

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Forest is undoubtedly one of the major natural resources of an agricultural country like Nepal, where more than 80 percent of the people are farmers by profession. Unlike that of other countries, here forestry resource for the livelihood of the rural people of Nepal the life of women and the poor, in particular is closely associated with forest products for their subsistence need. People use forest for many purposes such as fuel wood, fodder, timber and minor forest products such as fruit, nuts, medicine etc. Forest is essential to protect soil against erosion, providing clean water, reducing landslide, floods, maintaining ecological balance and preventing environmental degradation (kayastha, 1991).

Before 1957 there was no strict rules and regulation for the protection and use of forest. Believing that there was enough forest, the government paid no attention to develop the forest, allowed forest use to continue at higher rate. Forest rehabilitation was similarly ignored. So rapid deforestation has been created a serious problem e.g. soil erosion, floods, landslides, water scarcity, decrease agriculture, reduce income sources and livestock productivity etc. are some of them. Generally the factor responsible for deforestation increased demand of forest and forest products due to population growth, clearance of the forest to increase the agricultural land and grazing livestock in the forest.

To solve the increasing serious problem of deforestation the government nationalized all forest in 1957 to prevent the destruction of national wealth to nationalize private forest for their adequate protection (Regmi, 1978). Unfortunately, the government was unprepared to assume the technical and administrative responsibilities of the ownership. Villager reacted negatively to nationalization, believing their traditional rights to access and use had been

curtailed. As a result, local responsibility for forest protection disappeared where as previously there had been communal responsibility for managing the forest, but after nationalization nobody took responsibility of managing this resource. Moreover, because there were no lands records, villagers had a strong incentive to destroy the forest so that the land could be claimed as a private property after it was cleared and cultivated. As a result of inadequate government control and adverse local reaction to nationalization, Nepal's forests effectively became common property (Wallance 1997).

The forest act of 1961 and its subsequent amendments and rules became the basic law governing forest administration in Nepal. Likewise the forestry act and the forest protection (special arrangement) Act (1967) attempted to establish strong state authority over the forest. Although some provisions were made for transferring HMG forest area to Village Development Committee (VDC), yet for some years no steps were taken to implement these provisions.

In 1978, the government did real change in forest policy intended two categories. The Panchayat Forest (PF), Panchayat Protection Forest (PPF) and leasehold forest rules. They were intended to involve local communication and private interests in the management of the forest. Though the forest act 1979, Community Forestry Program (CFP) was intending to develop and manage both PF and PPF. This program has been launched in 58 districts under the department of forest (source forest department (CFDP). In 1977 and 1978 Panchayat Forest (PF) and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) were introduced under the Community Forest Department Program (CFDP) with the purpose of handing back the protection and management of the forest to the people (Chhetri and Pandey, 1992). The 7<sup>th</sup> National Plan also emphasized to engage the maximum participation of the people in the management of the forest resource for fulfilling the needs of daily life (NPC, 1985). In most part of hilly regions numbers local forest management systems are still found (Paudel, 1994). Many research studies on forest resources and their management are widely distributed throughout Nepal (Budhathoki, 1987, Campbell et al., 1989) and these systems of forest protection and management have effectively and successfully operated within local environment context.

Similarly, Community Forestry Program (CFP) is in operation in most part of Nepal in which users groups are the units of forest management and decision makers.

The Community Forestry Program is a largest program among six major program of forest protection implemented in Nepal. Different International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) have great interest in such conservation program. They see this program as a tool in the improvement of environment as well as upgrade of existing livelihood of local people. In this respect, they use community forestry as tool for development of environment and community development (Shresth, 1999).

For any development program to be success gender balance participation of locals is very important. However, when the participation of local is considered, that are often involved are only smart men and women. Dalit and ethnic group (Mainly poor class) women are always ignored and not included in development program. Similarly in natural resource management also women and dalit/ethnic peoples participation is not considered worthwhile even though they are primary users of the forest and have more indigenous knowledge about the forest than their men country parts. They are less benefited from the CF programme.

It is generally recognize that women have an important role to play in the conservation and protection of the forests in terms of their labour contribution with exception of true feeling; most management activities in community forests are conducted by women. However, their contribution at CF as labour but their participation at meetings, decision making and planning process, benefit sharing not being valued and domination by men at meetings (Van Eijhatten, 1998).

Many studies (Acharya and benet et al., 1981) has shown that women are primary users of the forest. Women spent significant portion of their time in forest related activities such as collection of fuel wood and fodder, fetching water, wash cloth, child care, cooking food, and have to be involved service. But women are often excluded from planning, decision making, benefit sharing and organizational mechanism in CF program. In benefit sharing aspect, women are keeping far away. This situation seems in community forestry.

## 1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

In Nepalese context, women are the primary user of the forest and they have the major responsibility for protection the forest from its depletion. For rural women deforestation means more time and energy to be spent on household. Children also have been invested time for carrying water and gathering forest protects. In this way deforestation affects everyone who depends on the land for any part of their livelihood.

Local people involvement in the forest management activities have been acknowledge as main strategy of the forest policy of Nepal for the sustainable and effective management and conservation of the forest (Chhetri et al., 1992). Without participation of local people, community forestry program cannot be succeeded.

Any development programs needs gender balance participation for its success. But when participation of local people is considered often only males are found valued. Women are always ignored and not included in development program.

It is noted by everybody that women are the main collectors and users of the forest products. They are also more knowledgeable and skillful in terms of use and management of these forest resources. However their status within the forest user groups as chairperson or decision makers is not equal to that of men.

The question rises here, what is the degree of gender participation? Are women involving in planning, implementation, decision-making and getting equal opportunity in benefit sharing? What are the key factors hindering women's participation in community forestry? What is the men's attitude (norms, values) for women's in participation in community forestry? What is the management system of CFP with regard to gender participation? Above questions are the main focuses, which this study has addressed. Some researcher has pointed out problems in the above issues. The main problem of the study is unequal participation of men and women in forest related activities due to social, cultural and other factors. These problems raised above questions in community forestry for continuity and sustainability. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct in-depth study on the issue of CF program.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to assess gender participation in different stages of community forest, such as: planning, decision-making and benefit sharing (executive committee, assemblies, group meeting, training etc.)

The specific objectives are as follows;

- ) To examine the level of participation of men and women in Forest Executive Committee.
- ) To find out factors affecting men and women's level of participation in community forest.
- ) To trace out attitude of men towards women in participation.
- ) To assess the benefit sharing system of CF.

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

From different information media, the slogan of women's participation, and women empowerment are being expressed. It is high time to know the real situation of women's participation in community forestry. The study will examine the people's participation in CF with related to gender perspective analysis in Gadawa VDC of Dang district.

Being organized into CFCU, women have having increased confidence level and raise ability to speak their voice as exposure to the outside world.

Even though words like "Manager", "Consumer" and "Protector" are used for women, tend to remain at the level of rhetoric only. The local men see Forest management as an important issue, which does not concern women. They think that women mostly being illiterate are ignorant and do not have anything to contribute to it. Earlier provision in the forest Master Plan had emphasized the participation of 33% of women in the User Group Committee. But

this policy has not been followed. Numbers of factor are responsible are: socio-cultural norms, values, illiteracy and lack of appropriate knowledge to participate women.

Women are primary users of community forest. They contribute in CF as a labor. However, their participation at meeting, decision-making, planning process and benefit sharing aspect is not being valued (Van Eijhtten, 1988). Both men and women have equal rights and the objective of any development is to increase benefit of socially marginalized groups. Understanding on why women are disadvantage from these opportunities is an important to increase forest benefit for women. This study mainly focuses on problem of female's participation on two aspects: participation for decision-making and participation for benefit sharing. Therefore, the study deals with the above issues and expected to bring out those issues in policy level. The findings of the study would be useful for decision makers, concern government organization, Donor Agencies, planner, policy maker, social activators and future researcher to plan similar project better. The study will find out issues that could be address in future and benefit those involved peoples.

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

The study will be limited to people's participation in CF with related to gender perspective analysis in Gadawa VDC of Dang district. Since the study will not be conducted as a case study of particular areas, the validity of the findings may not be representative to other VDCs. This study will be undertaken to meet the partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master Degree in Rural Development and will thus naturally be impeded by time and budget limit.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Evolution of Community Forestry Concept

It is widely recognized that local communities have historically played an instrumental role in forest management as an indispensable common property (Uprety 2000). Management of common forest resources was well developed in England by the middle Ages with clearly defined use and ownership right and such rights already dated from time immemorial (Rackham 1986 cited in Baniya, 2000). Thus, far from “Community Forestry” being a modern concept, it is in fact a very old one; another case of “old wine in a new bottle” (Gilmour et. al 1991).

The prevailing development paradigm was a pro-industrialization, top down, which has been characterize as the “development from above” approach (Stohr & frasertylor 1981 cited in Gilmour et. al; 1991). By the late 1960s, the development paradigm changed to the “development from below” (Stohr & Frasertylor 1989 & Chamber 1983 cited in Gilmour et. al; 1991) because of the criticized of the “development from above”. The emergence of new approach did not replace the old one. Both approaches continue to exist side by side in general development and in forestry development. In 1945 to 1970 forest was used as a source of industrialization and economic growth. This led to the poverty in the third world countries increased; the rural people were getting poorer. In the late 1970s two major role of forest is recognized are 1) provide forest products and trees for rural people who no longer had access to them and 2) find ways of increasing the benefits of the forest resource to the rural people who lived in or near forests. As a result, the concept of community or social forestry came after the release of the landmark FAO publication “Forestry for local community development” (FAO 1978). FAO defined CF as “any situation which intimately involves local people in forestry activities”. The legitimating of the concept was also boosted by the adaptation of “Forestry for people” as the theme for the eight world forestry congress in Jakarta in 1978. By the 1980s, the concept of Community Forestry had become major program within the forestry policy of many developing countries.

Evolution of development paradigm influenced on the forest policy of Nepal. In 1957, under the forest nationalization act of 2013 B.S., Government of Nepal nationalized all the private forest. From 1957 to 1977; subsequent amendment was made in rules and Act (Joshi 1991). The legislation proved to be completely ineffective because the act controlled the utilization of forest products and only gave importance on controlling the users to enter the forest. The Department of forest was incapable of maintaining effective control over thousands of small patches of forest throughout the hills (Fisher 1990, cited in Uprety, 2000). In 1978, the Nepalese Government introduced Panchayat Forest (PF) and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) rules in a response to the failure of the protection of the Forest; Panchayat (now replaced by the Village Development Committee) was responsible to manage forest within their boundary. Initially, Department of Forest and other line agencies were willing to hand over only barren and degraded forest lands to the local people in the form of Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest because reforestation was the main program of Community Forestry and District Forest Officers did not want to hand over natural forest underestimating the practices and knowledge of local people. Due to pressure of local user, natural forest was also handed over in selected district but Department of Forest did not get anticipated result. The major problems was the ambiguities in program regarding the security of traditional use right, lack of freedom in decision making and user had to function under the structure of Panchayat. Forest could be handed over only to the Panchayat officials within the politically defined area e.g. ward, VDC and District. However political boundary for forest did not usually coincide because some forests were common to more than one ward or more than one Panchayat (now Village Development Committee). General local people did not appreciate such practice. Issue related to forest ownership and recognition of actual use right is solved by the introduction of the concept of user group in the decentralization act 1982. In 1988 Master Plan for Forestry Sector prepared which also emphasized on Community Forestry and user level management disregarding of Panchayat. Now Forest Act 1993, Forest Regulation 1995, Operational guideline 1995 are the effort of Government for the sustainability of Community Forest, which clearly recognized the involvement of user group (Joshi 1993, Karki et. al. 1994 & Uprety 2000).

In Nepal, the Community Forest policy combines with the environmental objectives of preventing land degradation and deforestation with social and economic objectives. The latter objectives are to meet people's basic needs for fire wood, fodder, timber and other forest products on a sustainable basis and also to contribute to food production through effective interaction between forestry and farming practices (HMGN, 1988). Therefore all the accessible forest area in the middle hills of Nepal has been handed over by District Forest Office to the local communities themselves (Aryal 2000).

Department of forest identified 60% of the national forest (3.9 million hectares) is designated to be handed as the Community Forest (Anonymous, 1991). Many development projects are working in the field of CF program in Nepal and getting good progress in the hills. According to A.R. Sharma "up to 2000, 662 thousand hectare of national forest is already handed over to Forest User Groups, encompassing some one million thousand users".

Community Forest is a partnership program between government and community organization in which Government staff play a role as facilitator and catalyst to identify real user groups, to prepare operational plan of forest and constitution of group and in implementation of CF activities where as community (user group) is responsible to manage, protect and utilize the forest on the sustainable basis (MPFS 1988). Community Forest is a part of national forest that has been given to the users do not follow the rules of operational plan of the forest. This provision has made some doubt toward the Government from local people (Fisher and Gilmour, 1999).

## **2.2 Community Forestry Program in Nepal**

Community Forestry is the major strategy in Nepal's forest policy. The Community Forestry program resulted due to the failure of forest nationalization act 1957. This nationalization act ignored traditionally managed communal forest, which act came into conflict with this traditional type of community management of forest resources (Dahal, 1994). The lack and difficulties of supervision from the center, bureaucratic practice, the lack of ownership feeling among the people, who were the direct beneficiaries of the forest, led to the failure of the nationalization policy.

In 1975, a conference was held in Kathmandu to consider issues relating to management of Forest in Nepal. The participants of the conference were Divisional Forest Officials from throughout the country and senior members of Department of Forest and Ministry of Forest. The planned three days meeting was extended to 23 days because of the great interest that was generated and desire to make a strong statement on the need to address the deteriorating condition of the country's forest. This conference formulated the National Forestry Plan (NAFP) 1976. NAFP recognized that the Department of Forest had ignored forest of hills, which led to the deterioration of watershed. To overcome this problem, the concept of "Panchayat Forest", which aims on the plantation of bare land, was proposed. NAFP provide base for the formulation of "Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest Act, 1978 (Gilmour et al 1991).

Community Forestry Program was launched in 29 districts up to mid 1980s. Initially, Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest were handed over to the local political body "The Village Panchayat" who was responsible to take care of the forest. In late 1980's the concept of User Group was introduced. After that Community Forestry has been handed over to local user irrespective of political boundary and political body.

Now, Community Forestry Program covers almost all hilly District of Nepal. The most of the forest areas were handed over to communities and its considerable success in the hills earned a lot of recognition internationally (Joshi 1997, cited in Pokhrel 1999). Whereas, the picture of the Terai in this field is different. The reason for not gaining momentum of Community Forestry in the Terai could be due to different socio-economic and resources use tradition. Most of the settlements around the Terai forest are of new origin with heterogenous society which may cause difficulties to bring them under one umbrella. This may be the reason why user group forestry having hard time to get full momentum in the Terai (Updhyay et. al, 1997).

The Community Forestry in Terai was initiated in mid 1980s by Terai Community Forestry Development Project (TCFDP). Except Bara district, most of the Terai district forests either natural or plantation is handed over to the communities (Joshi 1997 cited in Pokhrel 1999).

Although, Community Forestry program is effective participatory program of Nepal, it is not out of debate. One of the major issues of debate is revenue from forest especially in Terai. Baral, Subedi and Pokhrel had discussed the issue of revenue from Terai Forest in the process of Community Forestry Program. They argued that there is a need of a new model of forest management in Terai then in the hill forest. They suggested a new model should ensure Community Forestry's contribution to the national treasury without effecting local enthusiasms for participation. "Success can be achieved through the joint efforts with community and Department of Forest. This could be done by sharing the revenue between two parties" (Pokhrel, 1999). But Federation of Community Forestry User Group (FECOFUN) is in against of sharing of revenue through any model of participatory forest management. They argue "Terai people want an area that would be enough to match their needs and be granted the right according to the provisional of forest act 1993" (FECOFUN, 1999, cited in Aryal, 2000)

Next debate is about land tenureship. Government has given full use right of forest products to users but not land tenure. This provision may develop low confidence towards Community Forestry program. Users may feel whether government take the Community Forestry back from the users group and revert to national forest (Shrestha, 1996).

Next major debate is about unclear guideline where the objectives of Community Forestry is only to fulfill subsistence need of forest produce or whether it may commercialize the Community Forestry by permitting installation of wood based industries in sustainable way (Shrestha, 1996).

The sustainability of Community Forest management in Nepal depends upon economical, social and cultural diversities of Nepal. Diversities of social cultural setting make diverse natural resource management practice and allied resource use conflict. Conflict in Community Forestry in Nepal is one of them which are rooted in the communities themselves (Kharel, 1994). In Community Forestry, conflicts are seen within a Forest User Group, between two and more Forest Users Groups or between Forest User Group and District Forest Office (Shrestha, 1994).

Although, there are some debate and conflict during the process of Community Forestry in Nepal, the Community Forestry Program in general is one of the successful forestry programs of Nepal (Joshi, 1995). The improvement of the forest of the nation and meeting the basic forest products to the need of local forest users are the two major objectives in Community Forestry Program in Nepal.

Community Forestry program is a partnership program between local communities and the staff of Department of Forest (DOF) for the management of locally accessible forest. Community Forestry involves the control and management of forest either natural or planted by a specified user group. Several amendments in Community Forestry policies were made supporting for better people participation. The term Forest management encompasses both technical and social arrangements. Forest management includes the planting, protection, harvesting and distribution of forest products.

The process of Community Forestry can be divided into four major phases according to Community Forestry Guideline 1995. These are:

### **Investigation Phase**

This is first phase of Community Forestry process. This phase includes gathering of socio-technical information about the use of the forest and the identification of the real forest users and forest areas. Careful attention should be given in identifying the users to ensure no one is left out.

### **Negotiation Phase**

This phase includes formation of Forest User Group, discussion on forest management issues within the Forest User Group and preparation of Operational Plan of forest and constitution of user group. Existing management knowledge is acknowledged. The needs, problems, concerns and issues of different interest group as well as the solution of the needs and problems are identified during the preparation of Operational Plan. Finally, Operational Plan is prepared with the help of forest technician. District Forest Office approves this Operational Plan and constitution.

The Forest User Group could be either exiting group or newly organized specifically to manage Community Forest. After approval of constitution, Forest User Group is formalized. Operational plan of forest is prepared with the objectives of developing and conserving the forests. The use and distribution of forest products is made by maintaining the environmental balance.

### **Implementation Phase**

After the approval of constitution and operational plan, the right and responsibilities of management and utilization of the forest as mentioned in the Operational Plan are legally transferred to the Forest User Group. The implementation phase includes fulfilling approved forest management plan with the help of District forest official. Any mistakes made during investigation of forest and its real users and during negotiation among the users may create problems during the implementation of Operational Plan.

### **Review Phase**

This phase includes appraisal, revision and re-negotiation of the Operational Plan either at the request of Forest User Group or upon the expiry of operational plan, which is prepared generally in every five years. Whether Forest User Group is working properly or not is evaluated and a new Operational Plan is approved after the expiry of the old one.

#### **Box 1: Some Information about Community Forestry in Nepal**

)	Total Forest User Group:-	14,604
)	Benefited Household by Community Forest:-	1,680,270
)	Total Forest Area:-	6,306,000 ha.
)	Potential Community Forest Area:-	3,551,849
)	Community Forest Handed over:-	1,247,025
)	Average number of Committee members:-	11.94 per committee
)	Average women committee member:-	3.59 per committee
)	Total woman community user group:-	805
)	Total representative in Community Forest:-	
)	Total female representative in Community Forest:-	

### **2.3 Forest User Groups**

The Forest User Group (FUG) is focus subject of Community Forest, which recognizes local user right and practices to a considerable extend (Fisher and Gilmour, 1991). The concept of Forest User Group is derived from the concept of use right. The Forest User Group is an institution based on the concept of “common property”. The Forest User Group is known as common property resource institution that is group of people share specified use right (Gilmour and Fisher 1991 & Karki 1994). The evolutionary background of user group is closely linked to the existence of indigenous forest management system of Nepal, thus the forestry profession may not doing no more than rediscovering and redefining the system (Chetri and Panday 1992 and Gilmour and Fisher 1991).

Community Forestry planning process prescribed four separate phases to form Community Forest or Forest User Group. Identification of Forest User Group is the first phase of Community Forest hand over process. In this process, the field staffs within the village determine the real user of a particular forest by discussion and checking. Community Forest extension worker need to devoted more time with the forest users in this phase. The process also identifies Socio technical information about the use of forest and Community Forestry areas (Joshi, 1991). “When a person is of low cast or disadvantaged, he or she does not easily mingle with the rest of the community and will have a low profile and therefore may not know what is happening around the village and so miss the chance to be included in the user group. Sometime low cast people do not speak out in community dominated by high cast people. As a result when a user group is formed such disadvantaged persons are left out. Later on at the time of benefit sharing, the conflict will surface” (Shrestha, 1994).

The second phase of Community Forest process is negotiation phase in which user group is formed, their need and problems are identified, and discussed on the problems and issue and find the solution themselves with the assistance of DFO staff. In this phase they prepared Constitution of group and Operational plan of forest. During the preparation of constitution they formed one executive committee is called Forest User Committee (FUC) on the basis of consensus or voting Mechanism of forest protection, management and utilization are mentioned in the operational plan and Forest User Group is responsible to implement these.

They have total right to fix price of their forest products, they can use forest products for their collective benefits and use surplus income in forestry development as well as in community development work. These authorities can be practiced in a way that should not be affecting on sustainability of forest. Third phase is implementation phase that includes carrying out approved forest management activities by the Forest User Group. Last phase is the review of operational plan at the request of Forest User Group or the expiry of the operational plan after five years. It is continuous process. The first two phases are concerned with the formation of Forest User Group (Karki et. al. 1994, Shrestha, 1999 & Fisher, 1991).

Through the Community Forestry Program following rights are given to the Forest User Group.

- ) Any part of the forest can be handed over to Forest User Group who is traditional users of the forest irrespective of the political boundary.
- ) There is no limit of forest to be handed over as Community Forest to Forest User Group that depends upon their willing and capability.
- ) Forest User Group must be registered at District Forest Office with their constitution and manage the Community Forest according to their operational plan approved by District Forest Office.
- ) Forest User Group can freely fix price, transport and market the forest products from Community Forest.
- ) Forest User Group can grow long term cash crop applying inter cropping system inside the Community Forest.
- ) Forest User Groups are allowed to establish forest based industry that can be run with the raw material yielded by Community Forest.
- ) Forest User Group can utilize the fund generated through the sale of forest produce in any development work but amendment of Forest Act 1993 make compulsion to utilize 25% fund in forest management work.
- ) Forest User Group can take action to the members of Forest User Group who break the rule of the constitution or operational plan (Joshi, 1993 & Lamichhane 2000).

In terms of function there are two basic types of groups: expressive and instrumental. Expressive groups are formed primarily for the purpose of the individual relating to each other. Instrumental groups are formed to reach a specific goal. Forest User Groups are combination of both these types. It is primarily a task oriented (instrumental) group. It is designated to manage reach their goals, forest users become a close: well knit members of community (Subedi, 1997).

## **2.4 People's Participation**

The concept, People's participation has been used since ancient time of Plato and Greek philosopher in public affairs especially in political science. Participation on those days was merely a matter of voting, holding office, attending public meeting, paying taxes and defending the state (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980 in Joshi, 1995). The meaning of participation however has changed with the passage of time. Participation of people in the affairs of the state is necessary for a modern welfare state. The participation ideology "bottom-up" approach is originated in reaction to colonial Bureaucratic failure in 1950s (Moris 1981 cited in Rahnema, 2000). Social activist and field worker advocated on the side of participatory development against the "top-down" approach (Rahnema, 2000). During the latter half of the 1970, the concept, peoples participation in development become more popular and fashionable as oppose to the "top-down" approach (Lisk, 1981 cited in Joshi, 1995). World Bank also realize the participatory development approach due to far less achievement on expected output from billion spent on development project through "top to bottom" approach of development. The concept, people's participation has become a politically attractive slogan; it is perceived as an instrument for greater effectiveness as well as new source of investment. Participation is becoming a good fund raising device and it could help the private sectors to be directly involved in the development business (Rahnema, 2000). Community participation is now generally taken as a necessary precondition to the successful implementation of any renewable or rehabilitation project. Community participation is generally agreed to be important for the long term success of local resource management system (Korten, 1986 cited in Joshi 1995).

People's participation has been used in a variety of context such as community development, social mobilization, community participation, public participation etc. Various authors define people's participation in divergent way. Soen (1981) regard community participation as the means of involving people outside of the government in the planning process, while Fagence (1977) sees it is a means of reducing power differences, and is therefore, contributory to equalization and social justice. White (1991) calls it as involvement of the people actively in the decision making concerning development projects or in the implementation. (Quoted in Joshi, 1995) World Bank Define "participation means their active not passive involvement and it should be transformative" (1995; 6). According to Cohen and Norman people's participation is often narrowly defined as the voluntary contribution of labor and / or cash by the local people. However, conceptually people's participation includes their participation in identifying needs, decision making, implied benefit sharing and evaluation (Cited in Bhandari, 1997). People's participation has been taken as a means by the Government agencies and the projects for achieving their goals. "A problem free situation of people's participation is not easy". There is no common understanding regarding what people's participation. Different level of people has different perception about it. Participation in the sense of only physically involvement is passive participation. Such participation does not seem to last long (Chhetri, 1999).

## **2.5 Community Forest and People's Participation**

Community Forestry of Nepal is one of the popular programs in the context of people's participation. Many scholars and professionals have defined Community Forestry focusing people's participation. Food and Agriculture Organization (1978) defines "Community Forestry as any situation, which intimately involves local people in forestry activities. Likewise, Pardo (1985) describe". "Social Forestry as referring to any situation which closely involves local people in forestry or tree growing activities for which people assume responsibilities and from which they derive direct benefit through their own efforts". In the context of Nepal Golmour and Fisher (1991) define "Community Forestry is the control and management of forest resource by the people who use them for their domestic purpose and as an integral part of subsistence and peasant farming system". Similarly Inserra (1998) defines

“Community Forestry as management of forest by the local people who depend upon them for fuel wood, fodder, timber, food and raw materials” (Cited in Joshi, 1995).

People’s participation is the most essential feature of Community Forest. Infield practice; idea of people’s participation in Community Forest has gained high level of popularity in Nepal. The institutional arrangement and policy behind this program is quite good in the sense of people’s participation. But the gap between rhetoric and realities is seemed in the practices. It is happening because of an inadequate understanding of how the idea of people’s participation and empowering the people could be effectively put into practice His research on Hagam Village Development Committee of Sindhupalchok district gave feed back to know that there is no real participation of people in plantation work carried out by Forest User Group with the help of District Forest Office. Most of the users involved in plantation in return for wages. This involvement is given name of full participation. All seedlings were pulled out in the same evening of plantation work. When researcher asked to users during his field visit about such behavior; it is known that they were thinking that plantation of government seedlings means losing their convenient grazing land. From this research it is concluded that the type of people involved in decision making were elite while some other people were not fully informed and the need of general people was not recognized (Chhetri, 1999).

It is realized that people’s participation is the best way to achieve the objective on effective protection and management of forest resources. It is suggested for popular participation that existing local practices, institution, organizational structure and local user group should be recognized. People should be convinced that they are not only the protector but the immediate beneficiaries as well. Effective participation can be further increased if people are well informed about the program and sense of belonging is created through motivation and awareness (Kyastha, 1991 & Chetri et. al. 1992).

Lamichhane (2000) carried out his research in Ramechhap district and he found that before the involvement of District Forest Office and other line agencies in providing training to users, need of interest group was not addressed in most of the community. The local elite controlled most of the forest resources. The group was not mobilized effectively. But after

awareness training to local users, users started to adopt democratic decision-making process. Involvement of lower caste in Forest User Committee also increased from 2% in 1997 to 7% in 1999.

Participation of women is crucial for the success of Community Forestry. Women are the major collectors of the forest products such as fuel wood, fodder and dry leaf. So consequences of deforestation directly impact on women. District Forest Office and other line agencies must motivate women to participate in Community Forestry program through extension and awareness classes (Kasthaya, 1991).

## **2.6 Factors Affecting Participation**

Studies have been shown that there are various factors, which makes difference in participation. Mannion and Brehony's (1990) study in Tanzania found leadership qualities, age, sex, marital status, literacy and wealth affects individual participation. Similarly, the study carried out by Lama (1999) reveals that class; caste does make difference in participation. Baral (1993) stated that ethnic composition; political ideology and culture within the community could create problems at the user group level.

Shrestha (1997) in her study found that farm size affected participation negatively but fuel wood requirements have positive effect on participation. According to Maskey et.al (2003) age, gender and household income have significant effects on participation in CF management. According to Regmi (1992) the major factors affecting women's participation in committee work are the clear prospects of benefit sharing; family support; the small size of committee and the compact area in which they worked; personal character such as marital status and age; local people's support. On the other hand Lama (1991) found that heavy workload, timing and duration of meetings, men's resistance and equity in benefit sharing are the factors affecting the participation. Religious divides also could prove important in participation in relation to gender. For example, large differences can exist between Buddhist and Hindus; the former usually providing a less restrictive social setting for women than the latter, as found areas of Nepal (Lama, 2000).

## **2.7 Equity in benefit sharing**

MPFS specifies the objectives of Community Forestry are “to meet the peoples” need for fuel wood, timber, fodder and other forest products on a sustainable basis. The community Forestry policy has provided use right to the user independently. Community Forestry is primarily for the benefit of the villagers. Equity in the benefit sharing encourages the individual to work effectively in the sustainability of the forest management. Equity in benefit sharing is big issue in Community Forestry. Conflict may arise as to how the forest products should be shared. Some people may argue benefit be shared on the basis of household and other may argue be shared on the basis of the number of family members. Similarly equity is problematic between primary user who is regular user and secondary user who is seasonal user (Shrestha, 1994).

Community Forestry aims to ensure that all villagers have equitable access to forest resources. To be fair and equitable, Full involvement of farmers, women, occupational castes and poor in decision making during in preparation of operational plan is required. Their input will be effective for forest management if not fails to address the need of the poor. It is essential to obtain the views of the all level of people in benefit sharing. Different interest group may have different points of view about it. They may have different need from forest product. If the views of all people are not care in decision making of benefit sharing then local elites capture the benefit more than other general communities (Chetri, 1999 & Gautam, 1996).

Equity is a measure of how evenly the benefit and burdens from the Community Forestry are distributed among its beneficiaries. Equity is associated whether accepted systems for the provision of inputs in production and protection activities are made or not, high level of participation in decision-making and access of all use members to the Community Forest. No standard criteria for benefit sharing have been set by government rules and regulations. It is found variation in benefit-sharing mechanism from one Forest User Group to another Forest User Group. Generally, the benefit is Community Forests are shared based on the contribution of users (Pokhrel, 2000).

R. Pokhrel (2000) studied three user group; each user group from Kaski, Palpa and Surkhet district. He found that Phedipatan user group of Kaski district had distributed fire wood on the basis of group contribution where as he found group contribution with lottery system in Bharkesh user group of Palpa district and individual contribution in surkhet district.

Dahal (1994) found in his research in eastern part of Nepal that many sleeping users who have not even visited the forest for the last two to three years, never attended any Forest User Group meeting and so far not utilized any forest product. But at the same time, they pay money to forest watcher thus claiming the legal right to be user of the forest. He viewed on that “Although such users are saving forest products for the time being, they are not sharing their ideas, regarding the management, use and distribution of forest products. For young Forest User Group to become sustainable, collective efforts are essential.”

From the views of various scholars it was revealed that the Community Forestry is the involvement of people in forest management for their own welfare. Therefore it is known as Community Forestry that includes not only technical aspects but also social aspects of the communities. Nepal is ethnically and culturally heterogeneous country. So, consideration of these factors is essential for the sustainability of Community Forestry through people’s participation. The involvement of all kind of people in Forest User Group is precondition for effectiveness Community Forestry. Because of different cultural, religious and political ideology, the problem may arise in identifying user group, in decision-making and benefit sharing. Even though, they have different perception in forest resource, a good mechanism should be established so that there is an equal share in benefit, active participation in all type of decision-making. It is not an easy task to satisfy all kind of people, it requires social mobilization through awareness Sociologist and Anthropologist can devote their efforts by studying ethnic composition of user group that helps to handle Community Forestry more successfully.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study has adopted both the descriptive and exploratory research designs. Descriptive researcher design is concerned with the describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. Community Forest User Group's character and their rules and process in Community Forestry activities are descriptively discussed. Exploratory research design finds out some problems and then analyses these problems applying different research method. Participation of different level of male and female in Community Forest activities, factor affecting in participation and changed skill and knowledge are discussed on the basic of exploratory design. The study has discussed the socio-economic characteristics of a community forest user's and their activities. It was also find out the level of participation and analyzes the problem of female's participation.

#### **3.2 Study Area**

The selected study site is Gadawa VDC of Dang district. The VDC is accessible with a motor able road. Study unit of research is Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest of Gadawa VDC. Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group has been selected purposively among 13 Community Forests of the VDC because this community forest is regarded as one of the best Community Forest of the Dang District according to District Forest Office staff. There are different castes groups who are the users of the Community Forest. This community forest was also selected as there is a participation of both the sexes within the group. During last 18 years of its operation, this Community Forest user has gained significant knowledge and

skill, which can be examined. In past, this forest user groups has not been studied by anybody else focusing on gender perspective.

### **3.3 Nature and Sources of Data**

This research is field-based study. The primary data like socio-economic information, gender participation level in community forest meetings, executive committee, training, tour, attitude of men towards women in participation, benefit sharing, decision making and factors affecting participation in CF data will be collected through field work. The available relevant written documents e.g. village profile user group constitution, operational plan of the forest, Forest User Group and Forest User Committee minute and documents, publication and reports of District Forest Office (DFO) and Forest User Group were the sources of secondary data.

### **3.4 The Universe and Sample**

Gadawa VDC of Dang district was selected as study area among thirty-nine VDC of the Dang district. In Gadawa VDC, there are 13 Community Forest User Groups. Among 13 Community Forest User Groups, Matpur Nasahawa community forest user group was selected for the study. This community forest consist 540 households. Among them 108 (20%) households were selected as sample units using simple random sampling method. Household respondents were the users of community forest and member of community forest committee (CFC) aged between 25 to 75 years.

In addition to sample household survey, key informant interview was conducted. Some People of adequate and in-depth knowledge on the research issues were selected purposively. Those people were school teachers, forest officials, old aged experienced people and local

politicians. Besides that, women community forest users were also collected through focus group discussion.

### **3.5 Data Collection Technique and Tools**

The following technique and tools were used for the collection of primary data.

#### **3.5.1 Household Survey**

Household survey were conducted for collection of primary information on socio-economic condition, such as occupation, educational status, likewise participation level in (meeting, executive committee, training, tour, benefit sharing), work distribution with regard to the wood collection, fodder collection, pruning, thinning and clearing the jungle etc. were also included in the questionnaire. Similarly, the factors affecting to participation in community forest meeting, benefit sharing from CF and impact of the program etc. were asked. Close and open-ended structured questionnaire were prepared. In household level data collection, respondents were both sexes.

The researcher was visited user's houses and filled questionnaire. Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussion.

#### **3.5.2 Formal and Informal Group Discussion**

During field survey, the researcher met local users, women committee members and formal and informal discussions were held with them. The place of discussions was in the field and other common gathering places of the users. Information was noted down in plain sheet later after discussions was held. Information was also collected from the discussions in meeting places of users e.g. in the field, teashops and other places.

### **3.5.3 Key Informant Interview**

Staffs of forest office, forest user group committee member, village development committee members and other educated users were considered as key informant for the study. Key informants were both men and women. Formal and informal discussions were performed with them. Semi-structured questionnaire were prepared to conduct interview with them where respondents were both men and women.

### **3.5.4 Observation**

Direct observation was also applied to get relevant information for the study. In the course of field work, participation of men and women in FUC meeting, especially focus on women, women's raising voice, management of forest by men and women, present condition of forest etc. were collected by observation. The researcher attended one of the user committee meetings as an observer. Besides, observation was made during rapport building and in formal discussion with users. This kind of observation was helped very much in understanding the field reality, which was fruitful for the study that could not be captured through verbal discussion.

## **3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation Method**

As discussed above, the data were collected through different sources using various data collection techniques and tools. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from field visit. Since the nature of field study was more qualitative, information related to population structure, ethnic distribution, education, economic and participation status were quantified. Qualitative data were discussed analytically on the basis of findings. Quantitative data were tabulated and analyzed descriptively. Simple statistical tools like frequency and percentage were used to present quantitative data. The details of the data analysis are discussed in the following chapters.

### **3.7 Limitation of the Study**

This study is carried out for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Masters of Arts in Rural Development. Among thirteen Forest User Group of Gadawa VDC of Dang District, the researcher has only confined to the one forest uses group “Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest”. Among the five hundred forty households only one hundred eight households were considered as sample households for the collection of socio-economic information of the user groups. Due to limited resources like time, money and manpower, the detail study of Forest User Group could not be made, as the researcher is a student. Except sampled households, some key informants were considered to gather necessary data and information. Therefore, the response of partial users may not be adequate to explain the exact situation and the findings of the study may not be conclusive. The generalization made in the study may not represent in other Forest User Group unless same socio-economic and socio-biological contexts are existing.

## CHAPTER 4

### SETTING OF THE STUDY AREA

#### 4.1 Location

Dang district is one of the district of Rapti zone that is located in mid western region of Nepal. It lies within 27 36' to 28 29' north longitude and between 82 22' to 82 5' east latitude. The elevation varies from 213 meter to 2058 meter above mean sea level. Dang district has two municipalities and thirty-nine VDC. Total area of the district is about 2,955sq.km.

Among thirty-nine VDCs, Gadawa VDC is the study area of Research. The VDC lies on the south eastern part of the district and boarded by Koilabas VDC in the south, Gangaparaspur VDC in the east, Chailahi VDC in the north and Bela VDC in the west. Gadawa VDC linked Ghorahi municipality by 23 km. black topped and 5 km. gravill road.

#### 4.2 Climate

Climate of the whole district is Moderate. Mean annual rainfall of the district is about 1800 mm and mean temperature is 39c at upper limit to 5.2c at lower limit. The relative humidity is recorded in between 60 to 90 (DDC Profile).

Climate of Gadawa VDC is more or less similar to other parts of Dang district. In winter temperature comes down to 5.2c and reaches up to 33.9c in summer.

#### 4.3 Population

The population of Dang district is 462380 with 228958 male and 233422 female (Census, 2001). Among these 12,453 people live in Gadawa VDC (VDC Profile, 2009). Among the 12,453 population 6,442 male and 6,011 female. Total households of the VDC are 1,865 and family size is 6.67 per household. Gadawa VDC heterogeneous in term of ethnic composition. Majority of the population of Gadawa VDC Tharu followed by Brahman/Chhetri, Yadav, Dalit, and Muslim. Detail of the ethnic composition of Gadawa VDC is shown in the table no. 1 below.

Tabel no. 1 : Caste/Ethnic composition of VDC population.

S.N.	Ethnic/Caste	Population	Percentage
1.	Brahaman/Chhetri	2,347	18.85
2.	Tharu	4,459	35.81
3.	Janajati	2,312	18.57
4.	Yadav	1,857	14.91
5.	Dalit	835	6.70
6.	Muslim	643	5.16
Total		12,453	100

*Source: VDC profile, 2066*

Above table shows the composition of the ethnic group of the village where, Tharu occupies 35.81 percent of the total VDC population and is the first largest group of the VDC. Second largest group is Brahaman/Chhetri, which occupy 18.85 percent of the total population. The third largest group Janajati which occupy 18.57 percent and followed by 14.91 percent Yadav, 6.70 percent Dalit, 5.16 percent Muslim of the total population. Dalit (Kami, Sarki and Damai) are occupational caste. They are low caste or so called untouchable caste group.

#### **4.4 Culture and Religion**

Nepal is well known as multi cultural and multi religion country. It is difficult to find homogenous community in Nepal. Similarly two types of religion i.e. Hindu and Muslim were found in Gadawa VDC. VDC is dominated by Hindu culture. Hindu worship god everyday either in the temple or in their own house while Muslim pray in Masjid. Althouh Muslim, Tharu and Yadav have their own language they speak Nepali too. Other ethnic groups speak Nepali. All Hindu celebrate 'Dashain', 'Tihar', and other religious event. Every clan of Brahaman and Chhetri has their dynasty God. Once in a year all member of a clan gathered in a place and worship their dynasty God. Koteshwari, Kandara and Matpur are major Hindu temple and Jiyaul Masjid is religious and holy place of Gadawa VDC.

Marriage, birth and death custom are different among cultural group. Brahaman, Chhetri Yadav and Muslim have highly adopted 'Magi' marriage (arrange marriage). Tharu, Yadav

and lower cast generally get married in low age. Brahaman, Chhetri and Yadav burn dead body in their funeral ceremony while Tharu and Muslim burry dead body.

#### 4.5 Education

Among the total population there are about 29% illiterate people in Gadawa VDC. Based on researcher general observation, it was found that almost all young generation go to school and college. According to local people most of male of old generation are literate. Generally, adult women and people of occupational cast, Tharu and Yadav are less educated compare to male, Brahaman, Chhetri and other cast respectively. One Bachler level campus, two higher secondary schools, one secondary school, two lower secondary schools and six primary schools are facilitating villagers to provide education. People go to Ghorahi, Nepalganj, Butawal and Kathmandu etc. for higher education above than secondary level. The table no 2 below present educational status of Gadawa VDC.

Table no 2: Distribution of population by educational status.

S.N.	Educational Status	Male		Female		Grand Total	
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	1061	20.11	1909	38.20	2970	28.91
2.	Under S.L.C.	3559	67.47	2788	55.78	6347	61.78
3.	S.L.C.	391	7.41	206	4.12	597	5.81
4.	Above S.L.C.	264	5.01	95	1.90	359	3.50
	Total	5275	100	4998	100	10273	100

*Source: VDC profile, 2066*

Above table indicates that 38.20 percent female and 20.11 percent male are illiterate in VDC. In average 28.91 percent people are illiterate and 71.09 percent are literate. About 5.81 percent people are educated up to SLC and 3.50 percent people having high education. Only 1.90 percent females are found with high education.

## 4.6 Economy

Agriculture is the main source of economy of Gadawa VDC but agriculture production alone does not meet the basic requirements of the household. A large number of people profess different types of occupation. Of the total 1,865 households, 211 households are engaging in service of Government and Non-government organization. 110 Households have their own small business like hotel, restaurant and shops. 5 households have micro industries. Other are doing Agriculture, wage labor and their occupational job. The Table no. 3 below gives the occupational status of VDC.

Table no. 3: Occupational Distribution of Household

S.N.	Types of Occupation	Household	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	1208	64.77
2.	Service	211	11.31
3.	Business	110	5.9
4.	Small Industry	5	0.27
5.	Others	331	17.75
	Total	1865	100

*Source: VDC profile, 2066*

Above table shows that there are 64.77 percent of people with agricultural occupation, 11.31 percent people with service holder, 5.9 percent of people in business, 0.27 percent of people having small industries and 17.75 percent of people in other job like labor, occupational job.

## 4.7 Natural Resources

In general land, forest and water are the important natural resource is as follows.

### 4.7.1 Land

Land is one of the most exploited and utilized natural resources in the study area. Among the total population 66.47 percentage people are involved in agriculture. On the basis of availability of irrigation facilities, land is classified as Bari (dry cultivated land) and khet

(paddy cultivated land). The total of 615 hectares of irrigated and 425 hectares of non irrigated land is located in this VDC. People grow maize, mustard and millet in Bari and paddy field, wheat in khet. They also produce pea, green vegetable and potato as cash crops (village profile 2010)

#### **4.7.2 Forest**

Another major natural resource of the area is forest. Since 2048 B.S., District Forest Office has extended its Community Forestry program in the study area. Since then, forest condition has improved. It is estimated that two third of the fuel requirements of the users and fodder, leaf litter and grass to the domestic animals are fulfilled from own village forest.

The total area of the forest of the Dang District is 1,92,955 hector. Among this, 95,226.90 hectares of forest area is managed by 447 Community Forest User Groups. There are thirteen Community Forests in Gadawa VDC only, which covers 1973 hector forest area. Detail of the Community Forest of VDC is illustrated in Table no. 4 below.

Table no. 4: Distribution of Community Forest in Gadawa VDC

S.N.	Name of the Community Forest	Ward No.	Hand over Date (B.S.)	Area (Ha.)	Households
1.	Sarbodaya	1, 2, 3		260	343
2.	Chetanshil	2		3	31
3.	Mahila Shakti	3		9.5	60
4.	Upallo Matpur	3, 5		225	232
5.	Matpur Nasahawa	4, 5, 7	2048 B.S.	365	540
6.	Srijana Mahila	4, 5, 7		210	357
7.	Khabari	5		117	112
8.	shikhar	5		61	87
9.	Manikapur	5		165	196
10.	Mahila Samaj	5		7.25	22
11.	Chisapani	5		127	187
12.	Jyoti	6		371.75	312
13.	Chandanpur	9		440	351
	Total			1973	2693

Source: District Forest Office, 2066

Above table shows that Community Forestry program benefits 2693 households of Gadawa VDC. From table it can say that eight Community Forest are situated in ward no 5.

Different types if the tree species and wild animals are found in the forest within the VDC. Sal, Khayar, Saj, Sisam are main tree species found in the VDC, and different types of bird are found in the forest.

#### 4.7.3 Water

Even though water is one of the most used resources of the VDC, Rapti is Major River in VDC. There are some small rivers within the VDC. Rapti, Gurung khola, Khabari khola and Dangali khola and ground water are major source of water for the VDC's use. These sources of water are being used for irrigation as well as drinking water supply. Four irrigation canals

and five dip boring were constructed in the VDC for the agricultural purpose. One drinking water projects and more than thousand hand pump are supplying drinking water to the people of VDC.

#### **4.8 Development infrastructure**

Gadawa VDC is linked 7 km. gravil road to Lamahi Bazar. Frequent jeep service available making easy access to the people for marketing and to join colleges for higher education. One bachler level campus, two higher secondary schools, one secondary school, two lower secondary schools and six primary schools are providing education to people of Gadawa VDC. There are sub-health post, police post, agriculture office, ilaka forest office and range post providing service to people. All government offices are located in Gadawa Bazar.

Seven local non-governmental organization of the study area are registered to Dang District Administrative Office. A non-government organization “Ban tatha Batabaran Samrakshan Samiti” is working in this VDC since 2008.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DESCRIPTION OF MATPUR NASAHAWA FOREST USER GROUP**

#### **5.1 Location**

Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group is one of the thirteen Forest User Groups of Gadawa VDC. A portion of people of ward no 4, 5 and 7 is the user of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest. The Community Forest is located in the southern part of the VDC, which has the total area of 365 hectare. Forest is dominated by almost natural regeneration. Major tree species of the forest are Sal, Khayar, Baidaro, Saj etc. The different species of the birds are found in the forest.

#### **5.2 History**

The present Forest area was National forest. Along the nationalization of all forest, this forest was also nationalized in 1957. Before nationalization, this forest was informally protected by local people. After the nationalization, this forest was gradually depleted. After the Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest Act 1978, this forest was protected by Gadawa Village Panchayat. To improve forest condition, the forest department planted sisam in 2038 B.S. Village Panchayat had appointed forest guards for the protection. When reestablished of democracy, some leading person of the VDCs started to protection. They were gathered all the people of ward no 4, 5 and 7, they formulate one Forest Protection Committee in 2046 B.S. After two years, Forest Protection Committee was changed into Forest User Group and registered in District Forest Office. The Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest was handed over to the Forest User Group in 2048 B.S. After then, the user group had completely managed it.

#### **5.3 Formation of Forest User Group and Forest User Committee**

Formation of Forest User Group and Forest User Committee is the first step of Community Forestry program. All users of the forest must be identified to form a Forest User Group. Some leading people of Gadawa VDC gathered all people of ward no 4, 5 and 7 to form user group for the management of their forest as Community Forest. With the initiation of some

leading person, users were mobilized themselves and they organized first informal group discussion, they decided to make Community Forest to protect and strength the forest. In 2046 B.S. all member of ward no 4, 5 and 7 had made one Forest Protection Committee. After two years, Forest Protection Committee was changed into Forest User Group and registered in District Forest Office according to forest act, 1993.

Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest has 540 primary users managing 365 hectare forest area. They identified users of the forest themselves. After formation of Forest User Group, the next task is to select the leaders and other general members of committee. Through group discussion, they informally formed first User Committee of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest. This User Committee had encompassed all members of ward no 4, 5 and 7 who were responsible for the further proceed of Community Forestry. After registration of forest as Community Forest in District Forest Office, User Committee formalized. Forest User Committee was registered in District Forest Office in 2048 B.S. Since 2048 B.S., seven User Committees were made through group assembly till now. Every members of all seven User Committee were selected on the basis of consensus of all users last User Committee is functioning now.

Forest User Group included seven ethnic groups are Brahaman/Chhetri, Tharu, Yadav, Janajati, Dalit, Muslim and Other. Ethnic Composition of Forest User Group is already mentioned in table one. The table shows that there are 540 households with 3295 users in Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group. Caste of Tharu is the largest user group among seven ethnic groups having 1318 users. Brahaman/Chhetri ethnic group have 962, Yadav ethnic group have 369, Muslim ethnic group have 242, Dalit ethnic group have 187, Janajati ethnic group have 131 and other ethnic group have 86 members respectively.

The findings make know that there was not equally distributed position of User Committee to all seven ethnic groups. Brahaman/Chhetri has occupied large number of seats in User Committee. There is not any representative of Janjati in all user committee, Muslim in past six committees and Dalit in first five committees. In latest User Committee there is representation of Dalit with 6.67 percentage of coverage. Following table shows the ethnic composition of all forest User Committee of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest.

Table no. 5: Caste/Ethnic composition of Forest User Committee

S.N	Ethnic Group		Comm ittee 1	Comm ittee 2	Comm ittee 3	Comm ittee 4	Commi ttee 5	Comm ittee 6	Comm ittee 7
1.	Brahman /Chhetri	Male	5	4	4	5	4	6	2
		Female	1	1	1	2	2	3	4
2.	Tharu	Male	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
		Female							1
3.	Janajati	Male							
		Female							
4.	Yadav	Male	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
		Female						1	
5.	Dalit	Male							
		Female						1	1
6.	Muslim	Male							1
		Female							1
7.	Anya	Male		1	1	1	1		1
		Female							
	Total		9	9	9	11	11	15	15

Source: Field survey, 2066

Above table describes that there are only representative of Braham/Chhetri, Tharu and Yadav ethnic group in first User Committee. This table also shows that there is only 11.11 percentage representatives of women in first three committee and only 18.18 percentage representative of women in fourth and fifth committee. Master Plan for Forestry Sector (MPFS) has mentioned that 33 percentage of total member should be represented by women users in forest user committee. MPFS has also mentioned there should be representation of all ethnic group and interested group in Forest User Committee. Although there is such provision in MPFS, It was not found in first five Forest User Committees of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest. However, last two User Committees there is satisfactory representative of women who are occupying about 33.33 percentages and 46.67 percentages

of total members but not in leading position. In recent User Committee there is Brahaman/Chhetri are 40 percentage representatives, Tharu are 20 percentage representatives, Yadav and Muslim both are 13.33 percentage representatives and Dalit and Anya are 6.67 percentage representatives. There are also representative 26.66 percentage Brahaman/Chhetri women and 6.67 percentage Tharu, Dalit and Muslim women. There is no representative from Janajti ethnic group still.

During the formation of user group, users of the forest must be identified properly. It is the most importance step of Community Forestry. Careful attention should be given to define the users and to achieve consensus on the composition of the Forest User Group that ensure no one is left out from decision-making and benefit sharing.

#### **5.4 Preparation of Constitution and Operational plan**

Every Community Forestry needs to make one written constitution of user group and one Operational Plan for Community Forest. This provision is included in forest regulation 1995 and Community Forest guideline 1995.

Constitution of users is the guideline to go on specific direction and to participate systematically. It is the document of policies, rules and regulation. It is necessary to include the name, address, objective and stamp of the user's group in constitution. Total household, estimated population of user's group, formation procedure of user's committee and the name list of the user's committee members is also needed to include in constitution. Working procedure of the user's committee, the ways to control forest offences, penalties for the user members who do not obey the constitution, a system of collection of funds and auditing also must.

Preparation of constitution was a difficult task for user members. First, they organized the user's assembly to discuss regarding the preparation of the constitution. Users had no knowledge about it. Therefore, they requested the Ranger to help them. The user assembly gave authority to the users committee to prepare the constitution. The user committee members discussed and prepared the draft of the constitution with the help of the Ranger. There after they called users group assembly to discuss on the draft constitution. After the

ratification of the constitution, they registered in District Forest Office and issued a certificate of registration in the prescribed form on 2048 B.S.

Operational Plan is the written document with the description of forest (i.e. name, boundary, area, condition, forest types), the map of the forest, objectives of the forest management, forest protection system, scientific management operation (i.e. cleaning, singling, pruning, thinning), income generation program and benefit sharing for those who do not obey the Operational Plan.

The user alone cannot prepare the Operational Plan without helps of the forest technicians because it is a technical task (i.e. survey of the forest, preparation of map of the forest, designation of the Operational Plan). Users had no proper knowledge regarding how to draw an Operational Plan. The group meeting decided to prepare the Operational Plan and gave full authority to the user's committee to prepare the draft of the Operational Plan.

After the completion of the survey of the forest by the forest technician, users prepared the draft of the Operational Plan with the help of Ranger. A general assembly of all the users was called and discussions were held on major provisions. Then, Operational Plan was finalized and submitted to District Forest Office for the approval. District Forest Officer provided the registration certificate on 2048 B.S. This Operational Plan was approved for five years. After five years, District Forest Office evaluated and monitored the situation of forest and working style of Forest User Group. Then from three times Forest User Group was extended the authority to manage the forest for next five years. However there is provisional of making five years Operational Plan, Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group has been making one Years Action Plan through group assembly since 2065 B.S. One year Action Plan was made similarly like operational plan was made.

### **5.5 Social Characteristics of Forest User Group**

Social and cultural features and economic activities of forest users were examined to discuss the social characteristics of Forest User Group using 108 sampled households. Among 108 house hold 21 households were Brahanan/Chhetri, 46 households were Tharu, 19 households

were Yadav, 4 households were Dalit, 12 households were Muslim, 5 households were Janajati and 1 household were Other.

### 5.5.1 Ethnic composition of Forest User Group

Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest has covered 540 households. There is 3295 user among these households. They are the primary users of the forest. They use forest many purpose like fodder, wood, grazing, leaf collection etc. without effecting forest conditions.

Table no. 6: Caste/Ethnic composition of Forest User Group

S.N.	Ethnic/Caste	Number of Households	Population	Percentage
1.	Brahaman/Chhetri	170	962	29.19
2.	Tharu	188	1318	40.00
3.	Yadav	66	369	11.20
4.	Dalit	39	187	5.68
5.	Janajati	33	131	3.98
6.	Muslim	33	242	7.34
7.	Other	11	86	2.61
Total		540	3295	100

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

Above table describe that there are 170 households of Brahaman/Chhetri, 188 households of Tharu, 66 households of Yadav, 33 households of Muslim, 33 households of Janajati, 39 households of Dalit (Damai, Kami) and 11 households of other caste.

There are 962 Brahaman/Chetri users, 1318 Tharu users, 369 Yadav users, 242 Muslim users, 187 Dalit users, 131 Janajati users and 86 others users. By caste hierarchy, Brahaman, Chhetri, Thakuri are higher caste and then followed Magar, Tharu and the lower caste Dalit (also called untouchable) in Matpur Nasahawa Forest User Group.

### 5.5.2 Age and sex composition

There are altogether five hundred forty households in the Matpur Nasahawa Community forest User Group. Out of these, one hundred eight households were selected as sample for the study. One hundred eight sample households covered 601 benefited users. These sampled users are categorized in six age groups in the following table.

Table no. 7: Age and sex composition of sampled household.

S.N.	Age group	Male		Female		Grand Total	
		No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1.	0-5	40	5.96	32	4.77	72	10.73
2.	6-15	85	12.67	86	12.82	171	25.49
3.	16-49	179	26.68	176	26.23	355	52.91
4.	50-59	22	3.28	16	2.38	38	5.66
5.	60-69	11	1.64	10	1.49	21	3.13
6.	70 Above	6	0.89	8	1.19	14	2.08
	Total	343	51.12	328	48.88	671	100

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

From the table 6, it can be seen that the population of male is higher than female. Age group “Between” 16 to 49 has domination in the user group, which has covered 52.91 percentages of total users.

### 5.5.3 Households size and structure

Household size of the Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group found from two to twelve members with the average members of 6.21 persons. Most of the families were found nuclear family. Distribution of families of respondent household is presented in the table no 8 below.

Table no. 8: Number and percentage distribution of family size of the sampled household.

S.N.	Number of family member	Number of Households	Percentage
1.	1-2	2	1.85
2.	3-4	20	18.52
3.	5-6	37	34.27
4.	7-8	27	25.00
5.	9-10	16	14.81
6.	11 above	6	5.55
	Total	108	100

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

Above table indicates that most of the households were found having 5 to 6 member's family size which is 34.27 percentages in coverage of the user group. Twenty seven households were found having 7 to 8 members with 25.00 percentages, twenty households were found having 3 to 4 members with 18.52 percentages, and sixteen households were found having 9 to 10 members with 14.81 percentage of coverage of total households. Only six households were found with above 11 members in family. Only two households were found with 2 members in family.

#### **5.5.4 Educational status of Respondents**

The data reveals that Brahman, Chhetri are highly educated than others. Educational level of male is higher than female. Both young and old generations of males are educated. Most of the females are uneducated over the age of 45 years however; the young generations of females are educated. About 25% women with the age between 15 to 45 years are literate. Similarly, young generation of other caste also educated. Old generation of women of both these groups is illiterate. Educational status of the sampled users is categorized in four levels, which is given in the Table no. 9 below.

Table no. 9: Distribution of population by educational status.

S.N.	Educational Status	Male		Female		Grand Total	
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	69	22.77	116	39.19	185	30.88
2.	Primary Level	90	29.70	82	27.70	172	28.72
3.	S.L.C.	107	35.32	76	25.68	183	30.55
4.	S.L.C. Above	37	12.21	22	7.43	59	9.85
	Total	303	100	296	100	599	100

Source: Field survey, 2066

The table above reveals that in total 30.88 percentages of users are illiterate and 69.12 percentages of users are literate. Illiterate percentage of female is in higher in comparison to male users. The 39.19 percentage of females are illiterate while 22.77 percentage male are illiterate. The 12.21 percentage of male are having S.L.C. and above S.L.C. levels of education whereas total 7.43 percentage of female are having S.L.C. and above S.L.C. level of education.

## 5.6 Economic Activities

Land tenure, livestock holding capacity, agriculture production, food sufficiency and occupation of the Forest User Group were surveyed and examined. The details of these activities are briefly discussed in the following section.

### 5.6.1 Land Tenureship

Among ethnic groups, Brahman, Chhetri hold more land than other ethnic groups. No Brahman family was found having less than five Kaththas of land. The data revealed that the average land holding capacity of Brahman, Chhetri community is about 20 Kaththas land. Other ethnic groups have less land than Brahman, Chhetri.

Most of users cultivate their land themselves. Brahman, chhetri's some household has rented out their land to others for the cultivation. Tharu has rented in others land for the cultivation. Most of Tharu have no land for agricultural production excluding kitchen

gardening. Distribution of sampled household by the size of land holding is given in the Table no. 10 below.

Table no. 10: Distribution of sampled household by the size of land holding.

S.N.	Land Holding(Kattha)	Number of Households	Percentage
1.	Landless	3	2.78
2.	0-5	21	19.44
3.	6-20	40	37.04
4.	21-40	36	33.33
5.	40 Above	8	7.41
	Total	108	100

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

Above table indicates that there are 3 households with landless, 21 households with 0-5 Kaththa, 40 households with 6-20 Kaththa, 36 households with 21-40 Kaththa and 8 household with above 40 Kaththa land holding.

### **5.6.2 Livestock Holding**

Main livestock is buffalo and cow. Except Dalit, most of users are keeping one to two buffalo or cow. Tharu users keep ox or he buffalo to support agriculture work. Yadav users keep 5 to 7 cow or buffalo. Livestock holding is their traditional occupational. They keep more livestock and sell dairy products home to home. Other caste users keep livestock to support agriculture work and their own use.

### **5.6.3 Agricultural production and food sufficiency**

Main agriculture productions are rice, wheat, maize and some green vegetable in the settlement area of Matpur Nasahawa Forest User Group. Green vegetable are produce as cash crop. Among ethnic groups, most of Tharu and Yadav household were found dependent on agricultural production only. Other ethnic group has extended their services in different Governmental, Non-governmental and other private organizations.

Generally, females of household occupied with the agricultural work and male were occupied with different sector service.

Table no. 11: Distribution of sampled households based on their agriculture production.

Crops	Unit	Agricultural Production						
		Zero Production	1-5 Kwintal	6-10 Kwintal	11-20 Kwintal	21-30 Kwintal	31-40 Kwintal	41 Above
Rice	Households	5	13	10	30	14	21	15
Wheat	Households	13	47	40	8	0	0	0
Maize	Households	21	57	30	0	0	0	0

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

Above table shows that 103 households produce rice where as 5 households do not produce rice. Similarly, 95 households produce wheat while 13 households do not produce wheat and 87 households produce maize while 21 households do not produce maize. Only 36 households produce rice more than 31 kwintal. The survey revealed that the average production of rice, wheat and maize is 20 kwintal, 6.3 kwintal and 3.8 kwintal respectively. Only 50 households sell their agricultural production as a surplus production.

#### **5.6.4 Occupation**

Livelihood of the users is mainly based on subsistence of the agricultural economy. The only agricultural production is not sufficient for their livelihood. Brahman, Chhetri, Thakuri community extended their occupation in service of government and non-governmental organizations. Other community generally involve in the work of wage labour, carpenter, driver and masonry. Occupational distribution of respondents is given in the Table no. 12 below.

Table no. 12: Occupational distribution of sampled household.

S.N.	Occupation	Households	Percentage
1.	Only Agriculture	84	77.78
2.	Agriculture and Service	9	8.33
3.	Agriculture and Business	2	1.85
4.	Wage labor	11	10.19
5.	Occupational job	2	1.85
	Total	108	100

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

The table above shows that most of the household (about 77.78 percentage) are involved in agriculture. Besides agriculture most of the household (about 8.33 percentage) are involved in governmental and non-governmental service. Income from extra activities than agriculture is used in the expenditure of education, health, festivals, cloth and food. Household of occupational caste and Tharu are found solely dependent on daily wage labor and occupational jobs.

### **5.7 Culture and Religion**

In Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group, ethnically and culturally the users are heterogeneous. Similarly two types of religion i.e. Hindu and Muslim found in Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group. Without Muslim, all ethnic groups celebrate Dashain and Tihar and other Hindu festivals. Muslim celebrates their festivals Eda and Bakareda. Dalit in the community belongs to untouchable caste. Even though constitutionally prohibited, they are not allowed to touch higher caste like Brahman, Chhetri. Brahman, Chhetri celebrates Kul Puja (worship of dynasty god) once in a year.

### **5.8 Implementation Process**

For the implementation of Community Forestry activities, they have formed User Committee and made constitution of user group and Operational Plan of forest. During implementation,

user group must follow the rules and regulation of constitution and Operational Plan. Forest User Group had developed protection and management rules to implement Community Forestry activities properly which are discussed in below.

### **5.8.1 Duties and Responsibilities of Forest User Committee**

Forest user group Committee plays a vital role in protecting and managing the forest with the help of people. They have to follow constitution of user group and operational plan of forest. If User Committee needs to change and to add new rules, they have to call general assembly to formulate and approve the rules. They can formulate new rules with the agreement of the general users but it is necessary to take approval from District Forest Office.

Forest User Committee has set some duties and responsibilities for the effective implementation of Community Forestry activities with full participation as much as. The duties and responsibilities of the forest User Committee are as follows.

- ) To call the committee meeting in every month for the discussion on forest management and other casual problems.
- ) To take the necessary step to implement the operational plan.
- ) To punish and fine the individual who is against the rules and regulation of operational plan and constitution. As per need, they get help from District Forest Office for further punishment.
- ) To consult with District Forest Office to take necessary technical advice and other helps if needed.
- ) To keeps the records of income and the expenditure of the committee and to present in general assembly in every year for the approval from group.
- ) To dismiss the position holder User Committee members if they do wrong with forest and forest user group.
- ) To use and distribute the forest products equally as mentioned in operational plan for the satisfaction of users.
- ) To check whether user are performing their duty of forest protection.
- ) To notify the users about the works and decision of Forest User Committee.

- ) To perform other concern work of Community Forest with the help of general users.

### **5.8.2 Objective of the Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group**

Forest User Group has set following objective for the betterment of the forest.

- ) To supply timber, fuel wood, fodder, leaf letter, grass easily and continuously on sustainable way.
- ) To improve forest condition and forest productivity.
- ) To conserve medicinal plants and used them properly.
- ) To protect wild life.
- ) To control erosion.
- ) To increase income generating activities using forest product without effecting sustainability of forest.

### **5.8.3 Protection Rules**

Protection of forest is major task of Community Forestry program. Different rules are made in different Community Forest for the protection of Community Forest. Forest User Group of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest has decided to keep two guards on salary basis. All users also protect forest on a rotational basis by users themselves. Every user has been assigned to protection duty that is volunteer guarding on a rotational basis. They also supervised each other and if anyone were found with stolen forest products are informed to Users Committee for punishment. Grazing is prohibited to protect small seeding in plantation area.

### **5.8.4 Offences and penalties Rules**

Forest User Group made some penalties rules for those users (either belonging to user group or not) who break the norms and rules of the constitution and Operational Plan. Constitution has not given permission to enter the forest without notice. Users who involve in the destruction of forest are supposed to get penalties. S/he will get penalties in accordance with his and her nature of crime. Matpur Nasahawa User Group has made two types of penalties;

penalties for minor offence and penalties for major offence. Detail of offence item and penalties are mention in two tables below.

Table no. 13: Penalties for minor offences

Offences Item	Penalties
Fodder Collection	Rs. 10 per Bhari
Grass cutting	Rs. 10 per Bhari
Fire wood collection	Rs. 50 per Bhari
Timber cutting	Depending upon quantity
Damaging of seedling	Rs. 50 to 500 per seedling

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

Above table describes that there are penalties in monetary term. There is different rate of fines for separate penalties. Fines rate for destruction of seedlings and sampling is high than other penalties. Above mentioned penalties are minor offences. Next table has described major offences and penalties for those who found in the forest having intention of forest destruction or already destructed of forest are supposed to get separate penalties on the basis of destruction. The Table 14 below shows the major offence items and penalties for them.

Table No. 14: Penalties for Major offences.

S.N.	Item	Intention of destruction	Dead of destruction
1.	Hunting	Rs. 25 to 200	Rs. 200 to 1,000
2.	Fire hazards	Rs. 200 to 500	File the case to District Forest Office
3.	Land encroachment		File the case to District Forest Office
4.	Grazing	Rs. 5 to 50	Rs. 5 to 50
5.	Digging soil & stone	Rs. 30 to 50	To inform DFO for punishment

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

Above table reveals that there is role of District Forest Office to give penalties if case is forwarded to District Forest Office by Forest User Group. District Forest Office punish under the forest act, 1993. Offender who is getting punishment by Forest User Committee should pay fines within three days. Who do not pay doing mistake are again punished by the decision of user group.

All forest users are responsible to control fire hazards if happen. Absence users in the exhaustion of fire are suspended for one year from general membership of users. Big wild animals and even any type of small birds of the forest are not allowed for hunting for the protection of wild life.

### **5.8.5 Rules of Distributing of Forest Products**

Forest is well protected by Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group. It is a natural forest excluding some planted trees. Users are allowed to extract firewood, fodder, grass, leaf litter and timber prescribed time. Every year, in the months of January and February, user group perform management operations, which includes clearing, thinning and pruning. Products came out by the operation are equally distributed among users. Nominal price, as given below, has been fixed for each product to raise Forest user Group fund.

Firewood Rs. 2 per Bhari. 1000 per Chhatta.

Timber Rs. 130 per cube feet.

Coal Rs. 10 per bora.

Grass, fodder and leaf litter on free of cost.

Extraction of timber has not been allowed to cutting individually and there is prohibition for grazing on forest land. Fire wood, Grass, Leaf litter, can be brought any time not exceeding prescribed amount.

Forest User Group has made such rules that for the distribution of forest products in the case of special ceremony or cultural events like marriage, "PUJA" and emergency events such as death of a family member, natural calamities and firing of house. In such cases, needed fire

wood and timber is provided free of cost for all users. Written application should be submit to Forest User Committee to get such benefit.

### **5.8.6 Transparency and Communication**

User group/committee has adopted good system for the transparency and communication. Committee has recorded every meeting minute and financial activity. Any users can check and look it if s/he has any suspect to User Committee. Every user can keep any question to the Committee to come out from his and her confusion. Every year one auditor audits account of user group. Detail of account has been presented in the group assembly every year.

User Committee and users are informed through letter by committee chairperson or secretary for the participation in meeting and assembly. Any absentee user can see meeting minute afterwards without restriction to know what decisions were made in meeting. Similarly for the implementation of every activity, all households are informed to participate through forest gaurds.

### **5.9 Meeting the Objectives of the Community Forestry**

Matpur Nasahawa Forestry User Group has set six major objectives, which are written in forest operstional plan. Forest User Group is trying to fulfill these objectives.

- ) The User Group is protecting forest in a way that they fulfill their most of the demand of the forest products from Community Forest. The forest growth is satisfactory; there is a significant reduction in soil erosion and landslide.
- ) To conserve the medicinal plant, the User Group has prohibited the use of medicine plan for the purpose of sale. However, they are free to use these medicinal plants for their own use. Some users have been trained on the propagation of medicinal plant targeting future income source from medicinal plants. They have planted already some medicinal plants as a trial in their community forest.
- ) The users as well as outsider are not allowed to hunt animals, birds and reptile of the forest. According to the user groups, there is a good growth of wildlife.

### **5.10 Use of Forest Products**

The main forest products used by the local people on a regular basis are leaf litter, fire wood, fodder and timber. The Forest Users fulfill their most of the demand of forest products from Community Forest and some extend from their own farmland (Farm Tree, Agriculture residue and weed of agricultural land). So far, the Forest Users are not using forest products for the purpose of income generation. As the trees of the Community Forest are all age group. Users fulfill their demands from Community Forest. Users use medicinal plants extracting from their Community Forest if they need for their own use.

## CHAPTER 6

### PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

#### 6.1 Participation in Decision Making

In Matpur Nasahawa Community Forestry, Forest User Group makes decision through group assembly or committee meeting. Meeting of Group or committee relied on the issue to be decided. Committee members decide minor issue where as group decides major issue.

The chairperson and secretary call every group meeting and committee meeting. It is mandatory that, all members of committee should be present in committee meeting while one member from one household should represent in group meeting. The member of a Forest User Group is a household but not an individual. So, the household decides which of its member should represent the household at the Group meeting. Both meeting need more than half representative to decide any decisions.

Every decision is carried out by consensus. Every member has right to keep his or her opinion regarding each case. People's participation in decision-making is known by asking their representation in meeting and asking some question to access their active participation. For institutional development the process of decision making make great difference whether this institutional really could run or not. Group meeting and committee meeting are means of decision-making, which are discussed in below.

#### **Committee Meeting**

Generally, Committee meeting is held regularly once in a month. If members feel necessary, a meeting is being held more than regular meeting. When a meeting is called, it is usually the secretary or the chairperson who informs other members. Usually meeting is called on Saturday or morning time of any day, which time is free time of committee members. After gathering, members recommend agendas for discussion. Participation rate of committee members is found 10 to 12 members per meeting. Generally, decision to implement Forest Operational Plan is being made by forest user committee.

It is necessary to analyze the representation of women user and lower caste users of community in Forest User Committee. If the people from the lower caste and women are not the members of Forest User Committee, it may be assumed that there is less participation of these groups of people in decision-making. Forest User Committee has enough authority to make decision with regard to community forest user group processes such as what sort of seedlings to be planted, which members would participate in different training, tours and workshops. Therefore there should be representation from all interest group.

Matpur Nasahawa Forest User Committee is dominated by Brahman/Chhetri but leading of User Committee is Tharu. In current User Committee there was well representative of women than past User Committees. There is representation of four Brahman/Chhetri women and one Dalit, Tharu and Muslim women. They are regularly attends committee meeting and actively participated in decision making process. They strongly keep their voice in committee meeting. Although there was less representation of women in first five User Committees, they were active in decision-making on such context there was less approach of women in decision making. These women know their all committee members and have knowledge of decision what they made in meeting. It was found that there is no representation from Janjati group in all seven Forest User Committee. So, it can be said that participation of Janjati group in decision-making through Forest User Committee is zero.

### **Group Meeting / Group assembly**

Group meeting and group assembly is called when the User Committee feels its necessity. Generally assembly of group is held at least once in a year. At least majority assemblies (more than 50%) must be present to pass a decision. In group meeting, the users express the view and decisions are carried out by a majority vote of user group. Every member has the right to keep his or her opinion in each agenda during group meeting.

Matpur Nasahawa user group organized group assembly during the preparation of constitution of group and Operational Plan of Forest. Every year users evaluate their progress through group assembly. User Committee presents progress report on group assembly. User group can raise questions in different issue of report if they like. Due date of Operational

Plan is generally about five years. After five years every Forest User Group should prepare next Operational Plan or revise. Third five years Operational Plan of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest was finished in 2065 B.S. Now Fourth five years Operational Plan is running. They prepare one year plan through assembly for every year. It is already mentioned that User Group has given authority to User Committee to prepare plan and constitution through group meeting. User Committee first made draft of the document and presented in group meeting. The user group members actively participated and gave suggestion, added some points and changed a little also during the discussion period. The decision was taken by consensus of the user members.

Matpur Nasahawa User Group changed forest User Committee through meeting in seven times. All User Committee was made by consensus of the user members. User Committee formulated democratic policy.

The status of participation was measured asking respondent to express the frequency of their participation in meeting. Frequencies of participation are divided into three level are always participation for those who participate regularly, sometimes participation for those who participating regularly but participate when they have time and never participation for those who are not participating till now. The following table 15 shows status of participation of different ethnic in group assembly or group meeting.

Table no. 15: Participation of Respondent in Group Meeting/Assembly

S.N.	Caste/Ethnic Group		Participation Level			
			Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
1.	Brahaman/Chhetri	Male	5	2	1	8
		Female	6	5	2	13
2.	Tharu	Male	13	6	5	24
		Female	9	7	6	22
3.	Magar	Male	2		1	3
		Female		1	1	2
4.	Yadav	Male	7	3	2	12
		Female	3	2	2	7
5.	Dalit	Male		1	1	2
		Female	1	1		2
6.	Muslim	Male	4	3	2	9
		Female	1	1	1	3
7.	Anya	Male	1			1
		Female				
	Total	Male	32	15	12	59
		Female	20	17	12	49
		Total	52	32	24	108

Source: Field survey, 2066

Above table indicates that there are only fifty-two respondents among one hundred eight respondents who were found regular participants of group meetings. Among fifty-two there are thirty-two male and twenty female. Thirty two respondents were found sometimes participants of group meetings. Among them, there are fifteen male and seventeen female. Twenty-four respondents were found never participants of group meeting. Among them, male and female both are twelve.

Whenever there is a need to deal with the cases of theft of forest products (tree, fodder, green wood, dry wood, and thatch) and to determine the amount of a fine or to make or change new rules and regulations regarding the protection and management of the forest. These issues are considered generally through group meeting and decisions are taken based on consensus. Generally in group meeting, agendas are made by committee for the discussion in Group Meeting. If any general users want to add extra agenda is also accepted from Forest User Committee afterwards agendas are discussed. Finally, group accepts or changes the decisions for the implementation.

## **6.2 Participation in Implementation**

Implementation is the real practice of Operational plan, constitution and other decisions made by user group. It is the main responsibility of the User Committee to implement all decisions and Operational Plan with the full participation of users. It is the responsibility of Forest Users to be involved in implementation of rules and plan for effective implementation of Community Forestry Program. Protection, management and benefit sharing are major implementation activities of Community Forestry. Implementation of these activities cannot be successful in the absence of people participation.

There are great influences of decision making in implementation of Community Forest activities. Implementation decision includes which area of the forest is considered for the application of management operation, what period of the year is allocated for the harvesting of forest products, planting and distribution of forest products, how and what practices are to be applied in the planting, harvesting and protection. There is no meaning of decision-making unless it has not to be reflected in positive and supportive action by all users.

Respondents of Matpur Nasahawa Forest User Group were asked their participation in three major activities of Community Forestry implementation activities are protection of forest, implementation of management operation and benefit sharing. Participation in implementation is categorized in three levels. Respondents who are participating in more than two third activities are categorized in the High Participation, who are participating more than half activities to two third activities are categorized in moderate participation and at last

who participating less than half are categorized in less participation. Participation of user group in different activities is discussed in following sub headings and also is presented in tabular form.

### **6.2.1 Participation in protection of Forest**

Matpur Nasahawa Forest Group has appointed paid watcher for the protection of forest. They also protect forest by volunteer guarding on the regular rotational basis. Evaluation of last year by user themselves revealed that there were only four hundred fifteen households participated in guarding among five hundred forty households in last year. Among four hundred fifteen households, fifty-five households had participated for twelve days in guarding for forest. Minimum contribution of households was one day and average contribution of households was five days.

Table No. 16: Participation Level of Respondents in Protection of Forest.

S.N.	Caste/Ethnic Group		Participation Level in Protection				
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	Total
1.	Brahaman/Chhetri	Male	2	3	3		8
		Female	4	5	3	1	13
2.	Tharu	Male	5	10	6	3	24
		Female	6	7	5	4	22
3.	Magar	Male	1	2			3
		Female	1		1		2
4.	Yadav	Male	4	5	2	1	12
		Female	2	3	1	1	7
5.	Dalit	Male		1	1		2
		Female	1		1		2
6.	Muslim	Male	3	4	1	1	9
		Female	1		1	1	3
7.	Anya	Male	1				1
		Female					
	Total	Male	16	25	13	5	59
		Female	15	15	12	7	49
		Total	31	40	25	12	108

Source: Field survey, 2066

Above table indicates that there are only thirty-one respondents among one hundred eight respondents who were found high participants in protection of forest. Among thirty-one there are sixteen male and fifteen female. Forty respondents were found moderate participants in protection of forest. Among them, there are twenty-five male and fifteen female. Twenty-five respondents were found less participants in protection of forest. Among them, there are thirteen male and twelve female. Twelve respondents were found never participants in protection of forest. Among them, there are five male and seven female.

Above table describe that there is equal participation of male and female. According to women respondents, female's contribution is high than male in protection of forest. On their own words they are protecting forest not to going inside the forest for stealing of fire wood and fodder.

### **6.2.2 Participation in Forest Management**

Forest management is the scientific operation that is applied in forest. Forest management operation includes plantation, weeding, thinning, pruning and clearing of bushes and fire line construction inside the forest area. It needs technical knowledge for the forest management. Therefore, management operation needs technical assistance from District Forest Office. So users as well as District Forest Officials often play several roles simultaneously in forest management. But there is always need to take initiation from Forest User Group. Ranger of the Range post of the area has been providing such assistance for the Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest.

Plantation of seedling in open area of the forest is one of the main works of forest management. Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest planted more than 45,000 tree seedling inside the forest area. For the production of seedling Ilaka Forest Office established one temporary nursery in his field. Forest User Group brought seedling from Ilaka Forest Office. Every year they carry out thinning, pruning and clearing operation in the forest. For the forest management they have divided forest area into four blocks and give name A, B, C and D. Every year one block is considered for the application of management operation on the rotational basis.

Forest management needs physical exercise, so there is high participation of male compared to female. Women are participating in cleaning and thinning where as male is participating in pruning and transportation of extracted material from forest to open land during forest management. According to respondent, lack of sufficient knowledge of forest management, they are not getting expected output in forest management. However, must of the users have participated in carrying out management activities. Eight users are train of forest management. Thus, it can be said there is good participation of users in forest management.

Below table 17 presents participation level of respondents during application of management operation.

Table No. 17: Participation Level of Respondents during Management Operation.

S.N.	Caste/Ethnic Group		Participation Level in Forest Management				
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	Total
1.	Brahaman/Chhetri	Male	5	1	1	1	8
		Female	5	4	3	1	13
2.	Tharu	Male	12	6	4	2	24
		Female	7	6	6	3	22
3.	Magar	Male	2	1			3
		Female	1		1		2
4.	Yadav	Male	6	3	2	1	12
		Female	3	2	1	1	7
5.	Dalit	Male		1	1		2
		Female	1		1		2
6.	Muslim	Male	5	2	1	1	9
		Female		1	1	1	3
7.	Anya	Male	1				1
		Female					
	Total	Male	31	14	9	5	59
		Female	17	13	13	6	49
		Total	48	27	22	11	108

Source: Field survey, 2066

Above table indicates that there is high participation of male than female in forest management activities. There are only forty-eight respondents among one hundred eight respondents who were found high participants in forest management activities. Among forty-eight there are thirty-one male and seventeen female. Twenty-seven respondents were found moderate participants in forest management activities. Among them, there are fourteen male

and thirteen female. Twenty-two respondents were found less participants in forest management activities. Among them, there are nine male and thirteen female. Eleven respondents were found never participants in forest management activities. Among them, there are five male and six female.

### **6.2.3 Participation in benefit Sharing**

Benefit sharing is an important element of people's participation. If there is no equal sharing of forest products, people may be frustrated with the Community Forestry program. At the same time disparity may increase between advantageous and disadvantageous users. Equal sharing of forest products may make users to realize the Community Forest as their own.

Benefit sharing includes distribution of forest products like firewood, fodder, timber, grass and leaf litter. Firewood and fodder are important forest products needed for users. The members of the Matpur Nasahawa Forest User Group were asked whether they share the benefit from the Community Forestry equally or not and whether they are satisfied about the present condition of distribution system or not. It was found that benefit shared equally based on households. Firewood and fodder is distributed during the forest management operation as green firewood, dry firewood and fodder are extracted during this period. However, the timber is not allowed to bring individually. Users group annually collect timber and distributed all users once a year. The Forest User Group fixed nominal price for the extraction of green fire wood, dry fire wood and timber. All users have accepted this rule. Users brought fire wood, fodder, leaf litter and grass how their need. Users allowed to takeout dry fire wood and grass in any time. Below table 18 shows the participation of people in benefit sharing of forest products.

Table No. 18: Participation Level of Respondents in Benefit Sharing.

S.N.	Caste/Ethnic Group		Participation Level in Benefit Sharing				
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	Total
1.	Brahaman/Chhetri	Male	4	2	1	1	8
		Female	8	2	2	1	13
2.	Tharu	Male	12	8	3	1	24
		Female	10	7	4	1	22
3.	Magar	Male	1	2			3
		Female	1	1			2
4.	Yadav	Male	6	3	2	1	12
		Female	4	2	1		7
5.	Dalit	Male	1	1			2
		Female	1		1		2
6.	Muslim	Male	5	2	1	1	9
		Female	1	1	1		3
7.	Anya	Male	1				1
		Female					
	Total	Male	30	18	7	4	59
		Female	25	13	9	2	49
		Total	55	31	16	6	108

Source: Field survey, 2066

Above table indicates that there are only fifty-five respondents among one hundred eight respondents who were found high participants in benefit sharing. Among fifty-five there are thirty male and twenty-five female. Thirty-one respondents were found moderate participants in benefit sharing. Among them, there are eighteen male and thirteen female. Sixteen respondents were found less participants in benefit sharing. Among them, there are seven male and nine female. Six respondents were found never participants in benefit sharing. Among them, there are four male and two female.

### 6.3 Participation in Other Activities

Participation in training, information dissemination, financial auditing and relation to District Forest Office activities are also Community Forestry activities. These activities are briefly described here.

#### 6.3.1 Training

Forest User Committee is authorized body in selection of trainee participants. There are one hundred thirty-two user members have already benefited by different training. Among them, there are sixty-three male and sixty-nine female. Benefited users from training are all ethnic group. Detail of training participants is mentioned in below table 19.

Table No. 19: Participation of Users in Different Training

S.N.	Training	Participates		
		Male	Female	Total
1.	Income Generating	26	30	56
2.	CF Management	6	2	8
3.	Community Forest Workshop	15	25	40
4.	Co-operative Management	8	4	12
5.	Good Governance	8	8	16
	Total	63	69	132

*Source: Field survey, 2066*

Above table indicates that there is high participation of female than male in different training. Users get training five categories. There are fifty-six users who were participants in income generating training. Among them, there are twenty-six male and thirty female. Eight users were participants in Community Forestry management training. Among them, there are six male and two female. Forty users were participants in Community Forest workshop. Among them, there are fifteen male and twenty-five female. Twelve users were participants in co-operative management training. Among them, there are eight male and four female. Sixteen

users were participants in good governance training. Among them, male and female both are four.

### **6.3.2 Relation to District Forest Officials**

User Committee member has good relationship with District Forest Officials. They regularly visit to ranger of range post and other forest officials. If needed, they visit District Forest Office for technical help. Forest Officials are helping them time to time. There are no disputes between them.

### **6.3.3 Information Sharing**

Members are informed through letter and forest guards for group meeting and committee meeting. Any member who is unable to participate can see meeting minute easily without any restriction. Clustered, Settlement is also helping users to meet day to day to each other and share their information to each other about Community Forestry.

### **6.3.4 Raising and mobilizing fund**

Forest Users Group has opened a bank account. All the earning of the user group is deposited in bank account. Two persons from the User Committee are authorized to withdraw deposited money from the bank as per the guidelines set by the general Forest User Group. Every year budget expenditure and income is being presented in general assembly. Every user is informed about their annual budget in general assembly. They can raise question if they have any doubt in money expenditure. It is the responsibility of Forest User Committee to explain and clarify on the raised doubt. Annual auditing is carried out on the expenditure and income of the group with free of cost.

The Forest User Group funds comprise the following revenue.

- ) Grants received from Nepal Government.
- ) Grants donation or assistance received from any individual or institution.
- ) Amount received from the sale or distribution of Forest products.
- ) Amount collected through fines.

- ) Amount received from user's household per year as a membership renewable fee.
- ) Amount received from any other sources.

### **6.3.5 Village Development Work**

Till now, Matpur Nasahawa Forest User Group has not been able to accumulate large sum of money. Even though, they are unable to use the financial resources from Community Forestry in village development activities, they are very active in village development activities. For this they collect the financial resources from other sector e.g. help from VDC and other NGO. This way, they manage to build canal, road, culvert etc.

## CHAPTER 7

### FACTORS AFFECTING IN PEOPLE PARTICIPATION

There are some factors, which are responsible for the active participation of people in Community Forestry Program. These factors are classified as (I) Social cultural factors, (II) Economic factors and (III) Other related factors.

#### 7.1 Social and Cultural factor

Social factors include age group, family size and structure, cultural practices, gender and social value and norms. How these social factors effecting in people participation of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest is briefly described in the following section.

##### 7.1.1 Age

From field study, it is revealed that the respondents below the age of 25 years are young generation users who are mostly busy in their study. They have limited time to contribute in Community Forestry activities. They contribute their free time for Community Forestry activities. Most of the respondents with the age between 20 to 60 years are busy in their professional job and also contribute their free time in Community Forestry activities. The respondents between ages 60 to 70 years are 4 whose participation and contribution in Community Forestry is found higher than other age group users. Users above 70 years age are unable to contribute due to their physical weakness. Due to age factor, many old users left User Committee. However, Forest User Committee has tried to integrate all age group people above 16 years. The elderly users are placed in the position of advisor.

##### 7.1.2 Family size

Family size is another responsible factor in participation. It was revealed from field study that respondents with larger family size are participation in most of activities. Such households have managed to send one representative from their house. Sometime small family sizes have faced problem in sending their representative from their household during Community Forestry activities as they are occupiers in their own jobs.

Especially, there is a high influence of family size in women's participation. Women of large family household have to devote her time in preparing food and other inside housework. However, in the large family size where number of women is higher, well participation of women was found.

### **7.1.3 Gender**

In Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest, no gender discrimination was found in Community Forestry activities. Women are equally participating as they get free time from their housework. Although there is no restriction for women to participate actively in decision-making process, their participation was found not equal to male users in decision-making but participation in implementation is good.

### **7.1.4 Caste and Ethnic Group**

Ethnically and religiously, user group of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest is heterogenous group. Social values and religious belief on caste system are effecting in participation of users. Tharu, Magar, Yadav are to touch Brahman but are allowed to prepare food that can be used by Brahman in Hindu religion. Dalit are called untouchable caste. Brahman do not touch as well as eat food made by Dalit in Gadawa VDC. Magar, Chhetri, Yadav and Thakuri are also do not eat food provided by Dalit users. Even though, it is illegal in practicing caste discrimination based on the constitution of Nepal, still there is social/cultural practice of caste discrimination in Gadawa VDC. But Muslim religions there are not any discrimination of caste. Such social norms are inhibiting Dalit users to participate equally without any discrimination. According to the respondents, they set the criteria like education, free time, leading capacity and gender of the users during the selection of members of user committee. But they did not consider criteria for caste, ethnic group and disadvantage group. There are well participants of all ethnic groups.

### **7.2 Economic Factor**

Economic factor includes size of agriculture land, livestock and nature of occupation. Economic level within Brahman, Chhetri and Thakuri community is more or less similar in Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest. They have no great different in farm size and livestock

number whereas, Magar, Tharu and Dalit Community have less farmland and few livestock. This factor is especially affecting on participation of Tharu, Magar and Dalit in community forestry.

Nature of occupation is also affecting on participation of users. Service holder respondent said that they have no time to involve in guarding of forest. However, they are participating on group meetings and assemblies, if activities are organized during leave days or holidays. They again argued that they are unable in participating as free respondents because of their job in government and non-government organizations.

Some people work as wage labor in Gadawa VDC. They have no holidays and leave like others who work in government and non-government organization. Therefore, they cannot contribute their time even like service holder man. They have not managed to attend meeting and other activities of same day avoiding their work.

To avoid such difficulties, the Forest User Committee is making maximum effort for the high participation of user group in the meeting by calling in either morning period or during holidays.

### **7.3 Other Related Factors**

In researcher view, the other related factors consist of self-consciousness, government support, proximity and participation in decision-making.

#### **7.3.1 Self-consciousness**

Attitude, education, awareness and interest play important role in developing self-consciousness in a person. Most of the respondents are very aware and have interest and positive attitude in community forestry work excluding Muslim, Dalit and Yadav groups. Education factor is highly affecting in active participation in decision-making. Illiterate users who are participating in meeting do not raise their voice. Researcher asked them why they don't speak in the meeting and their response was that they are uneducated and don't know as educated. They think that decisions make by educated users are always good and thus support their decisions. Thus, in committee member selection the priority is given in

selection educated persons. All committee members are literate. Illiterate users participate during implementation as equally as literate users and is not affecting in implementation of any decision made.

In general, wealthy users are literate but poor and landless users are illiterate. For the illiterate users, it is difficult to hold the leadership position in Forest User committee as the leaders should perform daily administrative activities of the committee (Letter writing, minute keeping and reporting to higher officials). Literacy plays the vital roles as a source of powers and privilege in rural context. The researcher asked questions to the illiterate, poor and users with less land on “why don’t they hold the position of the leader of User Committee?” Their reply was “we are poor and illiterate; we have no knowledge and thus how to perform leader’s responsibility. Due to this reason we select literate person in the position of the leader.”

User who is self-consciousness understands the importance of forest. Such users devote his or her time in protection and management of forest although they do not need forest products from the forest.

### **7.3.2 Government Support**

Another important factor that affects people’s participation is Government support. Government officials are supporting Matpur Nasahawa Forest User Group that has enhanced their participation. Forest User Group organized Community Forest management training them and requested technical support (trainer) to District Forest Office. District Forest Office provided such support.

### **7.3.3 Proximity**

Proximity is not affecting to organize meeting and assembly in the Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group. Users are not scattered; they have cluster settlement making easy in gathering for group meeting and assembly. However, this factor is influencing in implementation of forest management, especially in the far-sited areas. In the nearby settlement they already applied management operation in Community Forest.

### **7.3.4 Participation in Decision Making**

Participation in decision making is directly connected with the participation in benefit sharing and implementation of the decision made. The users, who are participating in decision making their participation in implementation and benefit sharing seems good whereas, those whose participation is less during decision making lack in information.

### **7.3.5 Rule of Forest User Group**

Forest User Group formulated the rules to smoothly operate community forest. The rule states that in every community forestry activities one representation from one household is compulsory. There is no compulsion for every user. This rule is inhibiting in the participation of all users especially women users are more affected as most of the male represent such meetings.

## CHAPTER 8

### CHANGED ATTITUDE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

Community Forestry was launched in Gadawa VDC in 2048 B.S. During past 18 years, users managed to learn and experience many things through the Matpur Nasahawa Community Forestry Program. This Community Forestry also became effective to change attitude of users towards Community Forestry Program and Forest Officials. The researcher observed following changed attitude, knowledge and skill from the users of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest.

#### 8.1 Effectiveness of Group Work

Before the formation of user group, the condition of forest was very poor. At that time all villagers had to collect unlimited forest product. They collect forest product (firewood, timber) more than they need. So they had spent their time to collect forest product. At present day fulfill their need of forest product from the Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest. Now they realized the effectiveness of their group work. They say, their group work made it possible to bring the forest product easily and systematically. During the .... years of their work experience in Community Forestry they fully realized on its importance. This realization has changed their positive attitude towards Community Forest Program. Most of the respondents define community forest as the forest managed by the user group.

#### 8.2 Importance of Forest

Before formation of Forest User group, they were using forest products for their domestic need and they are using it even today. In past, they did not realize the importance of forest but now every user is fully aware in the importance of forest. They said, "If we use forest with protection and conservation, it supplies forest product regularly." They understand that the forest gives not only forest products but also it helps to increase wild life and natural beauty of VDC. They say, having good forest means having increase in wild life population, which ultimately attract tourist to enjoy the natural beauty of the forest. They also know trees of the forest provide healthy air for them as well as around them and it help in protection from soil erosion and landslides during monsoon.

### **8.3 Importance of Wildlife**

Before community forestry was launched in 2048 B.S., the users of the forest had negative perception towards wildlife. But at present the perception of the user is changed and they take the wildlife as a beauty of their forest. The hunting is restricted in Matpur Nasahawa Community Forestry. Users did not kill wild life when they came in the village. They handed it over to District Forest Office. User said that wildlife is the attraction of forest, it is their property and they have to protect.

### **8.4 Skill to Scientific Management**

The government forest officials are helping to the user group on how to apply scientific management of forest as well as other community forestry activities, which has led to change the past negative attitude of the users towards forest officials to positive attitude. The improved skill in the implementation of Operational Plan has increased their knowledge about scientific management of forest. Many of the users know cleaning, thinning, pruning and plantation. Some users may apply management operation without help of technician. Practice made them perfect.

### **8.5 Rules and Regulation of Forest Act**

During the process of Community Forest, User Group became familiar with rules and regulation of Forest act. They prepared Constitution of user group and Operational Plan of forest following rules and regulation of Forest Act.

### **8.6 Training on Different Issues**

Users have got opportunity to involve in Community Forestry related training and gathered knowledge in community forestry. Users gained knowledge in income generating, Community Forest management, Community Forestry workshop, co-operative management and good governance training. They know-how learning during the training program is shared among other users. After income generating training, twenty-one users get loan and started to their occupation.

## **8.7 Self Identification of Problems**

The Matpur Nasahawa Community Forestry User Group managed to learn many things by doing. They made different subcommittee to help Users Committee. They have allocated prize money for those who identify thief (stealing of forest products) and inform User Committee.

User group felt more to need of Community Forest management training to them. They organized such training themselves and requested a trainer from District Forest Office. For the Effectiveness if Community Forest of whole VDC, they have taken initiative to form User Group Co-ordination Committee within the Range post with help of Ranger from range post. Now, they have one User Group Co-ordination Committee of Gadawa range post. From Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest, there is representation on the position of President and one member. Every month they organize meeting and share ideas, problem to each other.

## CHAPTER 9

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### Summary

Forest of Nepal has great importance in fostering the agricultural system and in protecting the hilly and fragile land of Nepal. Most of the forest area of Nepal is being managed as communal forest by users themselves on the basis of locally accepted indigenous/traditional system before the forest was nationalized in 1957. The Forest Nationalization Act had failed in managing and protecting the forest as expected. Ineffectiveness of Department of Forest in the protection of forest caused in the emergence of Community Forestry program in Nepal. In the same time, there is also an influence of international environmental movement and changed development paradigm with the concept of people oriented development.

Community Forestry has a people participatory approach in which the local users of the forest are involved in planning, development, implementation, protection, production and use of forest resources. The concept of Community Forestry came into practice in Nepal in the late seventies (1978). At present, the Community Forestry program is launched in most of the area of Nepal.

Although, Community Forestry program is one of the effective programs of Nepal, different scholars have pointed out some problems in the implementation of Community Forestry through their discussion paper and research work. Some problems related to the research have been found out by the literature review. Most of the scholars have mentioned complex social and economic structure of Nepal as major effecting factor in Community Forestry program. Problems resulted from education, economic, caste structure of the society, gender, cultural value are identified in different literature.

Subsequent literatures have been accessed related to Community Forestry that helped to the researcher to know the real practice of Community Forestry in different part of Nepal. Through literature review, concept of Community Forest user group people participation and benefit sharing were reviewed.

During the study of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest, the researcher has set some research questions, which are; (I) how the diversity of cultural group and interest obstruct on the Institutional process? (II) How people are participating in implementation and decision-making process of Community Forestry? (III) How all interest groups are taking part in the process of decision-making and benefit sharing? (IV) Is people's knowledge on rules and regulations and managerial skill affect on the program? (V) And which factors are controlling people from active participation?

The main objective of this research were; to examine the level of participation of men and women in Forest Executive Committee, to find out factors affecting men and women's level of participation in community forest, to trace out attitude of men towards women in participation and to assess the benefit sharing system of CF. To fulfill these objective, Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest of Gadawa VDC of Dang District was selected as research area. One hundred Eight household member of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest were taken as sample and other key informants like Ranger, Teacher and Community Forest members were visited. Tools like observation, formal and informal discussion, interview and case study were used to collect the necessary information. For more information, primary data as well as secondary data were collected. Qualitative data were analyzed based on descriptive design. Quantitative data were also tabulated and analyzed. Simple stastical tools i.e. arithmetic mean and percentages were used for quantitative data analysis.

The research area, Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest is located in Gadawa VDC of Dang District of Rapti zone. Gadawa VDC is one of the VDC among 39 VDCs of the district. The VDC is located in the Southern east part of the district. There are thirteen Community Forest in the VDC. In Gadawa VDC, Community Forestry Program was launched since 2048 B.S. Among thirteen Community Forest, Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest was selected as study unit, which was handed over as Community Forest in 2048 B.S. by District Forest Office.

Matpur Nasahawa User Group is a multi ethnic and multi religion group where Brahaman, Chhetri, Magar, Yadav, Tharu, Dalit and Muslim are working together. Tharu are in majority group and then followed by Brahaman/Chhetri, Yadav, Muslim, Dalit, Janajati and other

ethnic. There are 540 households with 3295 beneficiaries. They are Hindu and Muslim religion. Brahman and Chhetri group are economically rich, educationally ahead and forward in leading than other ethnic groups.

Except agriculture, Brahman and Chhetri have managed to extend their occupation in different organization of government and non-government whereas; the main occupation of Yadav is livestock holding. Most of the Dalit are depending on their occupational job.

The Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group has made operational plan and constitution with the help of the District Forest Official. They have made rules for protection, management and benefit sharing with the help of Ranger of the range post. Community Forestry is implemented following these rules and regulation. There is good leadership from Brahman and Chhetri community. Participation of Brahman and Chhetri are higher than other community. High level participation of women was found in benefit sharing, protection and training and male was found forest management activities. Forest User Committee has satisfactory leading capacity and good relation to District Forest Office and other Forest User Group of VDC.

Economy and education levels are the major effecting factors in participation of users of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest. Educated users occupy all leading positions of Forest User Committee. Since Community Forest launched there, Forest User Group are benefited by direct and indirect benefits from the program. Direct benefits are getting fire wood, fodder, leaf litter, timber and grass easily as they need. Getting training and workshop opportunities and gaining knowledge are indirect benefit of the Community Forest Program. Based on findings some recommendations are also suggested.

## **Conclusion**

Community Forestry Program is the most priority program in the sector of forestry in Nepal. The program is launched in Nepal since 1978. The research unit “Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest” was handed over to the user group in 2048 B.S. User Group of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest consist seven caste groups; Brahman/Chhetri, Tharu, Yadav, Dalit, Muslim, Janajati and other ethnic. The Forest User Group is heterogeneous in term of ethnicity and religion. User Group is highly dominated by Tharu so; their representation in

User Committee is not high. Although, the forestry policy mentioned that there should be representation of women in seven seat of Committee and must integrated ethnic group representative in Community Forestry Program, the findings of the study has shown that it is applied satisfactorily in the process of Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest User Group formation and User Committee formation. In first five User Committees there was less participation of women and no participation of Muslim. In the existing User Committee there is satisfactory representation of women and all ethnic groups. The User Group has well adopted institutional process. The findings reflect that User Committee is responsible body to take decisions in minor issues, whereas major issues are decided in the general assembly or group meeting. All decisions are being passed by consensus but not by voting. Forest User Group has given full authority to User Committee to enforce implementation of Community Forestry activities. Firewood, fodder and timber are main demand of users. All users are satisfied with the benefit sharing. Committee members have good leading capacity. All committee members are literate and four are job holder on government and non-government organization. All Committee members actively participate during decision-making, implementation and benefit sharing process. The findings reveal that education is the major influencing factor in decision-making and leading the group in User Committee.

During the process of Community Forestry practice, User Group has manage also to benefit by gaining experience, knowledge and new skills from Community Forestry Program. It was found that most of the users could say more or less about Community Forest, forest management and importance of forest. This is due to the result of their interested in Community Forest. Forest User Group has good relation with District Forest Official. District Forest Office evaluated Matpur Nasahawa Community Forest as a best forest of Gadawa VDC.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the finding of the study, following recommendations are suggested.

- ) More extensive awareness and communication training should be conducted by District Forest Office to make active to the passive Users.

- ) User Group has no sufficient technical knowledge on forest management. Thus, more training should be conducted in this field.
- ) Training materials of technical aspect should be provided to User Committee as reference material.
- ) Woman participation in decision-making should be increased through awareness. They should be encouraged to hold responsible position in User Committee.
- ) Forest User Committee and Forest User Group should change the existing rule of one representative from one household to the compulsory participation of all Users in group meeting assemblies.
- ) There is a good potential of timber plants i.e Sal, Saj, Khayar production. Users are aware of the value of these products but lack technical knowledge on how to grow. Therefore, technical knowledge should be provided to them.
- ) User group has given more emphasis only on protection but is not applying management operation effectively. They should increase their participation in forest management.
- ) Forest User Group should keep their relation with other NGO working in Gadawa VDC through which they can get support in forest activities.
- ) Feasibility study should be carried out on commercial value of tree such as sal etc. and encourage them to increase growing stock.
- ) During Last 18 years, this forest is well protected. Social aspect of equal opportunity to all level of the people should be taken as a condition in community forestry for equal participation. During the formation of Forest User Committee, criteria regarding caste and ethnic group and religion should be included.

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