest trees, because they directly affect the composition, processes, and vigor of the understory floral and faunal components of the forest. We compiled those as a checklist (see Annex-1CIII) and were used to identify any ecological assessments being conducted by stakeholders of each community forest network. In addition, perceptions of the powerful stakeholders on forest condition changes were also assessed by using the checklist (see Annex-1CIII) and the results were further validated during direct field observation in community forests through a transect-walk.

7.3.4.1. Forest and bio-diversity conservation through community forestry in Nepal

Community forestry in Nepal is recognized as a feasible approach to attempt social, economic and ecological goal of forest management. Some empirical studies from 1998 to 2009 on community forestry in Nepal has clearly indicates that community forestry is improving forest protection and regeneration (Tachibana and Adhakari 2009, Nagendra *et al.* 2008, Gautam 2006, Thoms 2006, Pokharel *et al.* 2005, Karna *et al.* 2004, Rana 2004, Chakraborty 2001, Web and Gautam 2001, Branney and Yadav 1998). Studies also saying that the current forest management approach in community forestry recognize biodiversity conservation as a secondary issue and there is evidence that biodiversity status either has declined or has been altered in community-managed forest (e.g. Acharya 2004). Many such studies are based on qualitative interpretations and interviews with the experienced forestry stakeholders. Macro-level in-depth studies have not yet been undertaken to assess the magnitude of improved forest conditions under the community forestry regime (Kanel 2008), for example, the Community Forestry Division of the Department of Forests, who is responsible to compile the data base of CFs, does have a general statistics of CFs, but it contains insufficient biodiversity information. Data generated by donor projects are specific to project areas, and the ability to collate similar information across projects is limited because each project collects data that are most relevant to their particular interests (Ojha *et al.* 2009).

As there is a lack of national level statistics about ecological outcomes of community forestry, assessments have to be relied on case study level studies, hence, below are some literature based fact findings that indicate the magnitude of forest condition improvement under community forestry:

- According to the aerial photo analysis and ground inventory of 46 randomly sampled registered community forests, a study from Tachibana and Adhikari (2009) found that the formal management of CF system contributed to improve tree regeneration. Their field observations suggest that the registration of a user group often enhances the authority of its management committee. With enhanced authority, the formal user groups sometimes close all or a part of the forest for several years. This closing of forests is likely to have resulted in improved regenerations. The interventions by official agencies, mainly in the form of technical assistance and authorization, enhanced the functions of voluntary communal management.
- Nagendra *et al.* (2008) use land-sat imagery from 1989 and 2000 to analyze changes in land cover in three management zones (government control, buffer zone around protected area, and community forestry), using landscape ecology metrics and proportional distribution of land cover categories. The results show significant differences in terms of land cover dynamics and landscape spatial patterns between these land ownership

classes and suggest greater improvement of forests managed under community-based institutions.

- Gautam (2006) with the help of geomatics and conventional survey methods identify that the community forests were generally better in terms of current biological conditions compared to the semi-government forests.
- Referring various studies in the Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project, Pokharel *et al.* (2005) mention that formerly denuded hills are covered with forests and greenery again. The overall forest condition has improved mainly in terms of regeneration, number of stems per unit area, basal area, growing stock, rate of annual increment, density of a number of forest patches, species diversity, wildlife and the total biomass. Villagers have perceived that number of water springs as well as the volume and duration of water discharge have increased.
- The Department of Forests (2005) carried out an analysis of forest-cover change from 1991 to 2001 in twenty Terai districts. Previously, the rate of deforestation in these districts was 1.3 percent per year, but it has declined to 0.08 percent per year within last ten years. This decline in forest depletion is partly due to the expansion of community forests in the Terai (Kanel 2008:378).
- Rana (2004) by using remote-sensed imaginary data in Saptari district in Terai²⁴ concludes that the conditions of community forestry are found to be performing well in gaining the vegetation in their CFs.
- Karna, Gyawali and Karmacharya (2004) analyze the condition of five community forests at five-year intervals during 1993–2003 and find that several parameters of forest condition such as tree and sapling density and sapling diameter increased with the subsequent measurements.
- Chakraborty (2001), based on case studies from eight CFUG of two Terai Districts of Nepal, reveals that the CFs serve well to protect forests locally; however, many village residents resort to exploiting forests managed under state property. In some cases, village residents have protected forests for even up to seventeen years without being formally handed over. And in most cases, only degraded natural forests have been handed over to FUG; after handing over, access to CFs has been restricted temporarily in order to allow these forests to recover.
- A study from Web and Gautam (2001) in mid-hills of Nepal suggests that although structure is not complex in community forest, diversity was rapidly restored through succession, and that silvicultural thinning did not greatly affect forest diversity. The study provides quantitative biological evidence that under the appropriate circumstances, community forest management can protect and encourage a diverse regeneration in the hilly region of Nepal.

²⁴ Terai is the low land of Nepal, altitude < 300 m. from mean sea level.

- Branney and Yadav (1998) assessed the changes in forest conditions and management of community forests during 1994-97 in four eastern hill districts. The study shows an overall improvement in CF conditions over the study period. The total number of stems per unit area has increased by 51 percent. The basal area in poor condition increased significantly by 29 percent.

Most of the above mentioned studies are also inconclusive on biodiversity conservation through community forestry in Nepal. Improving forest conditions does not mean that diversity also is improved; the fundamental question is that whether the forest management practices in CF are compatible with biodiversity conservation. In scientific discourses, some argue that biodiversity can be maintained only in the absence of human use (e.g. Oates 1999). Others argue that biodiversity conservation is possible through management by humans (Anderson 2005, Maffi 2005). Maffi (2005) mentions that when traditional forest users have control over the forest, chances of biodiversity conservation remains higher. In their recent study, Shrestha *et al.* (2010:103) conclude that the community forest users group and policy makers have been giving less attention to the attributes of biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and services. They found that forestry stakeholders are inclined toward increasing monoculture of high economically valuable species and greenery of the forest rather than natural forest, which could be habitat of all types of living organisms range from smaller to large flora and fauna (Shrestha *et al.* 2010:103).

7.3.4.2. Factual assessment of ecological outcomes in the studied CFs

Across cases, basic records are lacking on ecological studies of forest and biodiversity. However, 'indicative evidences' (see Table-7.13) show that the forest and biodiversity conservation were supported by community forestry programs. The objective of community forestry stated in the Work Plan of FUGs on forest growth or improvement is closely associated with biodiversity protection. High emphasis is placed on technical (e.g. silvicultural practices, stand dynamics and forest regeneration) and procedural issues (e.g. duties and responsibilities of committee members, rules regarding resource utilization and punitive measures) contributing forest and biodiversity conservation through both direct and indirect measures. Direct measures include allocation of forestland for conservation and FUG fund for different forest management activities (e.g. plantation, forest watcher, fire-line construction, biogas promotion etc.). Indirect measures focus towards limiting accessibility or harvesting quotas for forest products, requirement of detailed technical inventory, block based forest management systems, strict monitoring and sanctioning helping to foster the ecological interests of stakeholders in CF processes.

Table-7.13: Adopted measures of forest and biodiversity conservation in community forests

Forest-biodiversity conservation measures (total studied CF= 12)	Observed cases*	Data source
Allocation of forest land for conservation (watershed, habitat, erosion)	12	Work Plan
<i>Technical requirements:</i>		
Detailed Forest inventory- listing of species in the work plan	12	Work Plan
Division of forest into small management units (blocks)	12	Work Plan
Investment on forest conservation (e.g. plantation, fire-line construction, biogas installation, environmental education)	12	Audit and financial reports
<i>Limiting access:</i>		
• Grazing, ground grass and leaf-litter collection	4	Work Plan
• Fodder collection	6	Work Plan
• NTFP for commercial purpose	12	Work Plan
<i>Restricted access</i>		
• Green fuel wood collection	12	Work Plan
<i>Access banned</i>		
• Grazing	5	Work Plan
• Fodder collection	1	Work Plan
• Green standing tree	12	Work Plan
• Cultivation, mining, hunting, encroachment and forest fire	12	Work Plan
<i>Monitoring measures:</i>		
Forest watcher (Number varied across cases (e.g. 1 in Pachabhaiya FUG to 7 in Satanchuli FUG)	12	Work Plan, interview (ICFUGC1-12 2008)
Patrolling by committee members and forest users on rotational basis	12	Work Plan, interview (ICFUGC1-12 2008)
Fencing (Partial)	8	Interview (ICFUGC1-12 2008)
Description of prohibited function inside community forests	12	Work Plan, interview (ICFUGC1-12 2008)
Penalties against rule violators (types and charges varied across cases) and incentives to the informants	12	Work Plan, interview (ICFUGC1-12 2008)

Source: Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008

*Note: *Here, the cases refer to the number of CFUGs, where the respective forest and biodiversity conservation measures have been practiced, in total twelve CFUGs were selected at this study.*

a. Direct and indirect measures of forest and biodiversity conservation:

Allocation of forestland for conservation:

Allocation of forestland for the conservation of flora and fauna is a common practice in community forestry. Table-7.14 shows that most of the studied CFUGs allocate their CF land for conservation (9.1%), in which Gitawor CF account highest (25.7%) and Yagyadole CF accounts lowest (2.4%). If we look at the characteristics of both CF, Gitawor consists large forest area with rich resource conditions where as Yagyadole has small forest area with poor resource conditions. Across all cases, there are mainly four reasons behind the allocation of forest area for conservation: i) limiting the effective forest area for harvesting, ii) protecting forest in erosion prone and water catchment areas iii) demonstrating the biodiversity effects of community forests, and iv) protecting mother trees for regeneration. These four reasons apparently concur with the interests of the Forest Administration on ecological functions of community forestry.

Table-7.14: Allocation of forestland for conservation

Name of CF	Total forest area	Allocated area for conservation	Effective area for harvesting	% allocation for conservation
Bhiteripakha	362.31	17.0	345.31	4.7
Tiprikot	119.75	7.25	112.5	6.1
Pachabhaiya	235.23	31.75	203.48	13.5
Akala	38.7	3.57	35.13	9.2
Yagyadole	20.60	0.5	20.1	2.4
Dudkoshi	686.45	33.47	652.98	4.9
Parewashowri	1311.9	108.08	1203.82	8.2
Pashupati	167.0	11.57	155.43	6.9
Piple-Pokhara	230.5	18.0	212.5	7.8
Gitawor	553.25	142.25	411.0	25.7
Raniban	139.0	13.5	125.5	9.7
Satanchuli	1412.65	142.0	1270.65	10.1
Average total	439.8	44.1	395.7	9.1

Source: Work Plan of the studied CFUGs, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Technical requirement of forest management:

Technical requirement of forest handover to the local communities itself secure objectives of forest and biodiversity conservations in community forestry. For example, detailed forest inventory as per the directives of Forest Inventory Guideline of 2000 (revised in 2004) is obligatory to the forest user groups, which enumerates floral and faunal species in the community forests and also determines harvest levels of forest products. The guideline, through technical requirements, ensures sustainable harvesting by limiting the extraction of forest

products mainly by i) quantifying annual allowable harvest (AAH) based on current annual increment (CAI) and mean annual increment (MAI), and ii) partition of forest area into different blocks, and iii) performing activities specified in a plan consistently over time (e.g. plantation and silvicultural operation). In addition, across cases the Work Plan of the CFUGs listed available floral species: for timber, fodder, fuel wood, NTFPs, medicinal plants; and faunal species: mammals, birds, reptiles, and fishes. However, changes of species diversity before and after community forestry are not recorded either in the Work Plan or in other reports.

Investment of income for forest management:

Assessment of expenditures figure of the studied CFs show that about 16% of their total income is allocated for forest management activities (see Table-7.11 in this chapter). Expenditures on forest management activities such as: hiring forest watchers, fencing, plantation activities, construction of fire-line, silvicultural operation helps to maintain forest vitality, conserve forests and improve biodiversity. In some FUGs (e.g. Tiprikot and Pachabhaiya), biodiversity hotspots have been established to monitor the changes of floral and faunal compositions. In Satanchuli CF, FUG has allocated their income to construct small dam to improve an aquatic habitat for fishes and birds.

Regulated (limited and restrictive) use access:

Forest access rules, designed through the Work Plan, determine what products are extracted from community forests, in what quantity, by what methods, and by whom. Hence, an effective enforcement of 'limited access' could be a strong indicator of high ecological interests of the powerful stakeholders in CF processes. After conducting a meta-study of community forests throughout the world, Pagdee *et al.* (2006) note that "effective enforcement" has one of the strongest associations with improved forest condition and biodiversity at local level". It is important to remember that conditions of forest in most of the studied CFs are improving because of the highly regulative resource extraction practices. Scholars claim that 'subsistence' oriented forest management (such as promotion of NTFPs rather than harvesting timber) have been thought of as being more ecologically sustainable with biodiversity conservation because it is often assumed to have little or no deleterious ecological impact (Belcher *et al.* 2005, Ticktin 2004). Across cases, grazing is considered as a major threat of biodiversity, hence most of FUGs adopted restricted grazing practices, and it was completely banned in five CFs. Likewise, there are also cases of access banned on green timber harvesting, cultivation inside CF, and other activities such as hunting, mining, and encroachment.

Granting free access to key resources may be under threat from conservation interests; in the longer term, use may be threatened by unsustainable extraction and resource destruction, due to this reason, limiting access is in line with conserving forest and biodiversity. Low levels of product

extraction can have a low impact on forest conditions and biodiversity at the species and landscape scales. As harvesting intensity increases, so does the likelihood of negative ecological effect (Belcher *et al.* 2005). Therefore, conservation is possible through 'limited access' as this strategy helps and/or forces to slow down the consumption standards of forest users.

Monitoring measures:

Local level monitoring is crucial at all scales for network stakeholders to assess the impact of their interventions on forest conservation to livelihood promotion activities. Identifying the circumstances under which different kinds of interventions succeed (or indeed fail) requires effective monitoring. Studies show that effective monitoring measures favors better forest condition in CF management. In their study of 178 user groups, Gibson *et al.* (2005: 273) assert, "regular monitoring is one of the conditions for successful resource management". Gibson *et al.* conclude that 'monitoring and sanctioning' are more important to forest condition than the underlying levels of social capital, formal organization, or dependence on the forest by the resource user group. Similarly, Ostrom and Nagendra (2006) with over-time analysis data find that those forests with regular monitoring were on average improved condition. From available records of the studied CFs and direct field observations, I also argue that monitoring measures, both direct and indirect, at FUG level are key enabling factors in the improvement of forest condition and biodiversity.

b. Assessment of forest condition changes:

Changes in forest condition, such as composition and structure, are strong indicators to measure impact of community forest management. Though, there were lacking of baseline data prior community forestry situations, examples of forest inventory in two consecutive time periods in two community forestry cases (Gitawor- example of resource rich CF, and Akala- example of resource poor CF) clearly demonstrate the changes in tree, poles, saplings and regeneration status in per hectare of forestland (see Tables-7.15 and 7.16).

Table-7.15: Forest condition changes in Gitawor CF (resource rich CF)

Indicators	Old Work Plan (April 2003)	New Work Plan (Feb. 2008)	Variations	% increased +/ decreased -
Number of tree per ha.	103	88	-15	-14.6
Total tree volume (m ³) per ha.	127.1	123.44	-3.66	-2,9
Number of poles per ha.	104	260	156	150.0
Number of saplings per ha.	37774	2188	-35586	-94.2
Regeneration per ha.	12534.11	25276	12741.89	101.7

Source: Work of Gitawor CFUG, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Table-7.16: Forest condition changes in Akala CF (resource poor CF)

Indicators	Old Work Plan (Dec. 1998)	New Work Plan (April 2004)	Variations	% increased +/ decreased -
Number of tree per ha.	25	67	42	166.0
Total tree volume (m ³) per ha.	22	53.02	31.0	141.0
Number of poles per ha.	815	1358	543	66.7
Number of saplings per ha.	831	1491	660	79.5
Regeneration per ha.	2333	7149	4816	206.4

Source: Work of Akala CFUG, field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Quantitative figures presented in Tables-7.15 and 7.16 indicate the positive trend of forest condition improvement in both CFs. As there are high interests on timber rents, a number of trees per hectare in Gitawor (resource rich) CF has been diminishing and consequently a negative result of tree volume per hectare can be observed. While, positive changes have occurred due to the increased number of poles and regeneration per hectare of forest area due to highly regulative access rules. In Akala CF, there are also evidences of marked improvement in forest conditions as figures shows the clear trend of positive changes in regeneration status, number of saplings, poles and timber in per hectare of forest area. The improvement has been occurred due to limited utilization, strict protection as well as monitoring measures. Hence, quantitative figures of the above presented two tables are also in line with the recent finding of Chhatre and Agrawal (2008) “higher levels of local enforcement have a strong and positive relationship to the probability of better forest condition”. In the case of resource poor CF, through regulated access practice, forests are grown and nurtured by users from the very beginning through regulated limited access practices, whereas, in the resource rich CF, conditions of forest regenerations have been enabled through opening the canopy by harvesting the big trees.

7.3.4.3. Forest and biodiversity through community forestry- visual interpretations of stakeholders

The oral histories and visual observations can give rich accounts of forest condition changes over different time period, although the scientific validation of such observation is questionable. Some sociological studies on community forestry have already tried to use the perception based qualitative measurements on the changes of forest condition. For example Thoms (2004), based on the interviews with 2871 households involved in community forest management within six district of Nepal mentions that about 85 % of the household respondents perceived improved forest conditions. As mentioned in the methodological section, I have used only the available records and perceptions

from the powerful stakeholders of each community forest network to assess the ecological outcomes, however, I have not discovered any recorded and justifiable facts regarding biodiversity across cases. Scholars' already encountered difficulties to measure biodiversity by applying perception based survey (e.g. Acharya *et al.* 2004) because:

*“The Nepali term for biodiversity – jaiwik bibidhata – was totally new and unknown to many forest users, who were therefore not in a position to offer an opinion on its meaning. As a result, the perceptions and views expressed by the forest users in relation to biodiversity were often inconsistent. Some villagers who may have heard of the term (especially the most disadvantaged groups) were not inclined to discuss its meaning, because this seemed to have no relevance to their largely utilitarian needs and views on their forests. At the other extreme, some forest users (usually those in contact with biodiversity specialists or other outsiders) had apparently thought quite seriously about the term, and could relate biodiversity to concepts that had meaning to them and their community forest. Most respondents expressed their views on biodiversity in relation to forest vegetation and tree species, although some included animals and other forms of nature, such as wild animals and water in the concept that they revealed” (Acharya *et al.* 2004:407).*

The powerful stakeholders' perception on forest condition changes:

In this study, powerful stakeholders of each community forest network, who are familiar with forestry and ecology, were asked on their perception about the changes in floral and faunal condition of the forests. The stakeholder's perception of changes in the forest was measured by using three parameters: density of tree cover, forest strata and ground cover or regeneration. During field interviews, their perception was recorded separately, according to the possible answers: 'no observed changes or stable' (code 'no'), and 'there are observed changes' (code 'yes'). In addition, as the Researcher also a professional forester, the perception of stakeholders on three parameters was verified through direct observations (transect walk) in each CF using qualitative scale of 1 (very sparse) through 5 (very abundant) during field work (see Table-7.17)

Table-7.17: Stakeholders' perception on forest condition changes with field verification

Resource status	Name of CF*	Stakeholder's perception in + or - changes in forests						Verification note of researcher in scale of 1 to 5 (very sparse-1, to very abundant-5)			
		Dense		Multi-strata		Ground cover		Dense	Multi-strata	Ground cover	Species diversity
		Y	N	Y	N	Y	N				
Poor	Bhiteripakha (4)	+++		+++		+++		3	3	4	4
	Tiprikot (3)	+++		+++		+++		3	3	4	3

Poor	Pachabhaiya (4)	+++ +		++ ++		++	--	3	2	3	3
	Akala (2)	++		++		+	-	4	2	3	2
	Yagyadole (2)	+	-		-	+	-	1	1	1	1
Rich	Dudkoshi (3)	+++		++	-	+++		4	3	3	3
	Parewashowri (2)	++		++		++		4	3	2	2
	Pashupati (4)	+++	-	+++	-	++ +	-	3	2	2	2
	Piple-Pokhara (4)	++++		++	--	+++	-	4	4	3	2
	Gitawor (2)	+	-	+	-	++		3	3	3	2
	Raniban (2)	++		++		++		3	3	4	3
	Satanchuli (3)**	++	-	+	--	++	-	3	2	3	2

Source: Field survey, Nepal 2008 and 2009

Note: * Number in the parentheses indicate interviewed powerful stakeholders, ** interview with two additional stakeholders

The perception of stakeholders together with the field observation of the researcher (Table-7.17) clearly visualize that there was a significant improvement in forest conditions after the forest was handed over to the user groups. In the context of resource poor status CFs, user groups received degraded natural forest with almost bare land. Stakeholders perceived that forest conditions were degraded because of continuous harvesting and animal grazing. After some years of management interventions, the degraded forests have been improved mainly due to two reasons: i) FUGs exercised restrictive product harvesting, and ii) grazing was banned or rotation was practiced. Current assessment of Work Plans of the respective CFs also provided the evidence of significant improved forest conditions in resource poor CFs. In the context of resource rich CFs, regulative access, and silvicultural operations foster to improve the forest condition even if a number of matured trees per hectare of forest area are decreasing (see Table-7.15 in the previous section). Referring to field observation and assessment of available records of FUGs, and the perception of powerful stakeholders, it is possible to conclude that the overall forest conditions in the studied CFUGs, is observed as 'improved', although tree density per hectare in the forest areas and forest management practices vary from one case to the other, even within a single community forest.

For example, the following qualitative observations made by stakeholders during field interviews further highlights the impacts of community forestry practices on ecological outcomes:

"Before we got this forest, the forest land was totally degraded and remained only shrubs, and after it was handed over we closed the forest for five years and forest started to recover and we now are able to harvest small poles from the forest". – The chairman of Akala CFUGC (ICFUGC-Akala4 2008)

“After our group (FUG) authorized to manage this forest, the forest became dense and we get more timber, fodder for livestock, fuel wood for cooking and also earning a good amount of money from selling the surplus timber. Unfortunately, we started to get in trouble from wild animals (monkeys, jackals, and leopards) and birds” – The chairman of Dudkoshi CFUGC (Women, ICFUGC-Dudk6 2009).

Box- 7.2: Some observations from network partners of Bhiteripakha CFUG

The chairman of FECOFUN Dolakha has mentioned that ‘In most cases, only degraded forests have been handed over to forest user groups, consequently access to many CFs has been restricted temporarily in order to allow these forests to recover. As a result, regeneration and forest conditions changed dramatically’. Similarly, District Manager of Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project Dolakha posits her view that ‘Wherever forest lands have been handed over to user groups, the vegetative cover has improved dramatically, even where the land has lost its trees and is severely eroded. Just by looking at the area, any one could predict whether it was locally or nationally managed’. During 90s’, the Swiss Project implemented plantation program in the study district and also in the studied CF but it was not successful because of the ‘ownership and open access’. Elaborating this issue, District Forest Officer Dolakha has expressed his experiences like: “The surrounding hills you see were totally exposed some twenty years ago. Then the Swiss Project planted these pine trees. But nobody was interested in its protection, because it was open access. Now, after the forest handed was over to the local people, every household is involved in the protection and we can see full of greenery”.

Source: Researcher Field Diary, Nepal 2008

Opinions of the powerful stakeholders in forest condition changes give qualitative evidences that they have realized changes after the introduction of community forestry. The protectionist rules in the FUG Constitution and Work Plan also indicate that the community forestry serves well to protect forests locally. However, only the ocular observations made during field visits are not sufficient to validate the ecological outcomes, without the records of different time series, we cannot say exactly to what extent CF practice support to improve forest condition and conserve/promote biodiversity in the studied CFs.

Chapter Eight

Powerful Stakeholders and Community Forestry Outcomes

8.1. Introduction

The discussion thus far has primarily focused on the nature of stakeholders' interests and their power features and also noted that at several points that exercise influence by the powerful stakeholders in community forestry processes, do not allow individual forest users to meet their expected needs from forests. Several examples were postulated mainly on how Forest Administration, users' committees, and donors exercise influence over community forestry processes through formal and informal power elements. For example, we have seen that in most of the cases Forest Administration attempts to influence community forestry processes through users' committee by the use of authority, technical rationale, and donors' funding. Evidences also show that certain methods of influence are likely to bring about changes in stakeholders' overt behavior while leaving his covert beliefs and attitudes unmodified. This combination of deviousness and close monitoring is bound to generate a number of formal and informal alliances in community forestry processes. The most obvious consequence of the possession of power in community forestry is that it enhances stakeholders' ability to achieve the desired outcomes, because powerful stakeholders could be insensitive to the needs of individual forest users. Further discussion shed lights on how the most powerful stakeholders perform their activities in order to secure their formal and informal interests from community forestry.

8.2. The most powerful stakeholders and the nature of their influence in community forestry outcomes

Through community forestry, stakeholders want to pursue to meet their specific social, economic, and ecological interests. The assessment shows two distinct types of results: firstly, the formal interests do not contradict each other; the powerful stakeholders all prefer sustainable management of community forestry through devolving forest management to local people, livelihood promotion, and protection of forest and environment. Secondly, the informal interests of the stakeholders are not compatible with each other who in fact are determining the community forestry process and outcomes. In the formal level, Forest Administration shows commitment to handover forests to support the livelihood of the forest users; this formal objective does not conflict with the formal interests of users' committee and even to the donors. However, informally by using voluntarily participation of local users' Forest Administration and other powerful stakeholders are interested to extend their control on forest and people. The processes can be termed as 'control by forming intermediaries or patron-client relationship'.

It is curious that there is fairly a low participation in decision-making and generally low awareness among users in most user groups under this study, yet at the same time in most of the studied CFs forest conditions are improving. Ostrom (1990, 1999) and others (e.g. Thoms 2004, Ballabh *et al.* 2002, Agrawal 2001, Gibson *et al.* 2000) argue that strong institutional arrangements are strong indicator of successful management of common pool resources. For rules to be effective, potential resource claimants must be aware of those rules. It seems, however, that CF rules are effective even though many users are not aware of them. And community forests were not able to meet livelihood needs of individual forest users even though forest is in improved condition. How can this be examined? The data I have presented in this chapter give a definitive answer, that 'coalition between committee elites, Forest Administration, wood contractors and local political leaders' make the atmosphere of highly regulative access rights and administrative hurdles through regulatory, informational, and financial instruments. Furthermore, across all cases, the links between socio-economic and ecological benefits from community forestry remain ill defined and practiced. Therefore, on one hand, the notions of 'ecological rationale' have been effectively employed by powerful stakeholders to legitimize and capture benefits while excluding direct forest users in community forestry processes, while on the other hand, the highly regulative access practices have been blocked the opportunities of empowering direct forest users and their livelihood potentials.

The above critical postulations show that despite a promising program on poverty alleviation and local empowerment the results are often poor. Labeling direct forest users as 'subsistence-oriented' and declaring the forest to be in the 'state of crisis' are common discourses of power in community forestry

processes. The ‘subsistence’ discourse does not allow forest users to enhance their livelihood and the deployment of ‘state of crisis’ a discourse which is part of how forest use and management rules are accomplished. Thus, neither “fortress” conservation nor unrestricted access is likely to be a helpful solution to the problems of the rural poor people (Sjaastad and Vedeld 2009).

The assessment of outcomes in chapter seven has demonstrated that community forestry generating income at local level, however, these benefits do not penetrate down to the direct forest users. The reasons behind the unequal sharing of benefits are due to uneven distribution of power among the community forestry stakeholders and their vested interest on it. As defined in chapter five stakeholders in the community forestry networks have different capacities to influence the processes which, in this study, are defined as ‘power features’. Through power elements, powerful stakeholders try to change the behavior of other stakeholders in order to determine the expected outcomes in their own favor. Different stakeholders have gained power from different sources such as legal authority, technical knowledge, information, and various incentives (see chapter five). Generally, who has the rights to take final decisions or coerce to make decisions are considered as powerful stakeholders in the network.

The Table-8.1 presents cases of community forestry networks with the total number of stakeholders in each case, the status of community forestry outcomes in each case with their validation in line with the interests of the most powerful stakeholders, and the status of stakeholders’ power based on three power elements: coercion, trust and incentives, which are finally based on field evidences and researcher’s knowledge by identifying the total number of powerful stakeholders in each case. In addition, the summarized results in Table-8.2 synthesize the final results of powerful stakeholders and community forestry outcomes. The following sections of this chapter describe the empirical results on how powerful stakeholders influence the community forestry processes in meeting their own interests.

Table-8.2: Powerful stakeholders in the network of community forestry

S.N.	Cases	Nos. of stakeholders (identified through quantitative network survey)	Nos. of stakeholders (revised through qualitative assessment)	Social		Economic		Ecological		The most powerful stakeholders					Total number of powerful stakeholders in the network	
				PIDO*	Outcomes	PIDO*	Outcomes	PIDO**	Outcomes	Forest Administration	Users' committees	Donors	Political parties	Private sector		
1	Bhiteripakha	11	11	0	0	0	0	1	1							3
2	Tiprikot	5	5	0	0	0	0	1	1							3
3	Pachabhैया	7	9	0	0	0	0	1	1							2
4	Akala	6	7	0	0	0	0	1	1							2
5	Yagyadole	10	10	0	0	0	0	1	1							2
6	Dudkoshi	11	12	0	0	0	0	1	1							2
7	Parewashowri	8	9	0	0	0	0	1	1							4
8	Pashupati	9	10	0	0	0	0	1	1							4
9	Piple-Pokhara	11	12	0	0	0	0	1	1							2
10	Gitawor	5	6	0	0	0	0	1	1							4
11	Raniban	6	7	0	0	0	0	1	1							4
12	Satanchuli	7	10	0	0	0	0	1	1							4
Observed cases (TN=12 CFUGs)										12	12	6	10	7		
Total powerful cases										12	12	2	5	5		

Source: Table-8.1 of this thesis

**Note: Powerful interests desired outcomes (PIDO) –PIDO 0' refers the result is validated in line with the interests of the powerful stakeholders. None of the powerful stakeholders supports these specific outcomes of community forestry. 'PIDO 1' refers the result is validated in line with the interests of the powerful stakeholders. At least one of the strong stakeholders supports these specific outcomes of community forestry.*

8.2.1. Forest Administration

The nature of influence of Forest Administration, as a stakeholder within the most powerful group in community forestry network, varies across cases. They are powerful because they bear the capacity to modify the behavior of others such as users' committee in the way which they desire from the community forestry. They use both formal and informal means to control and facilitate the community forestry processes. Legally defined 'authority' is the most dominant source of power that the Forest Administration enjoyed in community forestry processes. In fact, across cases, Forest Administration uses coercion to influence community forestry process because they suppose alternative power

elements: trust and incentives are mild and do not work at local context. Furthermore, Forest Administration has understood that *the exercise of control in community forestry is possible only through the exercise of high degree of coerciveness*.

In community forestry processes Forest Administration offers material goods (such as seedlings) and non-material (such as technical support for forest inventory and Work Plan preparation, approval for harvesting and marketing of the forest products) incentives without which community forestry cannot function in reality, however, in return forest users' groups are obliged to fulfill the formal and informal interests of the Forest Administration (such as protecting the forest and bribing percentages of the harvested products to the foresters). In this relationship, forest users' groups enter into a formal process of forest management through official contracts with Forest Administration where local users agree to accept the authority of Forest Administration. Although there is always informal bargaining while handing over the forest, explicitly stating or implicitly understanding, the range of Forest Administrations' authority, users' committee (who represent the local forest users) who sign whatever the condition of forest management is. Once the management contracts are signed, the Forest Administration or his staff (e.g. Rangers and Forest Guards) can use it to justify specific directives to the users' committee and the committee is bound by the contract to comply. This process suggests that the exercise of handing over the forest may result even in an actual increase of control of Forest Administration to the local forest users as 'resource giver'.

It is clear from the procedure laid out in the Forest Act of 1993 and in the Regulations of 1995 that once the forest is formally handed over to the user group, the role of the local Forest Administration primarily depends on the availability of their own human capacities and financial resources, as well as the resource conditions of the handed over forest. The fact is that, in the resource poor CFs the majority of the interaction that is mandated and that really occurs between local forest users and forest officials takes place before and during the process of formalization. After that, the extension role of forest officials is not too prominent, owing partly insufficient staff and their low interests due to the poor resource conditions of the forest itself. However, in the cases of resource rich CFs, forest officials keep their eye and continue their presence in the activities of the FUG both in direct and indirect ways.

Understanding the role of Forest Administration varies among stakeholders. For example, donors' project and NGOs understood Forest Administration as a 'facilitator' in community forestry process (INSCFP, IBISEP1-4, IComForM, IANSAB 2008), while users' committees' image of the foresters was still an authorizer of permits, licenses, orders, prosecution and timber providers (ICFUGC1-12 2008). According to the users' committee members the interaction between the foresters and local people were limited in formal settings and no two-way communication was noticed (ICFUGC1-12 2008). These evidences clearly demonstrate that although the Forest Administration

instituted and supported the forest users' groups as an 'autonomous' body, this does not mean that the foresters have had a good intention toward them. Field evidences suggest that the Forest Administrations' response to community forestry ranges from supportive neutrality to increased control. The tendency of the forestry officials is, in one hand, to show that they are willing to create and support community organizations, while in the other hand, commanding them through top-down directives and executive fiat (Pokharel 1997). Their motives in carrying out the community forestry program seem to take control and utilize additional resources being offered by the international aid organizations in the guise of community forestry. In the long run however, the Forest Administration is unlikely to be supportive to community organizations, since the forest bureaucracy and community organizations have always been rivals and they have to compete for power to control the resources for their survival. One gains only at the others' expenses (Pokharel 1997).

As we have seen FUGs are compelled to become dependent the whole time on the Forest Administration right from bureaucratic requirements of approving the Work Plan to various requirements in the implementation. For that, the Forest Administration creates procedures, rules, and agreements to control the forest resources in question. In fact, forestry officials understand that handing over forest to a community organization would be to give power to resource mobilization, and thus possibly threaten its own bread and butter, which no one in the organization wants (Pokharel 1997). In addition, they also know that aiming at strengthening local users may run counter to the interests of the ruling classes (forestry officials themselves are a part of it), thereby highlighting the problems and the nature of wider political economic system, which neither forestry officials or users' committee elite want.

From the discussion above, it is clear to see that the orthodox image of forest bureaucrats have not changed since the initiation of community forestry in Nepal. Instead, the difference in power and hierarchy between forest users and foresters continues to be wide, which was one of the dominant reasons of lower level of trust to the Forest Administration in the network of twelve community forestry cases. Forest Administration still attaches great value to what can be regarded as technical-rationale approaches because of dispositional (habitual), political (for fear of losing power), and knowledge-related (limited opportunity for critical reflection on bookish "scientific" knowledge) reasons (Ojha *et al.* 2008).

8.2.2. Users' committees

Users' committee is the formal institution of community forestry management which ought to provide control against mismanaging the forest and income derived from different sources. The basis of local power in community forest management is supposed to be the general assembly of the member households. Comprised of mostly economically better-off and male members (see Tables-7.1 and 7.2 in chapter seven), users' committees represent the forest

users of a particular forest user group in order to provide communication with the respective authorities, who also select members to oversee forests and community development workings, as well as monitoring and controlling illegal activities. The committee ought to provide a system of checks and balances to maintain the accountability of local forest users and external who involves in community forestry processes, but, in practice users' committee elites find ways to circumvent such checks on its power.

Across cases, users' committees in general, and chairman and secretary of the users' committees in particular are assigned responsibility for supervising or coordinating the activities of FUG. If these duos are to be successful, they must have resources that enable them to influence the members of the FUG. For this reason, they are frequently given control over such issues as income from forest products, external assistance, and other sources, which it is assumed will serve as resources for their power in the group. As twelve cases indicate, there was the domination of committee elites in decision-making process (see Table-7.2 in chapter seven). There were also evidences that reliance on the committees to carry out forest management, according to the Work Plan, presumes that there can be an articulation of a common interest of the local forest users. However, in practice, the users' committees would like to fulfill their personal interests rather than common interests of the forest users (see chapter six informal interests of users' committee).

The committee elites dominate community forestry processes using intimidation, rigging elections, avoiding supervision, and discouraging participation in community assemblies. Threats, violence, bribes, and the manipulation of reciprocal obligations are common tools of internal politics (Klooster 2000:289). Committee elites also undermine the basis for restrictions on tree theft, because the same committee members who enforce restriction on clearing and cutting are associated with corruption in the logging and selling timber to the wood mafias. In most of the cases, particularly in resource rich CFs, where the internal centralization of community forestry provides tree thieves with a mantle of legitimacy.

8.2.3. Donors

International donors' project, whose primary interests are in reversing forest degradation, has a long history of support in community forestry. Donors through their field projects are very active and influential since the starting of community forestry in Nepal. They have been assisting financial and technical support in economic, social, and ecological development of forestry sector where community forestry ranked top priority. Formally, they promote the interests of the forest users in close collaboration with state Forest Administration. Furthermore, donor-government relations and various forms of 'green conditionality' can influence powerfully the adoption or persistence of particular agendas in national government (Leach and Fairhead 2000). As the foreign aid occupies a prominent place in the policies, plans and programs of

forestry sector development in Nepal, the relevant question for this study is what has been the role of donors' aid in community forestry?

The studies show that the supports from donors have contributed to the improvements of the country's forest situation (see Carter 1992, Jackson and Ingles 1995, Branney *et al.* 1994). Doubtless on the equipment and training given by donors, it has increased the organizational capacity of Forest Administration and service providers; however, the utilization of such a trained manpower has always been questionable as the bureaucracy in Nepal is highly influenced by nepotism and favoritism.

The donors' offer diverse incentives such as: vehicles, study scholarships, trainings, visits, hoping to motivate the network partners to increase their performance. However, the continued flow of material (financial aid and goods) and non-material (mainly technical and advisory) support in the form of forestry projects has the effect of not only expanding the bureaucratic structure but also intensifying the Forest Administration as an agency to administer and develop community forestry into practice. In other words, without donor funding, the Forest Administration may be unable to deliver technical and managerial support to the forest user groups. Forest Administration, since the inception of community forestry, has largely depended to the donors' money to develop and execute community forestry programs such as forming forest user groups and handing over forests to them. In this regards, forestry projects such as Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP) and SNV funded Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST) referring to this study accounts the influential role of the community forestry networks. These forestry projects in practice have the freedom to test different modalities of community forestry programs on its own way. However, again, Forest Administration bears the capacity to give formal approval (there are very rare cases that the Forest Administration rejects the programs developed by donors projects) to develop and execute project specific programs. In return of the approval from the Forest Administration and users' committee leader, because of accepting donors' programs at community level, the projects provide financial and other supporting programs to the Forest Administration and users' committee demand. These observations make visible that no amount of facilities or project allowances have been able to change this situation, and as a result, foreign-aided development projects have been used as tools to maintain bureaucracy.

The donors' projects particularly through alliances from micro to macro-levels influence the field-level activities of community forestry. In many cases, the donors' representatives, and expatriates employed by them interacted formally and informally with stakeholders of the alliances and convinced them about the interests and targets they want to achieve within the project phases. As shown in chapter five, community forestry projects have had limited success in attaining their professed goals; nonetheless the proliferation of forestry

projects suggests that the forest apparatus has become able to coordinate and multiply power relations and link forests and population in formalities.

8.2.4. Political parties

Political parties through their activists play influential roles while shaping the outcomes of community forestry at local level. They recruit local elites, who can be entrusted by local people, as candidates for the election. Furthermore, they play the leading role in the legitimization of all community forestry decisions at local level. Consultation with political leaders while taking major decisions has become a culture in users' committee meetings and even without their symbolic acceptance, the election and/or selection of users' committee and users' group federation (e.g. FECOFUN) will not be possible. In most cases, political leaders may seek to influence FUG activities through non-transparent ways, such as: asking donation for their parties, recruiting political activists in different networks of community forestry and asking local people to participate in political programs. For these 'hidden' reasons, political leaders strongly support and respect community forestry approaches.

The local political leaders have their own interests of developing forests as more from economic point of view, which can be a source of income for them and their parties hence FUG and users' committee are viewed as potential forums for their personal political wills. However, their interactions as local institutions with other stakeholders seem negligible across all the cases of this study.

8.2.5. The private sector (wood contractors)

As described in chapter seven wood businesses in Nepal are highly dominated by the private sectors, mainly sawmill owners and individual contractors. They hold the strong control in wood business strategies and government decisions on forest management. The wood contractors reportedly enjoyed political and administrative support by forming informal alliances with Forest Administration, local political leaders and users' committee leaders in order to ease the timber trade from community forest. A recent study shows that community forests' timber trade figures are double regarding to the national forest figures across the country, which also show the high commercial interests in community forests²⁵. It was also evident that the prices per cubic feet of hard wood species (e.g. *Shorea robusta*) from the government-managed forest have been auctioned about NRs 600 while the same species and units were sold for less than NRs 300 in the community forests (e.g. Pashupati FUG under our study). At all cases, users' committee leaders and their alliance partners have

²⁵ Source: The Himalayan Times, 28 August 2010 under news heading 'Timber trade doubles in community forests: Govt.'

appropriate huge sums of money from the timber auctioned by the contractors at a lower price compared with the government. The evidences presented in Boxes-6.13 and 6.14 in chapter six support the above mentioned statements.

8.3. Interests and power as determinants of community forestry outcomes

This study has demonstrated three specific typologies of community forestry outcomes: social (empowerment effects of community forestry to the individual forest users), economic (poverty alleviation effects of community forestry to the individual forest users) and ecological (effects of community management on forest condition improvements and forest biodiversity) in twelve community forestry cases.

Resource availability in community forestry and associated rules of access and benefit sharing determine the social and economic benefits of individual forest users. However, in many cases, either forests are handed over to local communities after they have been severely exploited and are in a degraded condition (cases of resource poor CFs) or because of interests on timber rent of the Forest Administration and its alliances (cases of resource rich CFs). Studies suggest that honest applications might create ample opportunities for household livelihood diversification and income generation. If access is granted to the individual users, community forestry can simultaneously improve forest conditions and human welfare. Because there is a strong presumption that devolution of management to the local people must be better both in social and ecological terms to that of the management under state control (Hobley 2007). But in the studied cases, many of these opportunities forced to be 'limited' because of highly regulated 'access rights' to the individual forest users.

After the forest was handed over to the local community, in most of the cases FUGs/users' committees restricted access to members of their own community, for example, thus reducing random incursions from outsiders. While 'strict monitoring and sanctioning' is considered as a condition to success (Ostrom 1990), heavy restrictions on access make the 'common' practice shift the empowerment effect from individual forest users to the users' committee and also to the external stakeholders who define rules and support the FUG to implement management plans. Restrictions of access by means of regulations are often favored because they are seen to be easier to compare with the controlling forest use on the ground (Deweese and Scherr 1996).

As it is shown in chapter six, the most powerful stakeholders are viewing community forestry as a means for pursuing their own interests. For example, decisions regarding extraction of forest products in resource rich CFs tended to be more influenced by external commercial interests such as of Forest Administration, wood contractor and alliance partners. Influential committee members are often allowing timber harvesting of community forests in

response to higher prices and to increase the group's account. Furthermore, decision-making processes are imposed mainly by the executive committees. Being a member in the executive committee is viewed as 'power and authority'. In fact, the elites have been co-opted by the state as informers and embedded in the state system through incentives; favors and authority. The income generated through community forestry has largely been diverted to benefit the rich sections of society through community and forest development activities, hence, livelihood promotion activities only limit plans and discussions. Therefore, this section aims to critically review how interests of the most powerful stakeholders tend to determine community forestry outcomes at local level. Outcomes envisioned in the formal processes and actual observations in daily practices are subject of assessment in this section.

8.3.1. Social outcomes

This study emphasizes 'empowerment' effects to individual forest users, as the most important criteria valuating social outcomes of community forestry. Furthermore, we have used 'accessibility' on 'decision making' and 'forest use access' as specific parameters to judge the actual empowerment effects of community forestry management. In chapter seven evidences were found across cases that there were similarities in terms of forest access and it was constrained mainly through: formal interests of the most powerful groups of stakeholders in CF networks and their informal action to fulfill the interests. Our assessment show that community forestry practices have been limiting the accessibility and decision making capacity of individual forest users, hence, the expected social outcomes become 'low' across the studied cases. Table-8.3 shows how formal interests and informal acts of the most powerful group of stakeholders act against the wish of individual forest users' in order to secure their own interests from community forestry.

Community forest management constitutes a key component of the 'bundles of rights' through which the different stakeholders are expected to fulfill their own role in order to ensure that the practice favors local direct forest users. Two issues are central in assessing the role of stakeholders which determine the actual empowerment effects of the local people: i) freedom to craft the forest management rules, ii) degree of access to the forest and its products. In the situation where local direct forest users are given opportunities to craft forest management rules and full access to the forests, then there will be high empowerment effects of community forestry to the local people. However, our assessment show that decision making rights of forest management and forest access are beyond the control of local forest users, the most powerful stakeholders with their direct and indirect involvement as shown in Table 8.3 which definitely aim disempowering local forest users.

Table-8.3: Comparison of interests of the powerful stakeholders: social outcomes

Social outcomes in regard to individual forest users					
The powerful stakeholders and their interests			Interest for social outcomes		Social outcomes
	Formal interests	Informal actions	Formal	Informal	
Forest Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in decision making and sharing of benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users Extension of control through allies 	High	Low	Low*
Users' committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtaining access to the forest and resources Maintaining cultural and religious values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users on forest use and benefit sharing 	High	Low	
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social justice/good governance Research, publication and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of own agendas against wishes of direct forest users The use of project facilities to train own manpower Generation of scientific knowledge through local knowledge Creation of income for the donor agency 	High	Low	
Political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates maximum access of the individual forest users to the forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum access to the local people Form alliances to strengthen political basis 	High	Low	
Private sector	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum access to the forest products through allies Maximization of profits 	None	Low	

Source: Chapter six and seven of this thesis

** Social outcomes in regard to individual forest users are 'low' because the formal 'high' interests of the powerful stakeholders are dominated by their informal actions (interests); consequently, they show 'no interests' in high social outcomes.*

A central argument of our assessment is that current community forest management practices across cases tend to ignore the formal objectives and interests of the stakeholders while promoting informal interests in lieu to

maintain their own control over local people and forests. If we look Table 8.3, the formal interests of the most powerful stakeholders who do not conflict each other, and place high motivation to empower local people through their active participation in decision making and sharing benefits, social justice and good governance in order to build the local capacity in forest management, and disseminating information of forest management to wider audiences. None of these formal interests advocate against the will and interests of local forest users. However, the formal interests of the stakeholders rarely reflect the expected objectives of community forestry in practice, because informal interests of the most powerful stakeholders override the formal procedure and worth, as a determinant of social outcomes in community forestry.

The nature of community forestry in Nepal, as administered by the Forest Administration makes the 'elite-marginalized' or 'patron-client' relationship self-reinforcing. First, users' committees elites tend to make decisions that benefit themselves, and they often place restrictions on forest use that actually harm the poor users. As shown in Table-7.1 in chapter seven local elites control the users' committees which are key decision making forums in practice. In such a situation, only being a member of FUG does not guarantee their productive roles in decision-making. Furthermore, government foresters and even donors' field projects' staff reinforce these power relations because they tend to consult local elites first, then conducting the fieldwork phase of CFUG formation, and later providing services to user groups. Formally local users, their groups and their users' committees' possess considerable authority to manage and utilize forest land, however, in practice CF processes cannot be formed independently from the Forest Administration because various aspects of users' activities require oversight and approval from the Forest Administration. The various oversight role of Forest Administration comes from both formal sources and *de facto* informal practices, from which the formation state to the implementation of community forestry takes place.

In a context of unequal power relations in the networks, an individual forest user's access not only depend on membership and participation, but also on his/her ability to exploit it. As the cases illustrated, direct forest users in most of the cases were allowed to directly access only minor forest products. The forest users were not allowed to harvest the products that have market value, such as timber and high value non-timber products. Multiple rules were prescribed for the use of the forest and almost every forest product including grass (cases of resource poor CFs) was price-tagged. Therefore, most of the forest users across cases cannot access the products even when the prices are subsidized (i.e., set lower than the market price). Chapter five to seven reveal that users' committee in collusion with Forest Administration, local political leaders and wood mafias were interested to sell forest products in the market to get better prices and better commissions. In such situations, the whole notion of local empowerment through better access on decision-making and forests becomes rhetoric.

Furthermore, by providing huge amount of aid assistance to the forestry sector, donors also contribute to craft restrictive forest policy and indirectly contribute to the various unequal power relations that exist within community forestry.

8.3.2. Economic outcomes

Community forestry so far has been recognized as a viable alternative for livelihood improvement of forest dependent people. The contribution of community forestry into rural livelihood is also envisioned as a major policy objective of community forestry (see Forestry Sector Policy in 2000). However, studies in community forestry in Nepal have postulated clear examples that this practice is less successful in addressing economic needs of local forest users despite donor and government strategies of poor focused in community forestry (see Thoms 2006). In many situations, most of the benefits from community forestry appear to have been captured by users' committee leaders and external stakeholders. In this context, the assessment of nexus between community forestry and its effects on economic outcomes, is quite relevant.

The complex bureaucratic formalities from the formation to the implementation stages, always put local forest users under the caveat of 'subsistence'. Arguing that a search for new sources of income for 'poor forest dwellers' is a search for unsuccessful development alternatives, where Dove asked whether tropical forest people are poor because they are not allowed to be rich (1993:17-18). The community forests' users have also suffered because all of them are interested to extract more tress from the forest that they are protecting. Meanwhile, the Forest Administration, who produces and enforces regulations, local users must wait a rubber stamp in order to get what they want from the forest.

Results presented in chapter seven show that community forestry is improving the conditions of forests, which in turn leads to increase benefit flows. By considering the existing forest stock of the community forests, we can say that the potential production of community forests is many times higher than its present performances. However, the results also show that from the improved forest resources may not benefit all members of a community forest user group. Community forestry cases of this study are supposed to make benefit the 'community' as a whole by providing needed forest products and the potential for generating community development funds. However, although not surprisingly, certain already privileged households and individuals within a user group tend to benefit more than others as economically and educated members dominate FUG executive committee. Across cases, users' committees are placing strict protection on use of forest products without knowing other parameters of forest growth and regenerations. Such restrictions come partly from three reasons: firstly, there is a common emotion to the local elites that strict protection is the primary concern and expectation of the Forest Administration, second, the Forest Administration evaluates users' committees

on the basis of how effective are the forest conservation practices, and finally, those who take decisions (i.e. committee elites) on the use of community forests could afford to meet their needs from other sources.

The evidences presented in chapters’ five till seven indicate that the unequal distribution of power, both within FUG and with external stakeholders has limited the contribution of livelihood potentiality of community forestry across cases. For example, all the studied FUGs are able to generate and save money in a FUG fund. By law, 75% of a user group’s fund may then be used for community development activities such as rural roads, rural electrification, building drinking water supplies, building schools and community buildings. Potentially, this is a direct mean of improving local life standards. However, because committee elites tend to dominate decision-making, FUG funds tends to be managed by and for local elites and channeled into activities that they benefit mostly such as more investments in infrastructure development refer to income generating activities.

Table 8.4 shows how informal interests of the powerful stakeholders and their informal act to fulfill their interests curtailed the individual forest users’ rights toward fulfilling the expected poverty alleviation objective of community forestry.

Table-8.4: Comparison of interests of the powerful stakeholders: economic outcomes

Economic outcomes in regard to individual forest users					
The powerful stakeholders and their interests			Interests for economic outcomes		Economic outcomes
	Formal interests	Informal actions	Formal	Informal	
	Forest Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing basic forest product needs to the rural populace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent seeking- community forests as source of additional income • The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users • Extension of control through allies • Capturing incentives and opportunities from donor projects 	High	

Users' committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livelihood promotion • Community development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic benefits (rent seeking from CF) • The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users on forest use and benefit sharing • Capturing incentives and opportunities from donors • Maintaining political basis • Maintaining relation with forest agencies 	High	Low	Low*
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livelihood improvement • Research and publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of own agendas against wishes of individual forest users • The use of project facilities to train own manpower • Generation of scientific knowledge through local • Creation of income for the donor agency 	High	Low	
Political parties	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent seeking from CF for their own and their party • Form alliances to strengthen political basis 	None	Low	
Private sector	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum access to the forest products through allies • Maximization of profits 	None	Low	

Source: Chapter six and seven of this thesis

* *Economic outcomes in regard to individual forest users are 'low' because the formal 'high' interests of the powerful stakeholders are dominated by their informal actions (interests); consequently, they show 'no interests' in high economic outcomes.*

There are many contradictions in community forestry programs: firstly, it has undermined that local use access of forests by treating them as poor and subsistence-oriented folks while at the same time overestimating local users' willingness and capacity to comply with bureaucratic relations. It sees rural poverty as the reason for forest degradation but the price tags for most of forest products that the local people use in their daily life. While it proclaims to serve the rural poor, it marginalizes them by keeping them away from forest based livelihoods and profits. Secondly, there is an ambiguity in community forests which is a state forestland as the issue of property rights. Thirdly, while community forestry policy expects that local people will seek technical advice from forest agency, the users' committee leaders seek the presence of the forest

officials in the village so that they can feel comfortable in restricting forest use by general forest users and imposing fines in case of rule violations. Finally, when local forest users in the stage of conservation, the forest agency has little incentives to monitor the activities of FUGs even when the committee leaders demand it (cases of resource poor CFs), while, during the stage of forest harvesting the FUGs are under the strict surveillance of the forest agency (cases of resource rich CFs).

Despite flaws in the formal program logic, communities are taking responsibilities for forest management, and changes have occurred although, not exactly in the way expected from the Forest Administration. The overwhelming interest of the local elites, especially to use forests for economic gain, is shaking the authority of Forest Administration. High economic interests of users' committees are indicators which clearly show the loss of control of the Forest Administration. Therefore, threatened by the increasing economic interests in community forestry, the Forest Administration is looking to introduce control mainly through: i) placing administrative hurdles such as, by imposing technically rigorous Work Plans, restrictive use access, rules of forest product marketing, activities prohibited inside community forests, fund use rules, and actions against forest users' committees, and ii) forming alliances with users' committee and other potential stakeholders in order to monitor forest and users activity closely.

In most of the cases 'hidden incentives' shared by powerful stakeholders seem major impediment in shaping the economic outcomes. As mentioned in Table 8.4 although the powerful stakeholders show formal commitment on improving the livelihood of forest users, however, their informal act such as rent seeking behavior, promote own agendas against individual forest users wishes, and maximization of profits worked against the formal settings of community forestry. In informal ways, community forestry mainly in resource rich areas is utilized by well-organized nexus of timber mafia, Forest Administration, local political leaders and users' committee elites. To fulfill their informal interests, the powerful stakeholders do not want to lose control over community forests.

Donors' projects also show a clear goal of livelihood improvement through community forestry programs. The donors emphasize on 'subsistence livelihood improvement' as a criterion for negotiating with Forest Administration and local forest user groups make handing over forest patches to local communities. However, their informal interests always override the formal program goal in practice, such as definition of livelihood improvement in project document is very vague including trainings and coaching programs which limit the actual direct expenditure on livelihood improvement programs.

In summing up, while the community forest Work Plans articulates the connection between poverty and resource conservation, the forest management practices are designed in such a manner that the Forest Administration, local

elites, local political leaders and in some cases wood contractors control the whole process hence it cannot alleviate poverty.

8.3.3. Ecological outcomes

The evidences presented in chapter seven indicate that studied community forests are improving in terms of forest condition. Our findings on ecological outcomes also conceded by several other researchers who also reported an increase in the condition of the forest resources under the community managed forestry models (e.g. Tachibana and Adhakari, 2009, Kanel 2008, Nagendra *et al.* 2008, Gautam 2006, Thoms 2006). The reversing of forest degradation through community forestry can be taken as great achievements in Nepal. However, as other studies in community forestry are silent on changes of forest biodiversity, this study also remains inconclusive on biodiversity conservation in community forests, because there was a lack of records with the network stakeholders, and it was not possible to conduct field level monitoring as this issue is beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, field evidences make clear that formal interests and informal actions of the powerful stakeholders’ favor high ecological outcomes through community forestry (see Table-8.5).

Table-8.5: Comparison of interests of the powerful stakeholders: ecological outcomes

Ecological outcomes in regard to the improved forest conditions and biodiversity					
The powerful stakeholders and their interests			Interests for Ecological outcomes		Ecological outcomes
	Formal interests	Informal actions	Formal	Informal	
Forest Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest protection from further degradation • Protection of environment and valuable resources • Meeting international obligations on climate and environmental agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capturing incentives and opportunities from donor projects • The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users • Extension of control through allies 	High	High	High*
Users’ committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest protection from further degradation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capturing incentives and opportunities from donors • The maximum access to forests through limiting accessibility of direct forest users on forest use and benefit sharing • Maintaining relation with forest agencies 	High	High	

Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental protection • Promotion of international environmental agenda (e.g. Climate, REDD) in community forestry practices • Research, publication and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of own agendas against wishes of individual forest users • The use of project facilities to train own manpower • Generation of scientific knowledge through local • Creation of income for the donor agency 	⇒ High	High	⇒	High*
Political parties	None	None	None	None	⇒	
Private sector	None	None	None	None	⇒	

Source: Chapter six and seven of this thesis

* Ecological outcomes in regards to the improved forest conditions and biodiversity conservation are **‘high’** because it is supported by the formal ‘high’ interests and informal actions (interests) of the powerful stakeholders.

It is important to recall that most community forests are improving because of limitations on resource extraction rather than proper utilization through active management. Users’ committees of the studied CFs prefer strict protection because: i) the strict protection practices please government foresters, and ii) wealthy households that dominate decision-making and can afford such restrictions. Although, powerful stakeholders formally advocates for social and economic improvement of direct forest users in community forestry, they are informally interested to curtail rights of users through highly regulative access practices, which ultimately support the high ecological outcomes (better forest conditions) as well as fulfill the vested interests of powerful stakeholders, such as the maximum access to the forest, rent seeking and promotion of own agenda against individual users expectations.

The formal interests and informal behavior of the powerful stakeholders allow Forest Administration to impose ecologically oriented restrictions defined in the Work Plans and other directives. Across cases, forest user groups have access, use, management and exclusion rights to their community forests, but no alienation rights as ownership remain with the government. Such a bundle of rights with internal rule enforcement and sanctioning is translated into effective forest protection and improvement in forest conditions. Heavy involvement of government foresters, technical and financial support of donors’ projects and involvement of NGOs in crafting user groups’

Constitutions and Work Plans encourage such an approach. The blanket policy²⁶ of prohibiting and restricting activities in community forestry for ecological considerations has given the Forest Administration the power to intervene in users actions whenever required.

8.4. Dynamics of community forestry processes

The discussions from chapter four till eight (up to section 8.3) make clear that the wished programs of community forestry function well from initial stage to the formal handing over of the forest to the local forest users. However, the real bargaining begins only after the formal contract with the group and onwards during implementation and normal operation stages. During these stages, the facilitation from Forest Administration and other stakeholders slowly go down and they try to curb FUG activities (e.g. limiting access, use and marketing of the forest products). After the forest was handed over to the local community, in most of the cases FUG/users' committee restrict access to members of their own community. It is curious that there is fairly low access of direct forest in decision-making and forest benefits sharing, yet at the same time in most of the studied CF forest conditions are improving. These paradoxes have been mainly driven and supported by the formal and informal interests of the users' committee and external powerful stakeholders. Consequently because of slowing down facilitation and increasing trend of sanctions questioned "autonomy" of CFUGs and resulting outcomes of community forestry do not meets the expectations²⁷ of the direct forest users in most of the cases. Thus, the dynamics of community forestry processes do not reflect the formal program objectives of community forestry in reality.

8.5. Community forestry in Nepal validates research hypothesis

The formal objectives and interests of the powerful stakeholders explicitly state that community forestry is a means towards both forest protection and users subsistence need fulfillment, however, informally their focus clearly is seen towards limiting the accessibility of individual forest users and perform utmost own economic gain. Forest Administration, from initiation to normal operations stages of community forestry, uses various forms of influences. On one hand, they attempt to regulate and intervene in community forestry

²⁶ I used the term 'blanket policy' because across cases, the Work Plan of the FUG state similar forest management objectives such as: improve forest status, reduce land slide, and maintain ecological balance.

²⁷ Here, expectation denotes the high empowerment and livelihood improvement from community forestry.

processes through: i) planning, legislation and bureaucratization, ii) forming alliances with other powerful stakeholders. With their legal mandates on the management of the forest, Forest Administration has been able to coerce other stakeholders to collaborate with them in running and experimenting with the best possible model of the community forests. On the other hand, users and its committees are compelled into the web of bureaucratic relations for their own needs. Thus, the populist version of community forestry in Nepal was not sufficiently grounded in existing power relationships, which result powerful stakeholders control and determine the process and outcomes.

External assistance remains a major source of financing of community forestry in Nepal; however, their assistance also further tries to strengthen bureaucratic capacities and their penetration to the community levels. On one hand, donors 'conditional' funding has been creating 'financial dependency syndrome' to the network stakeholders, while, on the other hand, their support strengthen the 'technocratic' control of community forest management through 'limited use' principles of ecological restorations. Due to their own interests following funding, they are pursuing to impede their own agendas against wishes of direct forest users.

In conclusion, community forestry in Nepal has not become simply the establishment of users groups and managing the forestlands, it has become the contested means by which the positions of powerful stakeholders have been reinforced. Although signaled as a major departure from state control regime to participatory model, community forestry has intensified forest bureaucratic presence, tied up forest users in bureaucratic relations, and enlarged the 'control' of Forest Administrations' and its alliances in community forestry activities in reality.

The above mentioned postulations reveal that the direct forest users in community forestry remain at the peripheries of decision making because the nexus of the powerful external stakeholders have been dominating the processes. The Forest Administration and its alliances, through decentralized forest policies aim to capture existing and potential benefits from community forestry. Therefore, the specific hypothesis of this study '***the activities and outcomes in community forestry depend mostly on interests of the powerful external stakeholders***' being well reflected and validated through empirical evidences and suggested that when the distribution of power enables direct forest users to make their own decisions, then it could be possible to have common rule-making in community forestry. Therefore, without real devolution of power, the goal of community forestry will be difficult to be achieved because they are promised to this transfer. Findings of this study also go one step forward comparing to other studies in community forestry, because they mainly focus on internal issues such as: internal governance, inequality, factor affecting participation, capacity building and gender issues which are in reality not the real drivers of community forestry.

8.6. Global comparison

This study is part of a comparative research project on “Stakeholders’ Interests and Power as Drivers of Community Forestry- Comparative Analysis of Nepal, Indonesia, Namibia, Germany, Thailand, Albania and Cameroon” at the Chair of Forest- and Nature Conservation Policy at the University of Goettingen (Germany). The ‘Community Forestry Working Group-CFWG’ uses the concept of power to analyze interests and actions of various stakeholders that influence the use and management of community forestry at local levels. Native researchers of this group are testing the hypothesis by using empirically rich information from seven different countries; hence, the results from the Nepalese context can enrich the findings from other countries and can be used as a foundation for global comparison.

8.7. Final remarks

This study has shown the problems associated with community forestry management mainly through the lens of stakeholders’ interests and power, and its effects on outcomes to the direct forest users and to the forest. Although, the study has postulated several errors of community forest management it does not mean that this study has rejected the potentialities of community forestry in social, economic and ecological functions. The critical reflections of community forestry in the study are not anti-community forestry ideology. Obviously, in the context of developing countries community forestry is the best suited alternative model of forest management, but, it must be recognized that local people in forest management have been utilized to fulfill the vested interests of powerful stakeholders, mainly of Forest Administration. The continuation of power anomaly is not in favor of direct forest users; instead, it can only increase the exploitation of forest dwellers. Furthermore, politics and corruption creped community forests into the hands of some powerful stakeholders which shadowed the positive contribution of individual users. Therefore, future policy and practices in community forestry must address how to neutralize power differential of stakeholders in order to manage community forestry in favor of direct forest users.

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Annexes

Annex-1: Questionnaire for field survey

A. Questionnaire for complete network survey:

Name of the respondent stakeholder:	Date of interview:
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1. General information about the stakeholder

a. Name of the stakeholder interviewed :

Address:

How many members are there organized in your organization?

Please, mention your task/ responsibility in CF:

As far as CF is supported by many stakeholders, what is your experience with CF? Please, mention the stakeholders who deal with ... (X) CF:

b. Many stakeholders deal with community forestry; please mention based on your experiences these last few years, who provides you with information in 'X' CF?

(Note: Does it relate with various activities of community forestry: such as forest demarcation, forest inventory, harvesting, plantations, and income generation activities?)

2. Stakeholders' relations

a. Coercion

Please, mention who is / are the stakeholder(s) absolutely necessary in order to secure community forestry activities? (For example; managing to receive the approval for forest use)

Necessary

Not necessary

b. Trust

Based on your experience and collaboration with the stakeholders, please rank the level and reasons of trust to them?

Not at all — — — Complete trust

c. Incentives

Please mention, who is/ are the stakeholder (s) provide (s) support (financial, technical and materials) to you?

Yes

No

B. Qualitative assessment questionnaire (only with powerful stakeholders):

Name of the respondent stakeholder:	Date of interview:
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1. Please mention your most important activities in CF? Please explain them briefly how they have been managed?

(Note: During the discussion/ interviews we also asked for supportive documents and also verified by direct field observations and other possible means.)

2. Based on your experience and collaboration with other stakeholder(s) who is / are the most helpful stakeholder (s) to you and why?

(Note: Related to the discussion in the first issue (Q 1), the intention was to know the conflicting issues among network partners, the simplified question: Did some other stakeholder (s) provide support to carry out the task (q. 1), Where have the problem been and with whom? Who was supportive for this (q.1) task?

In the first field visit, we have identified the most powerful stakeholders in each CF; while the intention of the second visit was to find out the empirical facts of the most important activities in CF.

Example:

Interview with the powerful stakeholder 'A'		
Important activities in CF	Details of each activities (based on question 1-2)	Available records
Example: Inventory	How was this done? Who were involved? Who provided support?	Inventory guidelines Work Plan

3. Available records on human and financial resources of the interviewed stakeholder:

(The question asked: How many staffs' members (technical and non-technical) does your organization have? Who provides financial support to carryout community forestry activities?)

4. Available publications and documentations related to community forestry

Do you have your own/organizational publications related to community forestry?

Name of publication	Types(Journal/Book/Proceedings/Internet)	Number of copies	Published year	Subjects

5. A question related to the stakeholders' interests on community forestry:

Stakeholders were asked about their expectations from the community forestry. The discussions were further enriched by available records of their formal program objectives on community forestry mainly, in three dimensions: social, economic and ecological.

C. The checklist for community forest outcome assessment:

I. Social outcomes (empowerment- interviewed only with users' committee)

Name of the Community Forest User Group and Address: Name (s) of respondent (s): Position in FUG committee:

1. The organizational structure of the FUG

a. Composition of FUG

<p>How many members/hhs. are there organized in the FUG?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total members/HHs:...../..... • Rich..... Medium.....Poor²⁸..... • Total number in FUG Committee: Male total.... Female total... Rich....Poor....

b. Status of the group (mark the appropriate one)

- Informal group (no legal mandate)
Informal group (under traditional rules)
Formal group (formal agreement with forest administration or company)
- Approved management plan: Yes..... No.....

2. Accessibility to the forest and products

a. Do the users have free access to collect the following forest products?

Forest products	Free access	Limited access	Restricted access	Permitted only emergency cases	Access banned	Remarks
Grazing						
Ground grass						
Leaf litter						
Fodder						
Dried/fallen branches						
Green fuel wood						
Poles/ lumber						
Timber						
Charcoal						
Medicinal plants						
NTFPs						
Cultivation of crops						
Hunting						
Mining						
Infrastructure construction						

b. Please, mention how are the products distributed? And who decides about the rules of products access?

Note: There have been collected available additional records within the CF and other stakeholders' level. The aim was to assess how the direct users/FUG/committee/others have access to the forest.

²⁸ Based on food sufficiency: Rich (sufficient for a year or surplus production), Medium (sufficient at least for 10 months) and Poor (sufficient just for less than half a year)

- c. According to your understanding, who have been involved in the following processes?

S.N.	Task/ Responsibility	Name of the involved stakeholder	Their role
1	User identification		
2	FUG formation		
3	Setting rules and regulations		
4	Forest boundary delineation		
5	Writing a Constitution		
6	Block division in the forest		
7	Forest inventory		
8	Silvicultural operation		
9	Who provided: Inventory guideline: Inventory instruments:		
10	Stand volume calculation		
11	Inventory data Verification		
12	Writing a Work Plan		
13	Harvesting decision		
14	Tree harvest and transportation		

II. Economic outcomes (poverty alleviation- interviewed only users' committees)

1. Products and services

- Available records from forest users' committees have been collected. The information provided from the interviews was further triangulated through direct field observations and available records.

- a. Please, mention the products collected from the community forests within the past years:

Products	Quantity (time series, if applicable)
Fodder Fuel wood Poles/lumber Timber Medicinal plants NTFPs Other	

- b. Please, mention community development activities carried out by FUG within the past years:

Sector	Quantity (time series, if applicable)	Amount invested	Access to the direct forest users
School			
Health posts			
Rural electrification			

Community buildings (e.g. FUG office building)				
Irrigation canal/Dams				
Drinking water				
Others				

2. Money (income and expenditures)

a. The income status of the FUG (Information sources: annual audit and other financial reports verified through interviews)

Income source	Year	Amount in NRs	Access of the direct forest users if applicable
Income from users:			
Income from forest products (e.g. selling of forest products, income from access permit):			
Support from Forest Administration:			
Support from donors:			
Balance/ investment interest:			
Other sources (e.g. donations, charges to the rule violators, selling of confiscated products)			

b. The expenditure status of the FUG (information source: Annual audit and other financial reports verified through interview)

Themes of expenditure	Year		Access of the direct forest users if applicable
Internal administration and office management of FUG/users' committee			
Forest operations (harvesting, transportation etc)			
Forest management (Forest protection, plantations, silvicultural operations, fire line-constructions, forest inventory, nursery)			
Community development (see 2a)			
Livelihood promotion programs			
Social security programs			
Education			
Support to other institutions			
Other expenditures (entertainment, donations etc)			

III. Ecological outcomes (forest conditions and biodiversity conservation)

1. Referring to Forests

Total area of CF:	Number of blocks and their respective area:
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2. Available records before and after community forestry, possibly if there exist any with powerful stakeholders

Inventory and monitoring tools	Prior	After
a. Community-Ecosystem (stand level) - Aerial photographs/ remote sensing - Ground-level photo stations - Physical habitat measures and resource inventories - Habitat suitability indices (HIS) - Censuses		
b. Population-Species Censuses (counts, captures, signs, radio-tracking) - Remote sensing - HIS - Species-habitat modeling - Population viability analysis		
c. Field observations and CFUG' reviews of existing programs (e.g. management plan review) What is written on biodiversity/forest health or related terms in the management plan of the CFs in this study? What are the justifications in such statements? Is there any forest blocks allocated for biodiversity (species....) conservation, watershed protection? What about vegetative composition of the forests? Any other field observation?		

3. The check list of the perception based survey with powerful stakeholders (for the changes taking place in forest condition)

Please, mention about the forest cover changes after CF:

Structure of the forest	Changes (Yes/No)	Any facts (e.g. records, documents?)
More dense		
Secondary forest canopy is multi-strata		
There is no gap in the size class distribution		
Big (large diameter) trees can be found in the forest		
Occurrence of natural regeneration		
Others		

Annex -2- The list of interviewed stakeholders during first phase of field work

1. Bheteripakha Community Forest User Group, Boch VDC-1, 2 and 3, Dolakha District, Nepal		2. Pachabhaiya Community Forest User Group, Leknath Municipality-11, Kaski District, Nepal	
S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	S.N.	Stakeholders in the network
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1	District Forest Office (DFO)
2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)
3	District Development Committee (DDC)	3	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District
4	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry project (NSCFP)	4	Seed foundation
5	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	5	Tribhuvan University, Institute of Forestry, Pokhara (IOF), Nepal
6	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District	6	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District
7	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	7	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)
8	Ecology, Agriculture and Rural Development Society (ECARDS)	8	The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWONTI)- District
9	The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWONTI)- District	9	The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWONTI)- District
10	Village Development Committee (VDC)	10	Village Development Committee (VDC)
11	Bhimeshwar paper industry (P. Enterpirze-paper)	11	Bhimeshwar paper industry (P. Enterpirze-paper)

3. Tiprikot Community Forest User Group, Hemja VDC 7, 8 and 9, Kaski District Nepal		4. Akala Community Forest User Group, Vash Municipality-1, Tanahun District, Nepal	
S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	S.N.	Stakeholders in the network
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1	District Forest Office (DFO)
2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)
3	District Development Committee (DDC)	3	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District
4	Village Development Committee (VDC)	4	NGO Network
5	Institute of Forestry, Pokhara (IOF)/ (ComForM)	5	District Agriculture Office (DAO)
6		6	District Livestock Office (DLO)

5. Tiprikot Community Forest User Group, Hemja VDC 7, 8 and 9, Kaski District Nepal		6. Gitawor Community Forest User Group, Chatiwan VDC-8, Makawanpur District, Nepal	
S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Stakeholders in the network	
1	Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR)	District Forest Office (DFO)	
2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	
3	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC)	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District	
4	National Planning Commission (NPC)	Range post level-Coordination Committee (RLCC)	
5	District Forest Office (DFO)	Wood contractor	
6	District Development Committee (DDC)	Village Development Committee (VDC)	
7	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District		
8	Political party- Nepali Congress (NC)- District		
9	Political party- Communist Party Nepal, United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML)- District		
10	Political party- The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN(M)- District		

7. Raniban Community Forest User Group, Devghat VDC-4, Tanahun District, Nepal		8. Piple-Pokhara Community Forest User Group, Hetauda Municipality-5, Makawanpur District, Nepal	
S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	Stakeholders in the network	
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	District Forest Office (DFO)	
2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	
3	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District	
4	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	Range post level-Coordination Committee (RLCC)	
5	JB Saw Mill- Chitwan	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)	
6	Environment Conservation Society (ECOS)	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	
7		District Development Committee (DDC)	
8		District Plant Resource Office (DPRO)	
9		District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC)	
10		District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	
11		Hetauda Municipality	

9. Pashupati Community Forest User Group, Manahari VDC-3, Makawanpur District, Nepal		10. Parewashowri Community Forest User Group, Piple VDC-6, Chitwan District Nepal	
S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	S.N.	Stakeholders in the network
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1	District Forest Office (DFO)
2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)
3	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District	3	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District
4	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	4	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)
5	Wood Contractor	5	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)
6	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)	6	District Development Committee (DDC)
7	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	7	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)
8	Range post level-Coordination Committee (RLCC)	8	Kalika Saw Mill- Chitwan
9	District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC)		

11. Dudkoshi Community Forest User Group, Birendranagar Municipality-7 and 8, Chitwan District, Nepal		12. Satanchuli Community Forest User Group, Bharatpur Municipality-1, Chitwan District Nepal	
S.N.	Stakeholders in the network	S.N.	Stakeholders in the network
1	District Forest Office (DFO)	1	District Forest Office (DFO)
2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)	2	Community Forest User Group Committee (FUGC)
3	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District	3	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal (FECOFUN)- District
4	District Development Committee (DDC)	4	Devghat Area Development Committee
5	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)	5	Seed Tree Nepal (NGO)
6	The Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)	6	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)
7	Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	7	Chitwan Saw Mill- Chitwan
8	Village Development Committee (VDC)		
9	District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC)		
10	District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)		
11	District Cottage and Small Industry Development Office (DCSIO)		

Annex-3: Interviews coding

I- Code for community forest user groups (CFUGs):

S.N.	Community forest users groups (CFUGs)	Case coding
1	Bhiteripakha CFUG, Boch VDC-1,2&3, Dolakha, Nepal	Bhit1
2	Tiprikot CFUG Hemja VDC 7, 8 & 9, Kaski, Nepal	Tipri2
3	Pachabhaiya CFUG, Lekanath Municipality-11, Kaski, Nepal	Pach3
4	Akala CFUG, Vash Municipality-1, Tanahun, Nepal	Akala4
5	Yagyadole CFUG, Gokarna VDC, Kathmandu, Nepal	Yagya5
6	Dudkoshi CFUG, Birendranagar Municipality-7& 8, Chitwan, Nepal	Dudk6
7	Parewashowri CFUG, Piple VDC-6, Chitwan, Nepal	Pare7
8	Pashupati CFUG, Manahari VDC-3, Makawanpur, Nepal	Pash8
9	Piple Pokhara CFUG, Hetauda Municipality-5, Makawanpur, Nepal	Piple9
10	Gitawor CFUG, Chatiwan VDC-8, Makawanpur, Nepal	Gita10
11	Raniban CFUG, Devghat VDC-4, Tanahun, Nepal	Rani11
12	Satanchuli CFUG, Bharatpur Municipality-1, Chitwan, Nepal	Satan12

II- Code for stakeholders' interviews

Stakeholders in the network of specific community forestry	Interviews coding
Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC)	IMoFSC-Yagya5
Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR)	IMoPR-Yagya5
National Planning Commission (NPC)	INPC-Yagya5
District Forest Office (DFO)	IDFO1-12 (IDFO- Bhit1, IDFO- Tipri2, IDFO- Pach3, IDFO- Akala4, IDFO- Yagya5, IDFO- Dudk6, IDFO- Pare7, IDFO- Pash8, IDFO- Piple9, IDFO- Gita10, IDFO- Rani11, IDFO- Satan12)
District Soil Conservation Office (DSCO)	IDSCO1-6 (IDSCO- Bhit1, IDSCO -Pach3, IDSCO- Dudk6, IDSCO- Piple9, IDSCO- Gita10, IDSCO -Rani11)
District Livestock Office (DLO)	IDLO- Akala4
District Agriculture Office (DAO)	IDAO- Akala4
District Cottage and Small Industry Development Office (DCSIO)	IDCSIO- Dudk6
District Plant Resource Office (DPRO)	IDPRO- Piple9
District Development Committee (DDC)	IDDC1-4 (IDDC- Bhit1, IDDC- Yagya5, IDDC- Piple9, IDDC- Dudk6)
Municipality	IMUNI- Piple9
Village Development Committee	IVDC 1-4 (IVDC- Bhit1, IVDC- Tipri2, IVDC-

(VDC)	Gita10, IDDC- Dudk6)
Community Forest User Group Committee (CFUGC)	ICFUGC1-12 (ICFUGC- Bhit1, ICFUGC -Tipri2, ICFUGC-Pach3, ICFUGC-Akala4, ICFUGC - Yagya5, ICFUGC-Dudk6, ICFUGC- Pare7, ICFUGC-Pash8, ICFUGC -Piple9, ICFUGC-Gita10, ICFUGC-Rani11, ICFUGC-Satan12)
Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)	IFECO1-11 (IFECO-Bhit1, IFECO- Tipri2, IFECO-Pach3, IFECO-Akala4, IFECO-Yagya5, IFECO-Dudk6, IFECO-Pare7, IFECO-Pash8, IFECO-Piple9, IFECO-Rani11, IFECO-Satan12)
District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC)	IDFCC1-4 (IFECO-Dudk6, IFECO-Pare7, IFECO-Pash8, IFECO-Piple9)
Range post level coordination committee (RLCC)	IRLCC1-3 (IRLCC-Pash8, IRLCC-Gita10, IRLCC-Piple9)
Devghat Area Development Committee	IDADC-Satan12
Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project (NSCFP)	INSCFP (general), INSCFP- Bhit1 (specific case)
SNV funded Biodiversity Sector Program for Siwalik and Terai (BISEP-ST)	IBISEP (general), IBISEP1-4 (IBISEP-Dudk6, IBISEP-Pare7, IBISEP-Pash8, IBISEP-Piple9) (specific case)
Netherlands Development Organization (SNV)	ISNV1-4 (ISNV-Dudk6, ISNV-Pare7, ISNV-Pash8, ISNV-Piple9)
Danish funded collaborative research Project “Community Based Natural Forest and Tree Management in the Himalaya (ComForM)”	IComForM-Tipri2
National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)	INTNC1-3 (INTNC-Dudk6, INTNC-Pare7, NTNC-Satan12)
Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)	IANSAB- Bhit1
Ecology, Agriculture and Rural Development Society (ECARDS)	IECARDS- Bhit1
The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWONTI)	IHIMAWONTI 1-2 (IHIMAWONTI-Bhit1, IHIMAWONTI -Pach3)
Environment Conservation Society (ECOS)	IECOS- Rani11
Seed Tree Nepal	ISTNE-Satan12
Seed Foundation	ISFOUN- Pach3
NGO network	INNET- Akala4
Nepali Congress (NC)	INC- Yagya5
Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) (CPN-UML)	ICPNUML- Yagya5

The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN(M))	IUCPM- Yagya5
Saw mills	ISMILL1-3 (ISMILL- Pare7, ISMILL-Rani11, ISMILL- Satan12)
Wood contractors	IWOODC1-2 (IWOODC- Pash8, IWOODC-Gita10)
Paper industry (Bhimeshwar paper industry)	IPIND- Bhit1
Tribhuvan University, Institute of Forestry (IOF), Pokhara	IIOF- Pach3

Annex-4: The quantitative power network of community forests

I – Power element- Coercion

A. Resource poor status community forests

1. Bheteripakha Community Forest User Group, Boch VDC-1, 2 and 3, Dolakha District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	DDC	Swiss Project	ANSAB	FECOFUN	DSCO	ECARD	HIMAWO N'TI	VDC	P. Enterprize	
TAV	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Xi	40	30	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Hi	0.50	0.38	0.13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.50	0.88	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	2	3.50	#DIV/0!									
Note: Clear domination by DFO and CFUGC												

2. Pachabhaiya Community Forest User Group, Leknath Municipality-11, Kaski District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	FECOFUN	Seed foundation	Institute of Forestry	DISCO	HIMAWON TI	
TAV	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	
Xi	83.3	66.6	0	0	0	0	0	150
Hi	0.56	0.44	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.56	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	1.25	#DIV/0!						
Note: Absolute domination by DFO								

3. Tiprikot Community Forest User Group, Hemja VDC 7, 8 and 9, Kaski District Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	
STK	DFO	Institute of Forestry/ ComForM Project	CFUGC	FECOFUN	VDC	
TAV	3	1	0	0	0	
Xi	75	25	0	0	0	100
Hi	0.75	0.25	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.75	1	1	1	1	
Di	3	#DIV/0!				

Note: Absolute domination by DFO

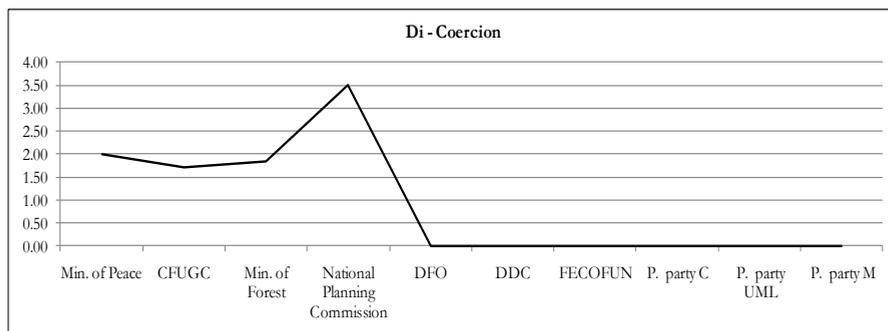
4. Akala Community Forest User Group, Vash Municipality-1, Tanahun District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	FECOFUN	NGO Network	DAO	DLO	
TAV	3	2	0	0	0	0	
Xi	60	40	0	0	0	0	100
Hi	0.6	0.4	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.60	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	1.5	#DIV/0!					

Note: Absolute domination by DFO

5. Yagyadole Community Forest User Group, Gokarna VDC, Kathmandu, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
STK	Min. of Peace	CFUGC	Min. of Forest	National Planning Commission	DFO	DDC	FECOFUN	P. party C	P. party UML	P. party M	
TAV	5	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Xi	55.5	33.3	33.3	33.3	11.1	0	0	0	0	0	166.6
Hi	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.07	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.9	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	2.0	1.7	1.8	3.5	#DIV/0!						



B. Resource rich status community forests

6. Gitawor Community Forest User Group, Chatiwan VDC-8, Makawanpur District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	Rangepost-CC	Wood Contractor	VDC	
TAV	3	0	0	0	0	
Xi	75	0	0	0	0	75
Hi	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	#DIV/0!					

Note: Absolute domination by DFO

7. Raniban Community Forest User Group, Devghat VDC-4, Tanahun District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	FECOFUN	DSCO	JB Saw mill	ECOS (NGO)	
TAV	3	1	0	0	0	0	
Xi	60	20	0	0	0	0	80
Hi	0.75	0.25	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.75	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	3.0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0	

Note: Absolute domination by DFO

8. Piple-Pokhara Community Forest User Group, Hetauda Municipality-5, Makawanpur District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
STK	DFO	CFUGC	DDC	SNV	FECOFUN	DPR	BISEP-ST	DFCC	Range post-CC	DSCO	Municipality
TAV	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Xi	70	30	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110
Hi	0.64	0.27	0.09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.64	0.91	1.00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Di	3.50	5.00	#DIV/0!								

Note: Clear domination by DFO and CFUGC

9. Pashupati Community Forest User Group, Manahari VDC-3, Makawanpur District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
STK	DFO	CFUGC	SNV	Wood Contractor	BISEP-ST	DFCC	Rangepost-CC	DSCO	FECOFUN
TAV	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Xi	50	12.5	12.5	0	0	0	0	0	75
Hi	0.67	0.17	0.17	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.67	0.83	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Di	4	2.5	#DIV/0!						

Note: Clear domination by DFO and CFUGC

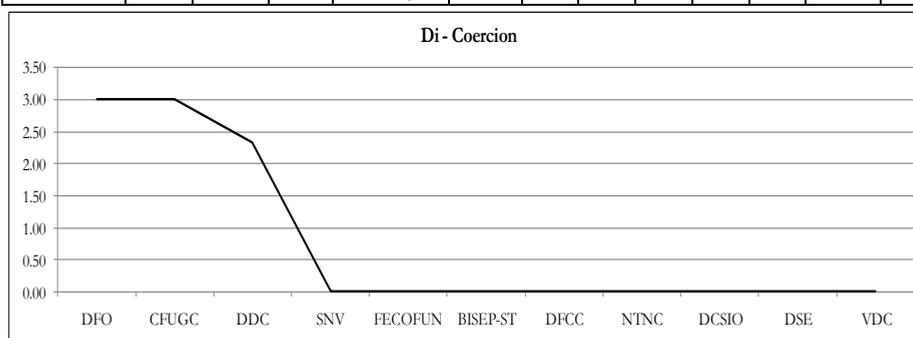
10. Parewashowri Community Forest User Group, Piple VDC-6, Chitwan District Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
STK	DFO	CFUGC	SNV	FECO FUN	BISEP-ST	DFCC	NTN C	Kalika Saw Mill
TAV	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Xi	71.4	14.3	14.3	0	0	0	0	100
Hi	0.7	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.7	0.86	1	1	1	1	1	1
Di	5.0	3.0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Clear domination by DFO and CFUGC

11. Dudkoshi Community Forest User Group, Birendranagar Municipality-7 and 8, Chitwan District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	DDC	SNV	FECOFUN	BISEP-ST	DFCC	NTNC	DSCO	DSE	VDC	
TAV	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0			
Xi	40	20	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Hi	0.50	0.25	0.13	0.13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.50	0.75	0.87	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	3.00	3.00	2.33	#DIV/0!								



12. Satanchuli Community Forest User Group, Bharatpur Municipality-1, Chitwan District Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	FECOFUN	Devghat Dev. Board	NTNC	Chitwan Saw Mill	Seed Tree Nepal	
TAV	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Xi	66.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	66.67
Hi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	#DIV/0!							

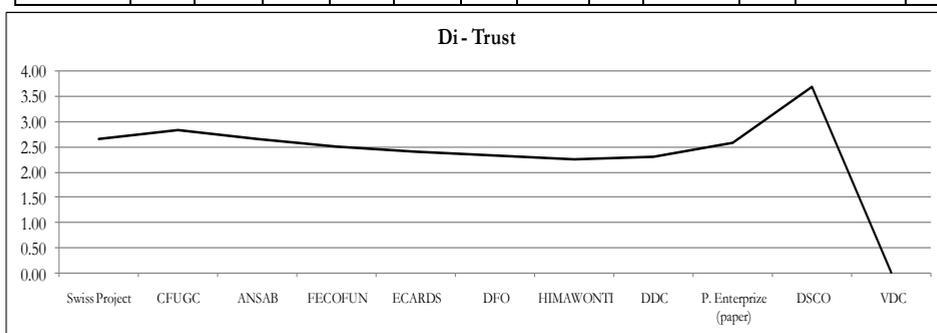
Note: Absolute domination by DFO and CFUGC

II – Power element- Trust

A. Resource poor status community forests

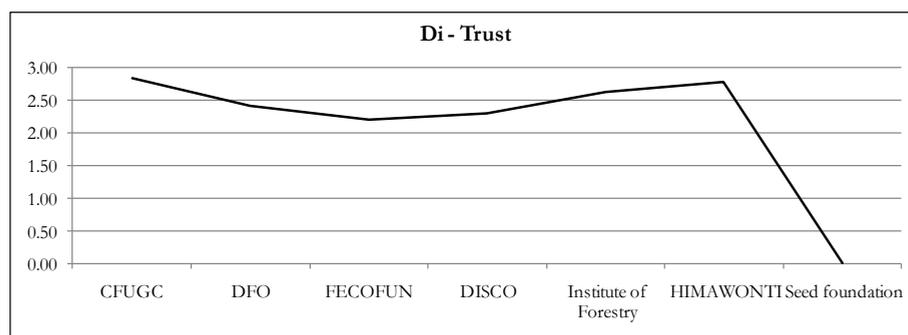
1. Bheteripakha Community Forest User Group, Boch VDC-1, 2 and 3, Dolakha District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
STK	Swiss Project	CFUGC	ANSAB	FECOFUN	ECARDS	DFO	HIMAWONTI	DDC	P. Enterprise (paper)	DSCO	VDC	
TAV	24	20	13	10	9	8	7	7	7	6	3	
Xi	80	66.6	43.33	33.3	30	26.6	23.3	23.3	23.3	20	10	380
Hi	0.21	0.18	0.11	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.03	1
Cri	0.21	0.39	0.50	0.59	0.67	0.74	0.80	0.86	0.92	0.97	1	
Di	2.67	2.83	2.67	2.49	2.40	2.33	2.26	2.30	2.59	3.70	#DIV/0!	



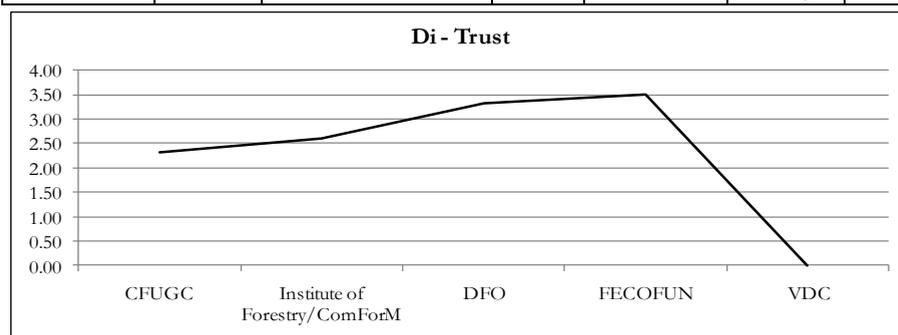
2. Pachabhaiya Community Forest User Group, Leknath Municipality-11, Kaski District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
STK	CFUGC	DFO	FECOFUN	DISCO	Institute of Forestry	HIMAWONTI	Seed Foundation	
TAV	17	9	7	7	6	4	3	
Xi	94.4	50	38.8	38.8	33.3	22.2	16.6	294.4
Hi	0.32	0.17	0.13	0.13	0.11	0.08	0.06	1
Cri	0.32	0.49	0.62	0.75	0.87	0.94	1	
Di	2.83	2.41	2.20	2.31	2.63	2.78	#DIV/0!	



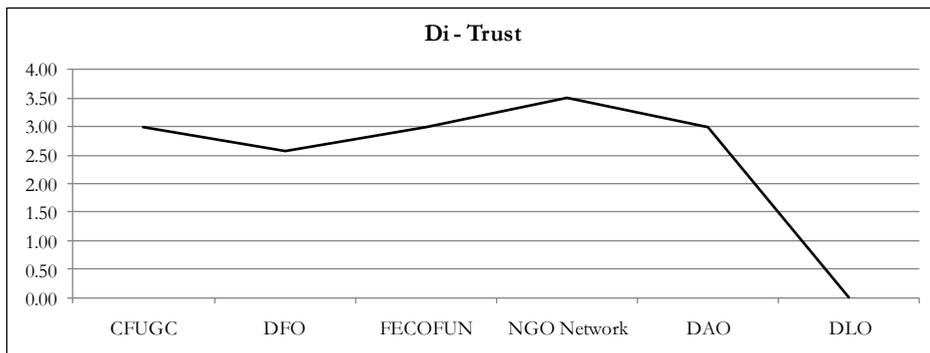
3. Tiprikot Community Forest User Group, Hemja VDC 7, 8 and 9, Kaski District Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	
STK	CFUGC	Institute of Forestry/ComForM	DFO	FECOFUN	VDC	
TAV	11	8	6	3	2	
Xi	91.6	66.6	50	25	16.6	250
Hi	0.37	0.27	0.20	0.10	0.07	1
Cri	0.37	0.63	0.83	0.93	1	
Di	2.32	2.59	3.33	3.50	#DIV/0!	



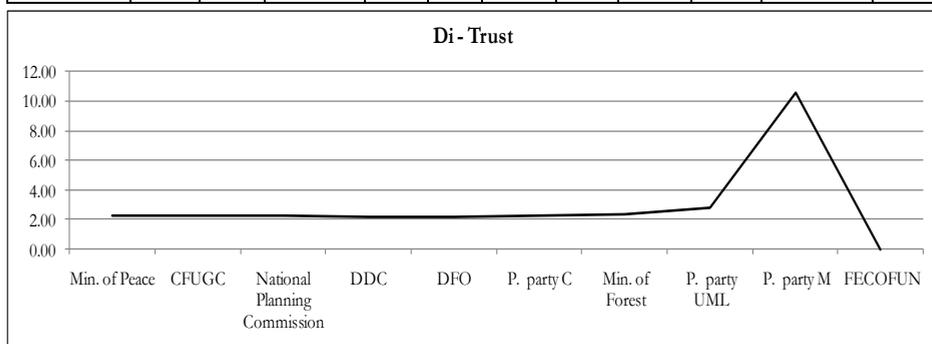
4. Akala Community Forest User Group, Vash Municipality-1, Tanahun District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	
STK	CFUGC	DFO	FECOFUN	NGO Network	DAO	DLO	
TAV	12	6	6	4	2	2	
Xi	80	40	40	26.6	13.3	13.3	213.3
Hi	0.38	0.19	0.19	0.13	0.06	0.1	1
Cri	0.38	0.56	0.75	0.88	0.94	1	
Di	3.00	2.57	3.00	3.50	3.00	#DIV/0!	



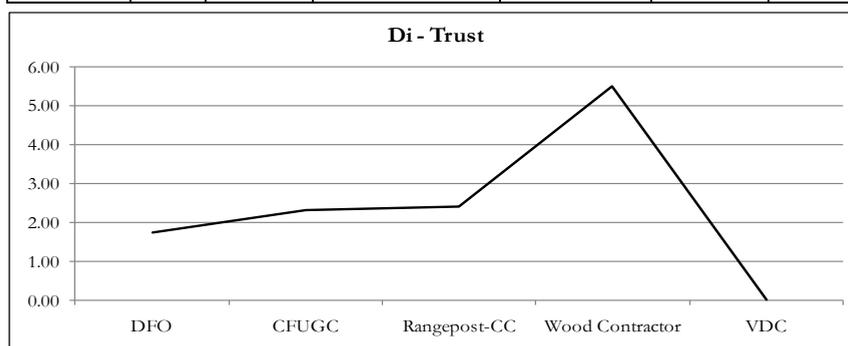
5. Yagyadole Community Forest User Group, Gokarna VDC, Kathmandu, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
STK	Min. of Peace	CFUGC	National Planning Commission	DDC	DFO	P. party C	Min. of Forest	P. party UML	P. party M	FECOFUN	
TAV	19	16	12	10	9	8	7	7	7	1	
Xi	70.3	59.2	44.4	37.04	33.3	29.6	25.9	25.9	25.9	3.7	355.5
Hi	0.20	0.17	0.13	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.01	1
Cri	0.20	0.36	0.49	0.59	0.69	0.77	0.84	0.92	0.99	1.00	
Di	2.22	2.30	2.24	2.19	2.20	2.24	2.31	2.75	10.56	#DIV/0!	

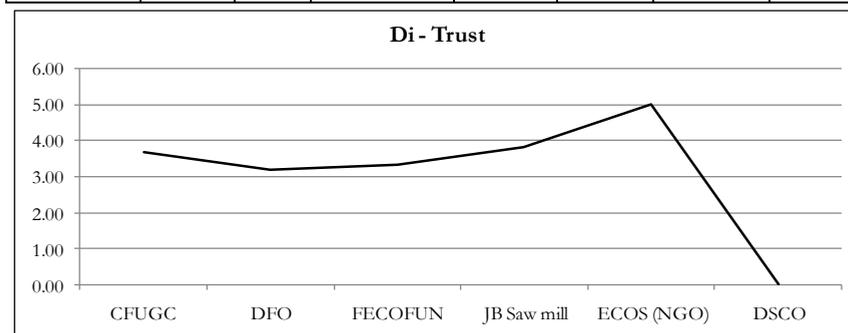


B. Resource rich status community forests**6. Gitawor Community Forest User Group, Chatiwan VDC-8, Makawanpur District, Nepal**

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	Range post-CC	Wood Contractor	VDC	
TAV	7	7	4	4	1	
Xi	58.3	58.3	33.3	33.3	8.3	191.7
Hi	0.30	0.30	0.17	0.17	0.04	1
Cri	0.30	0.61	0.78	0.96	1	
Di	1.75	2.33	2.40	5.50	#DIV/0!	

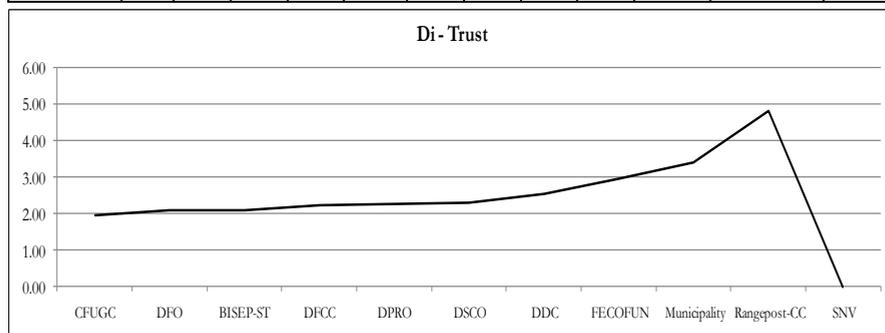
**7. Raniban Community Forest User Group, Devghat VDC-4, Tanahun District, Nepal**

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	
STK	CFUG	DFO	FECOFUN	JB Saw mill	ECOS (NGO)	DSCO	
TAV	11	5	4	3	2	1	
Xi	73.3	33.3	26.6	20	13.3	6.6	173.33
Hi	0.42	0.19	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.04	1
Cri	0.42	0.62	0.77	0.88	0.96	1	
Di	3.67	3.20	3.33	3.83	5	#DIV/0!	



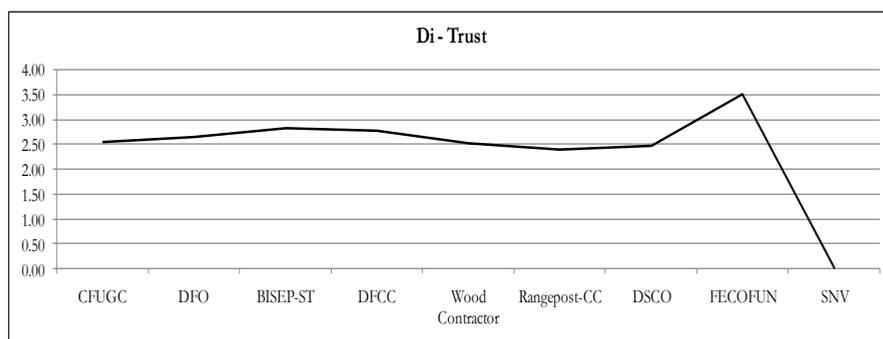
8. Piple-Pokhara Community Forest User Group, Hetauda Municipality-5, Makawanpur District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
STK	CFUGC	DFO	BISEP-ST	DFCC	DPR	DSCO	DDC	FECOFUN	Municipality	Rangepost-CC	SNV	
TAV	16	15	12	12	9	8	8	7	5	4	2	
Xi	53.3	50	40	40	30	26.6	26.6	23.3	16.6	13.3	6.6	326.67
hi	0.16	0.15	0.12	0.12	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.02	1
Cri	0.16	0.32	0.44	0.56	0.65	0.73	0.82	0.89	0.94	0.98	1	
Di	1.95	2.08	2.08	2.24	2.26	2.31	2.54	2.97	3.41	4.80	#DIV/0!	



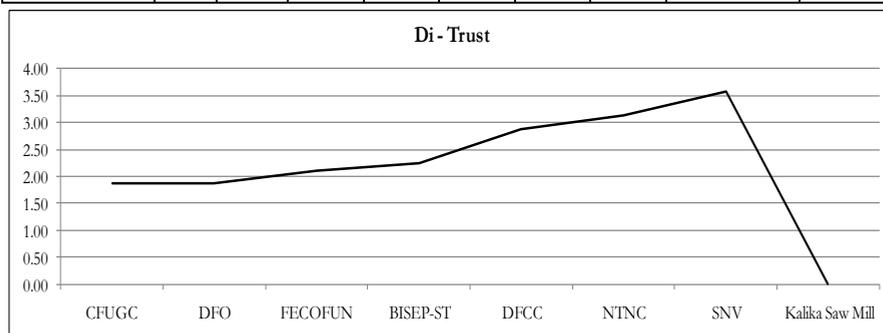
9. Pashupati Community Forest User Group, Manahari VDC-3, Makawanpur District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
STK	CFUGC	DFO	BISEP-ST	DFCC	Wood Contractor	Range post-CC	DSCO	FECOFUN	SNV	
TAV	14	11	9	6	4	4	4	4	2	
Xi	58.3	45.8	37.5	25.0	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.33	241.6
hi	0.24	0.19	0.16	0.10	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.03	1
Cri	0.24	0.43	0.59	0.69	0.76	0.83	0.90	0.97	1	
Di	2.55	2.65	2.83	2.78	2.51	2.40	2.48	3.50	#DIV/0!	



10. Parewashowri Community Forest User Group, Piple VDC-6, Chitwan District Nepal

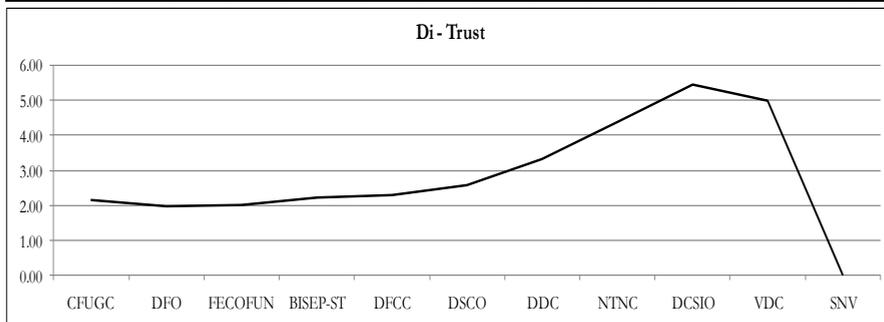
Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
STK	CFUGC	DFO	FECOFUN	BISEP-ST	DFCC	NTNC	SNV	Kalitka Saw Mill	
TAV	11	9	9	7	7	4	3	2	
Xi	52.3	42.8	42.8	33.3	33.3	19	14.2	9.5	247.6
Hi	0.21	0.17	0.17	0.13	0.13	0.08	0.06	0.04	1
Cri	0.21	0.38	0.56	0.69	0.83	0.90	0.96	1	
Di	1.88	1.88	2.10	2.25	2.87	3.13	3.57	#DIV/0!	



11. Dudkoshi Community Forest User Group, Birendranagar Municipality-7 and 8, Chitwan District, Nepal

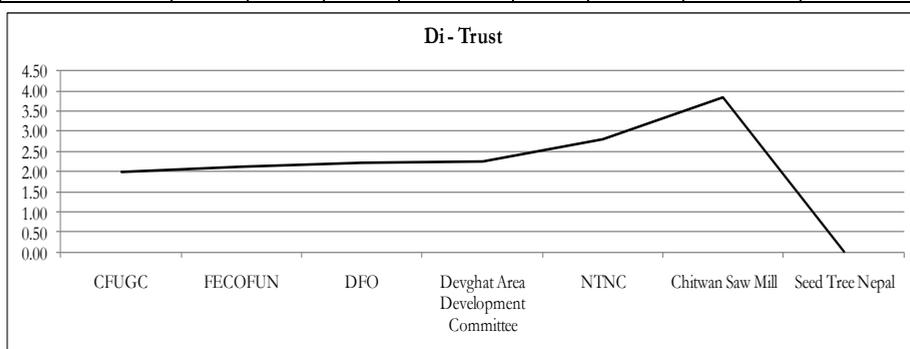
Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
STK	CFUGC	DFO	FECOFUN	BISEP-ST	DFCC	DSCO	DDC	NTNC	DSE	VDC	SNV	
TAV	18	13	13	13	10	10	10	7	4	2	2	
Xi	60	43.3	43.3	43.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	23.3	13.3	6.6	6.6	340

hi	0.18	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.02	1
Cri	0.18	0.30	0.43	0.56	0.66	0.75	0.85	0.92	0.96	0.98	1	
Di	2.14	1.96	2.02	2.22	2.30	2.57	3.31	4.41	5.44	5.00	#DIV/0!	



12. Satanchuli Community Forest User Group, Bharatpur Municipality-1, Chitwan District Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
STK	CFUGC	FECOFUN	DFO	Devghat Dev.lopment Board	NTNC	Chitwan Saw Mill	Seed Tree Nepal	
TAV	12	10	8	6	6	4	2	
Xi	66.6	55.5	44.4	33.3	33.3	22.2	11.1	266.67
Hi	0.25	0.21	0.17	0.13	0.13	0.08	0.04	1
Cri	0.25	0.46	0.63	0.75	0.88	0.96	1	
Di	2.00	2.12	2.22	2.25	2.80	3.83	#DIV/0!	

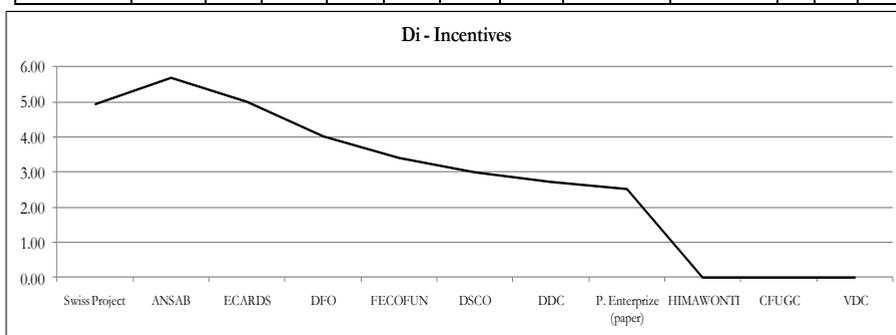


III – Power element- Incentives

A. Resource poor status community forests

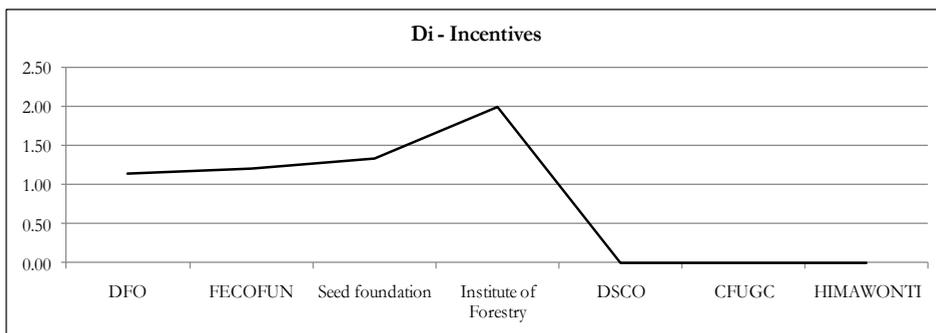
1. Bheteripakha Community Forest User Group, Boch VDC-1, 2 and 3, Dolakha District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
STK	Swiss Project	ANSAB	ECARDS	DFO	FECOFUN	DSCO	DDC	P. Enterprize (paper)	HEMAW ONTI	CFUGC	VDC
TAV	8	5	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Xi	80	50	20	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	0
hi	0.38	0.24	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0	0
Cri	0.38	0.62	0.71	0.76	0.81	0.86	0.90	0.95	1	1	1
Di	4.92	5.69	5	4	3.40	3	2.71	2.50	#DIV/0!		



2. Pachabhैया Community Forest User Group, Leknath Municipality-11, Kaski District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
STK	DFO	FECOFUN	Seed foundation	Institute of Forestry	DSCO	CFUGC	HEMAW ONTI
TAV	2	2	2	2	1	0	0
Xi	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	16.6	0	0
Hi	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.11	0	0
Cri	0.22	0.44	0.67	0.89	1	1	1
Di	1.14	1.20	1.33	2	#DIV/0!		



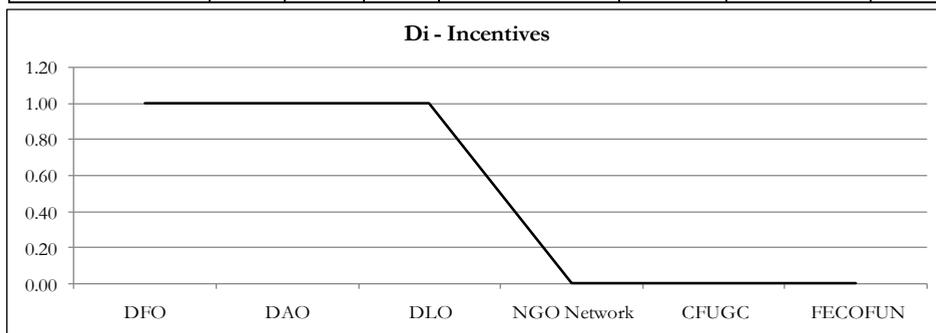
3. Tiprikot Community Forest User Group, Hemja VDC 7, 8 and 9, Kaski District Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	
STK	DFO	Institute of Forestry/ComForM	CFUGC	FECOFUN	VDC	
TAV	1	1	0	0	0	
Xi	25	25	0	0	0	50
Hi	0.50	0.50	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.50	1	1	1	1	
Di	1	#DIV/0!				

Note: Absolute domination by DFO

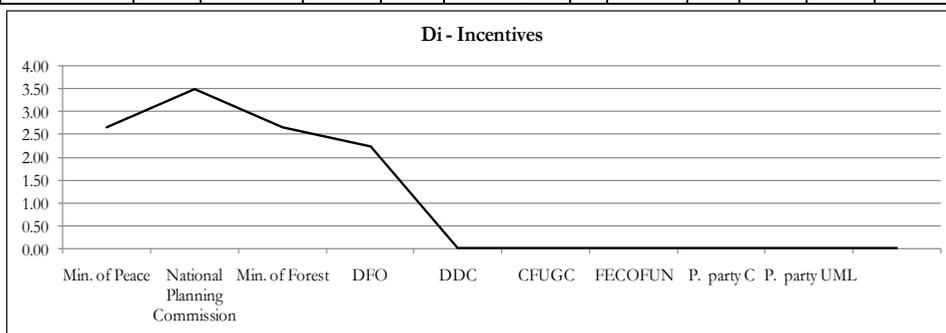
4. Akala Community Forest User Group, Vash Municipality-1, Tanahun District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	
STK	DFO	DAO	DLO	NGO Network	CFUGC	FECOFUN	
TAV	1	1	1	1	0	0	
Xi	20	20.00	20	20	0	0	80
Hi	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0	0	1
Cri	0.25	0.50	0.75	1	1	1	
Di	1.00	1.00	1.00	#DIV/0!			



5. Yagyadole Community Forest User Group, Gokarna VDC, Kathmandu, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
STK	Min. of Peace	National Planning Commissio	Min. of Forest	DFO	DDC		CFUGC	FECOFUN	P. party C.	P. party UML	P. party M.	
TAV	4	3	1	1	1		0	0	0	0		
Xi	44.4	33.3	11.1	11.1	11.1		0	0	0	0	111.1	
hi	0.40	0.30	0.10	0.10	0.10		0	0	0	0	1	
Cri	0.40	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00		1	1	1	1		
Di	2.67	3.50	2.67	2.25	#DIV/0!							



B. Resource rich status community forests

6. Gitawor Community Forest User Group, Chatiwan VDC-8, Makawanpur District, Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	
STK	DFO	Wood contractor	CFUGC	Rangepost-CC	VDC	
TAV	2	1	0	0	0	
Xi	50	25	0	0	0	75
Hi	0.67	0.33	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.67	1	1	1	1	
Di	2	#DIV/0!				

Note: Absolute domination by DFO

7. Raniban Community Forest User Group, Devghat VDC-4, Tanahun District, Nepal

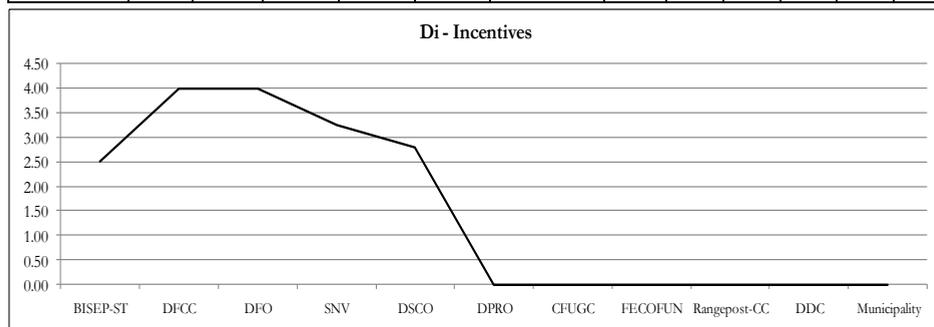
Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	
STK	DFO	JB Saw mill	ECOS (NGO)	DSCO	CFUGC	FECOFUN	
TAV	1	1	1	1	0	0	

Xi	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	80
Hi	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.00	1
Cri	0.25	0.50	0.75	1	1	1	
Di	1.00	1.00	1.00	#DIV/0!			

Note: Domination by DFO, Saw mill operator and NGO

8. Piple-Pokhara Community Forest User Group, Hetauda Municipality-5, Makawanpur District, Nepal

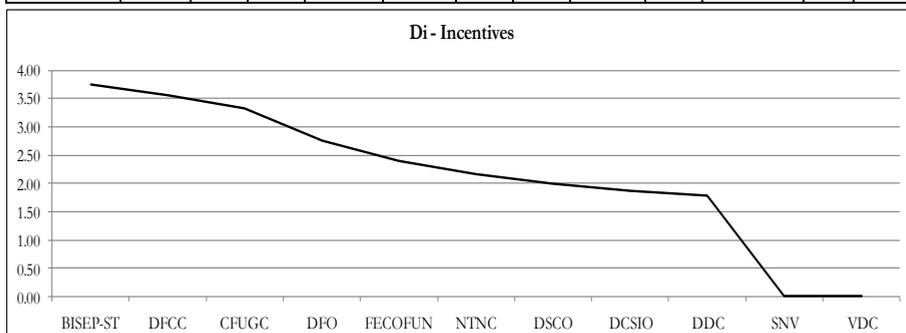
Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
STK	BISEP-ST	DFCC	DFO	SNV	DSCO	DPR	CFUGC	FECOFUN	Range post-CC	DDC	Municipality	
TAV	5	5	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Xi	50	50	20	10	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	150
Hi	0.33	0.33	0.13	0.07	0.07	0.07	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.33	0.67	0.80	0.87	0.93	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Di	2.50	4.00	4.00	3.25	2.80	#DIV/0!						



9. Pashupati Community Forest User Group, Manahari VDC-3, Makawanpur District, Nepal

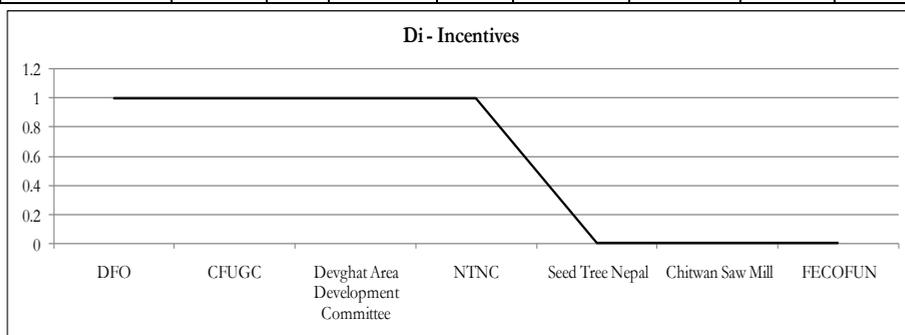
Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
STK	BISEP-ST	DFO	DFCC	Wood Contractor	DSCO	SNV	CFUGC	Range post-CC	FECOFUN	
TAV	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	
Xi	37.5	25	25	12.5	12.5	12.5	0	0	0	125
Hi	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	1
Cri	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	1	1	1	
Di	1.71	1.50	1.56	1.00	#DIV/0!					

Cri	0.29	0.47	0.59	0.65	0.71	0.76	0.82	0.88	0.94	1	1	
Di	3.75	3.56	3.33	2.75	2.40	2.17	2.00	1.88	1.78	#DIV/0!		



12. Satanchuli Community Forest User Group, Bharatpur Municipality-1, Chitwan District Nepal

Power Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
STK	DFO	CFUGC	Devghat Dev. Board	NTNC	Seed Tree Nepal	Chitwan Saw Mill	FECOFUN	
TAV	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	
Xi	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6	0	0	83.3
Hi	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0	0	1
Cri	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	1	1	1	
Di	1	1	1	1	#DIV/0!			



Annex-5: Chronology of donors' forestry projects in Nepal

Project	Source of funding	Project objectives
Rapti Development Project (1987-95)	USAID, Peace-corps, grant and HMG/N	It aims at increasing household income and well-being through increased productivity, market access and sustainable management. It is an extension of the project initiated in 1980. It emphasizes decentralized planning and strengthening of user groups and an improvement in line agencies' capacity to deliver services.
Community Forestry Training (1989-96)	DANIDA grant and HMG/N	It aims at improving the technical & managerial capabilities of the DoF staff and the communities. This project is run parallel to the World Bank-sponsored community forestry.
Nepal Hill Community Forestry Project (1989-96)	World Bank loan, UNDP grant and HMG/N	It aims at establishing forest management system so as to conserve and expand the forest resource base required for sustaining the subsistence farming system and livelihood. It is an expansion of the project run since 1979. Poor incentive system for field staff is seen as a constraint.
Forest Development (1990-1995)	USAID grant and HMG/N	It aims at strengthening the capacity of the Forest Ministry to implement Forest Sector Master Plan programs.
Nepal Australia Community Forestry (Six phases) (1978-2006)	AUSAID grant and HMG/N	It aims at assisting the government in achieving community welfare and self reliance through improvement in forestry development and conservation. It is an extension of the project initiated in early 1978.
Dolakha- Ramechaap Community Forestry / Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project Currently VI phase (1990-2010)	SDC grant and HMG/N	It aims at improving local access to forests on a sustained basis through participatory initiative. External evaluation in 2007 highlighted "this is a successful, highly innovative, flexible and responsive project. It has demonstrated real progress in this phase to redirect community forestry

		to contribute to poverty alleviation”.
Churia-Forestry Project 1992 - 2004	GTZ and HMG/N	The project aim is to improve livelihoods of the local population through rehabilitation and sustainable use of the Churia forests in the districts of Siraha, Saptari and Udayapur by its participatory integrated resources management approach with emphasis on community forestry, off-forest income generation, soil conservation, and promotion of alternative energy.
Nepal-UK community Forestry (1993-2001)	DFID grant and HMG/N	It aims at meeting local needs for tree products on a sustained yield basis. It supports the community forest policy to transfer targeted forests from government to community management.
Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project (1993-2001)	IFAD loan, FAO grant and HMG/N	It aims at alleviating poverty of the people and improving the quality of degraded land.
Environment and Forest Enterprise (1995-2002)	USAID grant and HMG/N	It aims to help government promote democratic decision making in forestry and ensure the increased household incomes. Control and sustainable management of natural resources by community forest user groups, private farmers and entrepreneurs are emphasized.
Natural Resource Management Sector Assistance Program (1998-2005)	DANIDA and HMG/N- GoN	The overall development objective of NARMSAP is to improve the livelihood of the people in the rural areas of Nepal. The immediate objective is to achieve improved management of the natural resources of Nepal, based on local participation and using sustainable social, economic, and environmental practices. NARMSAP has worked in 38 hill and mountain districts and was the largest program in the sector in Nepal.

Livelihood and Forestry Programme (LFP) (2001-2011)	DFID grant and GoN	LFP's main organizational objective is to reduce vulnerability and improve the livelihoods of the poor and excluded rural people of Nepal. In addition, the programs' purpose is to enhance the assets of the rural communities by promoting more equitable, efficient, and sustainable use of forest and other natural resources. LFP operates in 15 districts of Nepal. It is an extension of the earlier phase project initiated in 1993 as Nepal UK Community Forestry Project.
SAGUN- Strengthened Actions for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resources (SAGUN) (2002-2008)	CARE-USAID and GoN	The SAGUN program is developed to build on the successful establishment of Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups in order to increase their ability to manage the precious forest and water resources that support people's livelihoods.
Biodiversity Sector Programme For Siwalik and Terai (Collaborative Approach) (2001- 2006)	SNV and GoN	The programme goal is to work towards self-sustaining forestry sector in Terai, Inner Terai and Siwaliks for bio-diversity conservation and equitable economic development.
Terai Arc Landscape Programme(TAL) (2001-2006)	WWF and GoN	Goal of TAL is to "conserve the biodiversity, forests, soils and watersheds of the Terai and Churia hills in order to ensure the ecological, economic and socio-cultural integrity of the region."
Western Terai Landscape Complex Project (WTLCP) (2005-2011)	UNDP, GEF, SNV, WWF and GoN	The immediate objective of WTLCP is to establish effective management systems and build capacity for the conservation and sustainable use of Nepal's Western Terai Landscape Complex.

<p>Reducing Poverty in Nepal, Through Innovative and Equitable Carbon Financing (REDD)</p> <p>(2009-2012)</p>	<p>WWF and GoN</p>	<p>The proposed project links to the ongoing project “Strengthening Restoration of Biological Corridor in the Terai Arc Landscape, Nepal” supported by the government of Finland (2003-2008).</p> <p>Project aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance knowledge and scientific basis on forest carbon. • Strengthen the capacity of government and the local communities on forest carbon, including the REDD mechanisms. • Develop policy and institutional framework for the implementation of REDD.
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Sources: HMG/N, MFSC-USAID 1995, Dahal 1994, Shrestha 1999, DoF 2010

Photo Plates

- a. Users' committee members of Raniban CFUG, Tanahun showing their records to the researcher



- b. The chairman of Dudkoshi CFUGC, Chitwan explaining why women took responsibility to manage their forests



- c. Direct field observation assists to assess forest condition: Gitawor CF, Makawanpur



- d. Highly regulative management practices make possible to restore the degraded forestland: Piple-Pokhara CF, Makawanpur



- e. Timber serves as a major source of income to the forest users' groups; but, only a few percentages of its shares go to the direct forest users. Photo: Satanchuli CFUG, Chitwan



- f. High expenditures on internal administrations have become the culture of users' committees: under-construction office building, Raniban CFUG, Tanahun



Zusammenfassung

Gemeindewaldbewirtschaftung (oder englisch Community Forestry) ist ein weltweit anerkanntes Modell für Dezentralisierungsvorhaben im Forstsektor. Sein Erfolg begründet sich hauptsächlich auf dem Versagen von zentralisierten Waldbewirtschaftungssystemen. Durch einen verbesserten Zugang zur Ressource Wald und verbesserte Nutzungsrechte sowie die aktive Beteiligung der direkten Waldnutzer an Entscheidungsprozessen wird nachhaltige, dezentrale Forstwirtschaft in der Theorie erst möglich. Die Praxis zeigt jedoch ein ganz anderes Bild. Entscheidungsprozesse werden häufig nicht durch die direkten Waldnutzer, sondern durch andere starke Akteure dominiert, die ihre Interessen durchzusetzen versuchen. Für die aktuelle Debatte um Gemeindewaldbewirtschaftung ergibt sich die Frage, wie man ein ausgeglichenes Machtverhältnis erreichen kann, um eine Verwaltung zu etablieren, welche den Zugang zu Waldressourcen sowie den daraus folgenden Nutzen den direkten Nutzern auch für schwächere Akteure garantieren kann. Die Studie beschäftigt sich daher mit der Verteilung von Macht zwischen den beteiligten Akteuren und untersucht dabei die tatsächlichen Möglichkeiten der Partizipation von direkten Waldnutzern, sowie die Einflussmöglichkeiten außenstehender mächtiger Akteure. Dabei versucht sie die Frage zu beantworten, ob sich mit dem Modell der Gemeindewaldbewirtschaftung der Einfluss der mächtigen Akteure verringert hat oder ob diese weiterhin die Prozesse dominieren.

Die Theorie der Studie basiert hauptsächlich auf der Machttheorie von Max Weber sowie der von Max Krott. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Vorhaben und Ziele im Gemeindewald von den Interessen mächtiger außenstehender Akteure abhängen. Dafür werden aktuelle Gemeindewald-bewirtschaftungspraktiken in Nepal analysiert. In acht Kapiteln verdeutlicht die vorliegende Studie, dass Gemeindewaldbewirtschaftung eher als soziale Beziehung zwischen Fortverwaltung, Selbstverwaltungsorganen und den anderen partizipierenden Akteuren gesehen werden sollte. Des Weiteren untersucht sie das offizielle Ziel in Relation zum wahren ökonomischen und sozialen Nutzen für den direkten Waldnutzer sowie den tatsächlichen Effekt, im Bezug auf einen verbesserten Waldbestand anhand von Biodiversitätskriterien.

Der erste Teil der Studie beschäftigt sich mit der Identifizierung aller Beteiligten Akteure in 12 ausgewählten Gemeindewäldern in Nepal. Durch eine quantitative Untersuchung der Machtquellen Vertrauen, Anreize und Zwang werden die mächtigsten Akteure ermittelt. Die Daten für diese Untersuchung stammen aus der Befragung aller beteiligten Akteure.

Im zweiten Teil werden zusätzliche Daten und Informationen durch erneute Interviews mit den mächtigsten Akteuren, Beobachtungen und der Analyse Fallbezogener Dokumente gewonnen und anhand der drei Machtquellen qualitativ analysiert. Dabei zeigt sich, dass offizielle Dezentralisierungsvorhaben und die einhergehende Etablierung von

Gemeindewäldern häufig nur ein Deckmantel für den Ausbau der bestehenden Macht der Forstverwaltung sowie deren Partner ist.

Der erwartete soziale und ökonomische Nutzen durch das Gemeindewaldbewirtschaftungsmodell in Nepal wird durch die ungleiche Verteilung der Macht nicht erreicht. Das ökologische Ziel dient den mächtigen Akteuren als reine Legitimation zur Durchsetzung ihrer Interessen und schließt die direkten Waldnutzer von Entscheidungsprozessen aus. Eine tatsächliche Gemeindewaldbewirtschaftung wird nur möglich sein, wenn die Macht so verteilt ist, dass die direkten Waldnutzer ihre eigenen Entscheidungen treffen und diese auch umsetzen können.

Curriculum Vitae

Rosan R. Devkota was born in November 22, 1975 in Gorkha District, Nepal. He graduated in 2000 at the Institute of Forestry, Tribhuvan University, Pokahara, Nepal. He did his post Bachelor of Sciences services from February 2001 until May 2002, as a Research Assistant at The World Conservation Union (IUCN), Country Office, Nepal. Then, in May 2002 until July 2004, he was appointed as Officer In-charge/Conservation Officer at Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), Nepal. According to the field exposures he experienced, he decided to focus his career by continuing the postgraduate studies on social and political dimensions of natural resource management. Being supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), in 2004 he enrolled at the Tropical Forestry and Management Master of Sciences Program, at Dresden University of Technology, to specialize in forest policy. His academic thesis focused on multi-level governance practices in community forestry in Nepal. After he finished his master studies in 2006, he immediately obtained a PhD position at the Community Forestry Working Group, Institute of Forest and Nature Conservation Policy at Georg-August University, Goettingen. During his PhD, he has actively been involved in Forest Policy Development Course teaching to the International Master students. He has taken a leading role to develop the DFG research project- Stakeholders, Interests and Power as Drivers of Community Forestry: Comparative Analysis of Nepal, Indonesia, Namibia, Albania, Germany, Namibia, Thailand and Cameroon- coordinated by the Institute of Forest Policy and Nature Conservation and focused his PhD research in Nepal as a case study. He has participated in a number of national and international seminars and has also published different papers on community forestry and forest governance.



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