

**STATUS OF GOVERNANCE AND SATISFACTION LEVEL OF
USERS IN COMMUNITY FOREST USER
GROUP IN SEMI-URBAN AREA**

**(A Sociological Study of Patle Muldol CFUG of Godawari
Municipality, Lalitpur, Nepal)**

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Ms. Karma Dolma Gurung has written the thesis entitled **"Status of Governance in Community Forest User Group in Semi-Urban Area (A Sociological Study of Patle Muldol CFUG of Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur, Nepal)"** under my supervision for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology. I hereby recommend this thesis for further evaluation and acceptance by the expert committee.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) are responsible to establish good governance, sustainable forest management and improve people's livelihoods. The study aimed to assess the governance status in Community Forest (CF) in semi-urban area by assessing the good governance practices on transparency, accountability and participation and measuring the user's satisfaction level. Based upon the findings, it is very clear that good governance in Patle Muldol CF is satisfactory but there is still room for improvement. The study relies on primary data from 60 CF users, where structured questionnaires were used for collecting information. The findings show that the executive committees contain 50 percent female of gender but due to lack of updated Participatory wellbeing ranking (PWBR), it cannot be certain regarding inclusion of poor groups in the EC. Inclusive committees in a CFUG may not always reflect good governance, as there is a chance that marginalized groups will be exploited in the name of inclusion. Therefore, there is a need to build capacity of marginalized groups before asking them to represent in the executive committees of CFUGs. Similarly, there seems to be a bit of conflict between the CFUG and the subdivision forest office so regular coordination and interaction between them is needed to solve this issue. Participatory monitoring jointly with subdivision forest office should be done on regular basis to ensure governance is maintained.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AWP	:	Annual Work Plan
CBF	:	Community Based Forest
CBFM	:	Community Based Forest Management
CF	:	Community Forestry
CFUG	:	Community Forest User Group
DFO	:	Division Forest Office
DoF	:	Department of Forest
DNPWC	:	Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation
EC	:	Executive Committee
GA	:	General Assembly
GoN	:	Government of Nepal
HDI	:	Human Development Index
HHs	:	Households
KII	:	Key Informant Interview
NGOs	:	Non-government Organizations
FOP	:	Forest Operational Plan
PHPA	:	Public Hearing and Public Auditing
PWBR	:	Participatory Well Being Ranking
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	:	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
VDC	:	Village Development Committee

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Governance is defined as the process whereby societies or organizations make important decisions, determine who has voice, who is engaged in the process and how account is rendered. (Edgar et al., 2006). Governance is a neutral term, and good governance is achieved if its attributes are in accordance with the principles of governance (Gurung, 2002). Good governance has eight major characteristics: the rule of law, participation, consensus, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and equity and inclusiveness. It assures minimization of corruption, inclusion of the views of marginalized and disadvantaged people, and that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard in the decision-making process (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific [UNESCAP], 2006).

Community Forestry (CF) is a participatory forest management system in Nepal that was started in the late 1970s. Gilmour and Fisher (1991) defined community forestry as the control, protection, and management of forest resources by rural communities for whom trees, and forests are an integral part of their livelihood. The Community Forest Act 1993 gives local people significant control in the management and harvest of forest resources (Euphrat& Shrestha, 2002). Because of this progressive act, community forest hand over process took place and Bhatta (2001) reported that about 850,000 hectares forest areas have been handed over to eleven thousand Forest User Groups (FUGs) in Nepal. Community forestry originated as an alternative arrangement of governance of forest resources and has now become a flagship institution for sustainable management of forests in developing countries.

Community Forest User Group (CFUG) is a local-level institution for forest management where the local people make decisions regarding forest management, utilization, and the distribution of benefits from the forests. The CF program in Nepal is regarded as a learning ground for governance reform due to the participatory decision-making, bottom-up planning process, gender and equity sensitivity, partnership among government, non-government and private sector agencies,

participatory monitoring, and evaluation mechanism (Pokharel&Niraula, 2004). However, CF program has been facing many challenges for improving the governance system within the CFUG such as lack of inclusive policy making process and pro-poor policy outcomes, lack of adaptive organizational structure and bottom-up planning, and inequitable decision making and benefit distribution systems (Pokharel&Niraula, 2004;Upreti et al., 2004). Rich and poor, male and female, and supposed upper caste and lower caste speak and are heard differently (Pokharel&Nurse, 2004;Parajuli et al., 2010). In poor CF governance, the distribution of forest products is inequitable, and interest of poor and disadvantaged groups is not properly incorporated (Kanel&Niraula, 2004).

In a forest user group, there are rich, medium, and poor households. The contribution of rich and poor households to community forest protection and management is equal. Forest products such as tree and grass fodder, fuel wood and timber etc. are used to meet user's subsistence needs and to generate income from the sale. Group incomes are also raised from monthly membership fees, fines and penalties, and donations from various organizations. Forest user groups are using this amount to undertake community development activities such as irrigation canal improvement, community building, school, and temple construction, drinking water schemes and foot trail improvement. However, many community development activities are not directly helpful to meet the need of the poorer households, and this raises the issue of equity of group fund management. Moreover, the rapid urbanization has decreased the participation of user group in forest management which becomes the threat in difficulties to maintain the good governance within the group members. People in urban areas are significantly less dependent on forest resources and they are engaged in jobs and businesses for their livelihood. They do not have significant time to be engaged in CF programs and meetings. Due to less interest and participation of the user groups, there is higher risk of inequitable decision making and misuse of resources and funds leading to poor governance in semi-urban CFs by the elites and Executive Committee (EC).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Nepal rural community livelihood are highly dependent on forest products (Paudel, 2017) in comparison to urban community. Due to less dependency on forest resources

in semi-urban and urban areas the relation in between community people and forest get distance. As community forest is one of the best examples of good governance where in participatory approach the forest gets managed. But due to the busy schedule in urban context, gaps in between the community people and forest management committee gets created which results poor governance. For example, less people participating in meetings and decision-making events and forest members keeping less interest towards the financial aspects and decision which can lead towards the misuse of the forest resources resulting forest degradation. Limited studies have been conducted on the status of governance in community forest in urban areas. After the introduction of federal system in Nepal, many previous Village Development Committees (VDCs) have now merged to become municipalities transitioning them into semi-urban cities. There is a gap in previous studies regarding how this transition has impacted the community forestry system in Nepal and how the governance in the CF in newly formed municipalities has been impacted due to this transition. This study addresses the need for in-depth and evidence based knowledge regarding means to enhance the limited engagement, livelihood benefits, and distributional equity in community forestry in semi-urban areas of Nepal, with reference to women and the poor. It addresses the scientific problem of the need for deeper understanding of the underlying issue of the persistence of power imbalances in community based natural resource management and the role of good governance in addressing them. The study has tried to address the following research questions.

-) What is the status of the governance in terms of transparency, accountability, and participation in PatleMuldoICFUG?
-) What is the level of satisfaction of users of PatleMuldoICFUG towards governance?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this research study is to assess the governance practices in semi-urban community forest user group and identify the relationship between community forest and local government in changing context of forest management.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To study the status, the good governance (Accountability, Transparency and Participation) in PatleMuldoICFUG

- To assess the level of satisfaction of CFUG members towards the governance in PatleMuldoiCFUG

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Community forestry program of Nepal is one of the good examples of good governance which successfully managed the degraded forest. The condition of forest describes the relation of members within the forest user groups. The forest user groups are the one who use the forest resource and manage the forest areas. So, the relation in between the forest user groups and group members in committee is also the other aspects which makes effective implementation of community forestry approach. The components of good governance such as transparency, participatory, bottom-up approach, decentralization help to sustain the forest management through building mutual understanding in between the forest user group members.

In existing context, urbanization can decrease the forest user group members' engagement or participation in decision making meeting due to their less dependency on forest. So, the forest user committee members and group members should be oriented on how to enhance the participatory and transparent approach for resulting healthy forest environment in urban context.

The study has assessed the key components of good governance such as accountability, equity, transparency, and participation. In addition, the study assessed the roles and responsibilities of different actors (gender and caste) in managing the forest and as well as social dimension of community. Similarly, many research and studies have been done assessing the governance in rural CFs in Nepal but there has been no specific study focused on governance in semi-urban CFs where the dependence of users on the forest resources is very low. So, the findings of this research would provide the status of governance in semi-urban CF helping to fulfill current gap of research in semi-urban CFs and would be useful for academicians and related practitioners in comparing the governance status in semi-urban area with that of rural area and doing further research in this field.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Overview

Elinor Ostrom uses the term "common pool resources" (CPR) for natural resources used commonly by many individuals that have long been subject to overexploitation and misuse for their own best interests by individuals. According to Ostrom, the sturdy cooperative institutions organized and governed by the resource users themselves are the approach to resolving the problem of the commons. Ostrom (1990, 2000) identified eight recurring principles in successful collective actions related to common-pool resources: 1) Clear boundaries; 2) Equivalence between costs and benefits; 3) Collective choice agreements, with the participation of all; 4) Efficient monitoring; 5) Gradual sanctions; 6) Simple and fast conflict resolution mechanisms; 7) Legitimacy of internal norms versus external forces; and 8) Multiple layers of nested enterprises in larger groups.

Community forests in Nepal are good example of common pool resources with clearly identified boundary. According to Jackson and Ingles (1995), Community Forestry refers to the situation where forests are controlled and managed as common property by groups of rural people who agree to use them to support their farms and households. The CFUGs serve as common property resource institutions at the grassroot level and provide many goods and services to the livelihoods of local people (Acharya, 2017). The possibility of law enforcement and mutual control is higher in smaller groups like FUGs which helps reduce the potential problem (Karki et al., 1994). CF can demonstrate an excellent example of co-management of common property resource in the forestry sector but only if there is good governance with each member of the FUG having equal rights over the resources and making all kinds of decisions.

Good governance indicates the process in which the conduct of governance is democratic, people-oriented, and participatory through accountability, transparency, and participation (Rajbhandary, 2002). It is considered as the last resort whereas the journey for reaching the desired destination is through improvement in governance (Bhattarai, 2013). It leads to good management, performance, stewardship of public

fund, public engagement, and ultimately good outcomes (Bhatta, 2076) and satisfaction of the people. Good governance, people centered governance, responsive governance all call for a collective sense of destiny and direction for human beings (Ansari & Singh, 2009). Equality, greater participation, welfare, and happiness of the people, transparent, effective, accountable and people friendly government would contribute to enhancing and promoting good governance. Therefore, good governance must recognize and serve the interest of people (Lamichhane, 2021).

2.2 Review of Previous Studies

2.2.1 Community Forests in Nepal

Community forestry is renowned as one of the key solutions to forest management and governance challenges in the developing world (Sapkota et al., 2020) and as the most successful participatory approach (Baral et al., 2019; Joshi et al., 2021). Well-established policies and institutions are in place to govern CF in Nepal. Forest Act 2019, Forest Regulation 1994, CF Program Development Guidelines 2015, and number of directives of the government have been crucial to organize and develop CFUGs. These policy instruments are considered the milestones not only for decentralizing forest management rights to the local people but also institutionalizing meaningful participation and equitable benefit sharing among resource users. CF legislations and institutions are considered pioneer to institutionalize equal participation of women and promote inclusive and participatory decision-making process in Nepal. However, effective implementation of these policies has always been a matter of concern.

Many of the CFUGs are practicing the provisions of legislations and their operational plans as per their capacity. Different government and non-government agencies have been supporting CFUGs to enhance their institutional performance in implementation of these governance provisions. Some of the CFUGs have also established a governance assessment mechanism and developed governance improvement plans. However, evidence and experiences have shown that their enthusiasm, interests, capacity, and intentions on group governance has not been institutionalized and keep changing with the changes in CFUG leadership. Despite the better policy provisions and tremendous efforts from the Government, Non-Government, and community organizations, many CFUGs are being unable to enhance, maintain and sustain good

governance, gender equality, social inclusiveness, and equitable sharing of benefits as envisioned in the National Forest Policy 2015, Forest Act 2019 and community forest related directives and guidelines. The total fund collected in the CF account are to be allocated in such a way that 25% of it should contribute the forest development, conservation and management. 35% of the fund should be invested on women, dalits, indigenous and underprivileged groups considering the well-being ranking of CF. Rest of the fund can be spent on community development activities with community consent during General Assembly (GA) (Community Forestry Division, 2014). The multiple goods obtained from the community forests such as timber, fuel wood, fodder/grass, leaf litter, and many non-timbers forest products that are part of local people's subsistence and help strengthen the local economy (Khanal&Devkota, 2020). Additionally, Government gives rights for FUGs to access, use, exclusion, and management plan according to their needs but retains ownership through the community forestry (Paudel, 2018). Overall, the goal of the community forestry program in Nepal is to increase participation of the local user in decision-making of forests and gaining benefits (Adhikari et al., 2016; Joshi et al., 2019).

Participation has evolved as an important notion in policymaking (Mollick et al., 2018). Majority of the policy mechanism introduced at regional and global level focused for conservation and limiting forest resource use of forest dependent communities with livelihood improvement alternatives (Maryudi et al., 2018). Therefore, effective engagements of people living in and around forests play a critical role in sustainable development alignment (Djomo et al., 2018). Good governance at all levels reduces inequalities and promotes participatory decision making and sustainable management of forest resources (Piabuo et al., 2018). Similarly, it serves to improve the condition of the forest and feeling of ownership among local communities (Nygren, 2005).

'Governance' is perceived as establishing, encouraging, and maintaining a specific type of liaison between governmental and non-governmental bodies in the governing process since long time back (Howlett et al., 2009). Further, Barwick et al. (2014) highlight the strength of good governance for effective management of complex natural resources. Additionally, Lamichhane and Parajuli (2014) stated that the contribution of CF towards supporting the poorest, most vulnerable, and marginalized members of the society has been limited only within the CFUGs. Moreover, CFUGs

can become viable local and inclusive institutions for sustaining forests (Pokharel et al., 2007). However, customary caste system despite considered illegal by law, the ethnic and gender discrimination are considered hurdles in poverty reduction and social inclusion (Department for International Development [DFID] and World Bank, 2006). The powerful actors of community forest have control over decision-making process; and can manipulate as resulting in biasness for poor, disadvantaged and marginalized actors (Yadav et al., 2016). Overall, corruption in this sector is still prevalent, which is threatening the governance (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation [REDD], 2015). Therefore, to ensure the sustainability of community forestry process, it is very essential to know how the governance is prevailing within it.

2.2.2 Good Governance in Community Forest

Governance is the practice of power for the management of economic and social resources in the development of the state (Kafle, 2060). It integrates the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which all the stakeholders (the state, private sector and civil society) and citizens articulate their interests. It is all about the rules (United Nations Development Programme[UNDP], 1999) that answer the questions who, what and how decisions are made and enforced. Good governance is at forefront in natural resource management and development discourse (Mc Dougall et al., 2004). It accounts for the sustainable management of resources and livelihoods. The striking features in good governance are effectiveness, responsiveness, accountability, participatory, predictability, transparency, and equitability; and social justice, economic liberalization, political pluralism, and administrative accountability (Fowler, 1998). The good governance was first used in Nepal in Human Development Index (HDI) report of Nepal –1997 (United Nations Development Programme[UNDP], 1997). Later, the word has frequently been used.

Power imbalances between actors are common in community based natural resource governance (Colfer, 2005; Berkes, 2006; Ojha et al., 2009). These imbalances have been observed to reflect overlapping categories of identity in terms of gender, wealth, ethnicity and caste, education, linkages to more powerful actors or institutions, and other factors (Nightingale, 2011). There are pragmatic and ethical implications, including the marginalization of some people from decision making processes (Mahanty et al., 2006), lack of attention to the needs of some social categories,

weakened resource governance, as well as conflict, and other negative outcomes from the perspective of sustainable development (McDougall, 2015).

Forest Governance is defined as the set of principles and rules of forest resources management under which power is exercised and practiced in all spheres from private to public and the relationship between the state and its citizens, civil society and the private sector (Pokharel&Niraula, 2004). It can have different meaning at different context. But, for poor and marginalized people, good governance means an enabling environment with higher inclusion and reduced marginalization. That means greater opportunity for their involvement in public policy making, greater likelihood of being treated equally by the law, more space to associate and pursue interests, and a better chance of bureaucrats behaving responsibly towards them (Pokharel&Grosen, 2000).

The CF program has retained its most innovative element of governance through decentralization and devolution of forest management rights and responsibilities (Timsina et al., 2004). Annual review and reporting as well as public hearing and public auditing (PHPA) are some of the initiatives from the communities towards good governance in CF (Kunwar&Parajuli, 2007). Likewise, in terms of inclusiveness of poor and female members, Pokharel and Tiwari (2013) found that executive committees of project supported CFUGs are more or less inclusive of gender and wealth class. Similarly, Paudel and Vogel (2007) documented the activities of service providers to promote community forestry governance in Nepal and revealed that several government and non-government organizations (NGOs) have been playing an effective role in improving the status of good governance in terms of participation, transparency, and accountability.

Despite some achievements, there are many challenges that CF program has been facing for improving the governance system within the CFUG. Lack of inclusive policy making process and pro-poor policy outcomes, lack of adaptive organizational structure and bottom-up planning, and inequitable decision making, and benefit distribution systems are the some of the current governance related issues of CF (Pokharel&Niraula, 2004;Upreti et al., 2004). Only few CFUGs practice a transparent, participatory, and inclusive decision-making process (Tiwari, 2002.) Kanel and Subedi (2004) indicate that the contribution of CF towards supporting the poorest, most vulnerable, and marginalized member of society has been limited within the CFUGs. Rich and poor, male and female, and so-called upper caste and lower

caste speak and are heard differently (Pokharel & Nurse, 2004; Parajuli et al., 2004). Kanel and Niraula (2004) conclude that the distribution of forest products is inequitable, and interest of poor and disadvantaged groups is not properly incorporated in poor CF governance. Making CFUGs and their executive committees more accountable and responsive to all CFUG users including poor, women, and disadvantaged groups, was one of the major challenges. Because of the inequitable distribution system of forest products, the gap between the rich and poor users is widening and the involvement of poor and marginalized members in CFUG activities has been decreasing (Lamichhane & Parajuli, 2014).

Study conducted by Thapa et al. (2020) on effect of gender-based leadership on good governance in community forest management with case study from Bhaktapur district showed gender as important factor in maintaining governance with females being the primary users of the forest resources. The comparative study revealed that the female headed CFUGs was better in terms of all aspects of governance.

Study on assessment of forest governance on poor livelihood in Chitwan by Devi Prasad Paudel (2018) revealed that participation the poor users is found higher in passive and activity specific participation however it was almost null in case of interactive and active participation. The benefits from forests were found to be associated with the level of participation with poor users getting fewer amounts of benefits than that of non-poor users. This study suggested for development and implementation of the appropriate mechanism that ensures active and interactive participation of the poor and marginalized users along with the access of poor users in decision making process.

Another study on Community Forest Management in the Changing Context of Forest Governance by Prabin Pandit (2020) showed that elite capture was still a major weakness in CF with resource utilization records and distribution patterns of CF revealed that rich and medium households were more benefited from the timber than poor households.

These research and studies have mainly assessed the governance in rural CFs in Nepal but there has been no specific study focused on governance in semi-urban CF. So, the findings of this research would provide the status of governance in semi-urban CF helping to fulfill current gap of research in semi-urban CFs by assessing the

governance status in PatleMuldol CF which is in semi-urban area and measuring the level of satisfaction of its users through Household (HH) survey and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

CHAPTER III

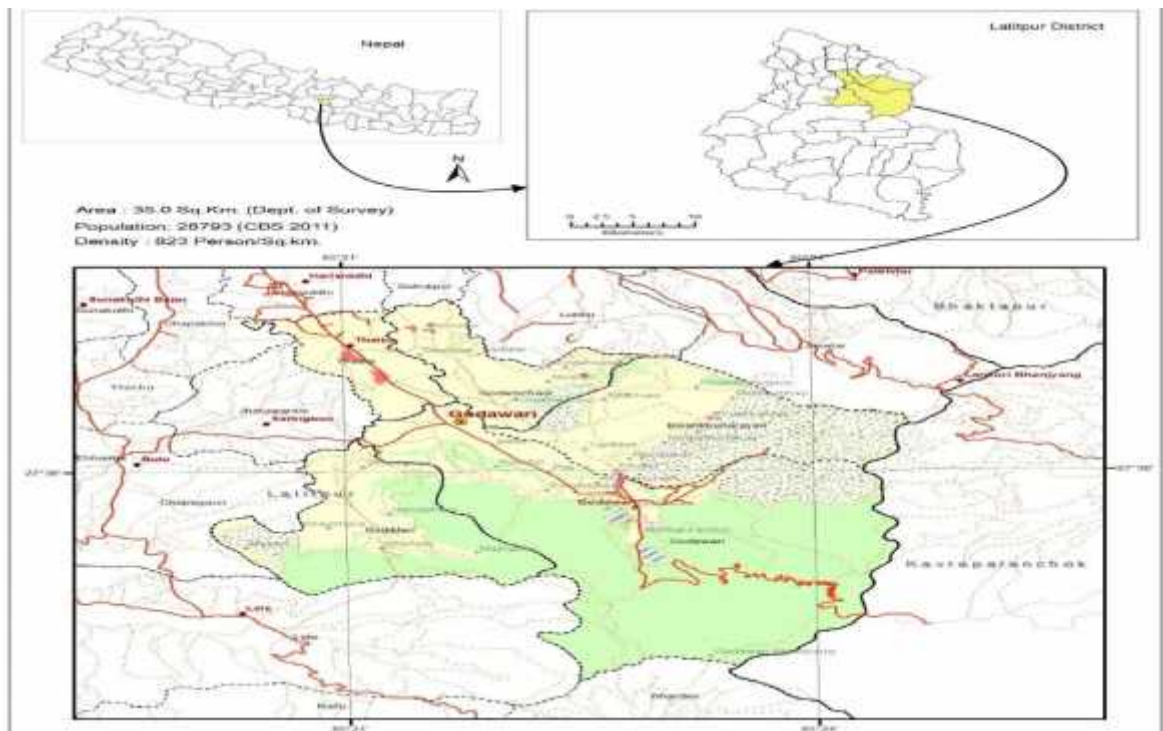
METHODOLOGY

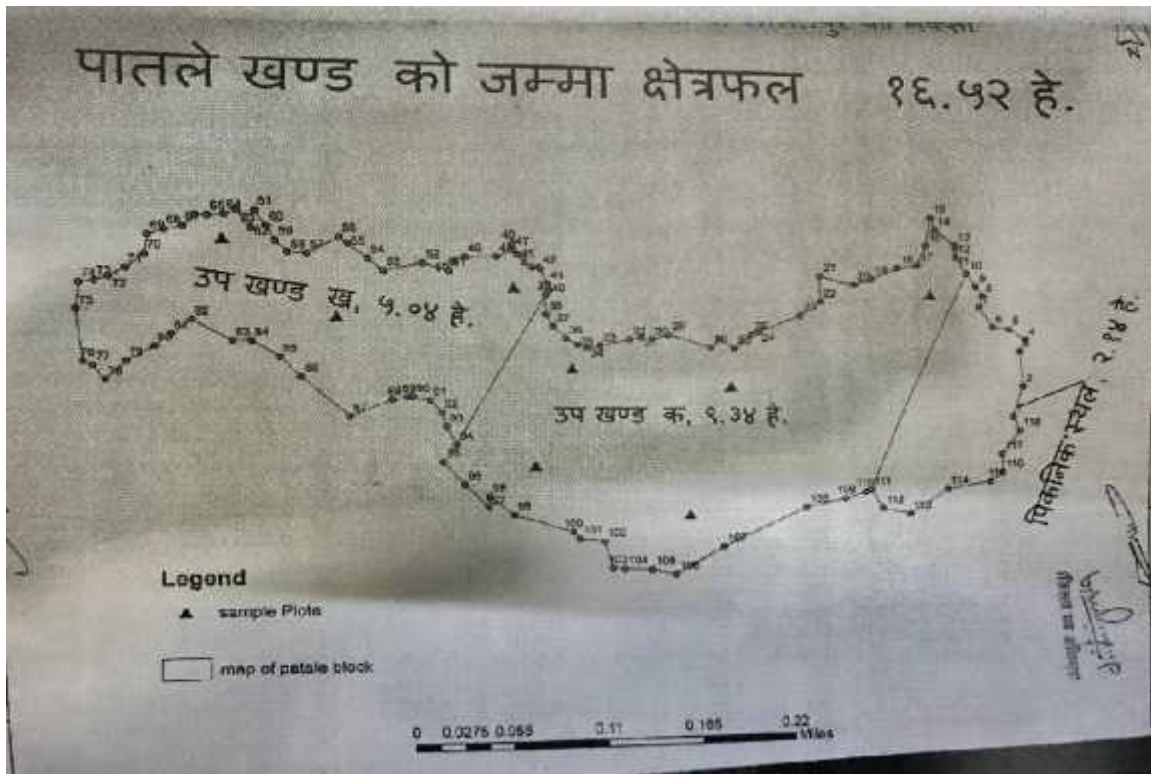
3.1 Rationale for the Selection of Study Area

PatleMuldol Community Forest User Group was chosen for the study as it has recently transitioned into urban area after its restructuring from VDC to municipality. There is good forest cover with reliable source of revenue and the EC is actively engaged. It lies in Godawari municipality covering an area of 16.52 Ha. Godawari is a municipality in Lalitpur District in Bagmati Province of Nepal. Before the federal system of system, there were 12 VDCs namely Godawari, Badikhel, Bisankhunarayan, Godamchaur, Devichaur, Dukuchhap, Chhampi, Thecho, Chapagaun, Jharuwarasi, Lele and Thaiba within the now Godawari municipality. The center of this rural municipality is located at Bajrabarahi where PatleMuldol CF is located. PatleMuldol CF is gradually transitioning into the urban area, so it is the ideal site for this study.

As per 2021 Nepal census, it has a population of 100,972 people living in 24,771 individual households. The geographical location is located at latitude 27° 35' 55 N and longitude 85° 23' 14 E with an altitude 1579 meter. Godawari comes under the Pulchowki watershed area in the southeast corner of the Kathmandu Valley, which is about 15 km far from the capital of Nepal. In total 203 community forests are registered in Lalitpur district under Division Forest Office, Lalitpur which covers 11125.06 hectare of forest land areas. Similarly, PatleMuldolCFUG falls under Bajrabarahi Subdivision Forest Office which handles 23 community forests.

Figure 3.1: Map of the Study Area





3.2 Research Design

This study has adopted a descriptive research design. The collected data and quantitative information are analyzed descriptively and elaborately to provide as in-depth understanding of food governance practices in CFUG in semi-urban area.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

This study consists of both qualitative and quantitative data. Both primary and secondary data were collected. The study is primarily based on field level information gathered through the HH survey for quantitative information and KIIs for qualitative information. Secondary data are used to shape the study framework, data collection instrument and triangulate the information received from the primary data.

3.4 Universe and Sample

The total number of HHs in PatleMuldol Community Forest User Group is 60. Out of 60 HHs, 7 HHs belong to Janjati and the rest of 53 HHs belong to Bhramin/Chhetri/Thakuri (BCT) communities. For this research, all 60 HHs were taken using the census method.

3.5 Data Collection

The selection of appropriate instrument for data collection is an important part of a research plan. Both primary and secondary information were collected from the community forest, Division Forest Office(DFO) and Sub-Division Forest Office. Following data collection method were used to collect the primary and secondary data.

a. Primary Data Collection

Primary data were collected from the combination of social survey methods involving key informant interviews and household survey.

1. Household Survey:

The household survey was conducted in 60 households using interview schedule with predetermined questionnaire. In most of the cases, the head of family was the respondent. Information regarding the status of governance in terms of transparency, accountability and participation along with the satisfaction level of CFUGs towards good governance in PatleMuldol CF was collected.

2. Key Informant Interview:

In-depth interviews were conducted with community forest executive committee and Forest officials. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect the information.

- i. **Interview with CF Executive Committee:** Three CF executive committee representatives were interviewed to understand the overall governance scenario in PatleMuldol CF and the role of EC in maintaining good governance.
- ii. **Interview with Forest officials:** Two forest officials were interviewed to identify the current issues of governance in Community based Forest Management (CBFM) and challenges in new federal setup.

b. Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data for this study were collected to supplement primary data and for some new information as well. The main sources of secondary data were Forest Operational Plan (FOP), Constitution of CFUG, Meeting Minute, Audit report, CFUG national guideline, annual report of the Division Forest Office (Lalitpur) and related published and unpublished documents, literatures, and journals.

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected information was compiled, processed, and analyzed both in qualitative and quantitative ways. Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the data. Similarly, Likert scale was used to analyze the level of satisfaction of the CF users. The analyzed information was presented in the forms of tables, figure (Pie charts and diagrams), and descriptive texts in different sections.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of respondent such as: age, education, religion, occupation, and gender are as follows:

4.1.1 Age groups

Respondent's age was categorized into three groups. 30 percent respondent belonged to 29 to 40 years age group, 55 percent respondent belonged to 41 to 64 years age group and remaining 15 percent respondent belonged to 65 years and above age group. Only adults were interviewed for this study and majority of them were HH heads.

Table 4.1: Age Group of the Respondent

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
29-40	18	30%
41-64	33	55%
65 and above	9	15%

Source: Field Survey, 2079

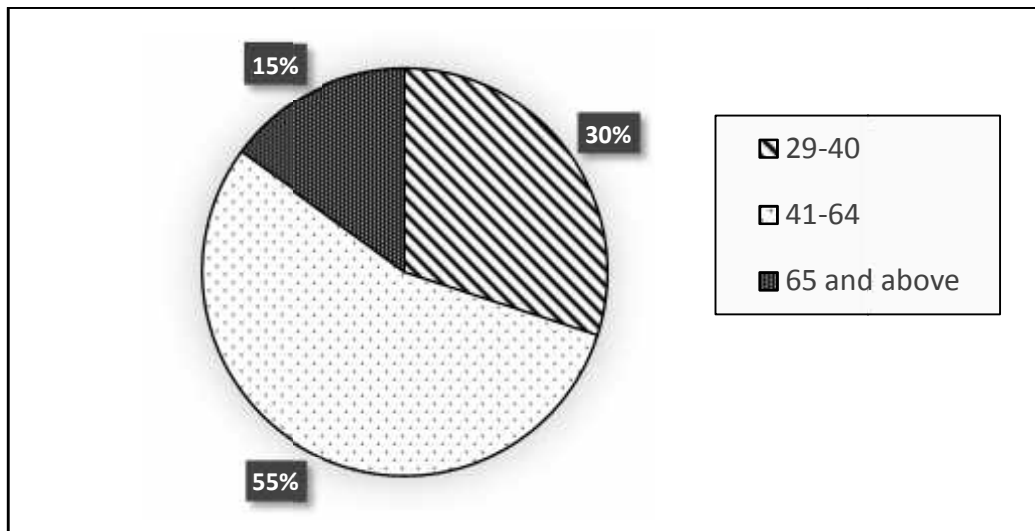


Figure 4.1: Age group of the respondents

4.1.2 Education

23.3% of the respondents were illiterate while 41.7% of respondents had completed high school. Majority of the respondents were literate and have completed high school level of education.

Table 4.2: Education Level of the Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	14	23.3%
Can read and write	3	5%
High school	25	41.7%
Intermediate	12	20%
Bachelor	3	5%
Master	3	5%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

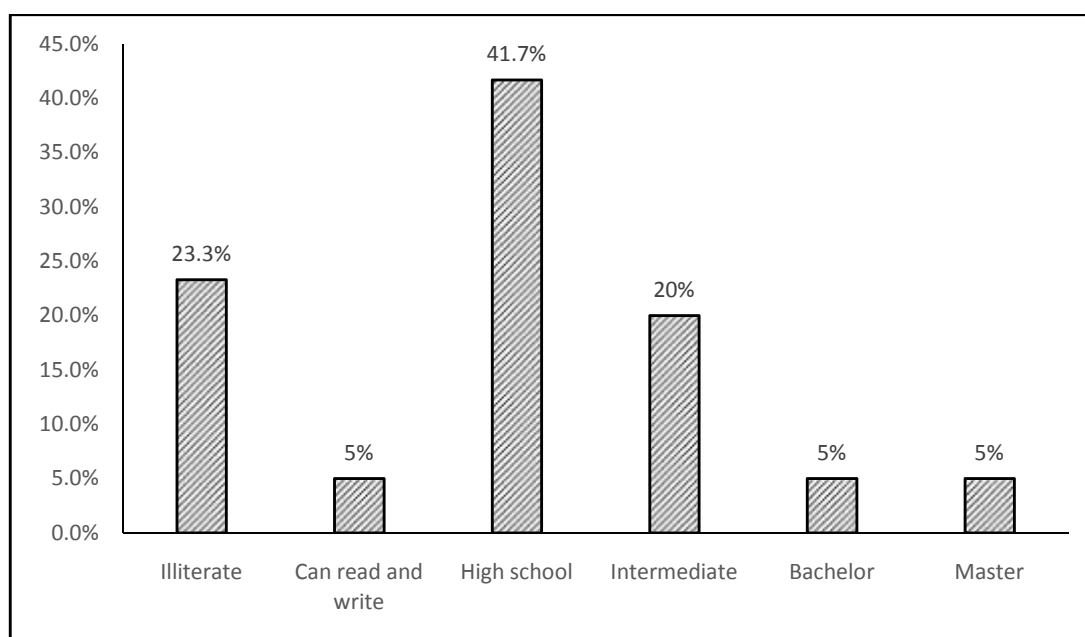


Figure 4.2: Education level of the respondents

4.1.3 Religion

Respondent's religion was categorized into three groups namely Hindu, Buddhist and Christian. Majority of the HHs followed Hindu religion as 53 of the HHs belonged to BCT category.

Table 4.3: Religion of the Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Buddhist	5	8%
Christian	7	12%
Hindu	48	80%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

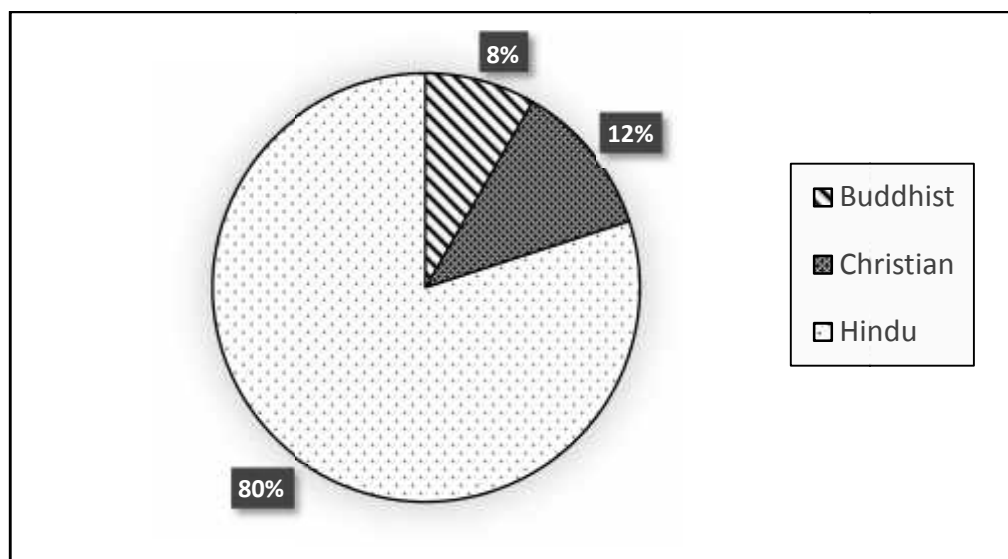


Figure 4.3: Religion of the respondents

4.1.4 Occupation

38.33 percent respondents were farmers, 33.33 percent were job holders and 20 percent were doing business. Likewise, out of 60 respondents, 3 were housewives, 1 was retired and 1 was migrant worker.

Table 4.4: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farmer	23	38.33%
Job	20	33.33%
Remittance	1	1.67%
Retired	1	1.67%
Housewife	3	5%
Business	12	20%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

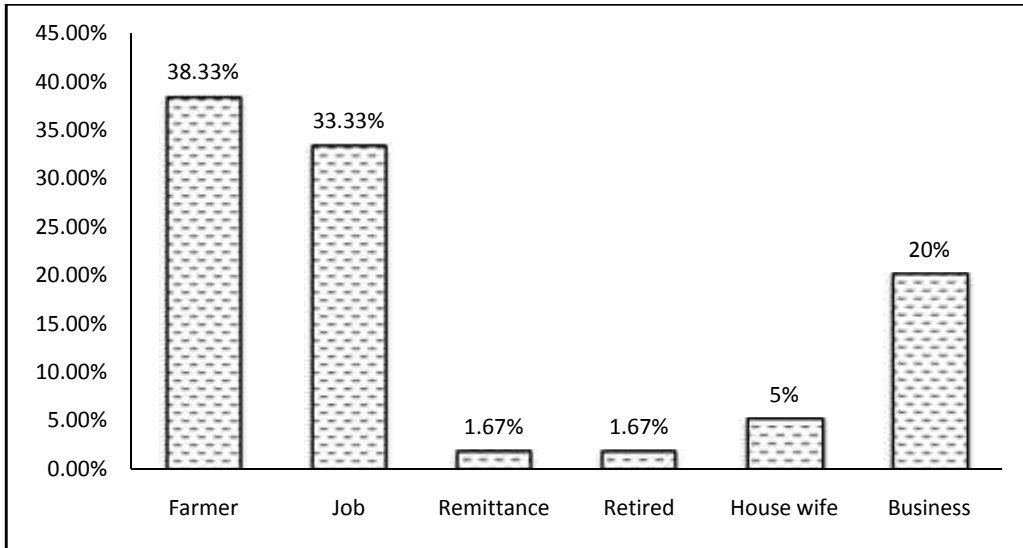


Figure 4.4: Occupation of the respondents

4.1.5 Gender

57 percent respondents were male and remaining 43 percent were female.

Table 4.5: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	26	57%
Male	34	43%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

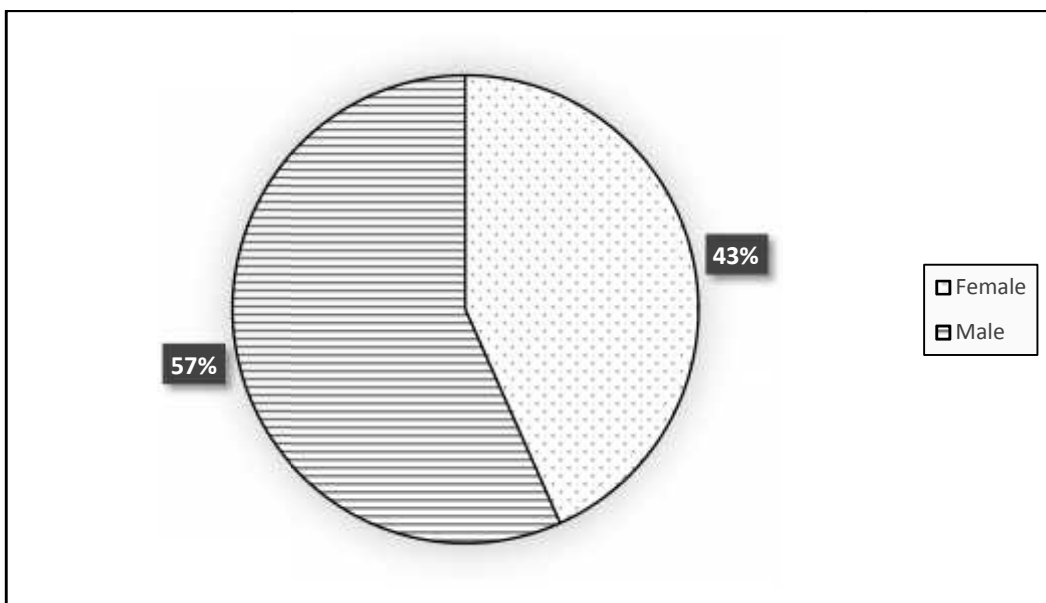


Figure 4.5: Gender of the respondents

4.2 Status of Governance in PatleMuldoI CFUG

Three key components of good governance namely Transparency, Accountability and Participation have been analyzed to determine the status of governance in PatleMuldoI CFUG.

4.2.1 Status of Transparency

Transparency is an attitude and approach to implementation whereby all the action and particularly transactions of finance, revenues and benefits are visible, clear, and fully disclosed to all stakeholders without any ambiguity and concealment of information. Similarly, it ensures that decisions taken, and their implementation are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations.

In CFUGs, all the users should have access to information. More attention needs to be paid in transparency in policies, plans and programs, fund generation and utilization, resource distribution and implementation of the program. To know the transparency status of the CFUG, the selection process of EC, transparency in roles and responsibilities of EC, PHPA process, provision of constitution, FOP and AWP and the monitoring system were considered.

4.2.1.1 Transparency in Role and Responsibilities of EC

In many CFUGs, elite members of the community capture the key positions in EC and are more interested in serving their own interests. Often the representation of the women and marginalized groups are ensured by EC only to fulfill the requirement set by the CF guideline and they do not have any say in the decision-making.

In case of PatleMuldoI CFUG, the EC selection process seems fair but often the same people end up being selected during the reformation process. This was because the users are satisfied with the work of the existing EC and they themselves are busy and do not have time to be engaged in EC. Other general users should also be capacitated by the EC and motivated to be involved in EC to ensure good governance because there are higher chances of misuse of power if same people remain in the EC for a longer period. 97 percent respondents felt that the representatives and leadership positions in EC were chosen fairly while 3 percent felt that the process was unfair.

Table 4.6: Selection Process of EC

Fair Selection of EC	Frequency	Percentage
No	2	3%
Yes	58	97%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

Puran Hamal, acting chairperson of PatleMuldolCFUG said, “The EC has the term period of 5 years. Every 5 years, reformation of EC takes places and members including the key positions are decided based on consensus during the GA.”

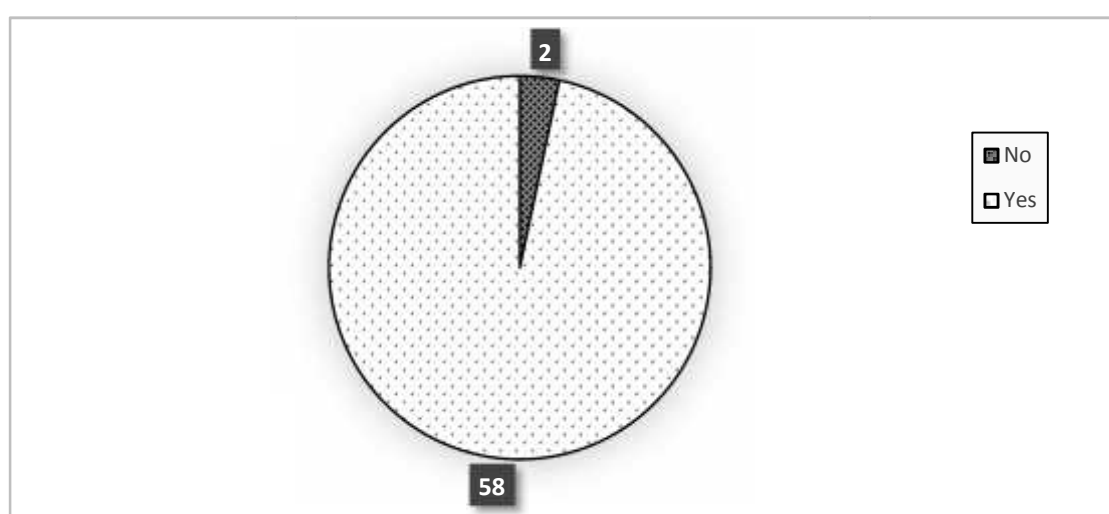


Figure 4.6: Selection process of EC

The CFUGs need to implement activities as per their constitution and FOP. In absence of updated constitution and FOP, the misuse of resources and power can happen. The elite groups may extract and sell forest resources haphazardly and the revenue generated will only benefit them.

Although the constitution and FOP in PatleMuldol CF is updated periodically, many users were unaware about this. The EC needs to ensure that all users are updated about the revision process and their opinions are incorporated into the constitution and FOP. 58 percent respondent shared that the constitution and FOP were being revised periodically whereas remaining 42 percent had no idea regarding this. Since many respondents didn't know whether the constitution and FOP were revised periodically, there seems to be a gap. To fulfill this gap, EC needs to ensure that participatory

approach is followed during the Constitution and FOP revision so that all the general users are aware about the process.

Table 4.7: Revision of Constitution and FOP

Periodic revision of constitution and FOP	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	25	42%
Yes	35	58%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

AnupaGhimire, Assistant Forest Officer in Division Forest Office, Lalitpur said, “Many CFs registered in Lalitpur have become inactive as the users are losing interest as they are not getting tangible benefits from the CF in urban areas. The Godawari area especially is very rapidly transitioning into urban areas. People no longer use firewood and the demand for fodder is also decreasing due to growing urbanization. The users no longer require forest products for their daily use, so the value of forest is decreasing. Moreover, in case of Godawari municipality, the timber available do not have market value so the revenue generated from the forest is not sufficient resulting in loss of interest of the user groups. They view it as burden as they must spend a lot of time and effort to manage the forest without much in return. However, CFs which have sufficient income from picnic spot management such as PatleMuldoI CFUG are actively engaged and renewing their OP and constitution on time.”

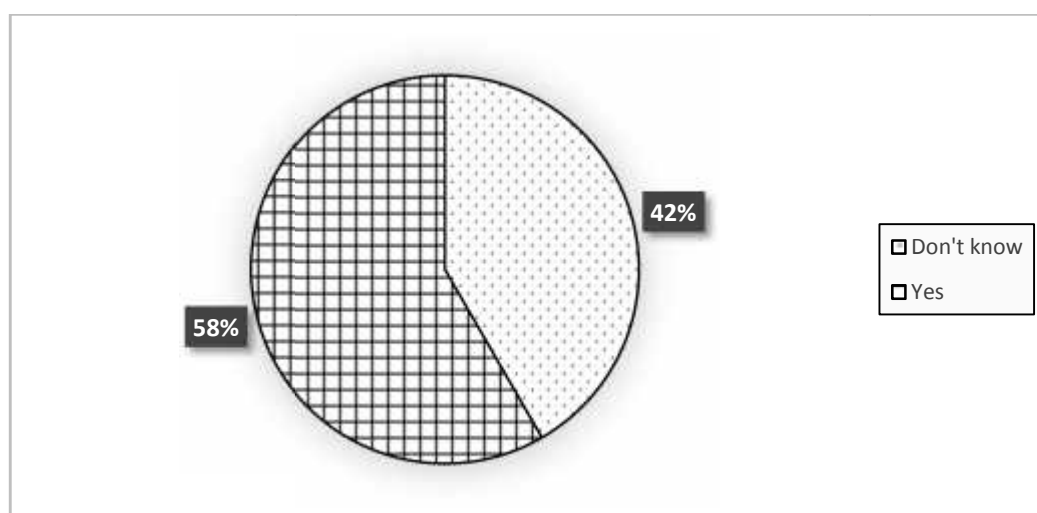


Figure 4.7: Revision of Constitution and FOP

Transparency in constitution allows the members to be aware of rules and regulations mentioned in the constitution and clear about the roles and responsibilities of the EC

and the general users. Similarly, FOP shows the activities to be implemented with a definite period (5 or 10 years). All users should have knowledge about the provisions outlined in FOP so that they can monitor if the plan is being implemented strictly and efficiently. Likewise, users should be aware about the activities within the AWP to ensure that all the activities are being implemented efficiently and effectively.

In case of PatleMuldoilCFUG, 88 percent respondents agreed that EC shared the provision laid in constitution, FOP and Annual Work Plan (AWP) which shows that EC are transparent in sharing the information about the constitution, FOP and AWP with the users.

Table 4.8: Information sharing by EC

Sharing of constitution, FOP and AWP by EC	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	6	10%
No	1	2%
Yes	53	88%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

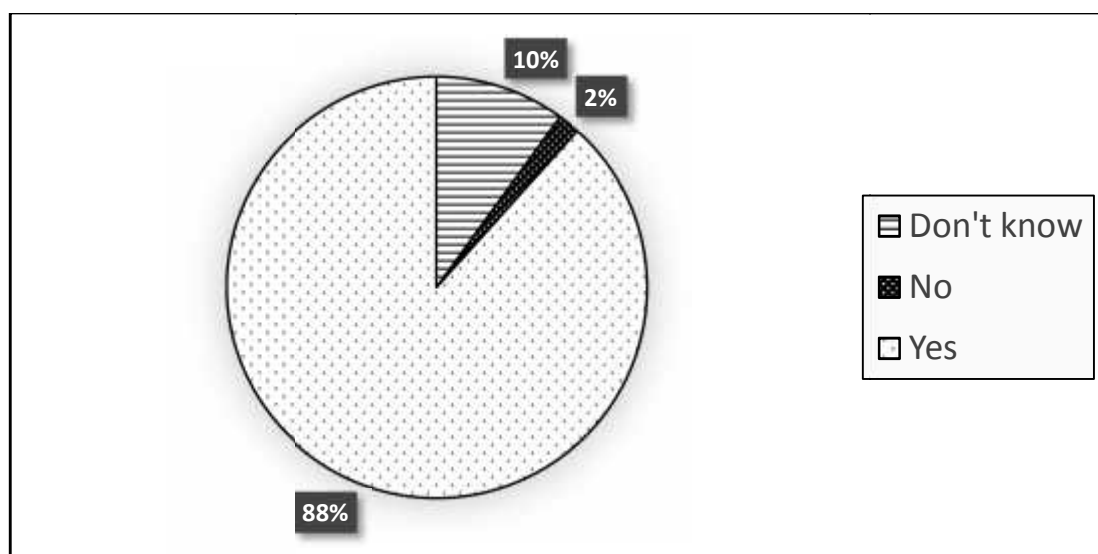


Figure 4.8: Information sharing by EC

85 percent respondents had no idea whether CF constitution and FOP included the issues of governance and GESI or not. Likewise, 10 percent respondents shared that the issues of governance and GESI were included in CF constitution and FOP and were being implemented accordingly. It shows that many users do not have the

knowledge about the content of the FOP. EC needs to conduct periodic sensitization programs to ensure that the users are clear on the provisions included in the FOP.

Table 4.9: Integration of Governance and GESI issues in FOP

Integration of Governance and GESI issues in FOP	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	51	85%
No	3	5%
Yes	6	10%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

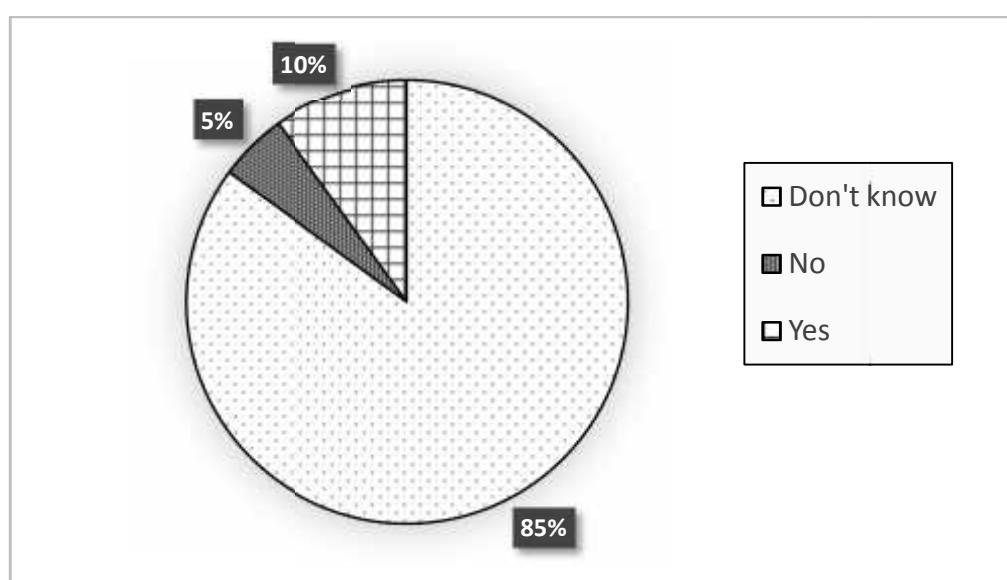


Figure 4.9: Integration of Governance and GESI issues in FOP

4.2.1.2 Transparency in PHPA process

Public Hearing and Public Auditing (PHPA) is a mandatory provision for all Community Forest User Groups. A public hearing and public auditing should be conducted at least once a year to inform users about group programs, income, expenditure, sale and distribution of forest products, group decisions and their implementation status.

In Patle Muldol CFUG, 82 percent respondents shared that their constitution and FOP has mandatory provision of PHPA. All 60 respondents felt that income and expenditures, reports, major decisions, and achievements were presented transparently during PHPA. It can be interpreted that PHPA process is transparent, and majority of the respondents are aware about the mandatory provision of FOP.

Table 4.10: Provision of PHPA

Provision of PHPA in constitution and FOP	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	11	18%
Yes	49	82%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

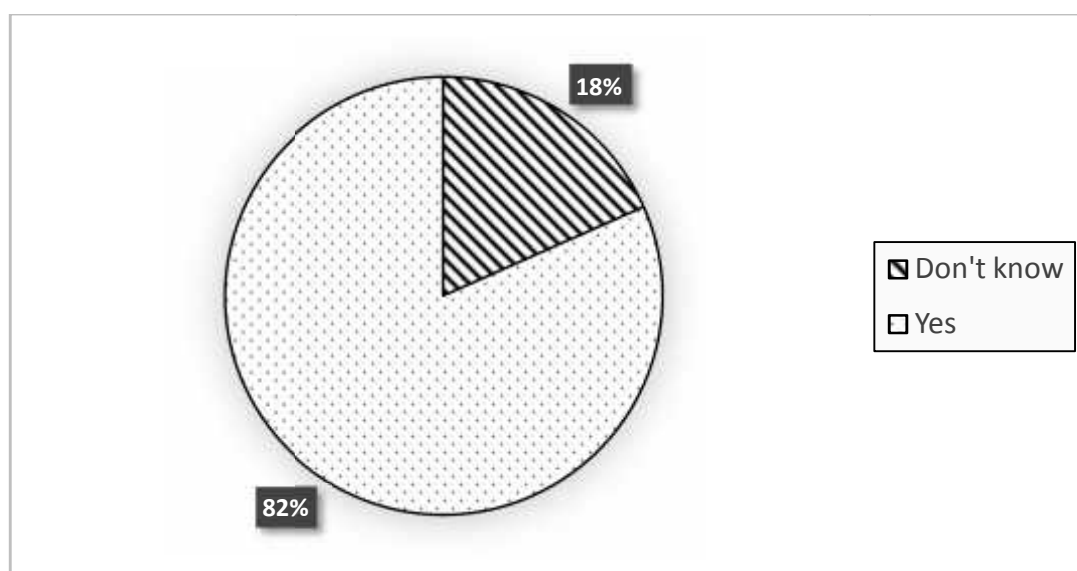


Figure 4.10: Provision of PHPA

PHPA should be conducted by a trained person so that the process is transparent and systematic. The trained facilitator can encourage the active participation of women, the poor, and marginalized caste and ethnic groups, and demonstrate respect for their inputs and aspirations. 93 percent respondents in Patle Muldol CFUG shared that trained person with recommendation from the EC facilitated the PHPA process. This shows that the PHPA process has been followed following proper procedure and guidelines.

Table 4.11: Facilitation of PHPA Process

Facilitator of PHPA	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	4	7%
Trained person recommended by EC	56	93%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

Ram Babu Khawas, treasurer of Patle Muldol CFUG, said “PHPA is conducted annually whereby all major decisions, income, expenditure, status of group fund

is shared with the users. During peak COVID 19 period, we could not do mass gathering but we did hire an auditor to audit our financial transactions. All the financial transactions of the CFUG are recorded properly. The record keeping system is paper based, but we are planning to upgrade it to computer-based system.”

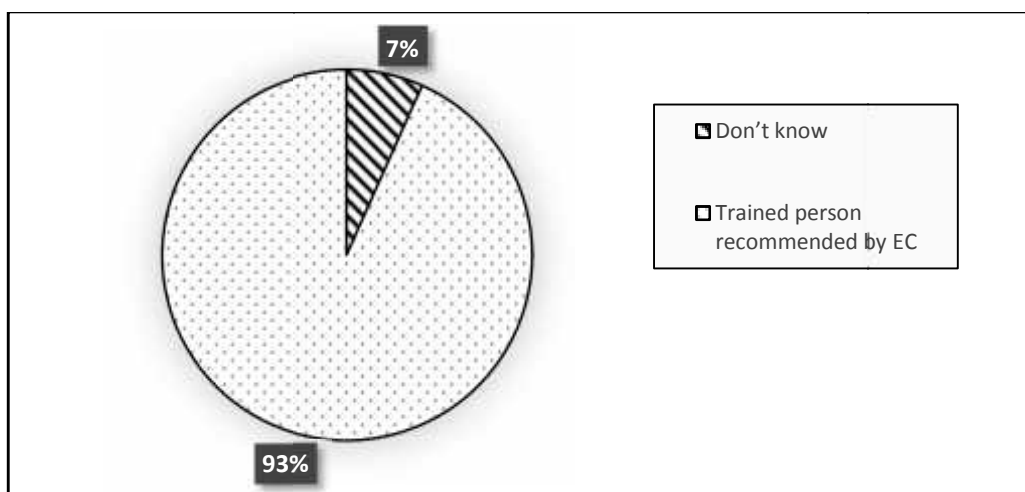


Figure 4.11: Facilitation of PHPA process

4.2.1.3 Participatory Monitoring System

Participatory monitoring system helps CFUGs to reflect, review and adapt their current processes, and through this maximize the benefits to the users. It ensures that the EC are performing their duties sincerely and the users getting their rights and following their responsibilities. Participatory monitoring should engage multiple stakeholders such as Sub-division forest office, local government, EC, general users, etc. Regarding participatory monitoring system in Patle Muldol CFUG, 87 percent respondents did not have knowledge about it which shows that the current monitoring system is not strong.

Table 4.12: Participatory Monitoring System

Participatory and Transparent Monitoring System	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	52	87%
No	2	3%
Yes	6	10%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

Ms. Durga Pokhrel, Assistant Forest Officer in Sub-division Forest Office, Bajrabarahi said. “After the restructuring of Range Forest office to sub-division forest, Bajrabarahi

subdivision forest office must look over 23 CFs whereas we only had to look over 6 CFs before. Due to limited human resources, it is difficult for us to oversee all the 23 CFs equally.”

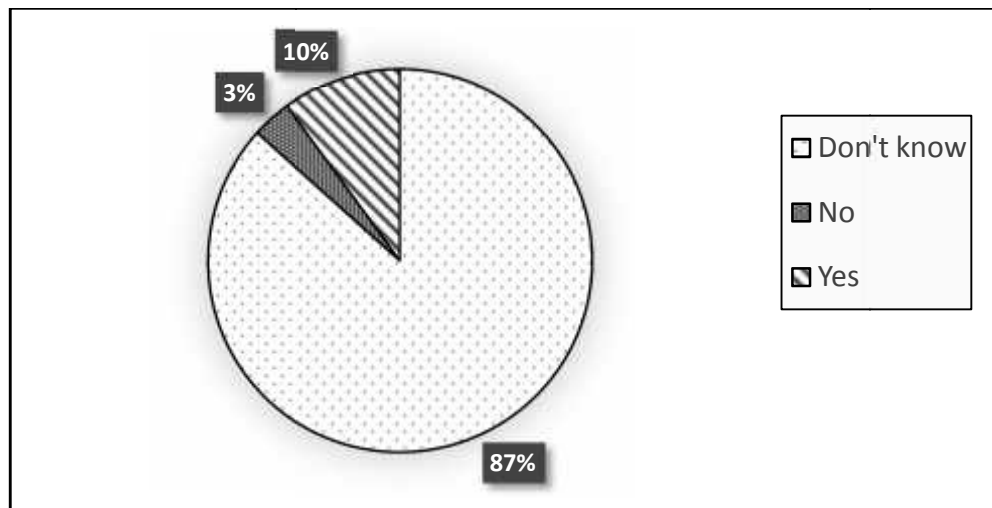


Figure 4.12: Participatory monitoring system

4.2.2 Status of Accountability

Accountability ensures that any organization or institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decision. Accountability is holding duty bearers responsible and liable. In community forestry, accountability is a must to be practiced by all the users concerned to lead the group as well as the forest management to the success. There appears to be the need of accountability from all the user members and EC as well. More attention needs to be paid on accountability to needs and interests of the users in addition to the policy provision of the group. To know the status of accountability, accountability of role and responsibilities of EC, PHPA and GA process and access to information were considered.

4.2.2.1 Accountability in Role and Responsibilities of EC

The EC needs to be accountable to their roles and responsibilities to guide their CFUG to success. Accountable EC timely accomplish their duties, conduct regular meetings, assemblies and make the decision on consensus that would benefit all users.

All 60 HHs shared that all the EC members were aware of their roles and responsibilities, and they were responsible and answerable for the assigned roles. 95 percent respondents felt there was no biasness from EC members towards any CFUG members and only 2 percent stated there was biasness towards certain members. This

shows that the EC are accountable towards their roles and responsibilities and treated all the members fairly.

Table 4.13: Biasness of EC

Biasness of EC towards CFUG members	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	2	3%
No	57	95%
Yes	1	2%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

Ram BabuKhawas, Treasurer of PatleMuldolCFUG, said, “The priority of the EC is to ensure that maximum benefits are received by our users. We don’t take meeting allowance and keep the management cost at minimum. Due to our benefit sharing mechanism, many HHs show interest to get membership and become part of our CFUG.”

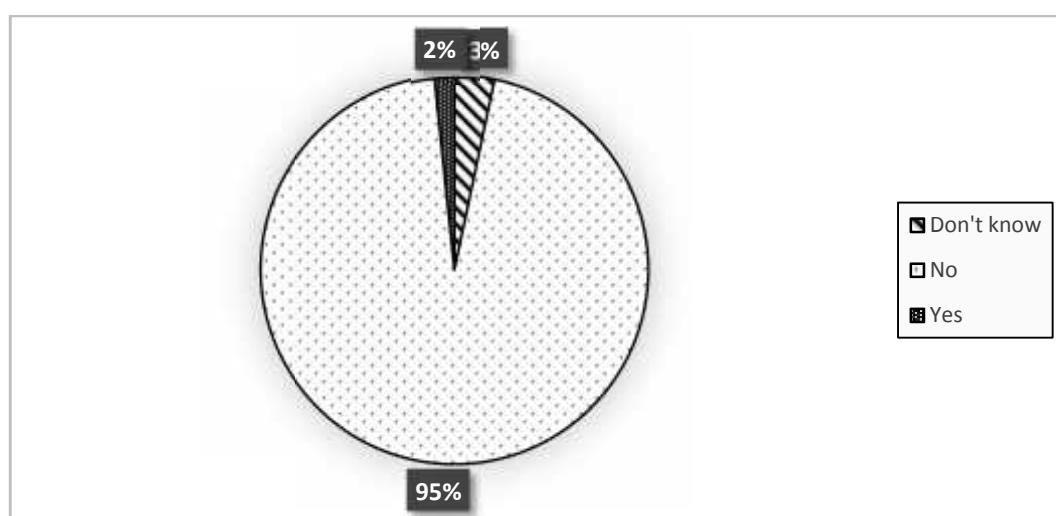


Figure 4.13: Biasness of EC

Conflict in power occurs when those in power prioritize their own goals and desires above those of others. In case of CFUGs, conflict in power occurs when EC abuse their power for their own personal gain and interest. EC needs to be accountable and prioritize the common needs and interest of the CFUG. Regarding power dynamics, 97 percent respondents felt there was no conflict over power in the committee and CFUG. It shows that the current ECs are performing their duties diligently and the users are satisfied with them.

Table 4.14: Conflict VverPower

Conflict over powerin EC and CFUG	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	2	3%
No	58	97%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

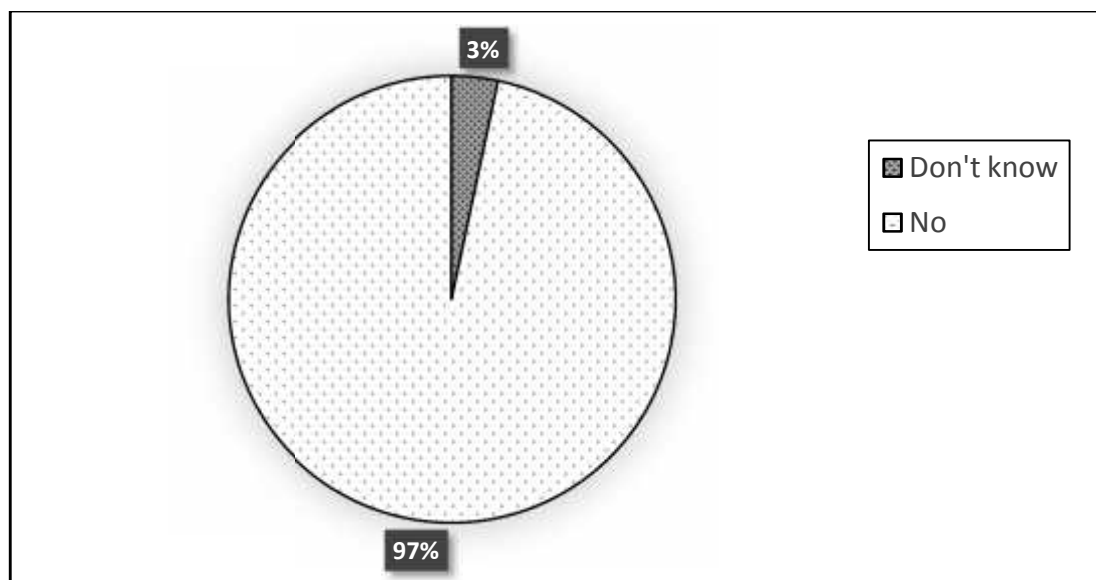


Figure 4.14: Conflict over power

4.2.2.2 Access to Information

Access to information in CFUG is the right of the members to access information concerning any decisions made, as well as on the use of group fund. Without proper access to information, users will be unaware of their own community forest constitutions and operational plans and lack understanding of their rights and responsibilities towards effective functioning of their FUG.

All 60 respondents shared that the services were easily accessible to the CF users. 65 percent respondents got access to information about the CF and their decisions mostly through executive committee representatives and during the GA, 23 percent got access to information from forest guard and 12 percent respondents got access to information through notices posted on the walls at public areas. This shows that the EC is accountable in sharing the information and use different modes to ensure that all the users receive the information.

Table 4.15: Access to Information

Information Dissemination to CF Users	Frequency	Percentage
Information received from executive committee members during GA	39	65.00%
Notices in public areas	7	11.67%
Forest Guards	14	23.33%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

Puren Hamal, acting chairperson of PatleMuldolCFUG said, “We use many modes of communication to disseminate the information regarding the CF decisions and processes. Foremost, the EC members themselves share the information to the users living nearby their toles, they also post notices in common public areas where the local people usually gather, and the forest guard also pass messages to those HHs which may be left out.”

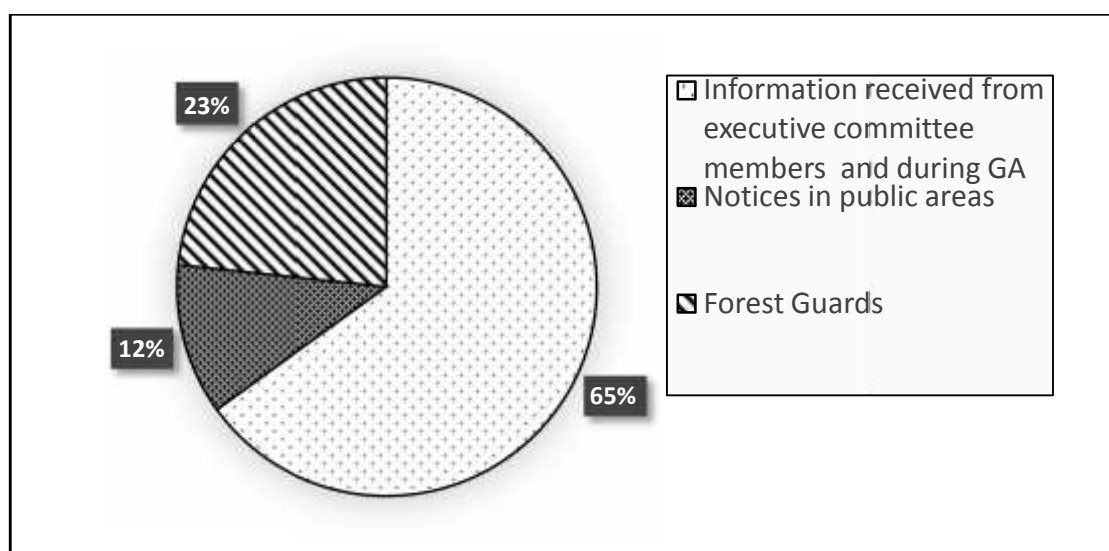


Figure 4.15: Access to Information

4.2.2.3 Accountability in GA and PHPA Process

PHPA and GA aim to strengthen the accountability of institutions. The rules and regulations are developed and approved in general assemblies. Following the procedure of consensus, the users form an executive committee. General assembly amend the constitutions and operational plans. In some cases, users can openly criticize, debate, self-criticize and praise one another. The income and expenditures of the group are reported and discussed in the assemblies and PHPA.

97 percent respondent shared that PHPA was conducted during the general assembly. All 60 respondents were satisfied with current PHPA process. All 60 respondents shared that GA was conducted annually and all of them were satisfied with the GA process and felt that they could freely put their own views during GA. This shows the accountability of EC as they conducted GA and PHPA systematically in participatory approach ensuring that everyone could voice their opinion freely.

Table 4.16: Conduction of PHPA

PHPA conduction time	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	2	3%
General assembly	58	97%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

Ram BabuKhawas, Treasurer of PatleMuldoICFUG said, “PHPA and GA are being conducted annually except during peak COVID period, one year was missed during the peak COVID period. During the GA, they invite 2 members-one male and one female from each CF members HHs, representatives from neighboring CFs, local representatives, and Sub-division Forest Office. All the major decisions made are discussed and agreed mainly during the annual GA.”

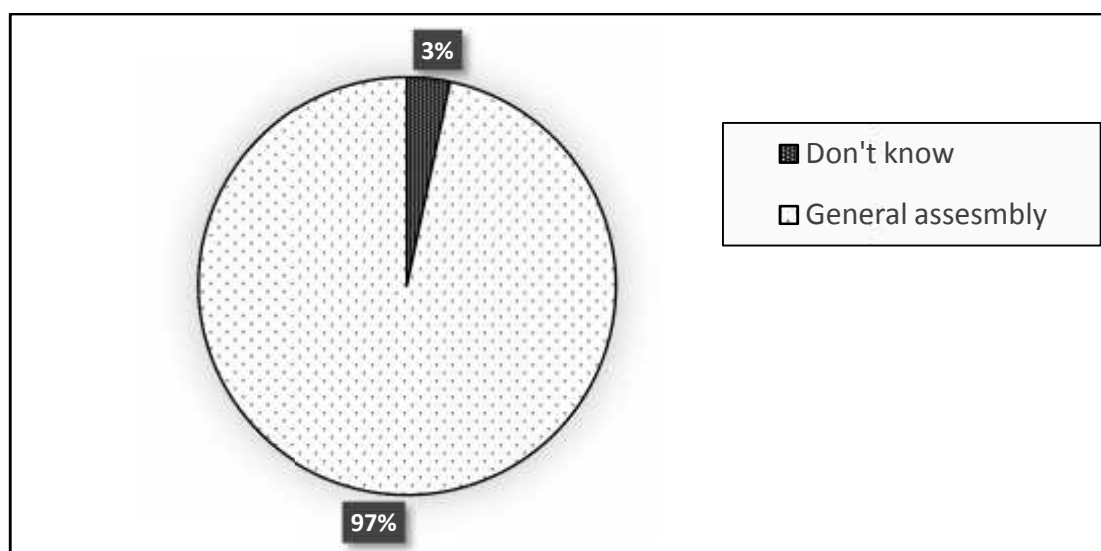


Figure 4.16: Conduction of PHPA

All 60 respondents shared that the decisions were made based on consensus. 65 percent respondents shared that all major decisions made in the general assembly were followed through whereas 35 percent shared that only some decisions were

followed through. This shows that the EC needs to prioritize following through all decisions made during GA.

Table 4.17: Follow up of GA decisions

Follow up of GA decisions	Frequency	Percentage
All decisions followed through	39	65%
Only some decisions followed through	21	35%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

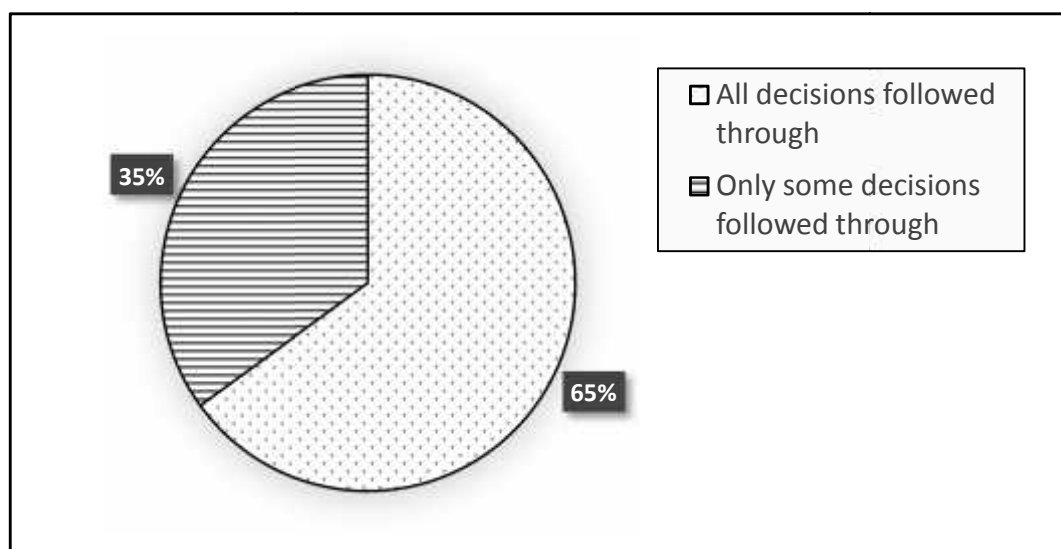


Figure 4.17: Follow up of GA decisions

4.2.3 Status of Participation

Participation is defined as the basis for democratic process whereby all stakeholders have opportunity to participate directly or are proportionately represented in decision-making processes. The principle of participation derives from an acceptance that people are the heart of development. They are not only the ultimate beneficiaries of development, but also the agents of development. It is considered that all the community people should equally participate in any development activities which are launched within community.

In CFUGs, all the users including women and marginalized groups should participate right from the beginning of need identification to the monitoring process, of any activities conducted in the community. So, participation in CFUG includes involvement of all members in planning, decision-making process, implementation of programs, benefit sharing process and monitoring. There needs to be more attention to the proportionate representation of user member in EC (leadership position) and

active participation in decision-making process, program implementation process and resource utilization process which makes the group sustainable. To know the status of participation, representation of women and marginalized groups in EC and decision-making process, PWBR status and benefit sharing mechanism were considered.

4.2.3.1 Representation of Marginalized Group

Participation of all members associated with any community organization is a must in the leadership selection process of that organization. In CFUG, there is need for inclusive participation of users in leadership selection process. During EC formation or reformation, attendance of all users is essential so that they could select deserving and capable individuals either through election or consensus. Selection of EC should represent proportionate ratio of gender, caste, and class. There should be proportionate ratio in key positions too.

97 percent respondents shared that the representation of female, marginalized and poor members in EC is according to rules and regulations. It shows the representation in EC is satisfactory.

Table 4.18: Representation in EC

Representation of female, marginalized and poor in EC	Frequency	Percentage
No	2	3%
Yes	58	97%

Source : Field Survey, 2019

Jamuna Silwal, member of EC in Patle Muldol CFUG said, “There is proper representation of women and marginalized groups in the EC. There are 5 women and 6 men in the EC. We all are actively involved in the EC, and everyone can share their opinions and voice equally.”

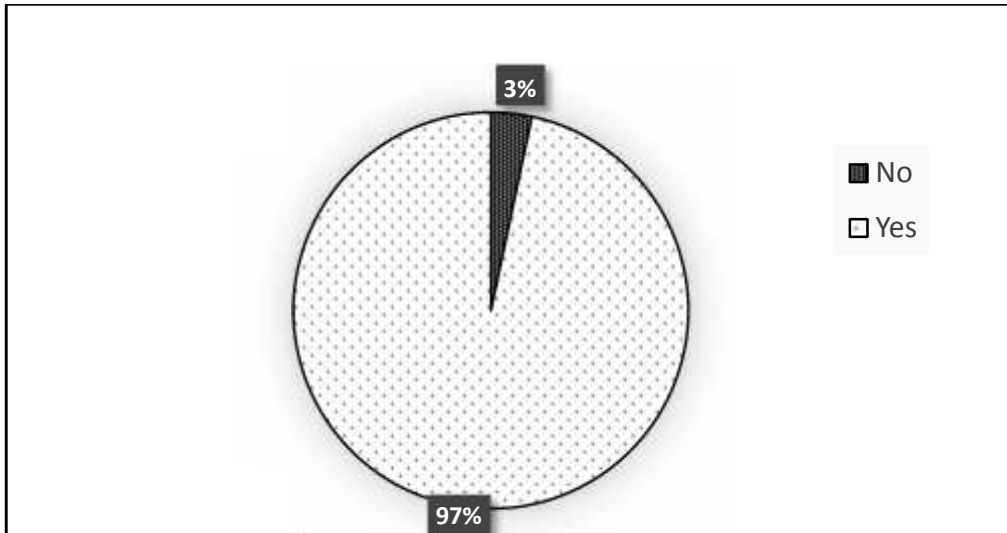


Figure 4.18: Representation in EC

Different people have different views and level of knowledge. So, participation of all the members of any community is vital in the process of decision-making. The decision-making process is one of the important aspects of community forestry and inclusive participation leads the group to the success. Views of all users should be given equal priority which helps to empower especially the minority and marginalized groups. Similarly, 97 percent respondents felt that there is participation of all representatives (women, Janajati, poor) during any decision-making process. Only 3 percent respondents felt there was not enough representation. This shows the EC in PatleMuldolCFUG follows participatory decision-making process.

Table 4.19: Representation of Marginalized Group

Equal Participation in decision-making process	Frequency	Percentage
No	2	3%
Yes	58	97%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

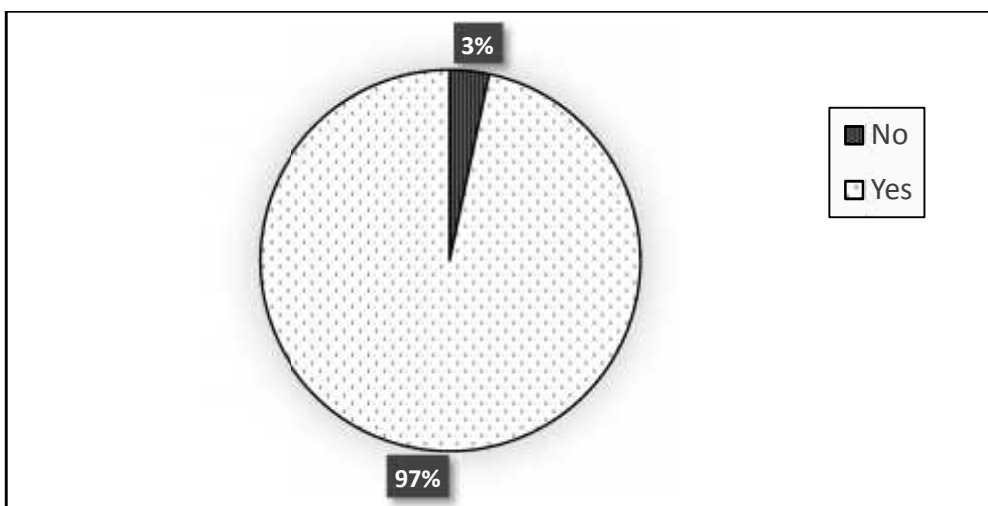


Figure 4.19: Representation of marginalized group

4.2.3.2 Wellbeing Ranking Mechanism

Participatory Well-Being Ranking is used to identify poor households and individuals so that poverty reduction support can be provided through community forestry initiatives. Participatory Well-Being Ranking is a process by which a group of households are asked to rank themselves according to economic and social status. Households are generally described as either rich, medium, poor, and ultra-poor. This process helps groups to allocate resources to poor and extremely poor households on a more equitable basis. Poor households get access to group funds which they can use to support a range of income-generating activities that help to reduce pressure on forest resources.

53 percent of respondents didn't know whether their CF had proper and complete Participatory Wellbeing Ranking (PWBR) in place, and 42 percent of respondents shared that PWBR has never been done. This shows that the respondents do not have much information regarding PWBR and EC should do an updated PWBR ensuring that all the users are involved in the process.

Table 4.20: Wellbeing Ranking Mechanism

Wellbeing ranking mechanism in place	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	32	53%
Never done	25	42%
Yes, but not updated in years	3	5%

Source : Field Survey, 2019

Ram Babu Khawas, treasurer of Patle Muldol CFUG said, “The PWBR has been done previously but it needs to be updated. We are planning to do an updated PWBR during the FOP revision process.”

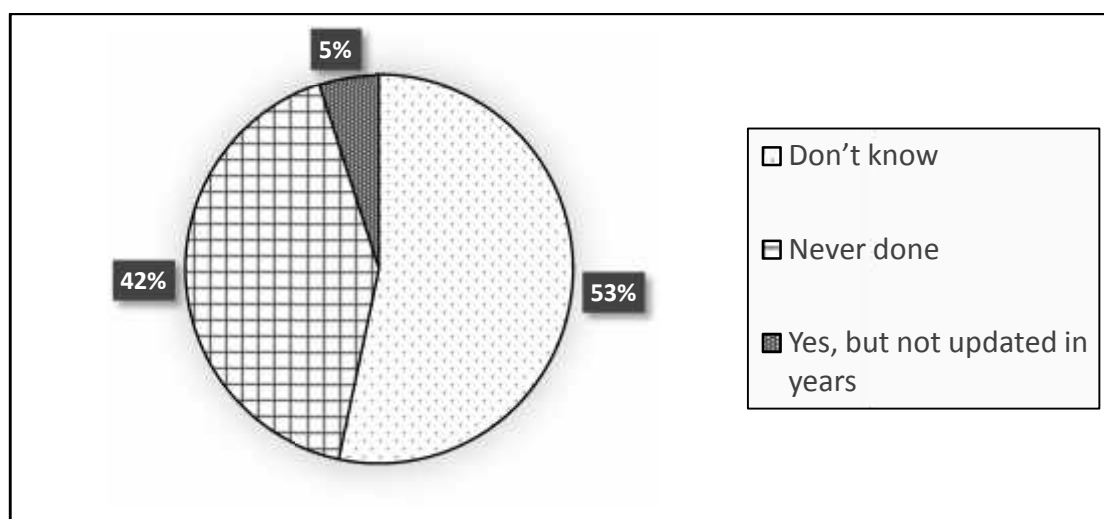


Figure 4.20: Wellbeing ranking mechanism

4.2.3.3 Benefit Sharing Mechanism

All the community people must be equally benefitted from the development activities carried out within a community. As community forestry program aims to empower and uplift livelihoods of poor and marginalized groups, there should be inclusive participation in resource utilization adopting equitable benefit sharing.

88 percent respondents didn't know whether there was provision of allocating 35% of the group fund to the ultra-poor (based on PWBR) is on practice or not. Only 2 percent respondents stated there was such provision in place. This shows that this provision must not be in place as many are not aware about this and EC needs to ensure that this provision must be followed to ensure equitable benefit sharing.

Table 4.21: Provision for Ultra-Poor

35% fund allocation to the ultra-poor	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	53	88%
No	6	10%
Yes	1	2%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

One of the main purposes behind community forests is the livelihood improvement of the poorest in the community. But often that is not the case as the elites and privileged groups are the most benefitted resulting in inequitable benefit sharing. Although the

provision of 35% fund allocation to ultra-poor is mentioned in FOP, it is rarely followed. Even in case of PatleMuldol CF, this provision does not seem to be fully in practice.

DurgaAryal, Assistant Forest Officer in Bajrabarahi Sub-division Office, “PatleMuldolCFUG has not allocated any budget for forest management activities and pro poor targeted activities are also not sufficient as per the CF guidelines which state that 25% of total CF income invested in conservation and 37.5% of total income invested for marginalized HHs. Skill based trainings should be conducted to uplift the livelihood of the ultra-poor.”

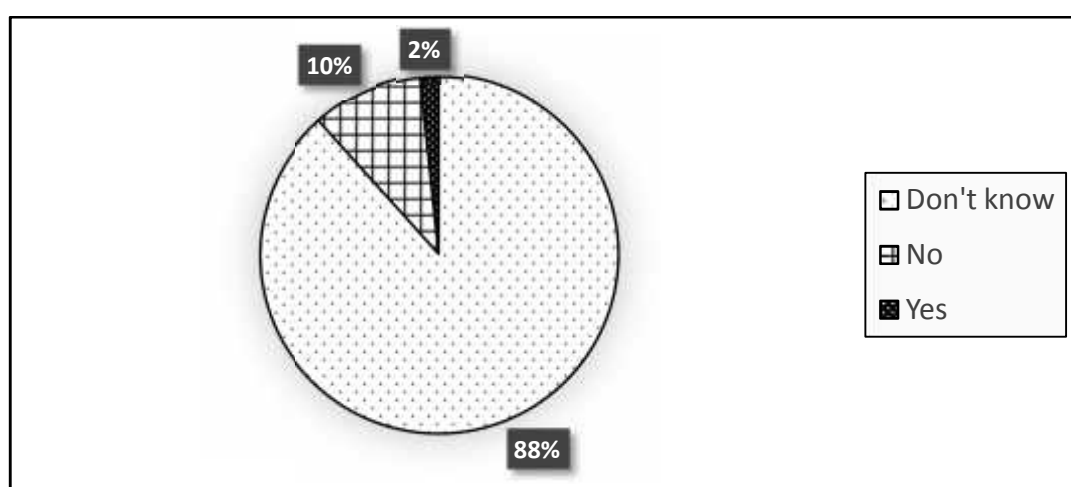


Figure 4.21: Provision for ultra-poor

All 60 respondents shared that all benefits and opportunities provided to all groups in equitable basis and that there were sufficient schemes/provisions for poorest people to uplift their livelihood. 82 percent respondents shared that EC made the decision of budget allocation for the most marginal households. It shows that users are satisfied with current benefit sharing process practiced by EC.

Table 4.22: Benefit Sharing Mechanism

Decision on allocating money to marginal HHS	Frequency	Percentage
EC	49	82%
EC and GA	9	15%
GA	2	3%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

Ram BabuKhawas, treasurer of PatleMuldolCFUG said, “We have employed one forest guard to protect the existing forest. We feel that all the revenue must go to the

CF users and should not be wasted on managing the forest as we don't use the forest products. We provide loans worth NRS 10000 to poor HHs without interest for one year to start income generating activities, provide scholarships to merit students, provide yearly NRs 1200 allowance to elderly people and disable people, also funeral rites expense in case of any family members has deceased, etc. Our users are satisfied with the current benefit sharing process. In fact, many other HHs living nearby also request us to be include them in our CFUG.”

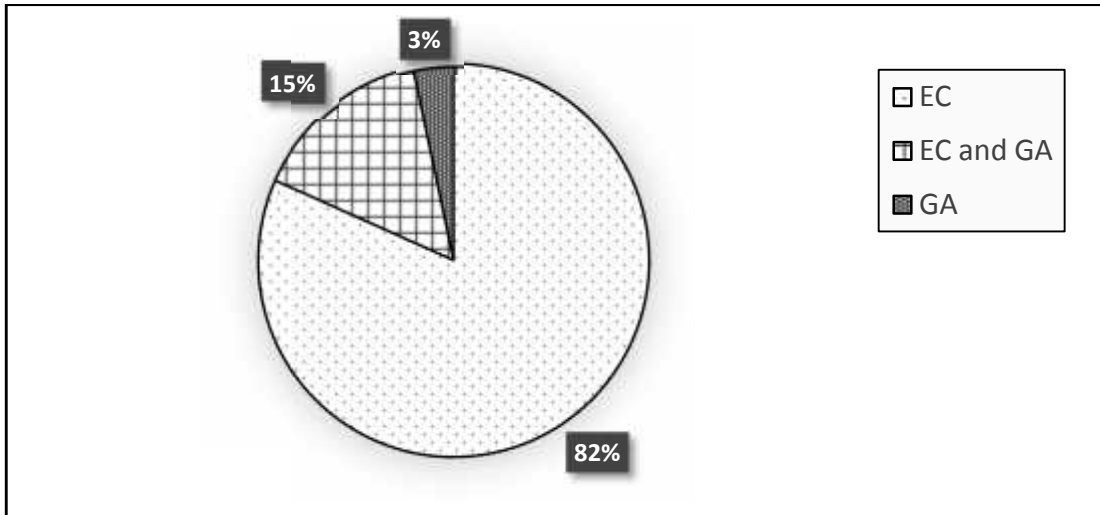


Figure 4.22: Benefit sharing mechanism

4.2.4 Overall Status of Governance in PatleMuldolCFUG

From the above results and discussion, it can be concluded that the governance status in PatleMuldol CF is good in terms of transparency, accountability and participation and the satisfaction level of users is also satisfactory but there are still some areas of improvement. The EC needs to facilitate awareness programs so that the users are aware about the provisions within their constitution, FOP and AWP. Similarly, the monitoring system needs to be strengthened.

4.3 User's Satisfaction Level

User's satisfaction level was assessed using Likert scale. Likert scale is a type of psychometric response scale in which responders specify their level of agreement to a statement typically in five points: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree (Neutral); (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree. It is often used to measure respondents' attitudes by asking the extent to which they agree or disagree with a particular question or statement. A Likert scale is a rating scale used to assess

opinions, attitudes, or behaviors. Likert scales are popular in survey research because they allow you to easily operationalize personality traits or perceptions.

The overall satisfaction level of the respondents is high as in all parameters the responses fall under agree and strongly agree. There were no responses in strongly disagree, disagree and neutral scale.

4.3.1 Satisfaction with the Community's Participation During Overall Process

Community forest is a common property managed by the community with participation in management, extraction and decision-making within the user group for collective action. Nepal's social structure is still discriminatory based on caste-system, gender, age and wealth. Poor households do not benefit from community forests as much as affluent households because of the decision by influential groups of people and poor people are suffering since they cannot afford to participate. In collective action, levels of participation include attending meetings, participating in forest management, and decision-making in relation to CF. Different levels of participation have been observed in community forest management.

In case of Patle Muldoi CFUG, the level of satisfaction of users towards participation is high as 80 percent respondents strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the community's participation during overall process. This shows a proficient level of participation of the users in the community forest management process.

Table 4.23: Satisfaction with the Community's Participation During Overall Process

I am satisfied with the community's participation during overall process	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	12	20%
Strongly Agree	48	80%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

4.3.2 Satisfaction with the Role of EC During NRM Planning and Maintaining its Governance

Good leadership is vital in leading an institution to success. Good leaders are role models for the people they lead, motivating them, supporting them and facilitating

communications among them. Good leadership helps shape a positive attitude, promotes harmony and facilitates maximum productivity. The importance of leadership in society should not be underestimated. In CFUGs, the EC play the leadership role and have the responsibility of leading the CFUGs towards sustainable forest management and uplifting the livelihoods of the poorest in the community ensuring good governance is in place.

In case of PatleMuldolCFUG, the level of satisfaction of users towards the role of EC in planning and governance maintenance is good as 90 percent respondents agreed that they are satisfied with the role of EC during NRM planning and maintaining its governance. This shows that the role played by EC in NRM planning and ensuring governance is satisfactory.

Table 4.24: Satisfaction with the Role of EC during NRM Planning and Maintaining its Governance

I am satisfied with the role of EC during NRM planning and maintaining its governance.	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	54	90%
Strongly Agree	6	10%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

4.3.3 Satisfaction with the Decision-Making Process

Decision making is the process of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions. Meetings of the executive committee and the user group general assemblies are two important decision-making forums, and such organized meetings and assemblies are regular events. In participatory decision-making process, active participation of women and marginalized groups is encouraged, and decisions are based on consensus and constitutions and operational plans are prepared in a transparent and participatory way. Major decisions of CFUGs were taken in the presence of all users in assembly whereas other minor decisions were done by the executive committee members. In absence of participatory decision-making, users are unaware about the annual planning of activities, procedures, rules and regulations and how to implement.

In case of PatleMuldoI CFUG, the level of satisfaction of users towards the decisions taken is good as 55 percent respondents agreed, and 45 percent strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the decision-making process. The decision-making process in PatleMuldoI CFUG is based on consensus following a participatory approach.

Table 4.25: Satisfaction with the Decision-Making Process

I am satisfied with the decision-making process	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	33	55%
Strongly Agree	27	45%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

4.3.4 Satisfaction with the Benefit Sharing Process

A benefit sharing mechanism is the system or channel through which monetary and/or non-monetary benefits are distributed. Equitable distribution of benefits in community forestry refers to the measures taken to ensure that the benefits such as forest resources, group fund, etc. are shared in a fair and equitable way. The users should have access to information on forest resource distribution, income, expenditure and status of group funds and be part of the budget allocation process.

In case of PatleMuldoI CFUG, the level of satisfaction of users towards the benefit sharing mechanism is high as 81.67 percent strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the benefit sharing process. They are satisfied with the benefits received and the benefit sharing mechanism practiced.

Table 4.26: Satisfaction with the Benefit Sharing Process

I am satisfied with the benefit sharing process	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	11	18.33%
Strongly Agree	49	81.67%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

4.3.5 Satisfaction with the operation plan and constitution and its implementation process

Operational plan of the forests and constitution of the user group are the basic technical and legal documents required to implement community forestry at grassroots level. They serve as guiding documents which reflect site specific objectives and activities of forest management, rules and regulation, etc. All the users should be part of the operation plan and constitution preparation and its implementation process so that they are aware on the provisions outlined in the constitution and FOP and monitor and evaluate whether its implementation is as per the plan or not.

In case of Patle Muldol CFUG, the level of satisfaction of users towards their constitution and FOP and its implementation is good as 96.67 percent agreed that they are satisfied with the operation plan and constitution and its implementation process.

Table 4.27: Satisfaction with the Operation Plan and Constitution and its Implementation Process

I am satisfied with the operation plan and constitution and its implementation process	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	58	96.67%
Strongly Agree	2	3.33%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

4.3.6 Satisfaction with the Accountability of EC Members Regarding their Roles and Responsibility

Accountability is an important variable contributing to positive impacts of community forestry. Executive committee members should always be accountable to the users of the CFUG. In principle, the control over community forest rests with CFUGs. General assembly elects an executive committee. The executive committee makes most of the decisions on behalf of users. The development of an appropriate mechanism is required to avoid dominance of committee members in decision-making and to make them accountable towards the general users in the CFUGs.

In case of PatleMuldolCFUG, the level of satisfaction of users towards work of the EC is good as 80 percent agreed that they are satisfied with the accountability of EC members regarding their roles and responsibility.

Table 4.28: Satisfaction with the Accountability of EC Members Regarding their Roles and Responsibility

I am satisfied with the accountability of EC members regarding their roles and responsibility	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	48	80%
Strongly Agree	12	20%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

4.3.7 Satisfaction with the Record Keeping Process

CFUGs operate their own funds and have their own bank accounts, and each CFUG has one elected person as a treasurer to oversee economic activities. However, they do not have dedicated and trained staff to perform the accounting tasks. Many CFUGs have very low capacity and performance in maintaining robust financial records and reporting. There is lack of well-established managerial accounting systems within CF.

In case of PatleMuldolCFUG, the level of satisfaction of users towards record keeping system is good as 96.67 percent agreed that they are satisfied with the record keeping process. The financial transaction is audited periodically by trained personnel and the records are well maintained. However, there is need to update the record keeping system to computer-based system.

Table 4.29: Satisfaction with the Record Keeping Process

I am satisfied with the record keeping process	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0

Agree	58	96.67%
Strongly Agree	2	3.33%

Source : Field Survey, 2079

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The study was carried out in PatleMuldol community forest user group of Godawari municipality in Lalitpur district to assess the status of the good governance in community forest in semi-urban areas and the level of satisfaction of the users towards the governance in CF. Both primary and secondary data were analyzed using simple statistical methods. Primary data was collected through HH questionnaire survey using census method and KIIs with EC and Sub-division forest office. The collected information was compiled, processed, and analyzed both in qualitative and quantitative ways using Microsoft Excel.

From the above results and discussion, it can be concluded that the governance status in PatleMuldol CF is good in terms of transparency, accountability and participation and the satisfaction level of users is also satisfactory but there are still some areas of improvement. The practice of auditing and reporting of funds to the Division Forest Office (DFO), provision of office building or room, notice board for public and internal notices, maintenance of minute books and other office records with secretarial work (accounting, stamp), higher satisfaction level of users and increased participation of women in the committee have shown a right trajectory towards the good governance. The outcome of this study also demonstrated institutional capabilities of CFUGs are quite conscious on getting consensus for any decision making. The participation of women, poor and disadvantaged groups in committee and any decision-making process are following the current law. Community forest needs to work out on capacity building programs to build up confidence on women and other marginalized groups so they can play role in decision-making and management rather than mere attendance on the meetings.

Many users were unknown about the provisions mentioned in the constitution and operational plan of their CFUG. Regular technical backstopping from Subdivision

Forest office is needed along with capacity building on CF guidelines and forest management is needed. Benefit sharing mechanism has been operated in more of equality basis, so all groups were treated by the same measures and the provision of allocating 35% of the group fund to the ultra-poor (based on PWBR) did not seem to be in practice. Although the users were satisfied with the work of current executive committee representatives, opportunities should be given to new individuals during the EC reformation process to remove the risk of power abuse and corruption.

To practice good governance in community forestry, timely public audits, general assemblies, and monthly meetings must be ensured, and all CF users should be aware of all the provisions in the constitution and FOP of CF and involved in the decision-making process. Women and marginalized groups must be empowered and encouraged so that they can actively participate and contribute to decision making processes. Equitable benefit sharing mechanism should be practiced based on proper participatory wellbeing ranking. Regular participatory monitoring and evaluation should be implemented effectively and efficiently. The Division Forest office and Sub-division Forest Office must strengthen their network with the CFUGs for better financial and technical assistance so that they can conduct various activities in the group for ensuring good governance while considering forest management and biodiversity conservation. At policy level, CF guidelines need to be reformed in case of semi-urban areas as the demand for forest products, forest management requirement and the interest of the users for semi-urban is very much different than that of rural areas.

Only one CFUG from one of the several districts hardly represent the overall semi-urban Community forests in Nepal. Thus, further exploration of statistically strong quantification techniques with a larger representative sample size could be a worthwhile endeavor. Although, local politics can have greater influence on governance and management system, but it was not considered during this study which can be an area of exploration for further study.

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ANNEXURE

Annex 1: HH survey Questionnaire

1. Name of Respondent:
2. Are you the household head?
 - (i) Yes
 - (ii) NoIf No, what is your relationship with HH head?
3. Respondent Details:
 - (i) Age:
 - (ii) Sex:
 - (iii) Ethnicity:
 - (iv) Religion:
 - (v) Highest level of education:
 - (vi) Current marital status:
 - (vii) Occupation:
4. What is your role in your CFUG?
 - (i) Executive position holder
 - (ii) Executive member
 - (iii) General Users
5. Do you feel the representatives and leadership positions are chosen fairly?
 - (i) Yes
 - (ii) NoIf No, specify the reasons
.....
6. Are all the EC members aware of their roles and responsibilities?
 - (i) Yes
 - (ii) No
7. Are they responsible and answerable for the assigned roles?
 - (i) Yes
 - (ii) No
 - (iii) Don't know

8. Are the constitution and FOP being revised periodically?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
9. Do they share the provision laid in constitution, Forest Operational Plan (FOP) and Annual work Plan?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
10. Does your CF constitution and FOP include the issues of governance and GESI?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
 If yes, how well are they implementing it?

11. How accessible are services to CF users?
 (i) Easy to access (ii) Difficult to access (iii) Inaccessible
12. Do you know about Public Hearing and Public Audit (PHPA)?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
13. Does their constitution and FOP has mandatory provision of PHPA?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
14. When is PHPA conducted?
 (i) General assembly (ii) Others specify
15. Do they present their income and expenditures, reports, major decisions and achievements during PHPA?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
16. What is the process of doing PHPA for your CFUG?
 A) Do they hire a facilitator for PHPA?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know

- B) How is the facilitator for PHPA chosen?
- (i) Trained
 - (ii) Recommendation from executive committee member
 - (iii) Don't know
- C) Are you satisfied with current PHPA process?
- (i) Yes
 - (ii) No
- If no, why?
-
17. How do the general members get access to information about the CF and the decisions made by the executive committee?
- (i) Information received from executive committee members
 - (ii) During general assembly
 - (iii) Notice boards in CFUG office
 - (iv) Information not provided
 - (v) Others.....
18. Is General assembly conducted annually?
- (i) Yes
 - (ii) No
 - (iii) Don't know
19. How is your General Assembly conducted?
- a) How do people get information about GA?
-
- b) Are you satisfied with the GA process?
- (i) Yes
 - (ii) No
- If No, why ?
-
20. Do you feel free to put your own views at general assembly?
- (i) Yes
 - (ii) No

If No, why ?

.....
.....

21. Are decisions made based on consensus?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No

If No ,how are the decisions made?

.....

22. Are major decisions made in the general assembly followed through?

- (i) Only some decisions followed through
- (ii) All decisions followed through
- (iii) None of the decisions followed through
- (iv) Don't know

23. Are EC members biased to any CFUG members?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No
- (iii) Don't know

24. Is there any conflict over power in the committee and FUG?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No
- (iii) Don't know

If yes, specify

.....

25. Is there participatory and transparent monitoring system in place?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No
- (iii) Don't know

If No, what are the gaps?

.....
.....

26. Is the representation of female, marginalized and poor members on EC is according to rules and regulations?
 (i) Yes (ii) No
27. Do you feel there is participation of all representatives (women, janajati, poor) during any decision-making process?
 (i) Yes (ii) No
 If No, what is the reason?

28. Does your CF have proper and complete Participatory wellbeing ranking (PWBR)-(division based on rich, medium, poor and ultra-poor) in place?
 (i) Yes, but not updated in years (ii) Yes, updated PWBR in place
 (iii) Never done (iv) Don't know
29. Do the provision of allocating 35% of the group fund to the ultra-poor (based on PWBR) is on practice?
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
30. Are all benefits and opportunities provided to all groups (women, janajati, poor) in equitable basis? (Equitable benefit sharing)
 (i) Yes (ii) No (iii) Don't know
31. Are there any specific schemes/provisions for poorest people to uplift their livelihood?
 (i) Yes, but very limited (ii) Yes and sufficient (iii) None
32. Who do you feel have been benefitted the most by the opportunities?
 (i) EC and their families (ii) Poor and marginalized groups
 (iii) Equitable benefit sharing

33. While allocating money to the most marginal households, who decides which households?

- (i) Executive committee (ii) General assembly (iii) others,.....

CFUG members satisfaction: (Measured based on Likert scale)

1. I am satisfied with the community's participation during this NRM Institution's overall process.

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

2. I am satisfied with the role of EC during NRM planning and maintaining its governance.

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

3. I am satisfied with the decision-making process.

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

4. I am satisfied with the benefit sharing process.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

5. I am satisfied with the operation plan and constitution and its implementation process.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

6. I am satisfied with the accountability of EC members regarding their roles and responsibility.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

7. I am satisfied with the record keeping process.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

ANNEX 2: KII CHECKLIST

Forest Officials

1. How has the restructuring of Division and Sub-division forest office changed any service delivery mechanism to CFUG.
 - a. Positive Change
 - b. As same as precious
 - c. Negative change
2. If it has positive in-service delivery, could you explain about the change?
3. If it has negative change, what are the areas of difficulties?
4. From your perspectives, what is the role of Division Forest Office in monitoring and ensuring good governance in CF?
5. What are the challenges that hinder good governance in CFs?
6. What do you think about the status of good governance in PatleMuldol CF?
What are the gaps?
7. What could be role of Division and Sub-division forest office in addressing these gaps?

Executive committee

1. Are the constitution and FOP being revised periodically?
2. What is process of EC formation/reformation and are they reformed periodically?
3. What is the ratio of women and other gender in the vital position?
4. What is the ratio of Janjatis/Indigenous people in EC?
5. How do the general members get access to information about the CF and the decisions made by the executive committee?
6. How accessible to the general members on the services?
7. Does your constitution and FOP have mandatory provision of public hearing and public audit?

8. What was the presence ratio of Women, Poor, Janajatis/Indigenous peoples in the last public audit?
9. What was the ratio of general members being presented in last general assembly?
10. Are the major decisions made in the GA followed through?
11. When do have your executive meeting? Monthly, Six months, Need based)
12. Are the major decisions made in the executive committee meeting followed through?
13. How do you ensure participation of all representatives (women, janajati, poor) during operation plan/constitution preparation and renewal, general assembly and other decision-making process?
14. Do you have proper and complete Participatory wellbeing ranking (PWBR) in place?
15. Do the provision of allocating 35% of the group fund to the ultra-poor (based on PWBR) is on practice?
16. How do you ensure Equitable benefit sharing?
17. How strong is the record keeping and accounting system?
18. How do you monitor and maintain governance in your CF?
19. What should be done to improve the governance system?