

**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING ROLE  
IN COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT**

*A Study of Bankhe Damara CFUG in Syangja District*

**A Dissertation**

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**Submitted by**

**Khim Bahadur Gurung**

**Roll No.: 28/063**

**T.U. Registration No.: 10528-90**

**Department of Sociology/Anthropology**

**Prithwi Narayan Campus, Pokhara**

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## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Mr Khim Bahadur Gurung has prepared this thesis entitled "**Women's Participation and Decision Making Role in Community Forest Management: A Study of Bankhe Damara CFUG in Syangja District**" under my guidance and supervision. I forward this thesis for final approval and acceptance.

---

**Shanti Bhusal**

**(Research Supervisor)**

Department of Sociology/Anthropology

PN Campus, Pokhara

5 January, 2014

## LETTER OF APPROVAL

This thesis entitled "**Women's Participation and Decision Making Role in Community Forest Management: A Study of Bankhe Damara CFUG in Syangja District**" prepared by Mr Khim Bahadur Gurung has been accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree of Arts in Sociology/Anthropology.

### Approval Committee

.....  
**Shanti Bhusal**  
(Research Supervisor)

.....  
**Dr. Lekhnath Bhattarai**  
External Examiner

.....  
**Shanti Bhusal**  
Head of the Department

5 January, 2014

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**5 January, 2014**

**Khim Bahadur Gurung**

## ABSTRACT

Community Forestry is one of the most successful programme in Nepal since last three decades. As more than two-third people of the total population live in the rural areas and they directly indirectly depend on forest for their livelihood, forest has become very much significant to them. With its importance, the proper management of forest for its sustainability is also equally important and essential. As the rural women are directly concerned with forest and forest products, their participation and decision making role to manage and conserve the forest area shouldn't ignored. To analyze the women's participation in community forest management, specific study and research is necessary. Moreover, in the case of Bankhe Damara Community Forest and its user group, no any studies and researches have done so far by any of the individuals or organizations. Thinking that my first attempt will reveal different aspect of studies of the forest and the people in this area for the scholars in coming days and this tiny research work can be one of the references for them, this study has been carried out.

The general objective of this study is to find the women's participation and decision making roles in community forest management. However, the specific objectives are as follows:

- ) To find out the women's participation in community forest management of the study area,
- ) To explore and analyze the role of women on decision making process of community forest management,

Bankhe Damara Community Forest lies on the north-east of Syangja district. This community Forest has covered ward nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Majhkot VDC. The VDC or user group lies in the middle hilly region of Nepal which is situated at the height of 2,517 meters from the sea level. The total user households of this CFUG are 187 with 181 households of Gurung and 6 *Kaami* community.

Both descriptive and explorative research designs were applied to analyze the present situation of the study area about the issue of participation and decision making role of women in the management of community forestry. Bankhe Damara Community Forest Users Group of Majhkot Siwalaya VDC was taken as universe of the study. Out of 187 household users, 65 households (*ghar dhuri*) were selected for respondent according to simple random sampling method. The data and information are qualitative and quantitative in nature which collected through primary and secondary resources.

The major findings of the study have been briefed below;

Most of the respondents were Gurung (95.3 percent) and following Buddhism (95.3 percent). The community forest was entirely managed by married people (95.4

percent). Out of the respondents, 87.3 percent were literate and educated. 83.1 percent households of the respondents were directly dependent on firewood for fuel energy. Among them, 90.6 percent were entirely dependent on community forest. Likewise, 55.5 percent of the total respondents relied on community forest for fodder. The respondents reported that they felt the community forest is their common property. The major factor affecting to participate in CF is the need based motivation (81.5 percent) mainly for firewood, wood and fodders. The position occupied by the female in the executive committee was more than one third but the posts hold by female were less vital than the male hold. 80.0 percent of the respondents were participated in the CFUG assembly. Similarly, as per the respondent view, 30.7 percent were involved regularly in mass meeting. 54.2 percent female respondent had feeling of significance of the CFUG/CFUC meetings which is less than the male (100.0 percent). More than 53.8 percent respondents were found to have expressed their views in FUG forums of which 66.6 percent of the male respondent can express their views, suggestions, feedback in the assembly and meetings freely whereas females are only 42.8 percent. Out of total, one third (36.6 percent) of the male respondents were participated in any kind of the training and exposure but only 11.4 percent of the female were participated in the training programmes. The meeting and assembly is the main forum of the discussion of community Forestry activities. 60.0 percent of the male respondents participate actively but only 31.4 percent female can actively participate in meetings of CF. According to respondents, 78.4 percent decisions were good followed by 15.3 percent average (not good or bad) and 6.1percent very good. 92.3 percent of the respondents have freedom on decision of the CF in the users assembly however, 100 percent of the male respondents feel freedom but 85.7 percent female respondents feel freedom in decision making.

To further increase the women's participation and decision making role in the Bankhe Damara Community Forest Users Group, the following programmes, especially for the women are suggested to conduct in the study area;

- Awareness programmes
- Workshops for women empowerment
- Leadership Development Trainings
- Programmes for confidence development
- Observation tours to other community forests
- Complete support from the males by delegating power to women
- Full right to the access of forest resources

*(Key words: participation, community, consumption, distribution, empowerment, decision making, meeting, natural resources, sustainability, management etc.)*

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## ABBREVIATION

CF	:	Community Forest or Forestry
CFUG	:	Community Forest User Group
DFO	:	District Forest Office
DAG	:	Dis-Advantage Group
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organization
FUG	:	Forest User Group
GoN	:	Government of Nepal
WID	:	Women in Development
GAD	:	Gender and Development
SAP	:	Structural Adjustment Programme
PCI	:	Per Capita Income
LFP	:	Livelihood Forestry Programme
NGOs	:	Non Government Organizations
NACFP	:	Nepal Australia Community Forestry Programme
NTFP	:	Non-Timber Forests Product
OP	:	Operational Plan
UNCED	:	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
VDC	:	Village Development Committee
HH	:	Household
KII	:	Key Informant Interview