

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Community Forestry or related approaches towards the devolution of forest management authority is a common trend sweeping through many parts of the world in the last three and half decades. The recognition of multiple benefits of forest products, greater dependency of local people up on these resources and the experiences of government controlled forest management systems informed government and donor agencies that forest couldn't be properly managed without active support from local people (Gilmour and Fisher, 1998).

The need for people's participation in forest management was recognized in Nepal in the 1970s, although forests in the hills were protected and managed by local communities for a long time (Bonita and Kanel, 1987; Gilmour and Fisher 1991).

Arnold (1998), in examining the contribution of forests to sustainable livelihood, defines forests "to include all resources that can produce forest products. This can comprise woodland, scrub land, bush fallow and farm bush, and trees on farm, as well as forests". Arnold's definition focuses not only on tenure or tree cover as the basis for defining a forest, but also on the potential for producing products. Moreover, the contribution of forests is measured not only by the products they provide, but also by non-tangible services they offer.

Forests are important natural capital. Past development efforts have primarily focussed on building natural capital, without paying equal attention to how these assets such as forests combine with other assets to sustain livelihoods, especially among the poor. This oversight has resulted in gaps in understanding the contribution of forest products to sustain livelihoods (DFID, 1999).

By realizing the fact, Community Forestry (CF) Programme in Nepal has been substantially successful in organising and empowering rural community for efficient use and management of forest resources, the emerging interests of people involved in CF have appeared to manage the forests for more than subsistence level. There are many capable Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) producing timber, fodder, fuel wood, nuts, resin and turpentine and many other non-timber forest products that can be sold in the market and income can be used for the development of both forest and people. The sustainable

management of the forest can enhance both the ecological and socio-economic status of local people. However, for obtaining maximum benefit from the management of community forestry a well-developed institution at community level is necessary. Many issues have arisen over time with the growing popularity of CF as a viable forest management system. Most of such issues are noted to have come up due to the conflicting interests of stakeholders in local, district and regional level. Although some of the crucial issues can be addressed at, the operational level, there are some other issues that need immediate and sincere response from the policy level. Sustainability of CF will be at risk if the existing institutional arrangements within FUGs are not improved to say of women, poor and socially marginalized groups of the society. The participation of the poor and disadvantaged group (DAG) in the CF process is very low and the local elites (high social status, wealthier, and educated) are influenced in the local decision making process of CFUGs (Gilmour and Fisher 1991, Hood et al., 1998, Laughed et al., 1994; Mehta and Kellert, 1998). As a result an unequal distribution of CF benefits in favour of local elites is common in many CFUGs.

Community forestry practices emphasize the participation of community in the management of forest resources. It is mainly based on the assumption that local people are knowledgeable about their common resources and its management. Along with that if authority is delegated to the people, the sentiment can be germinated that they are involved to uplift their own destiny. In this way, community Forest management practices mainly focused on the sustainable utilization of forest resources through the people's participation.

The main purpose of this study is to observe the process of institutional strengthening of the Shree Jan Jyoti Community Forest User Group (CFUG) in Sarlahi district. This study will focus on analysing the different root causes of poor institutional arrangement of this CFUG and impact of different activities to strengthen the capacity of the CFUG and thereby management of the community forest in a sustainable way.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the early stages of the community forestry programme, the Forestry field staff attempted to motivate local people to engage in community forestry through extension, even though they were not properly trained for the new job. Initial field activities focused on establishing nurseries and plantations to the local people. Field level training programmes were planned and implemented extensively in districts and regional training centres by

field staffs, user groups and local leaders. Study tours and workshops were organised to discuss community forestry. At that time only the degraded forest is handed over to the local community mainly for conservation and extension of resource base.

As the number of FUGs increase, they need more post formation support and even frequent visits from the forestry technical field staff. District Forest Offices (DFOs) are severely understaffed considering the workload they face for the efficient implementation of community forestry development programme. In practice, government staffs generally focus on the achievement of targeted activities within a given year. But in general, they do not give priority to evaluate whether the community is able to manage the forest resources in a sustainable basis. The DFO staffs are also not able to provide the regular follow-up services to FUGs following handover, as the government is not recruiting new staff in the one hand and on the other even the posted staffs are in long study leave (up to 4 years). The lack of frequent field visits, interactions and supervision may lead to wrong directions and decisions made by FUGs and may go against the policy. This has resulted in the lack of a technical management strategy in CF management as a whole.

In Nepal, the potential of NGOs/CBOs in natural resource management receives increasing attention; the importance of institutional strengthening in order to tap this potential, is also being recognised. Phrases like "enhancing institutional capabilities of NGOs," "improving local NGO effectiveness", and "expanded role for NGOs" are appearing with increasing frequency in official aid-agency reports and documents. For example, the World Bank's operational directive notes that some NGO's abilities are constrained by their limited managerial and technical capacity: "even some professionally staffed NGOs are poorly managed, have rudimentary accounting system and sometimes initiate infrastructure projects with inadequate technical analysis" (World Bank, 1989).

The core of community forestry efforts is the development of appropriate institutions and institutional relationships for the sustainable management of the forest to fulfil the basic needs of people without compromising to the environment.

Data indicate that forest covered 39.6 percent of Nepal's land area when last surveyed in 1994(DFRS 1999). This estimation is based on forest area (29 percent) and shrub land (10.6 percent) (NPC/UNCT 2005). A more recent estimate suggests that deforestation increased at an annual rate of 1.4 percent between 2000 and 2005 (Baral et al. 2008). Approximately 1.24 million ha (34.9 percent of the potential community forest area) had

been handed over to 14,500 FUGs by 2008, benefiting over 1.66 million households, which is about 40 percent of Nepal's total households (DOF 2010). Still the potential community forest covers 61% of total forest area (Singh, 1998). The Community Forestry Development Program in Nepal is moving towards monetization. Both timber and non-timber resources are ready to be harvested commercially.

This study “Institutional strengthening process of CFUG” was carried out in Shree Jana Jyoti CFUG Sarlahi district which covers the area of 94.25 hectare and has been divided into 5 management blocks (SJJCFUG Operational Plan 2005/2006). Before handing over this forest to the community, people used to manage the forest traditionally. This led to heavy forest degradation as the ownership of the CF used to be with the government. Due to the lack of the ownership of the forest to the local people who were using that forest traditionally from the time immemorial, there was heavy forest degradation.

Together with changing government policy of the forestry sector, the forest was handed over to the community as a community forest in 2005. The handing over process was done leaving the CFUG with multiple challenges ranging from technical, ecological and institutional aspects.

During the hand over process of the forest in 2005, the decisions made were based on the interests of the elites of the society while missing the actual resource users such as dalits (low caste people), poor and women, who are highly dependent on the forests resources. This approach missed the proper need and capacity assessment of the community, identification of real users, forests boundary and so on. Following the handing over of the CF, the implementation of the operational plan became unpractical and difficult because the aforementioned group of the society was not involved in the process. This created management conflicts of Shree Jana Jyoti community forests because of the incompatible ideas of rich and poor resource users. By considering the afore-mentioned issues, the study concentrated to find the answer of the following issues:

What is the functional arrangement/relationship of CFUG?

What is the level of participation in respect to gender, caste and ethnicity?

Which factors has affected the level of participation?

What is the situation of FUG fund mobilization?

Who makes the decision? Etc.

Therefore, it has been realized that not only understanding of the internal structure and decision making arrangements of the CFUG is at the heart of institutional development for sustainable CF management but also puts the importance on existences of an agreed set of rules as well as reliable mechanisms to enforce such rules and settle disputes. It was also observed that active participation of marginalized people to enhance their access to and control over resources at community level.

Moreover, it also supports for external funding and structural support to ensure balanced people's participation but sustainability and effectiveness of the programme largely and ultimately depends on the self-reliance of the community people.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to assess the institutional strengthening process of CFUG for sustainable CF management and their documentation.

The specific objectives of the study were

- 1) To identify the present structural and functional arrangement of CFUG.
- 2) To analyse the level of participation in both CFUC and CFUG in respect to caste and sex and economic status.
- 3) To evaluate the fund mobilization process of the community forestry.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Poverty alleviation is the basic premise of the country's development plans (HMGN 2002) and the future vision of the CF programme has been stated as poverty alleviation (HMGN 1999): However, the contribution of CF to poverty alleviation has not been examined well. Thus, this study will also seek to evaluate /analyse how much the CF programme is contributing to poverty alleviation in the proposed study area.

As FUGs are Community Based Organizations (CBOs), effective participation of every group of the society in each CF activity is crucial for the institutional development of the FUG. The trend of institutional development process is important for the sustainability of the group. The final outcome of this study is expected not only to overcome the existing difficulties and challenges faced by Shree Jan Jyoti CFUG, in Sarlahi district but also could be a reference for individuals involved in the community forestry development interventions dealing with similar issues.

The study mainly focused to the analysis of existing CF development practices that can be rationalized by following points:

1. Analysis of the institutional arrangement of concerned community forest user group
2. Identification of major stakeholders in the natural resource and community forest management issues.
3. Fund mobilization for IGA and other developmental activities
4. Overall decision making processes

1.5 Organization of the Study

This thesis report has been organized in five different chapters. The chapter one is related with basic introductory information about the study and study objectives, the chapter two attempts to present findings from relevant literatures review. The chapter three consists of the methodology of the study. The chapter four consists of data presentation and analysis. The chapter five contains summary conclusion and recommendation of the study.

1.6 Definition of key concepts variables and their measurement

- Dalit: - So called ritually impure and untouchable caste
- Structural – functional: - by the structure (build up) of the society different functions are being carrying out automatically e.g. different parts of the body to function
- Dis-advantaged group: - a group of people in the society who are not in the access of different benefits they are supposed to get.

Elites: - so called high social status, wealthier and educated people
in the village

1.7 Limitation of the study

The study mainly focuses on the observation of CFUG strengthening processes and its effect in CF management. The findings might not be appropriate to other places as generalizations are based on selected study CFUG. Similarly, most of the data used in the study are subject to the change with time. Therefore, it might be wrong to see and use the data absolutely, rather they indicate general trend only. Similarly, there are many variants of institutional development applied in Nepal. Therefore, the generalization made here might not be equally valid for all variants as the study was solely based on the field study of one of the several CFUGs and as it mainly focus on some approach of institutional strengthening for sustainable CF development.

Most of the synthesis findings are related to the selected CFUG own process, programmes implemented through it and effect there from and therefore, the study might not present the complete picture of the study area as many other things play a vital role to determine the actual status of the community.

Similarly, this study is a simple and descriptive study, which will not include in-depth information related to community forestry approach. At last but not least, financial and time constraints have also influenced the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of CF related literatures including the broad concept and philosophy of CF, evolution of CF in the global as well as Nepali context and its application in Nepal. The literature related to the socio-economic aspects of community resources by different economic and social strata of the populations was reviewed.

This chapter concentrates on the review of relevant literatures. It is divided into two parts i.e. theoretical review and review of previous literatures. Both types of literature helped to complete this study.

History of Forest Management in Nepal

In 1957, the government nationalized the forest to provide equal opportunity to all citizens in access to the forest resources such as fuel wood, fodder, grass, poles etc. But it created more chaos and destruction of the forest because elites encouraged the local people for the encroachment and illicit felling. However, in some areas, community themselves used to manage the forest and pasture lands locally. Later the government prepared the plan for the management of the Terai forests. However, they were not effective because of less involvement of the real users in the planning process. The government realised the role of the community in the forest act 1961. The act included a provision of handing over the protection rights of the forest to the Panchayats. Pancha- yats were local government units' generally local elites were the leader of the Panchayat. Several categories of forest were delineated, each with different right of access assigned to it. In this system, the ownership of the forestland remained with government and the control could be resumed whenever the government deemed it necessary. The Panchayat had some powers to fine those who transgressed the law. However, management decisions remained with the government forest service.

By the mid 1970, forest depletion and degradation were leading to shortages of forest products in some areas. In 1978, the government passed the legislation enabling substantial amount of forests in the middle hills to be handed over to the Panchayat as Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest. Later, it realised that the Panchayat was not found as a proper managers of the forest resources as forest boundary didn't match with the boundary of the Panchayat. Though, forest management committees were formed, they seldom functioned as representative discussion and decision-making bodies (Forest Legislation 1978).

Following passage of decentralization Act in 1982, the government initiated a series of measures that shifted the focus from Panchayat to the user group, with more authority and responsibilities progressively devolving to these groups. An important step in refining the system has been the recognition that their different categories of users interested in particular forest resources. This range from primary users who depend on the particular forest area/resource for their entire products needs, to secondary users interested only in a particular forest resource.

In 1989, the government declared the new forestry sector policy through the "Master Plan for the Forestry Sector of Nepal", which recognized the community forestry as the largest among the six programmes. These programs depend on local user groups, for the protection, management and the utilization of the forest.

Since, 1990s, the focus and definition of development shifted to the intergenerational analysis. The focal point of sustainable development concentrates on the benefit sharing of development practices not only for the today but also for tomorrow. Social values emerged as the crucial factor for development practices and sustainable utilization of natural resources was highlighted.

When the democratic government came into power in 1990, the new Forest Act 1993 and Legislation 1995 were enacted which mainly deals with community forestry. The main features of the legislation concerning the community forestry are; all accessible forests can be handed over to users. The forest User Groups have to manage the forests as per the approved constitution and operational plan. The FUG is an autonomous and corporate body with perpetual succession and operational plan. The FUG is an autonomous and corporate body with perpetual succession. The FUG can fix the price of forest products

independently irrespective to the government royalty. The FUG can plant long-term cash crops (medical plants, fruit plants) without disturbing the main crops. The FUG can use their funds for any community development work but at least 25% of the income should be used to develop community forestry activities. The DFO can take the forest back if they operate against the operational plan. The FUG will not be disturbed by any political boundaries while handing over the forest. (Forest Act 1993).

All the rights of Community forests, except land ownership have been transferred to the local people by the government through the enforcement of the Forest Act 1993. From this, local people started to conserve the forest resources thinking that they are preserving the forest for their own purposes.

Management plan designed by the forest department to increase forest productivity tended to be neither technically acceptable nor intelligible to the villagers, cumbersome bureaucratic procedures surrounding authorisation of the handed over of forest lands to communities, the granting of permission to harvest and sell forest produces from communal forest areas, and the slow payment of revenues to the community discouraged local involvement (Arnold, 1998).

Subsequently, a succession of adjustments has moved the government programmes in the direction of indigenous control and management systems that many communities within the middle hills areas were practicing spontaneously. The indigenous systems were typically based on user groups, rather than the whole villagers or Panchayat.

As a result, FUGs have realised the importance of forest conservation and without their own attempt, this is not possible therefore, the conservation of forest in the middle hills is very appreciating. The forest management system of Nepal with the full community involvement has become a model throughout the world.

The need for people's participation in forest management was recognized in Nepal in the 1970s, although forests in the hills were protected and managed by local communities for a long time (Bonita and Kanel, 1987; Gilmour and Fisher 1991). Master Plan for Forestry Sector Nepal 1988 (MPFS 1988) declared the CF program to be one of the major forestry components and decided to handover all accessible hill forests to the CFUGs for their protection and utilization (HMGN, 1988).

Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) Nepal 1988 declared the Community Forestry (CF) programme to be one of the major forestry components and decided to handover all the accessible hill forests to the Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) for the protection, management and utilization (HMGN; 1988). According to the new policy, CFUG is defined as a “*specified group of people who share mutually recognized claims to specified use rights*” (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991:70). The CF programme thus became one of the major forestry components aiming at managing rural forest for equitable sharing of benefits among stakeholders and sustainable management of forest resources. *The equity issues are very important in any development processes including community forestry for the multiethnic society of Nepal* (Kanel, 1993).

2.2 Concept and Philosophy of Community Forestry

Community Forestry was first defined by FAO (1978) as, “*Any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity*”. *The original concept of CF was based up on three elements. These were fulfillment of the basic needs of fuel wood, fodder and timber at the rural households and community level, supplying food and the environmental stability for crop land and the generation of income and employment in rural communities* (FAO, 1978:1).

Gilmour and Fisher (1991) define CF as “*.....the control and management of forest resources by the rural people who use them for domestic purposes as an integral part of their farming system*”.

In addition to the FAO’s definition of CF, Gilmour and Fisher has emphasized local control over resources.

Some terminologies in the field of participatory forestry like Community Forestry, Joint Forest Management, collaborative forest management, participatory forest management and social forestry are creating the terminological confusion (Gilmour and Fisher 1998). *The term “CF” and “SF” are sometime used differently because “Social forestry” (SF) often refers to a form of industrial forestry*

modified, to allow benefits to be distributed locally while community forestry.....is, or should be, locally controlled” (Gilmour and Fisher 1991:8).

However, the term originally used in practice was “social forestry” (Gilmour and Fisher 1998).

According to Hobley (1987), *CF management* should include both participation and control of management by local people. As Hobley (1987:2-3), stated ;".....*management of forest resources does not just referred to the narrowed understanding attributed by foresters, to the word management , that of utilization, harvesting but goes beyond this to include the full participation and control by local people over all aspects of the establishment , sustenance, access to and distribution of the forest resources. The key concepts are power and authority, control and responsibility. Transfer of power and authority from those who have traditionally held it, to groups who previously had no access to power.*"

Diverse approaches are applied in different countries for the involvement of the local people in forest management (Poffenberger 1996). For example, India is practising co-management of degraded forests with partnerships between local communities and the forest department.

2.3 Emergence of Community Forestry in a global context

The concept of development from below emerged in the 1960s with a new definition of development concerned with the fulfilment of basic human needs rather than material needs of financial advantage (Gilmour and Fisher,1991). The mobilization of rural people towards fulfilment of their basic needs was further reemphasized in the world conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural development (WCARRD) organised by FAO in 1979 (Arnold, 1991).

During the succession of bottom up development approaches, the pro industrialization forest development model was challenged in the 1970s. Westoby, a former economist of FAO, became a strong advocate of CF program in the 1970s and played a significant role against forest based industrialization and emphasized in the mobilisation of the resources for socio-economic development (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991)

Fossil energy prices rose rapidly in 1973 and dependency on fuel wood rapidly increased in developing countries (Arnold, 1991). The over exploitation of fuel wood was widely cited for several consequences like deforestation and declining productivity of food production systems prolonged periods of draughts in Sahelian countries in the early 1970s and calamities floods of South Asian countries in 1977 highlights the

impacts of deforestation and degradation of tree cover (Arnold, 1991). In this context, Gilmour and Fisher (1991:4) concluded: “...*the concept of CF emerged in response partly to the failure of the forest industries model to lead to socio economic development, and partly to the increasing rate of deforestation and forest land degradation in the third world.*”

The concept of CF was further endorsed by the 1978 eighth world forestry congress in Jakarta, which was devoted to the theme “forestry for people” (Arnold, 1991; Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). Arnold (1991) presented some key events in the emergence and development of CF from the mid 1970s to mid and late 1980s.

Participation of all concerned members (HHs) of the community, transparency and consensus decision-making are the basis for community mobilization. Consensus

Table: 2.1 Emergences and Development of CF (Adopted from Arnold, 1991)

Year	Key Events
Mid 1970s	Energy crisis and Sahelian drought drew attention to the dependence of rural people on forest products
	Drought in Africa and flooding in Asia emphasized impacts of deforestation and degradation of forest land
	FAO and SIDA organised an expert group on forestry and local development project in India (Social Forestry), South Korea (Village Woodlots), Thailand (Forest Village), and Tanzania (Village Aforestation) were initiated.
Late 1970s	FAO Forestry for local community development program, new World Bank forest policy and ICRAF were launched.
	1978 World Forestry Congress committed to “Forest for people”.
	1979 FAO World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.
Early 1980s	1981 UN Conference on New and Renewable sources of energy.
	FAO Fuel wood map focused attention on energy needs
	First generation of projects focused on creating new village-level resources to meet local subsistence needs through aforestation.
Mid and late 1980s	Experiences from projects and research identified the importance of the economic dimension to farmer and communal decisions, and forests and trees as sources of food, income, employment and household security.

	Second generation of projects emphasized local control and management of existing forestland resources and multiple roles of trees in farming systems.
	Focus on working through local institutions.

Community Forestry Development Programme is the primary programme of the government as described in the Master Plan for Forestry Sector (MPFS) of Nepal (HMGN, 1998). Community forestry in Nepal evolved through an interaction of various factors. This stems from a sense of collective spirit embodied in Nepalese society through generations. There were frequent cases, particularly in the hilly communities having been involved in the conservation of forests and regulating of forest resources. Earlier experiences with different political turmoil, population growth, regulatory enforcement and adjustments, excessive dependence of the people over forest resources are some of the other factors that contributed to evolve it to the present scenario.

Similarly, Because of continued deforestation, food and energy crisis has become a political issue for which more and more countries have realizing the value of forest in protecting environment and stabilizing ecology. *In community Forestry management the principle aim is to produce goods and services on sustainable basis to fulfil the basic needs of the community* (Kayastha 1992).

Earlier efforts have been specifically harmful to the development and conservation of the Nepalese forests. Their main shortcomings stem from their indifference to, or failure to address, the needs and aspirations of the people who continued to depend on forest products for their very subsistence. The Private Forests Nationalization Act of 1957 brought forests, which were earlier perceived to be private, under state jurisdiction. Similarly, Forest Act 1961 and Forest Protection Special Arrangement Act of 1967 failed to democratise the regulation of forests. *Coupled with population growth and government's continue failure towards effective protection, and misappropriations led to consistent decline in the forest cover. As such, community forestry could have been adopted also as an adhoc approach to timely halt the deforestation process* (Dhungana 2004).

The main shortcomings observed were no consideration of the institutional capacity of the FUG as a whole. The capacity building aspects of the community was left behind and responsibilities were overloaded. In this way, the management of CF was not as desired by the government. Therefore, in this study, the attempt to analyse the indicators of the institutional strengthening of CFUG for the management of CF has been done.

2.4 Emergence of Community forestry in Nepal

The protection and management of forests by local people in the hills region has long been established in Nepal. The practice of several formal and informal forest management systems have been widely reported. In this context, an overview of the indigenous forest management systems prior to formal CF seems appropriate.

2.4.1 Indigenous forest management system

The existence of indigenous forest management system (IFMS) has been reported throughout the hill region of the country (Baral and Lamsal, 1991; Bartlett and Malla 1992; Budhathoki, 1987; Chhetri and Pandey, 1992; Dahal, 1994; Furer-Haimendorf, 1984; Gautam, 1991; Gautam, 1993; Gilmour, 1990; Gilmour and Fisher, 1991; Tamang, 1990; Tamrakar, 1996). Similarly literature also documents the existence of traditional ecological and conservation knowledge of people in the hills (Brower, 1990; Gurung, 1989; Thapa, 1994; Zurick, 1990).

The handing over of responsibility for forest management to the local people was also practiced during the Rana regime (over a century ago), when authority for the forest management was transferred through *lalmohar*, a document to declare the authority (Adhikari, 1990). However, other studies (see Mahat et al., 1986) suggested that there was no forest legislation before the mid – Twentieth Century.

Bartlett and Malla (1992:113) described two main types of IFMS, the first “... generated, developed and sustained entirely by internal initiative” and the second “... generated by internal initiative but which are developed and sustained by a cooperative arrangement between the community and the forest department”. The understanding of the two different types of management systems is necessary to formulate apposite CF policy and approaches.

The existence of IFMS has been recognized as a potential basis for the formation and implementation of CF. According to Baral and Lamsal (1991), the identification and

recognition of IFMS not only quickens the forest handing-over process, but also strengthens local management systems. Chhetri and Pandey (1992) suggested that the existence of IFMS in any particular area is an indicator of the ability and willingness of local people for CF management. Tamrakar (1996) suggested that the enhancement of forest management in CF could be possible, if the IFMS are properly recognized.

The equity aspect of IFMS has not yet been studied in detail. However, the tendency of discrimination in favour of rich people in decision –making has been remarked. Baral and Lamsal (1991) perceived some rules in favour of rich people like a fixed monthly charges of NRs 10 per household for the fuel wood collection in comparison with poor , who can rarely send anybody because of their dependency on wage labour for their livelihood (Baral and Lamsal, 1991).

The existence of communal (managed by clan or cluster of families) IFMS was observed in western Nepal (Bhandari and Pokharel, 1996). The four communal forests were managed for their exclusive use by different casts such as Thakuri, Ranabhat, Paudel, and Adhikari since the last two generations. As a result, the minority inhabitants like low-caste people were compelled to exploit the government- managed forest far away from the village to fulfil their basic needs.

Tamang (1990) reviewed the literature on IFMS of Nepal. She perceived a lack of studies on the distribution of forest products, benefits-sharing, and organizational and technical aspects of indigenous forest management. She also noted the lack of such studies in Inner Tarai, Far East, west, and north of the country.

2.4.2 Evolution of modern community forestry

CF is not a new concept for Nepal, but is a continuation from the past where people developed very wise and sustainable working arrangements to manage their natural resources. Historically, the control of forests was under the tenure of state of feudal and communal landowners. The exploita-tion of resources for revenue collection was started in

the 17th century. Before the mid-18th Century, the country was fragmented into 80 small kingdoms.

Before the unification of the Nepali kingdom, people in the middle hills used forests to support subsistence rather than commercial exploitation. After the unification, the state declared its ownership over forests and part of the forests' ownership was transferred to institutions and individuals as *birta* (Mahat et al., 1986). The state did not receive revenue from these forests. Despite the *birta* system, local people had free access to most forest areas (Arnold, 1998).

Along with the *birta* system, there were the *talukdari* and *kipat* systems in the hill. *Talukdari* was there where the *Talukdar* as representatives of the state protected the forests by appointing *chowkidars* (watchman). *Kipat* was there where the village headman (*Jimmuwals*), recognized as tax collectors, managed the forests and local people were allowed to collect forest products. Meanwhile, the religious forest in many places, which were under the control of a particular temple or monastery, was managed as *guthi*.

The exploitation of commercial valuable forests was started after the emergence of the Rana State in 1846. British India extended a railway link to the Nepali boarder, which opened access to highly valuable Nepali forest resources to the Indian economy. Widespread felling of *Sal* forests began and the timber was given free of cost for railway sleepers as a contribution to World War I.

The DoF was established in 1942 and its first policy documents were prepared in 1952/53. The document classified the forests of Nepal into three main categories, one of which was CF (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991; Poffenberger, 1996). However, the policy was never implemented.

The government of Nepal implemented the Private Forest Nationalization Act 1957 to nationalize all the forests. The objective of the nationalization was to procure back under state control one-third of the country's forests and agricultural lands held under feudal tenure (Gilmour and Fisher 1991; Mahat et al., 1986; Poffenberger, 1996; Regmi, 1978).

But the forest area brought under the government ownership was neither adequately controlled nor properly demarcated due to lack of resources (HMGN, 1988; Mahat et al., 1986).

Nationalization of the forests was blamed for country-wide deforestation (Bajracharya, 1983) and breakdown of local forest management systems (Pardo, 1993). However, contrary to this opinion, Gilmour and Fisher (1991) noticed a great number of IFMS originated around the 1990s, immediately after the implementation of the Act. According to Arnold (1998), local control was continued in those forests where local leadership was strong.

The Forest Act of 1961 enacted with the political changes in 1960 made provision for private forest plots (banbatika) and incorporated the idea of handing-over government forestland to village panchayats for their use (Mahat et al., 1986). However, the policy was not implemented for a further 15 years (Poffenberger, 1996). The Forest Preservation Act was passed in 1967, and provided more powers of offences to Forest Department for enforcement of law and policy (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991; Mahat et al., 1986).

Environment problems became more pronounced in Nepal during 1970s and rapid deforestation in the hills was allied with soil erosion in Nepal and ruinous flooding in Bangladesh. The country lost about 570,000 hectares of forest between 1964 and 1985 (HMGN, 1988). Accelerating population growth, expanding livestock herds and cultivation on sloping land were responsible for deforestation. According to Mahat (1985), deforestation in Nepal is not recent, and both government land-use policy and subsistence agriculture systems are responsible for deforestation. Whatever the various interpretations of the environment crisis, it was useful to the Nepali government to draw the attraction of foreign donors to CF (Hausler, 1993).

In 1975, the Ninth Forestry Conference was organized in Kathmandu and forest officers attended the conference from all over the country. The conference concluded to form a working group for the formation of a forestry plan for Nepal (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). The National Forestry Plan 1976 was prepared through a great effort of the working group. The plan realized that the management of hill forests of the country is not possible by

government effort alone, and recognized the participation of local people through panchayats (HMGN, 1976).

The Forest Act of 1961 was first amended in 1977 and rules and regulation under this Act were introduced in 1978. The amendment of the Act categories the forests of Nepal into six categories as panchayat, panchayat-Protected, Leasehold, Religious, Government, and Private Forests (Mahat et al., 1986). The regulations specified the provision of handing-over a limited (up to 125 ha) area of government-owned degraded forests to local panchayats as panchayat forests with an aim of reforestation. Similarly, provisions were also made to hand-over the existing forest area (up to 500 ha) for their protection, management, and utilization as panchayat-protected forests. No provision was made for forest products sale by the panchayats (Kanel, 1993).

Since panchayats were the local-level political units, they became unable to represent real users in CF management. *Institutions like panchayat are not appropriate institutions for the management of common property resources (Jodha, 1995).* Rather, such institutions have played a decisive role to convert the CPRs into open-access resources.

The history of forest exploitation and development of forest policies have a parallel development with Nepal's political structure (Hobley et al., 1994). The Private Forest Nationalization Act 1957, Forest Act 1961 and Forest Act 1993 followed the major political changes in 1950, 1960 and 1990, respectively.

The policy of the government was incorporated into the Sixth Five Year Plan (1981-85) and also supported by the Decentralization Act 1982 (Palit, 1996). The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector Nepal (MPFS), a twenty –year forestry sector plan, was prepared in 1988. The plan declared an absolute commitment of the government for the implementation of the CF program as a major forestry component. The plan decided to hand-over all accessible forests to local communities as CFs for the development and management of forest resources through people participation to meet their basic needs (HMGN, 1988). *The potential forest area for CF is about 3.5 million ha (Tamrakar and Nelson, 1991).* Similarly, MPFS emphasized the re-orientation of the staff under the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation for their new role as extensionists and advisors.

The forest legislation was revised following political changes in 1990. The amendment in forest legislation mandated handing-over the forests to CFUG for the control and management of forest resources. Thus, the Forest Act 1993 was formulated as the latest forestry legislation of the country.

2.5 Progress and Prospects

2.5.1 The slow versus quick handing-over process

Although handing-over the forests to local communities is the priority of the government's program, the transfer rate has been quite slow (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991; Kanel, 1993). On 16 February 1998, an estimated 403,688 ha of forest (about 13.5% of total potential CF) had been handed-over to 6,062 CFUGs (Bhatia, 1999). About 6,600 user groups are awaiting formal hand-over of their forests (Shrestha and Britt, 1998). If this rate continues, it will take 20-30 years to hand-over all the potential CF of Nepal (Joshi, 1997). The handing-over process is slower in the Terai region. By the end of May 1996, only 31,596 ha of forest had been handed over to 64,293 (12% of total) households in Terai (Joshi, 1997). Although the handing over process is quite slow, significant achievements have been gained in policies, philosophies and practices of CF in Nepal (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). The formation of user groups and writing of operational plans alone are not the indicators of the success of CF; the functioning of user groups for the implementation of operational plans is very crucial (Bartlett, 1992).

2.5.2 The management system

CF management in the hills of Nepal is protected oriented and passive (Acharya, 1998). However, many CFUGs have realized that protection of the forest alone is not sufficient to fulfil their demand or to increase the forest productivity (Tamrakar and Sharma, 1998). Forestry Research Division (FRD) has emphasized the particular research areas like natural forest silviculture, agro-forestry and fodder trees to support CF program (Danbury and Bowen, 1993). Some research is being conducted in subtropical Schima- Castanopsis forest type to determine appropriate silvicultural systems with a focus on CF (Danbury and Tamrakar, 1997). On the other hand, user groups are also encouraged to adopt appropriate silviculture for their forests through establishment of demonstration plots. Participatory Action Research (PAR) has been recently introduced with collaboration of CFUGs (Acharya 1998; Sattaur, 1998; Tamrakar and Sharma, 1998). In PAR, users are recognized

as researchers and their responsibility is to identify research questions, conduct research, examine the results and apply the learning in practice (Sattaur, 1998).

2.6 Review of Previous Study

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector provides sample scope for foreign assistance in the forestry development of Nepal. The Master Plan realizes that His Majesty's government lacks the human, financial and other resources needed to put all forests under proper management, or even just to protect from wanton exploitation. Most donor agencies seem to have inclinations to support community forestry in Nepal. The Master plan envisages planned and deliberate development of the forestry sector.

It has been observed that different personnel have different ways of CF programme implementation and their by positive as well as negative effects and confusion towards the whole programme. Even if this is the case, community forestry has developed as a continuous learning experience for many actors currently involved and to the nation at large.

The National Forestry Plan of 1976 listed the major constraints and proposed policies to tackle them. It recognized the critical forestry situation of the time and lay down as objectives for forest management the restoration of the balance of nature, economic mobilization, practices of scientific management, development of technology and promotion of public cooperation. However, the Plan was partly implemented (MPFSP, 1988).

The community forestry thrust followed the formulation of Panchayat forest Rules and Panchayat Protected Forest Rules in 1978. The community forestry project was introduced in 29 hill districts with assistance from the World Bank. Community forestry was also promoted with bilateral assistance. Later community forestry was also tried in 14 Terai districts with World Bank assistance (MPFSP, 1988).

Community forestry started in one village Panchayat in Sindhupalchowk district with the naming of a forest committee by the District Forest Officer (DFO). The forest committee, having been nominated by the DFO was given authority to decide on the use of forest allotments, which were protected or newly planted by its members. Community forestry was initiated by the villagers supported with the DFO's modest budget, plus small amount of foreign assistance in the form of training and establishment of the nurseries (MPFSP, 1988).

The review of above mentioned literatures have shown the importance of community forest user group formation for the protection of both forest and the user's rights. By realizing the fact, the number of CF handed over to the community is increasing. But those studies ignored the thinking of only handover is not an end. Handover of forest to the community is a beginning of the forest management. And for which post formation support is very important as local people lack the technical knowledge of forest management. For doing so, capacity development of the existing FUG institution is quite important so that they can run their organization effectively.

Moreover, review of above mentioned literatures have shown the importance of strengthening of community forestry user group, a community based organization (CBO) for the sustainable development and the management of community forest. For this, involvement of both sex as well as all ethnic group/occupational caste in the CF process is very important. Likewise, it also has found that without community mobilization, any development interventions will be ineffective because community is a vague terminology and it covers the different interests based on age, sex, caste, class etc.

The study beyond others explores the level of involvement of all resource users in decision-making process and considered the development of their capacity so that they can put their voice along with visibility. This study will determine and document the extent of participation and identify those factors which are important to strengthen the institution for the management of community forest. Moreover, it explores the different indicators of institutional development for the sustainable management of CF and determines and documents the importance and experiences of institutional development and recommends the factors for that.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Fieldwork is the main component of this project, which was mainly guided by the project implementation plan as described later in this proposal. Project will be implemented in a participatory way by involvement of all relevant stakeholders as per need. Different tools of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) such as semi-structured interview (SSI), household survey etc were applied during the fieldwork to collect socio-economic and biophysical information.

3.1 Research Design

This is a descriptive type of study. In this research method, there is no examination of the changes over time but intends to describe the events. Moreover, descriptive research design helps to find out the other details about the community forest and its management. A descriptive research design was used to describe the practices and the existing situation.

This study is based on the quantitative and qualitative data. The study more or less is descriptive and analytical in nature.

3.2 Rationale of Site Selection

More than 14,000 FUGs had been formed, till this date in the whole country. In Sarlahi District, 76 FUGs have already been formed by the Fiscal Year 2065/066. Among them, 65 CFUGs have been handed over to the community and Constitution registration of 12 CFUGs have been completed but yet to be handed over to the community. Out of the total forest areas 29736.13 hectare of the district, Sagarnath Forest Development Project occupies 6669.66 hectares Community Forest occupies 12179.66 hectares, Leasehold forest occupies 64.14 hectares, Private forest occupies 18.92 hectares and Religious Forest occupies 6.06 hectares. Among the 76 CFUGs, only very few have satisfying institutional capacity. Very few CFUGs close to the DF Office have been developing their FUG as a strong organization with good institutional arrangement due to regular facilitation and support.

The factors that influenced me for the selection of given site and the given topics are listed as follows:

-) Nepal stands at the top in the world in matters of community forest conservation.
-) I from my childhood have seen the deforestation taking place rapidly and the dense forest was turned into barren land.
-) I, as the resident of the same locality and was interested in the conservation of the forest which was being destroyed rapidly since last few decades.
-) Turning the government forest into community forest was found to be a success which led to the massive forest conservation campaign.
-) The inspiration, courage from my family members, DFO and my interest and willpower on the forest conservation encouraged me to choose the subject of the study.

Moreover, District Forest Office (DFO), FECOFUN and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) also recommended the same study site on the basis of the criteria like: organized CFUG, their interest and commitment for CF management and accessibility to the area in all way because of the current situation.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

3.3.1 Sources of Data

Two sources data has been analysed during the study:

3.3.1.1 Primary source of data

Primary data were collected from the field through direct observation and interview open discussion (esp. with executive body and advisory body) with stakeholders. Primary informants were collected from FUG and FUC members. District forest office and local organizations involving in natural resource conservation were also consulted for essential data.

3.3.1.2 Secondary Source of data

The secondary data were collected from the consultation of different published and unpublished documents, District Forest Office, Lalbandi and Range Post, Netragunj records

book. The records books of FUG were intensively studied for the information at user's group level. The CFUG constitution and operational plan of the CF were analysed. Other records such as meeting minutes, accounting, filing etc. were also reviewed. The reports and publications made by FECOFUN, United Nations were also used for the required statistics and information.

Other relevant data were collected from many natural resource management, community forestry, and institutional development publications.

3.3.2 Nature of data

Nature of data was qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data were collected to find out the management practices, people's participation by caste, gender etc and decision making processes etc. Similarly, quantitative data was collected to find out the economic status, livestock holding, land holding etc. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The factors affecting institutional strengthening of CFUG for sustainable management of community Forest has been divided into four blocks i.e., Socio economic factors, attitudinal factors, cultural factors and institutional factors. So, the following conceptual framework has been prepared for the study (Figure 1).

There are different indicators under the socio-economic factors. It has direct affects on institutional strengthening of CFUG and it indirectly influence the attitudinal matters and finally in institutional strengthening .Cultural factors such as leadership, decision making, social norms and values also have direct and indirect link with the institution build up. Likewise, Attitudinal and institutional variables has direct impact in the institutional strengthening of the community forest user group for the sustainable of the CF.

3.4 The Universe and the Sampling procedures

There were all together 354 Household (HHs) in Shree Jan Jyoti CFUG and belonging to 6,8 & 9 number ward of Lalbandi VDC using Shree Jan Jyoti Community Forest (CF)

resources. Out of 354 HHs of the users, only one third of the users were chosen for the necessary information and data collection process. The 118 respondents were selected using simple random procedure considering that respondents are from all ethnic groups.

3.5 Data Collection Technique and Tools

The information collected from individual household survey could limit the prospective of individual and needs further clarification. Participatory methods provide opportunities to discuss and clarify the information of household survey. Therefore participatory methods of PRA and RRA were applied to collect primary data regarding structural and functional information of CF. Following tools were applied to collect the information from the field:

3.5.1 Household Survey

Household survey was adopted as technique of data collection. For this purpose, questionnaire was prepared to collect information of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The used tools for the survey is given in the annex 1 under the heading Household Survey of Respondents.

3.5.2 Open Focus Group discussions:

It was carried out with the executive committee, FUG, and the target people at different levels. Checklists were used for discussion in groups representing different ethnic community in order to crosscheck the information gathered from the interview. Past experiences of the executive body, present status and future plan of the committee was also discussed in the same focus groups discussions. The tool used for this is given by annex 2.

3.5.3 Records verification:

The entire memorandum, operational plan, minutes of the meetings and its proceedings, accounting system and procedures were analyzed and looked into to get the entire knowledge of the CFUGs and the way its functions and books maintained and their reliability.

3.5.4 Observation:

The field observation of the forest and settlement area was carried out. That helped to monitor implementation of the management plan in the real field. It gave the information about the forest resources and its beneficiaries. Similarly, different activities like study tour, CF management training and other training and extension activities like tree plantation were observed and analysed.

3.5.5 Informants interview

Some informants were selected for the study. These key informants were interviewed to find out the useful information for the study. The information gathered in this way became an important asset to check the relevancies of the information obtained through the other methods.

3.6 Conceptual Framework of the study

The factors affecting institutional strengthening of CFUG for sustainable management of community Forest has been divided into four blocks i.e., Socio economic factors, attitudinal factors, cultural factors and institutional factors. So, the following conceptual framework has been prepared for the study (Figure 1).

There are different indicators under the socio-economic factors. It has direct affects on institutional strengthening of CFUG and it indirectly influence the attitudinal matters and finally in institutional strengthening .Cultural factors such as leadership, decision making, social norms and values also have direct and indirect link with the institution build up. Likewise, Attitudinal and institutional variables has direct impact in the institutional strengthening of the community forest user group for the sustainable of the CF.

Fig 3.1: Conceptual framework of the study

3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The information collected was classified, coded, and edited. The quantitative data were analysed using appropriate simple statistical tools and summarized accordingly. Simple as well as complex statistical methods were used for the analysis. The results are presented in the form of charts, figures and tables.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

So far as the matter of data is concerned, they are reliable and valid. This is because the researcher has been directly involved in the collection of data. Different techniques and tools have been used to check the relevancies of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Study area at a glance

4.1.1 Background

Sarlahi district is situated about 375 Kilometres Southeast from Kathmandu (the Capital of Nepal) via Mahendra Highway. The district situated in 26 Degree 45 minute to 27 degree 10 minute northern latitude and 85 degree 20 minute to 85 degree 50 minute eastern longitude. The total area of the district is 1259 Square Kilometers (249100 Hac). This district has 1 municipality and 99 VDCs. Its headquarter is Malangawa. The district is very rich in the forest resources. While talking about the development of the district, the forest resources deserve the first position. The forest has covered about 24.65% of the total area. There are many kinds of non-timber forest products like Babiyo, resin, Dalchini, idexplant etc. The forest is very rich in the biological diversity.

Background of the Study CFUG

The study site is in the Bastipur Village of Lalbandi VDC of Sarlahi District. There are 2024 members in all over the 354 households. The number of male members' i.e. 1044 is more (51.5%) than the female members i.e. 980 (48.5%). The name of the household head (male and female) has been given in the annex 3. There is the majority of Brhamin/Chetri (239 HHs) followed by ethnic group Magars (70 HHs) and others (32 HHs). There are only 7 lower caste (Dalit) households in the village. There are 5 Muslims HHs in this CFUG. Some household members have got a government job but it is very few.

Shree Jan Jyoti Community Forest is located in Lalbandi Village Development Committee in Sarlahi District, of the Mid Region. Prior to the handover of the forest, community members thought that if they don't care in time, they have to face great problem in the near future as the forest area was being cleared day by day. The forest is accessible to the district headquarter and it is also accessible to the non-user of another district. Therefore, they requested DFO, Sarlahi to hand over the forest to them as community forest. Following the handover of forest, the CFUG is taking the sole responsibility of protection, development and utilization of the forest.

The forest covers the area of 94.25 hectare of land and has been divided into 5 management blocks (SJJCFUG, Operational Plan 2005/2006). The forest was covered by Sal (*Shorea Robusta*), Sissau, Taki, Ipil, Bakaino, Khair (*Acacia Catechu*), and a few of Badar and Kyamuna species. Before handing over to the community, the forest was managed in a traditional way. Therefore, the status of forest was heavily degraded. Distance between the forest and the community is 15 minutes and both are almost Half hours walking distance from the District Forest Office, Sarlahi.

4.1.2 Climates and Topography

The climate of the district is primarily Tropical Climate (Up to 659 m altitude). The shape of the district is narrow from east to west and wide from north to south.

4.1.3 Land Utilization

Following table can explain the land utilization of Sarlahi district in different purposes.

Table 4.1: Land Utilization of Sarlahi district

S.N.	Land (particulars)	Churia Area(Hactor)	Terai Area (Hactor)	Total Area	Percent
1	Forest Land	13868	15494	29362	23.31
2	Grass Land	119	1192	1311	1.04
3	Bush/Shrub Land	109	265	374	0.30
4	Cultivated land	4576	79263	83839	66.57
5	River/Stream	75	1331	1406	1.12
6	Sand /Gravel	769	5165	5934	4.71
7	Pond /Lake		422	422	0.34
8	Builtup Area		1142	1142	0.91
9	Nursery /Orchard Land		1858	1858	1.48
10	Cliff/Cutting Land	38		38	0.03
11	Barren Land	11	77	88	0.07
12	Others land		172	172	0.14
	Total Land	19566	106381	125948	100

Source: District Profile Sarlahi (District Development Committee), 2067

From the above statistics, it can be observed that the status of agricultural system especially for vegetables products is good, which can also be supported by the scenario of 83839 hectare of agricultural land. Further, around 31047 hectare of forest in the district seemed quite significant as well. Therefore, the rural ecosystem of the district has been balanced and commendable.

4.1.4 Classification of Forest

Sarlahi has all the species that can be found in tropical climatic condition. The major tree species of the district is Sal followed by Sisau, katus, Khair of limited variety. There are mainly two forest types which are given below:

1. **Sal and Karma mixed Forest:** Particularly occurs in the Chure range. This type of forest lies in the altitude upto 659 m.
2. **Sal and Khair mixed Forest:** Particularly occurs in the river bank areas. This forest type lies in the range between 305 m. to 610 m.

4.1.5 Boundary of the District

East: Mahattori District
West: Rautahat District
Nor Sindhuli District
South: Bharat (Bihar)

4.2 Social Aspects

This section is based on the information obtained from 118 households of the study community. The occupational, educational, demographic, landholding, livestock holding condition have been presented in this chapter. Moreover, this chapter provides the background information about the respondents of the study area which is considered as a whole basis for the social research.

4.2.1 Caste/Ethnic Composition of the Study Area

Caste ethnicity plays crucial role in social system. In the one hand caste system is the basis of division of labor on the other hand it is the basis for social prestige that promotes something and constrains some.

There were altogether three hundred fifty-four households in 6,8 and 9 ward of Lalbandi VDC of Bastipur village. According to the caste there were 239 HHS (67.5%) belonged to Brahmin/Chetri, 70 HHs (19.8%) belonged to Magars, 20 HHs (5.6%) belonged to Tamang, 8 HHs (2.3%) belonged to Madhesi, , 7 HHs (2%) belonged to Dalits, , 5 HHs (1.4%) belonged to Muslim, 5 HHs (1.4%) belonged to Newar respectively.

Figure 4.1: Total distribution of caste/ethnic composition of study area

Distribution of Caste/ Ethnicity:

Source: CFUG Work plan and constitution 2005/2006

The ethnic composition of the community has shown in the above chart. This shows that the study community is heterogeneous in its composition where Brahman/Chhetri is the dominant caste. Following table shows the caste/ethnic composition of the study area.

Table: 4.2 Caste/ethnic composition of the study area.

Caste/Ethnicity	No. of HHs	Sex				Total
		M	%	F	%	
Brhamin/Chhetri	239	713	35.20	666	32.90	68.10
Magars	70	214	10.60	206	10.20	20.80
Dalit	7	17	0.80	24	1.20	02.00
Muslims	5	17	0.80	17	0.80	01.60
Others	33	83	4.10	67	3.40	07.50
Total	354	1044	51.50	980	48.50	100.00

Source: *CFUG Work plan and constitution 2005/2006*

By gender, each caste has nearly equal percentage of male and female population. There is not greater gender differential in terms of sex composition of population.

4.2.2 Educational Status of study area

Education is considered as the fundamental requirement for the social development. One of the major barrier of social development in Nepal is low educational status. With continuous efforts since long time, the literacy rate of Nepal has been raised to 52% by 2001 (CBS 2002). Of the total population, 76% male of the study area are literate and 24% male are illiterate where as 68% female of the study area are literate and 32% female are illiterate, which signifies 72.10% are literate in the total population and the remaining

27.90% are illiterate. Table 2 shows the detail educational status of male and female of the study area.

Table 4.3: Educational status of study area

Total population	Sex				Total Population	
	Male		Female		Literate	Illiterate
	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate		
2024	794	250	666	314	1460	564
Percentage	76	24	68	32	72.10	27.90

Source: CFUG Work plan and constitution 2005/2006

Moreover, highest percentage of people (72.10%) are literate while the small percent (27.10) are illiterate. By sex, no significant difference can be observed in the Literate. Female population (68%) is few lesser than the literate male population (76%). In conclusion, the educational status of the area selected for study seems to be good enough and there exists no much disparity between male and female in matter of education.

4.2.3 Wealth Ranking of SJJCFUG

The wealth status of the community was measured on the basis of employment, landholding, food sufficiency, education etc. The local people placed themselves in three wealth categories. They were: rich, medium and Poor. The results have shown in the table. From this it is clear that the members generally are of medium/middle and rich wealth status and few are of low status.

Table 4.4 Findings on wealth ranking of the villagers of study area

Category	Number	Indicators	Remarks
I. Rich	68	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) More land ownership) Food security for 12 months and more) 20 Kattha (1 biga) of land holding) Owner of the large no. Of livestock) At least one family members engaging in government service and have other occupation such as service/profession, other than the agriculture) Have capacity to go outside for the 	Name of HHs have been shown in annex-3

		treatment of sick members of family	
II. Medium status	197	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Food security almost for 6-12 months) 10-15 Kattha of land holding) Small numbers of livestock) Access to the local school and colleges) Family member might have job in India 	
III. Low status	89	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Some might have food security for up to 6 months) No employment) No ownership in land) Laboring for earning livelihood) Illiterate) More children) No capacity of treatment for sick. 	

Source: Field study 2011

From the above table, it can be observed that 68 HHs (19%) belonged to the rich wealth status, 197 HHs (56%) belonged to the medium wealth status and 89 HHS (25%) belonged to the poor wealth status family.

The following table shows that 25% falls under the poor group and 56% in the medium status followed by 19% in the rich category. The statistics shows the majority of the household's falls under middle class family while a small portion of household is high class family which comes to be at 19%.

Table 4.5 Percentage of different wealth categories

S.N.	Wealth Ranking	No	Percentage
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1	Rich Wealth Status	68	19%
2	Medium Wealth class	197	56%
3	Poor Status	89	25%
Total		354	100%

Source Field study 2011

4.2.4 Occupation and Livestock details as per caste

Almost 75% of the Community Forest Users households owned livestock. Average livestock holding is 3.4 ranging from 0-27 per household. Among the livestock owned categories, the percentage of Brahmin/Chhetri is highest (75%) followed by Magar 16%, Tamang 5% and the remaining caste owned 4%. Livestock ownership seems higher in the Brhamin/Chetri community than to others. This relationship also support the validity of wealth ranking applied for the economic stratification of the study community.

Table 4.5 Occupation holding and Distribution of Livestock

S.N.	Caste	HHs	Population	No. of Livestock	Percentage %	Occupation
1	Tamang	20	86	54	5	Carpentry, Farming
2	Brahmin/Chetri	239	1379	900	75	Business, Carpentry, Job, Skilled work
3	Magar	70	420	198	16	Farming, poultry, carpenting
4	Others	25	139	48	4	Farming, Mud Work
Total		354	2024	1200	100	

Source: CFUG constitution 2005/2006

4.2.5 Participation Level

5.2.5.1 General observation regarding the participation

Every society is the composition of different caste, class and gender. Any development interventions within the society are inspired by the notion of social justice that insists the participation of all people in development activities. Participation is necessary to ensure the social justice in development intervention.

4.2.5.2 Participation of the different groups in the old committee

It was observed that there was only one person representing from Dalit community despite the significant number of women seen in the old user's committee. Moreover, the people represents from remaining groups are quite good in number. The following chart clearly describes the scenario of representation from the people of different walks of life in the old committee. Name list of the ex-committee members has been given in the annex 4.

Figure 4.2: Participation of the different groups in the old executive committee

From the above chart it can be observed that there were 46% female representing in the committee followed by 38% from other caste groups while there was one person representing 8% from the Dalits. Name of old committee members is mentioned in annex-4.

4.2.5.3 New Elected Executive Committee

The committee of the SJJCFUG has been reformulated in 2067 for the improved management of the community forest by the actual resource users i.e. women and dalits. Name list of newly formed committee members is given in annex 4. In which the participation of dalits have been maintained at 7% while women participants has risen to 57%. The participation from other representative ethnic groups is satisfactory. Annex-5 includes the present committee members.

Figure 4.3: Participation of different groups in the new executive committee

Source: CFUG minute 2067

4.2.5.4 Nomination of Advisory Committee

It has been observed that an advisory committee of six persons is formed for the well functioning of the Community Forest Users Committee. These persons are selected by the users' consensus in the assembly. The committee people are selected in such a way that all the members are also the users of same CF and very influential within the CF Users Group.

The main roles of the advisory committee are to advice, support and backstop the CFUC as well as CFUG as per need. The advisory committee is also expected to coordinate to different stakeholders for the welfare of CFUG. Their name has been given in the annex 6. In this advisory system there is two woman and no Dalits are included.

4.2.6 Participation in General Meeting (FUG Assembly)

As per the CFUG constitution, it was mandatory to organize at least one CFUG assembly per year. In CFUG assembly, progress report of last year's is presented and planning of next year's is done. Beside, review and planning of the activities, the general CF related issues is discussed and solution explored. Addition to reviewing the last year's activities, the assembly plan the coming year's activities.

In general meeting, each type of user members uses to attend. This assembly meeting is considered as a good platform for clarifying the different CF related issues in front of all

the users. General trend is attending assembly by male members. Female users think that there is nothing to do by them but decision is in the men's hand. Similarly, Dalit member think that they are small in number and the higher caste people will consider them low or no voice. Therefore, in the decision making process, there was minimum active participation by women and Dalits.

4.2.7 Gender, Equity and fund mobilization

The gender and equity consideration of the FUG was also observed. The methods applied for the development of CF were participatory and used to provide the equal chance to both male and female among the participants to keep their views.

Analysis of men's and women's overall status in the Bastipur community to observe the access to and control over the resources showed that most of the high valued work is done by the male and in the same time, they have the control over resources. Whereas for the female, they have highly bounded life and have no self-guided and self-intended environment. Access to basic need fulfillment is also there for the female members but there was no choice for the women and the girls. Male can enjoy the external life whereas female are limited to the private sphere and guided by the male of the family.

Regarding forestry work, women's role was extremely limited to the physical work e.g. nursery construction, forest product harvesting and collection, plantation, fencing etc but they are not involved in the related decision making e.g. nursery site selection, how much and what to harvest, where to and what to plant and how many areas to fence etc. Similarly, punishment to the victim is beyond the access to the women and poor. Mobilization of fund and selection of activities are also limited to the men.

The male members, while making decision, used to remember the women's physical presence but their inactive participation doesn't put any special meaning to the community. Dalit role is gener-ally do not considered than the women as the voice of women is somewhat represented with their numerical participation.

4.2.8 Institutional Capacity

1. Transparency
2. Accountability
3. Record Keeping & Accounting
4. Distribution of Forest Products
5. Participation of Women and Dalit
6. IGA Program
7. CF management

a. Transparency

FUGs and FUCs activities were found transparent in terms of planning and implementation. But regarding the training participation, the records were not properly maintained which was hampering to provide the opportunity to all users in all way.

b. Record keeping and accounting

Record keeping and accounting in this CFUG was usually maintained by the treasurer with the help of secretary. The accounting books and minutes were looked into to get the entire picture of CFUCs position and treatment of accounts. The records were found recorded in the traditional manners just following the single entry system of book keeping. Hence the accouts are not found up-to-date.

d. Social Consideration in CF Management

Social considerations are generally neglected during Community Forestry Operational Plan (CFOP) preparation and implementation. In general understanding, Community forest management is considered as purely technical management of forest without consideration of the community management. So participation of all in terms of sex and caste was found considered in the later period.

e. Income Generation Activities

It found that the condition of the forest was not very good. CFUGs are laboring for the betterment of their overall socio-economic condition by managing the community forest

properly. Earlier the forest was divided into 2 management blocks, from this year; this Community Forest has been divided into 3 blocks. Another one block is separated for the plantation and management of Khair (*Acacia Catechue*). Furthermore, they had also planned to initiate the plantation in the community forest with various herbs and agro forestry species so as generate future income and to enhance the economic status of people of said CFUCs.

4.3 Technical Aspects of Community Forest Management

4.3.1 Forest Fire and Grazing Practice

Intentional, repetitive and frequent forest fire is a common phenomenon in the hill forest of Nepal. Local people resort to these practice to improve the quality of new regeneration of grasses and to facilitate collection of firewood from thorns and climbers. Even if there is fine mentioned in the constitution that sets fire in the CF, it is often unavailable.

4.3.2 Forest Products Harvesting System

The regulation concerning the forest products for the local people recognized two categories of wood- firewood and timber. Timber for individual use and timber for communal use were placed in the same categories. Firewood was required to come only from dead and fallen trees, where as timber was to be collected in the following order of preference: starting right from dead, dried and fallen trees, over matured and matured trees. But the extraction of wood had to be done in such a way that (i) Forest wouldn't be died (ii) Forest wouldn't be opened unevenly (iii) Such extraction would serve as a thinning process and the trees were cut only in dense part of the forest. In no case no tree were allowed to be cut from the forest along trials, source of water, roadside and religious site and scattered areas.

Smoothly functioning of any system requires checks and balances. Any people who infringed the arrangements were liable to punishment. Local people had to initiate the action, while district level authorities had the authorities to deal with cases and punish offenders. However, a provision for CF assembly to check forests every one year aimed at protection of forests.

4.3.3 Capacity of the CFUC

The capacity of FUC is still not enough to guide and facilitate FUG in the forest management things. Obtaining the consensus decision is still difficult for FUC. So, decisions were dominated by the views of the community's elites; political leaders and forestry field staff, while the concerns of poor and the marginalized group remain largely unheard.

It is still a lot left to build trust between community and DFOs, local people and NGOs, CFUG and CFUC.

4.3.4 Communal Ownership to the CF development program

It still remains in some of the community forestry user group to obtain the communal ownership toward the forest. As CF development works seeks volunteer participation from the users, they think that it is difficult to contribute voluntarily because they need to work something which provides cash income for the livelihood. Sometime it is also difficult to manage the time for the community forestry works as they have to work for urgent private works.

4.3.5 Distribution of forest products (Benefit sharing)

This activity is generally considered one of the most important activities of the CF development and management work. In this CFUG there was a system of equal distribution of the products to all the users without considering the wealth and the number of member in the family. During distribution of firewood and grasses, generally female users play the major roles. As the condition of forest is not so sound, users were not so satisfied with the products what they are getting.

There has been a general tendency to view "forest management" as equal to "forest Protection". Even local people can easily differentiate the before and after situation of the conservation. But only protection and conservation is not forest management. Without management, community forestry program will not be successful to achieve its goal of sustainable harvesting of the forest products by the community without destroying the present condition.

The same case was also observed in the SJJCF as well. The users were found satisfied with conserving the forest resources. But they were not found sincere to implement the operational plan prepared by them. Increasing management demand of forest resulted in negative annual increment because the density of some unwanted shrubs reduced the potential of growth for the desired species. Other major social obstacles for the management of CF were found as:

1. Negligence in participation
2. Difficulty in collection of CF loan from the users under different headings
3. Low participation in monthly committee meeting
4. Lack of implementation of decision
5. Lack of Forest Watcher
6. Illegal cutting of branches and grass
7. Selection of participants in the committee
8. Transparency of CFUG account

The above issues were generally raised by the female users as they were directly facing the problems connecting with the above issues. From this it can be concluded that, women are the one who are mostly involve in the implementation work and face the problems.

Despite of the dissatisfaction with the products they got, there has been an increment in the numbers of households grazing livestock due to the plantation of shrubs and grasses in the CFs.

4.4 Motivational Factors for Women's Participation

There are lots of factors that inspire women to participate the activities. Women of the study area are encouraged to participate in the community forest management by different factors. There were human agents to inspire them as well as some women were also found to be inspired because of social and governmental politics.

Table 4.6 Motivational Factors for Women Participation

Motivational Factors	No. of Respondents	Percent
Local Political Leader	30	26
Self Motivated	50	42
Government Policies	19	16
Husband and other Family members	19	16
Total	118	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2011

Above table shows that out of 118 respondents, the highest number of respondents (50) reported to be self motivated to participate in the CF development activities. The second highest number of women (30) reported that local political leaders encouraged them to participated and rest of the respondents reported they were equally encouraged by Government policies and the family members to participate in the activities.

One of the true factors, the role of private sectors to motivate women to participate in community forest development is still in shade. Although they had role in the promotion of women participation in CF development activities, they were not easily reported.

4.5 Women's and Dalit's attitude towards Community Forest Development

It is true that the condition of the forest has been improved than the past as stated by the informants and even from the self observation. An overwhelmingly majority of respondents were found satisfied with the activities of the newly formed committee and the member selection procedure. Very few participants argued that the committee members have no intension to keep the good relationship with rest of the users. They had their argument for the selection procedure. Almost all women had a single agreement that the forest should be protected where as Dalit and few caste group members had only interest to be involved in each activity where they could be benefited.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendation of the study.

Summary mainly focuses on the objectives, method and findings of the study. This study is based on the information obtained from the field survey, observation, key informants and the checklists.

5.1 Summary

The Community Forestry Development Program is a principal program of Nepal Government in the forestry sector of Nepal, which intends to hand over all the accessible forests to local communities for sustainable management and utilization. The Forest Act 1993 and the Forest Regulation Act 1995 have guaranteed the community rights to use the forest resources.

Sarlahi district is a terai district of the Mid Development region of Nepal. It is one of the underdeveloped terai districts while comparing with others of same altitude in the country. There are one municipality and 99 VDCs in the district.

The total population of Shree Jana jyoti community was found 2024 in which there were 1044 males and 980 were female as per operational plan 2005/06. In the study area there 354 HHs in which there were 239 Brhamin/Chetri HHs, 110 Janajati and 8 were Dalit's.

Moreover, highest percentage of people (72.10%) are literate while the small percent (27.10) are illiterate. By sex, no significant difference can be observed in the Literacy rate. Female population (68%) is few lesser than the literate male population (76%). In conclusion, the educational status of the area selected for study seems to be good enough and there exists no much disparity between male and female in matter of education.

As I found from the study some of the reasons for not strengthening the CFUG have been found to be:

1. Limited support from DFO

2. Limited access and presence of the poor and women in decision making
3. Emphasis on forest protection, rather than management.

The study revealed that a series of training and extension activities as per the FUG need can help to increase the level of understanding and internalization of the CF management needs of the local people along with necessary skills. Intensive support to some selected CFUGs could be a better and sustainable option for providing timely and adequate support. Moreover, the CFUG was more heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity because the users were included from Brhamin, Chetri, Janajati and Dalit of various clans and category.

The CFUG was purposively selected after consultation with the District Forest Officer and the concerned Range post Ranger.

According to the caste there were 239 households (67%) belonged to Brahmin/Chetri, 100 households (28%) belonged to Janajati (Ethnic group), 8 HHs(3%) belongs to Madhesi and 7 HHs (2%) belonged to Dalit.

While observing the economic status of the local people, 68 HHs (19%) belonged to the rich wealth status, 197 HHs (56%) in the medium status and 89 HHs (25%) fall in the poor group category. A majority of household of the CFUGs belong to the medium family while the small portions of family fall under rich category. Hence we can conclude that the economic status of the people of CFUGs is moderate and there exist no such gap between the rich and the poor.

Regarding the motivational factors for increasing the women's participation, out of 118 respondents, the highest number of respondents (50) reported to be self motivated to participate in the CF development activities. The second highest number of women (30) reported that local political leaders encouraged them to participate and rest of the respondents reported they were equally encouraged by Government policies and the family members to participate in the activities.

Talking about the income generation activity, users of the Shree Jana Jyoti Community Forest have started Khair plantation separating the forest in to one new block as an income generation activity (IGA) as their common business. CFUG was planning to cultivate the Amriso (broom grass) and some non timber forests products like kurilo, Dalchini and bamboo in the open forest land from the next year.

5.2 Conclusions

Nepal, which is recognized for the community forest in the world has ongoing trend in the numbers of CFs. The CFUGs help to maintain an ecological balance due to massive tree plantation programmes in the study site. The availability of the grasses from the CFs led to livestock grazing which in turn has improved their economic condition. Livestock grazing led to production of animal products such as milk, meat which will ultimately increase their economic status. The issues, training and various discussions done at local level have empowered the people of that area and have also made people aware about political matters as good governance, accountability of the leader towards the public etc.

On the other hand there are some factors that need to be improved in the SJJCFUGs. The various decisions of the CFUGs are informed to all the users. The major decisions of the CFUGs are made either by the influence of the political leader or by the higher caste people. The voice of the dalits and socially marginalized people are being suppressed in the decision making process of CFUGs.

5.3 Recommendations

FUG as an institution, need to have their own planning, implementation and monitoring. Strengthening of CFUG process with different training & extension activities will help them to be bounded with an organizational structure and help to develop their own vision and indicators that could become guide for FUG planning.

The following recommendations are made from the study to increase the effectiveness of the CFUG institutional Strengthening process:

1. Good facilitation is important for introducing institutional strengthening program. Therefore, network among all stakeholders such as FUG, FUC, Range post, DFO and other NGSPs working in the forestry sector in the district is very important to support CFUG.
2. Follow up and support need to be done to see the institutional capacity of CFUG and the CFUC.
3. Government and or development programs should support to strengthen the capacity of the CFUG as per the Training Need Assessment (TNA).

4. Regular follow up and support in the beginning need to be provided to the CFUG for their institutional strengthening.
5. There are some NTFPs in the community forest and other can be cultivated. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to the biological, socio-economic and conservation aspects of the management of non-timber forest to increase the income of the community.
6. Study tour inside the district benefits to the users in different ways. If the best practices done by one CFUG adopted by the other, that will have multiplier effect and their by save time and resources.
7. Community based conservation is essential for the sustainable use of forests and biodiversity. Community forestry has been successful in conserving forests and satisfying the basic needs of user groups. These types of initiatives should be strengthened and expanded.
8. It is crucial that learning from communities at the grass roots level is captured during the process of revising forest policy (Jamarkattel et al. 2009).
9. As I found the overall changes in thinking, participation and in motivation of the SJJCFUG have increased towards the CF development, it can be concluded the similar projects can be replicated to other areas as well. Because I realized that such support will help for the community to be very familiar with the different forestry work and understanding of all the processes and the importance as a whole.

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