CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline (Schumacher, 1973). Schumacher further goes on to say that the results of the second development decade will be no better than those of the first unless there is a conscious and determined shift of emphasis from goods to people.

The word participation became public in the development sector only in late 60s and early 70s, at a time when some development models, such as growth in income and social progress failed to reach the poor and marginalized population in countries like Nepal. While the growth in income model defined development as the growth in per capita income through transfer of huge capital from the North to the South, the growth in social progress model put emphasis, along with the ongoing emphasis on economic means, on the growth in social means, such as education, health, and other social factors for development in South. However because none of these models had put any space for people in general and poor and marginalized in particular in the whole development process, the benefits were more shared and enjoyed by a limited groups of people. The elite local leaders and those who were already better-off in the societies for various socio-political reasons were the ones who benefited more from all the development efforts made in this era further widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

The increasing poverty, growing dissatisfaction among a large number of people in the societies and the failure of development initiatives in sustaining whatever meager benefits that the poor had on their part forced the so called development experts, planners and policy markets both in the North and in the South to re-examine their understanding of development where there was no space for poor and marginalized. People, who bear the consequences of success and failure of any development initiatives in their vicinities have, in other words, right to involve in the process. Due to the increasing democratization and more open political system per se, relatively higher number of educated mass than before in the developing countries, improved information exchange mechanisms, fairly large number of human resources etc. forced towards people's participation in the era of late '60s and early '70s.

By the 1970s, most development activities were being implemented in the form of projects (Shepherd 1998:120). In the planning process of development projects, their approaches and components have been formulated usually by outsiders and then approved by donor agencies as well as national governments (Oakley 1991:5). Under such a framework, project designers and sponsors take the role of collecting information and ideas form other stakeholders in order to incorporate their ideas in a development project or strategy (World Bank 1996:4). It is, however, generally the case that an unequal power relationship between external agencies and project beneficiaries exists (Chambers 1993:2-6; Oakley 1991:4). Development projects thus can be seen as a system in which outsiders, who have strong decision making power and access to significant resources, dominate the development agenda with respect to the specific issues being addressed in target areas.

Planning process in Nepal started only after 1951. A Ministry of Planning and Development was established at the central level in 1952. In 1952, rural development was initiated for the first time with international support through the Tribhuvan Gramin Bikas Program along the line of community development program of the Government of India. The modern development thinking began only in 1951 with the implementation of the few projects on an ad hoc basis following the change in regime (Gurung, 1998).

The Nepal government supported the beginning of the Block Development Program (BDP) in 1958. BDP was designed around a hierarchy of institutions starting at the village level, followed by "block" (approximately today's VDC concept) and finally the district level. The program was supported by India. The BDP experiment was discontinued without an evaluation of the project after the sudden change of political system from multi-party to the party-less Panchayat System in 1960 (Gurung, 1998).

The main goals of the First Plan (1956-1961) were to raise production, employment and standard of living. The results of first 5th year plan were not satisfactory. After the introduction of Panchayat system (1960), the sectoral approach to development was initiated. This approach did not give fully satisfactory results. Thus, an integrated package was introduced in 1970s. An example of this approach was Small Farmer Development Program (SFDP). The first formal Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) traced its roots in Nepal from 1975. The concept of basic needs and community development was introduced in 1980s. After the raise of democracy in Nepal (1990s), non-governmental organizations

(NGOs) were expanded and community-based development programs also significantly increased (Gurung, 1998).

It has been realized that the main constraints or shortcoming of rural development in Nepal is lack of people's participation. From the very beginning of development program, i.e. from Tribhuvan Village Development Model up to Integrated Rural Development Program, people's participation has been a serious challenge (APROSC, 1986).

People's participation and participatory approach has been dominating development discourses even today. It has been widely accepted among the development professionals as well as government authorities that development efforts without active involvement of local people can generate no more good results for long run. Community forestry has become a prominent model of people's participation in Nepal. Involvement of local people in conservation, management and utilization of forest resources has made a significant progress in rural development. Role of local community (Community Forest Users Group-CFUG) in managing and utilizing forest resources has become an area of scrutiny in fostering social and economic development of Nepal.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

A large proportion of the world's mountain population is heavily dependent on forest resources for subsistence needs, energy, nutrition, income, livestock feeding and the maintenance of their farming systems. Past experiences show that the sole efforts of the government failed in conservation and fulfillment of people's daily needs.

The management of natural (forest) resources, through the active involvement of people or the resource users, under various arrangements has been realized increasingly as a better strategy for protection, conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources in the mountains. While policies for maintaining property resources may vary across countries, experience indicates that these boundaries collapse when common issues are addressed. Nepal has been acknowledged as a pioneer in promoting community forestry in South Asia. Poverty has become a burning issue in the developing countries like Nepal. Including Nepal, other developing country's principal objective is Poverty alleviation. Governments as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including bi-lateral and multi-lateral donor agencies have placed their priority in poverty reduction through the implementation of various

activities. The livelihoods of people are highly dependent on natural resources. Community forestry, which is the major policy program of the forestry sector in Nepal, has considered to be the potential means to reduce rural poverty.

This study aims to analyze the role of CFUG in community forest management in general and Bamdibhir CF management in particular. This study was carried out in Bamdibhir Community Forest of Chapakot VDC, Kaski (the details of the study area will be discussed in Chapter Four). How CFUG takes initiative in conservation, management and proper utilization of forest resources has become an important dimension of research and analysis. A key thrust of the community forestry program has been in the area of institutional development and in facilitating the establishment of new mechanisms and enhances their ability in advocacy strategies to influence policies which affect their lives.

In Nepal many organizations working in the field of rural development are practicing different approaches/modalities of people participation. CFUG has become a kind of "model" of participatory development not only in Nepal but also in abroad. In this context, how people participation works in the overall management of community forest with democratic system of governance and management is primary concern for development professionals and policy makers. It is therefore, high time to carefully look at the role of local people in resource management and local development. As the community forestry has proved as one of the pioneer models of people's participation, research and findings can be disseminated in other areas of development aimed at improving the lives and livelihoods of rural people.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study looks at the role of people participation in community resource management in general and community forest in particular with its expanded roles in sustainable local development. It is expected that the study will provide better insight in terms of the role of people participation in community forest management. The specific objectives are:

- To critically examine people participation for Bamdibhir CF management;
- To critically analyze the role of Bamdibhir CFUG in resource management and livelihoods improvement of local people ; and
- To analyze the socio-economic and environmental benefits to local people through Bamdibhir CFUG.

1.4 Research Focus and Questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

) What does the people participation mean for sustainable resource management and local development?

) What is the significance of people participation in community forest management in Nepal?

) What are the roles of local people in Bamdibhir Community Forest Management and thereby livelihoods improvement?

) What are the benefits to local community through the management of Bamdibhir community forest?

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The research has been undertaken for the partial fulfillment of requirements for the post-graduate degree in Sociology. This, being a work for a dissertation research, was obviously constrained by time and resources. Nevertheless, this study is helpful to all those who are interested in the field of participatory rural development in Nepal.

This study has been carried out in Chapakot VDC Ward No. 3, 5 and 6 of Kaski where a deserted area by a landslide was converted into a dense forest by the initiative of local users. This study has no any hypothesis. Therefore, any kind of test based on hypothesis has not been applied. It will look at the role of local community in participatory forest management and environment conservation. This research, however, will not look at the principle of community forestry and other socio-economic parameters of community forests.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. The **first** chapter includes introduction, backgrounds, statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, research focus and questions and limitation of study. The **second** chapter deals with literature review. It consists of the concept and definitions of people participation, poverty in Nepal, concept of development, community forestry in Nepal and the opportunities from community forest.

The **third** chapter describes the research methodology used for the study. Under this chapter, research design, selection of study site, nature and source of data, universe and sample, data

collection techniques and data analysis tools and ethical consideration are discussed. Similarly, the **fourth** chapter deals with the general background of study area and the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

The **fifth** chapter describes the results and findings drawn from the micro - analysis of the study. Finally, the **sixth** chapter comprises the summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER – II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of Participation

"People are real wealth of a nation" (HDR 2010:1). People or community based development strategy is not really a new strategy in all underdeveloped or third world countries, including Nepal, in general, and traditional or backward or indigenous people/communities, in particular (Bhattachan and Mishra, 1997). They have given the evolution of community development in Nepal as shown in the box below:

Indigenous organizations and/or community developments in Nepal
Pre-unification (pre-1768): autonomous indigenous organizations
Rana regime (1846-1950): indigenous organizations under the center
Planned development periods (1950s): community development
Early Panchayat regime (1960s): growth + community development
Mid – Panchayat regime (1970s): IRDPs + community development
Late-Panchayat Regime (1980s): Basic Needs + community development
Democratic period (1990s): market + NGO + state + people or community

Source: Bhattachan and Mishra, Development Practices in Nepal, 1997

Community participation has become popular dynamics in development discourses. Pretty (1996) has given two views about community participation. According to the first view; community participation as a means to increase efficiency, the central notion that if people are involved then they are more likely to agree with and support to the new development program or service. According to the second view; community participation as a right, in which, the main aim is to initiate mobilization for collective action, empowerment and institution building.

The concept of participation as it applies to development is not altogether new. It brings together with many old ideas under a new rubric. And because it entails many familiar ideas at the same time and it introduces a new form, there is a lack of clear understanding of the concept of participation, its meaning, value and implications for development. Worldwide experiences show that effective rural development requires the integration of a number of things (Butterfield, 1978). Participation means in its broadest sense, to sensitize people and

thus, to increase the receptivity and ability of rural people to respond to development program, as well as to encourage local initiatives (Oakley and Marsden, 1987).

Oakley and Marsden (1987) have described participation as an attempt to encourage rural people to collaborate with programs which have already been devised. It covers activities of the community development in which community involvement is sought as a means of ensuring the survival of a project. It can be applied as an initiative to facilitate the formation of people's organization at local level as a means by which poor people will have a chance to voice; and finally, the powerless people get empowerment. Paul (1987) on the other hand reported that community participation is an active process by which beneficiary of a development projects will enhance their well being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish.

Lohani (1978), explaining the UN definition, argues that "mass sharing of benefits of development, mass contribution to development and mass involvement in decision-making process of development" are the three basic ingredients of popular participation. He has mentioned six different elements of people's participation, which are (i) conceptualization and identification, (ii) decision-making, (iii) mass participation in resources mobilization, (iv) mass participation in implementation, (v) mass sharing of benefits, (vi) evaluation and control.

The elucidation of the concept of "participation" provided in the monograph by Cohen and Uphoff (1977) provides an excellent framework within which the meaning of participation in development can be examined. They suggest that the concept of participation can be understood in terms of three basic categories or dimensions:
- The kinds of participation (the "what" of participation);
- The type of people who participate (the "who" of participation);
- The mechanisms and characteristics of participation activities (the "how" of participation).

Uphoff and Cohen (1977) have the view that the "trickle-down model", which stressed exclusively on growth at the expenses of equity, showed serious shortcomings which eventually led to its failure. The response was the emergence of a new concept called

people's participation with a more central and active role of the majority of citizens in development process.

White (1996) has presented more useful typology in identifying some of the contrasting tendencies manifested in the uses to which participatory approaches have been put in development as follow:

Form	What "participation" means to the implementing agency	What "participation" means for those on the receiving end	What "participation" is for
Nominal	Legitimation - to show they are doing something	Inclusion - to retain some access to potential benefits	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency - to limit founders' input, draw on community contributions and make projects more cost effective	Cost - of time spent on project related labor and other activities	As a means to achieving cost effectiveness and local facilities
Representative	Sustainability - to avoid creating dependency	Leverage - to influence the shape the project takes and its management	To give people a voice in determining their own development
Transformative	Empowerment - to strengthen people's capabilities to take decisions and act for themselves	Empowerment - to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as means and an ends, a continuing dynamics

Adapted from White, 1996.

Is participation a means or an end of development? From the point of development planning and administration, it is evident that primary concern is participation in program/project from very beginning of planning to the benefit sharing. While various political strategies and ideologies may place broad-based participation in decision-making, implementation and evaluation as major goals in themselves, the developer is primarily concerned with the distribution of benefits to people. In this sense, widespread participation in benefits helps to define major "end" of development (Butterfield, 1978).

Participation by rural people in the institutions that govern their lives is a basic human right. If rural development was to realize its potential, the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) Conference said, disadvantaged rural people had to be organized and actively involved in designing policies and programs and in controlling social and economic institutions. WCARRD (1979) saw a close link between participation and

voluntary, autonomous and democratic organizations representing the poor. It called on development agencies to work in close cooperation with organizations of intended beneficiaries, and proposed that assistance be channeled through small farmer and peasant groups.

The WCARRD in 1979 affirmed that "participation by the people in the institutions and systems which govern their lives is a basic human right and also essential for realignment of political power in favor of disadvantaged groups and for social and economic development".

People participation in forest management has been very popular in Nepal since last many years, especially after the restoration of democracy in 1990. Community Forest Users Groups (CFUG) have been taking strong initiative to conservation and management of forest resources when the government introduced CFUG policy. Now these are the groups which are taking overall responsibility of managing and utilizing forest handed over by the District Forest Office (DFO) as community forest.

A close conceptual and operational link, therefore, exists between people's participation and people's organizations. Active participation of rural people can only be brought about through local community and membership-based self-help organizations whose primary aim is the persuasion of their members' social or economic objectives. People's organizations like CFUG are voluntary, autonomous and democratically controlled institutions. Some local people's organizations may establish higher-level federations at provincial, national or international level in order to increase their self-help capacities and bargaining power, and to promote participatory development at local level. CFUG has also been in that position having a national level federation called Federation of Community Forest Users Group (FECOFUN).

Participation through people's organizations is enhanced at local level through the work of development I/NGOs that aim at improving the social and economic conditions of rural people, especially the poor. The supports they provide to grassroots groups take various forms: training, technical support, research, assistance in formulating and implementing projects, exchange of information and experiences. These development I/NGOs have played a significant role in promoting community forestry program in Nepal.

Participation of people in community resource management and local development has been a traditional practice in Nepalese society. Various community based organizations used to take initiative of such activities with peoples' participation. However, development NGOs and various interest groups started to work formally when the provision of such organization was officially introduced. Now CFUGs have been playing not only the conservation role, but they are taking lead in development activities. Now a day, the issues of governance and rights have emerged within CFUG. It is now widely accepted that "people's participation, in order to have a broad impact on governance and development needs a robust society where citizens, professional groups and social organizations take a deep interest in activities that affect their lives and the well being of their community" (Nepal Human Development Report, 1998).

The level of participation comes forth when we talk about participation. Hinton and Baker (1998) have given a conceptual framework for analyzing level of people participation. The outsiders might be the agencies who are working for the local people. Insiders are the people who get benefit. The level of participation depends upon outsider / insider relationship.

Based on the definitions and concepts above, "people's participation" refers to the active involvement of community people on the issues that affect them. In the case of development, it refers to the involvement of the people from the very beginning of the project/program i.e. project/program design to the end i.e. monitoring/evaluation and benefit sharing. On the other hand, participation equally gives importance over the decision making processes of men and women, poor and disadvantaged, marginalized and socially excluded persons for the betterment of their lives. It is an organized effort to increase access to and control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control. From 1990s, the term 'participation' has taken a new gloss, captured by the World Bank's definition: 'a process thorough which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them' (World Bank, 1994).

But, precisely because participation can mean so many different things and because multiple understandings easily co-exist, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly where to draw definitional lines in practice. And because definitions of participation in development context often remain blurred, there is scope for a range of potential interpretations when it comes to

implementation. When participatory development takes shape through the actions of particular agents, who bring their own agendas to the process, preconceptions and mode of interactions become a major concern.

2.2 Poverty in Nepal

Although the world has witnessed tremendous economic growth and significant improvements in living standards of people, poverty still remains the major challenge for the 21st century. Economic deprivation, social marginalization and exclusion of the majority of the population in developing and the third world economies are some of the major problems even today. Widening gap between rich and poor on the one hand and the decades of efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger on the other hand has drawn up an attention of global community to think and rethink about the approaches and modalities of rural development and anti-poverty programs.

Development paradigms have been shifting rapidly since the World War-II to present. Economic growth model followed by capital investment in the 1960s to the people centered approach in the 1980s and early 1990s show the major change in the thoughts of development. Human Development Approach as advocated by UNDP through its Human Development Reports since 1990s and Capability Approach as advocated by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen have influenced over the thinking and understanding of poverty and development. Now, without exception, bilateral and multilateral development agencies have adopted these new principles and approaches of poverty and development.

Nepal is predominantly a rural country. Only 12 percent of the population resides in urban areas and agriculture forms the primary occupation of around 80 percent of the population. In the settlements designated as urban areas, the rural-urban distinction is blurred because people living in cities and valleys engage in farming for their livelihoods. Although the agricultural sector as a whole displays similar economic and social characteristics, it is diverse and contains several socio-economic strata in terms of income and poverty.

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty in Nepal has persisted for decades. The recent figures of the government of Nepal show that around 25.4 percent of its population lives below the poverty line (NPC 2010). Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2010, measured by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) on the basis

of different indicators, however, shows the incidence of poverty in Nepal as 64.7 percent. Poverty levels vary in Himalayas, Mountains and Plains.

Geographically, Nepal is a country locked between two giant neighbors, the People's Republic of China in the North and the Republic of India in the South. The altitudes in the country vary dramatically from a minimum of 60 m. in the low lands to a maximum of 8,848 m. in the Himalayas. The country exhibits a wide range of rugged and fragile topography. It is divided into three major topographic and ecological zones - the mountain in the North, the hills extending across the centre of the country from West to East and a narrow strip of low-lying land, the Gangetic plain (Tarai), in the South. This variation in topography has directly influenced peoples' means of living and thereby quality of their life. The poor and very poor are located predominantly in remote rural areas. They are vulnerable not only to natural calamities but also are deprived of the state services.

While Nepal is termed one of the poorest countries in the world, it has great potentials for rapid economic growth and social development. It is one of the richest countries in terms of water resources. Natural beauty is another important resource for Nepal. High Himalayan Mountains, numerous lakes, historic monuments and temples are some of the attractions of tourism. Various castes, diverse ethnicities, social solidarity and unity among diversity are some of the characteristics of Nepalese society. A distinctive feature of the Nepalese society since the centuries is having a vibrant and strong social capital. Social capital is a kind of "safety net" to those societies where majority of the people are living in abject poverty and vulnerability.

"Poverty is multidimensional" (OECD, 2001) and is a complex phenomenon. Poverty reduction has been a sole priority of the government of Nepal since long. Despite the efforts made by the government and various development organizations, poverty and deprivation remains major challenge even today.

Nepal is predominantly an agrarian country. Nepalese economy largely depends on agriculture, and people's livelihood activities are determined accordingly. "Agriculture contributes more than one-half of the household income, provides employment to 80 percent of the population, and has a significant bearing on the manufacturing and export sectors" (NHDR 1998:13). Thus, agriculture plays a central role in the Nepalese economy providing

major livelihood options to the majority. The role of peasantry in the political economy of Nepal since the unification of Nepalese state has been to provide basic livelihoods for the majority of the people.

Underdevelopment and poverty in Nepal is recognized as a deep-seated and complex phenomenon. Nepal is caught up in a vicious cycle of poverty and economic stagnation since long. Poverty has been defined as "a state of economic, social and psychological deprivation occurring among people or countries lacking sufficient ownership, control or access to resources to maintain a minimum standard of living" (World Bank 1980 quoted in NHDR 1998:125).

It implies that poverty means more than low income. It is a condition in which "opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied – to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-respect, and respect for others" (HDR 1997:15). Thus, "the multidimensionality of poverty is now widely accepted" (OECD 2001:37). Chambers defines poverty as "lack of income and assets, physical weaknesses, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness" (1987:8-9 quoted in Mikkelsen 1995: 146). Sen (1999), on the other hand, sees poverty as capability deprivation and defines development in terms of "expanding substantive freedom". In this context, how natural and human resources can be mobilized to reduce poverty is a major challenge for state and non state actors.

Definitions of poverty manifest that people's access to and control over various resources (human, social, natural, financial and physical capital) is the key determinants of well-being. The state of people's livelihoods and livelihood security determine the state of their poverty and vulnerability. It is also evident that poverty and vulnerability limit a family's exposure to social affairs. Acute poverty creates an environment of exploitation as well.

Seddon and Hussain (2002) state that over one third of Nepal's population is estimated to live in poverty and for all of these people, livelihoods involve a constant struggle for survival: their control over and access to strategic resources is limited; their sources of income are precarious and yield generally low returns to effort and risk; their social networks and stocks of social capital are generally of limited capacity; and their personal resources and quality of life are poor. Explaining about the background of Nepalese poverty, Seddon (1984) argues

that poverty in Nepal is not only an immediate consequence, lived and experienced by some, of the prevailing structure of economic and political relations, and therefore something to be deplored and criticized on the grounds of morality and humanitarian concern; it is also a reflection of an economic and political system. Growing poverty, therefore, has its own consequences, not merely for the poor themselves, but for the whole society.

UNDP (2004), explaining the causes of the development of underdevelopment over a long period of time, argues that a top-down development paradigm directed by the country's elite, political instability, slow progress on good governance, inappropriate macro-economic policies, unequal distribution of social resources and social discrimination have fuelled poverty in Nepal. This conception about the widespread poverty demands reform and modifications both in the modality and approaches as well as the policy of local development.

UNDP (2004:16) further argues that "conventional anti-poverty approaches, which focus almost exclusively on income and basic needs, have generally failed to reduce powerlessness and the negative attributes usually associated with it, notably isolation, vulnerability and physical weakness". This indicates the changing thoughts of poverty and development on the one hand and the realization of the importance of people centric approach to development on the other hand.

2.3 Concept of Development

The term "development" has been defined in different ways. Thinking over the development has been changing over time. Economic growth model followed by capital investment in the 1960s to the people centered approach in the 1980s and early 1990s shows the major change in the thoughts of development. Human Development Approach as advocated by UNDP through its Human Development Reports since 1990s and Capability Approach as advocated by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen have influenced over the thinking and understanding of development.

David Korten, an expert of development has defined development as "a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capabilities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life with their own aspiration" (Korten, 1990).

Chambers says, "development means the quality of life of poor and disadvantaged people who should come first in every endeavor of development priorities. Capacity building is the key factor for development"(Chamber, 1997).

2.4 Community Forestry in Nepal

The Community Forestry program was formally launched in Nepal in 1978 with the enactment of the Panchayat Forest Rules and the Panchayat Protected Forest Rules. The Community Forestry policy along with Community Forestry legislation has been continuously reformed over time. These reforms have recognized the use rights of the local people in the management of forest resources and established them as managers. Since the inception the progress in policy shift has been tremendous.

It is well known that prior to 1957 villagers managed their nearby forest to meet local demands of fuel, fodder, poles and timber. The management system was based on indigenous practices of protection and utilization of resources. These practices were locally developed and regularly revised (Fisher 1991, 1990; Gilmour 1991; Gautam 1987). The forests were nationalized under the Private Forest Nationalization Act of 1957 and it is generally believed that heavy deforestation occurred during the years following the nationalization because people felt that their forest had been taken away from them (Gilmour, King and Hobley 1989; World Bank 1978).

The period from 1978 to the present can be considered as the Community Forestry (CF) phase, which began with a review of the forestry sector and the relationship between the population and the natural resources of Nepal. The formulation of the National Forestry Plan (NFP) in 1976 provided a policy base for initiating forestry development work in the hills of Nepal and was a bold shift in policy towards participatory forestry. This plan was followed by the Panchayat Forest (PF) Rules and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) Rules in 1978 that included the provision for handing over limited areas of Government forest to the local Panchayat. This legislation gave formal recognition of the rights of villagers to manage the forest and can be regarded as the formal launching of CF in Nepal (Joshi 1993; Gilmour, King and Hobley 1989). From 1978, there have been several legislative changes aimed at facilitating the handing over of management responsibility of the government controlled lands to local people.

The Forest Act 1993 provided full authority to the users for management of forest resources and can be regarded as one end of a co-management spectrum between the government and forest users. It recognized the dominant role of local people in the decision making process and provided grounds for benefiting local people from forest management. The emphasis was given to returning the ownership of forest resources to the people. The spirit of the new CF legislation in Nepal was the development of a partnership between the organized local communities and the government. The community institutions called Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) represented the community of forest users and were legally authorized to take management decisions (Karki, 1994; Bartlett 1992).

The history of forest management, degradation and tenure structures in Nepal throws long shadows over policy and practice today. The early period of development (during 70s) is characterized by growing state control and alienation of local rights, with a concomitant growth in distrust of the state. But changes in policy have led to a reassertion of local rights of access to forest resources, with the government handing over local users.

Community Forestry evolved out of the realization that forest management in developing countries is incapable of and inefficient for people's active participation in forest conservation. It is based on the economic principle that forest policies based on maximization of revenue at the cost of social welfare have resulted in deforestation (Repetto, 1988 as cited by Baral, 1998). The evolutionary background of community forestry is closely linked to the existence of indigenous forest management systems, which was in practice for a long time (Karki at. el., 1994). Most of hill forests nearby the villages were being managed with their own de facto rules on their own initiative; still such examples can be seen in hilly areas. The government followed the indigenous system and initiated to convert it into community forestry system providing legal authority for management responsibility to the local people with the government's new community forestry policy (Shahi, 2000). Now, the CF program in Nepal promotes the control, management and use of forest resources by local people.

Although the laws and by-laws acknowledge the rights of user groups to manage and protect forest areas, they also state that ownership remains with the government, which retains the sovereign right to take back possession of the CF if the terms and conditions of the hand over are not met. The legislation gives powers to the DFO to control user groups, with little protection for the users in case of dispute between them and the Forest Department. CFUGs

can punish their own members if they commit mistakes. However, there is no provision in the Forest Act to punish the persons outside their CFUG if they misuse the resources. Similarly, CFUG can amend the operational plan which needs to be conformed by the DFO but do not need the approval. This encourages the tendency among the CFUGs to deviate from conservation and management to uncontrolled exploitation of the resources. There are also contradictions of the Forest Act (1993) with other legislation.

The Local Self-governance Act (1998) says that forests within the area of VDC and DDC are the property of that VDC or DDC. The Forest Act (1993), on the other hand says that all the national forests are owned by the central government, and the usufruct rights of a community forest are exercised by a CFUG registered in a DFO's office. There are serious overlaps between the Nepal Mines Act (1996) exercised by the Department of Geology and Mines, and the Forest Act (1993). As defined in the Forest Act (1993) any material lying on or within a national forest is a forest product and thus governed by forest Act. However, any mineral (defined as non-biotic products excluding petroleum), whether in the private or national forest is governed by the above Nepal Mines Act.

2.5 Status of Community Forestry in Nepal

The progress of the CF program was quite fast at the beginning because it was more like a formality to hand over forests to village leaders on paper rather than the actual forest management cases. Furthermore, the new legislation compelled a revision of all forests handed over before 1993, to include a CFUG constitution, and preparation and approval of operational plans to legitimize usufruct rights of the CFUGs for the management and use of the forest resources. This system slowed the progress in those districts which had been working with the program for many years. However, the achievement is progressive in total as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Status of community forestry in Nepal

CFUG No.	17,685
Households benefited from CF	**2,177,858**
Handed over forest area (ha.)	1,652,654
% of the people involved in CF management	35%

*Source: NG, DoF, accessed at **http://dof.gov.np/division/community-forest-division / community-forestry** on 10 Feb 2014.*

This figure is quite impressive from the point of CF development in Nepal. However, Nepal's CF development efforts so far have concentrated in the hill region of the country. Implementation of CF activities has lagged behind much in Terai. There must be some underlying reasons in the eyes of the policy makers for not implementing CF for the forests in the Terai region. In kaski, a total of 459 community forests are handed over to CFUG by the year 2010.

Table 2 : Status of community forestry in Kaski Ditrict

Total area of Kaski District	2,01,700 ha
Cultivated area	24%
Forested area	45%
Residential area	11%
Non arable area/land	20%
Natural forest area	89,943 ha
Handed over forest area as CF	16,687 ha
No of CFUG	459

Source: DFO, Kaski 2010. Cited from Shanta Kaphle (2011). Women's Participation in Community Forest Management: A case study from Ratopahiro Community Forest User Group of Pokhara, Kaski district. Thesis submitted to Tribhuvan University, Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Nepal.

Table 2 shows that almost 1/5th of the total natural forests are handed over to the community as community forest by the year 2010.

2.6 Opportunities from Community Forest

2.6.1 Meeting subsistence needs and income generation

Many rural people meet their subsistence needs from the collection of fuel wood, fodder and other non-wood forest products. Forests have been the source for livelihood of rural people. Evidences show that community forests have been the means to poverty reduction through various income generating activities. Pokhrel (1998) argues that community forestry has been a source of income and employment opportunities for rural communities. Recent experiences in Nepal also suggest that community forests can yield more than subsistence needs, and that forest user groups can generate income from a variety of sources. Community forests thus play an important role in providing local employment and developing local markets.

It could, therefore, be argued that the handing over of the forest to communities for management and use has increased the opportunities for organized income generation. CFUGs have started to incorporate income generation activities (IGAs) in their operational

plans. There are many examples of cash crops, cultivation of non-timber forest products and medicinal herbs. Selling seedlings, firewood, poles and timbers are the sources of income from community forest. Some groups are involved in growing ginger, cardamom, bamboo within the forest. These concerted efforts have raised the income of CFUG, and eventually, income level of the group members.

Non-timber forest products play an important role in the livelihood of people. The economic value of non-timber forest product in the South East Asia is highly significant to the rural and national economies of the region. Several examples from CFUGs can be cited where users are involved in collection, processing and sale of NTFPs for income generation and to meet subsistence needs in order to alleviate poverty. Subedi (1999) reported that NTFP contribute about 25 percent of the household income in Humla District. Forest-based enterprises are not common with community forests in Nepal. Very few CFUGs have started small CF-based enterprises. Rope making and plates making from sal (*Shorea robusta*) leaves are some examples. Forest-based small-scale enterprises can play a dominant role in household economies because these are often seasonal and household-based. They provide the much needed supplement income when alternative means of income generation are unavailable or spare time is available outside of household activities (FAO, 1991).

2.6.2 Environment conservation

Community forestry significantly helps in the conservation and management of environment. Forest Act 1993 forbids the conversion of CF into agricultural land and the construction of houses and other buildings inside CFs. Community forest management is directly helping to rejuvenate the natural ecosystem, primarily by rebuilding the forest ecosystem by minimizing disturbances. Landslide control, protection of wildlife from fire and poaching and water source protection are directly linked to the effective management of community forest.

2.6.3 Sustainable management of natural resources

The basic aim of CF management is to involve communities in all aspects of forest management for their own benefits and to conserve the forest for future generations. The underlying rationale is to find practical ways of ensuring stewardship over the resources by providing management responsibility to communities who use them (Malla, 1993)

2.6.4 Community development

CFUG, as an autonomous and self-governing entity, can generate funds from different sources and can use it for community development besides forestry development. There are tremendous opportunities to integrate community forestry into community development. This is because the subsistence livelihood of the rural people is primarily based on agriculture and livestock, which in turn is intricately linked with forestry. It is well understood that without forest the life in rural areas is impossible (Baral, 1998).

Singh (1998) argues that many CFUGs, after meeting their basic forestry needs of fuel wood, fodder and timber, have earned a significant amount of income for their group funds from the management of community forest and other viable sources. These funds are now being used for many community development activities.

It is shown that community forest management is helping community development activities by injecting funds and voluntary services. Many CFUGs are undertaking small-scale community development activities with the funds generated from community forests (Hunt et al. 1996). These small-scale development activities could be more appropriate than externally sponsored activities to solve local problems. This is because local people identify their needs, seek solutions and act accordingly. Such initiatives may be more sustainable than the activities run by the outside funding because continued sustained income from CF would provide for ongoing maintenance costs. This is particularly important when outside funded rural development program fail to provide continuous benefits after the termination of external funding as local communities often do not have sufficient funds to maintain the infrastructure. Local infrastructure development like drinking water, road construction, small suspension bridge construction, construction of school building and other community buildings are some of the examples seen among the activities undertaken by CFUGs (Shahi, 2000).

2.6.5 Food security

Community forest has contributed in food security in the country. Various edible food items are available in the forests. Besides, the financial capital and social capital generated by the community forestry help in addressing the problem of food insecurity. The following table shows the linkage between food security and the forest.

The figure shows that different capitals generated through the community forests contribute

in food security of the forest users. The figure also shows how relationship between policy and wider socioeconomic context and different capital contribute in food security. In other words, community forest has wider opportunity to address the food insecurity problem. The poor and very poor, who rely much in the
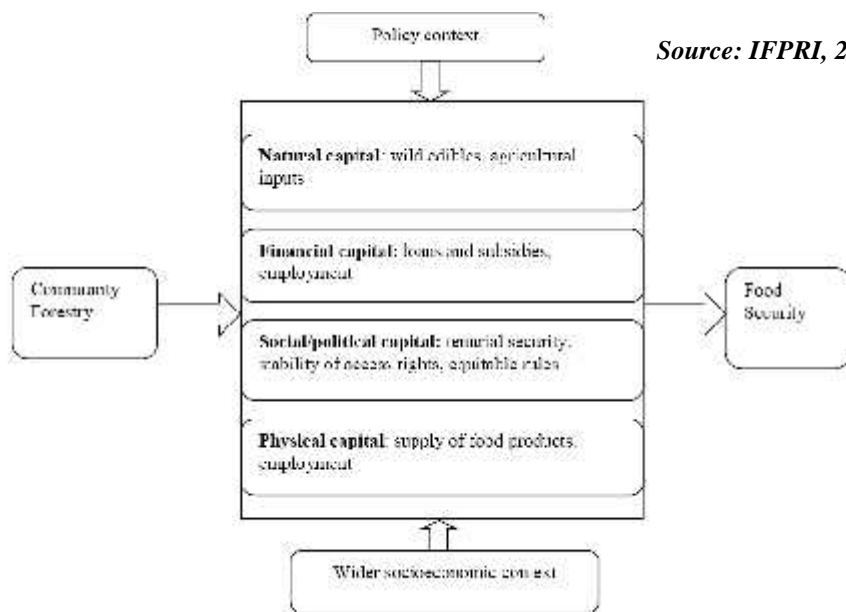
Source: IFPRI, 2009

forests, can use forest resources in one hand and the forest generated capitals on the other hand to tackle the daily needs. The chart also depicts how community forestry contributes in food security and wider socio-economic development of the communities.

2.7 Impacts of Community Forests

Community Forest/Forestry has numerous benefits and impacted in various dimensions of the

lives of local people positively. Restoration of forest, support in bio-diversity conservation, easy access of local people on forest products, support in poverty reduction,leadership development at local level, empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups and livelihoods improvement are some the impacts generated from

Impacts of Community Forest
⟩ Restored degraded forest land
⟩ Resumed greenery
⟩ Increased Bio-diversity
⟩ Increased supply of forest products
⟩ Empowered women, poor and the disadvantaged group
⟩ Promoted income generation and community development activities
⟩ Improved Livelihood
Source: NG, DoF, accessed on 10 Feb 2014. at http://dof.gov.np/ division/community-forest-division /community-forestry.

CF. CF has been the means for increasing income of CFUG through various programs.

CHAPTER – III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research is descriptive and exploratory. Since the objective of this study is to examine the role of local community in CF management, descriptive research design has been applied. Likewise, it examines the state of people participation in terms of caste / ethnicity.

3.2 Selection of the Study Area

For the research purpose, Bamdibhir Community Forest located in ward no. 3, 5 and 6 of Chapakot VDC of Kaski District has been selected. As Bamdibhir CF has become one of the models in te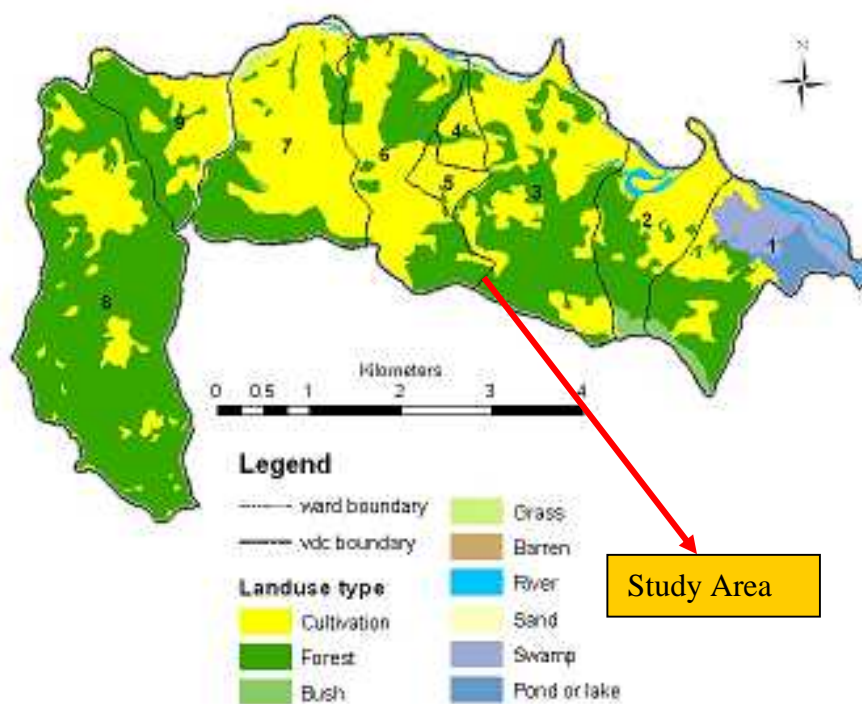rms of participatory forest resource management; where majority of Dalits are as users, it has been selected for the study. Women participation in CF management and the availability of qualitative and quantitative information for research are other reasons for selecting Bamdibhir CF as study area.

3.3 The Nature and Sources of Data

Both the qualitative and quantitative data have been used for this study. Primary data are the main sources of this study. Secondary data are used for further information. Primary data are obtained through semi-structured questionnaire, key informants' interview and observation.

3.4 Universe and Sample

There are 164 households as CFUG in the study area. Eleven member of Community Foresrt Users' Committee were purposively selected as respondents. Likewise 5 CFUG members are also selected as respondents. The reason for selecting two different groups as respondents is that they have different role, interest and background.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Different techniques are applied to collect the data during this study which are as below.
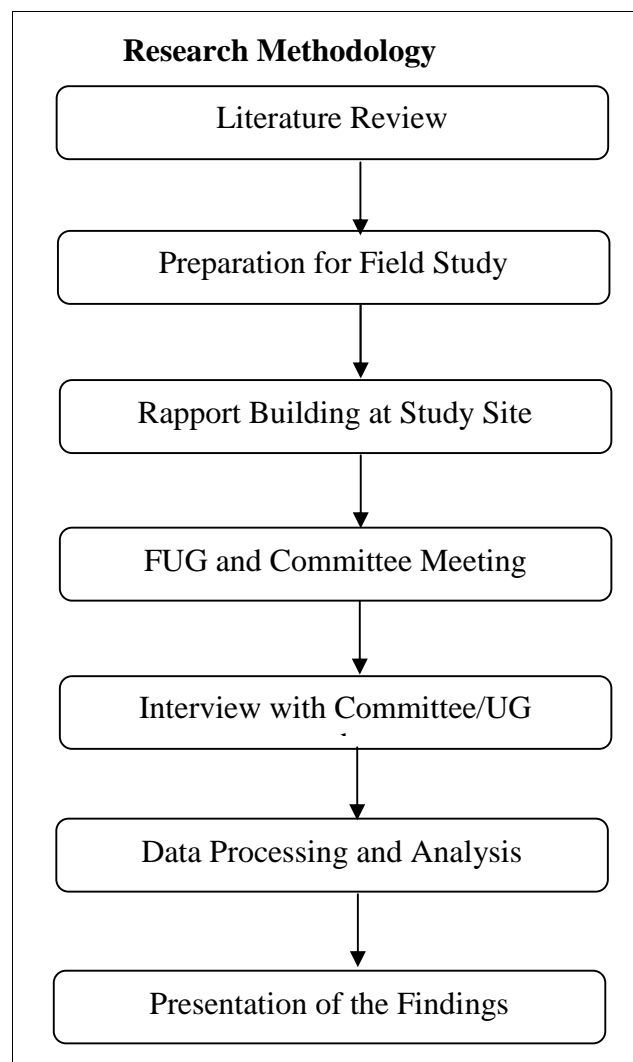
3.5.1 Interview with committee members

Numerical data were collected through records of the CFUG. Semi-structured interview was carried out based on interview questionnaire (the interview questionnaire is attached in an annex) to collect primary information. The data on socio-economic status of the respondents and their involvement in CF management were collected through interview. Many PRA tools were applied to build rapport, make friendly environment and extract information.

3.5.2 Interview with UG members

Interview was carried out with five randomly selected members of CFUG. The extent of people participation in managing and utilizing the CF was discussed with UG members.

3.5.3 Observation

Direct observation of CF was carried out to validate the information and judge the quality of the CF. Moreover, observation was taken as a strong tool for analyzing qualitative information. Decision making processes in meeting and male/female participation were

Research Methodology

Literature Review

↓

Preparation for Field Study

↓

Rapport Building at Study Site

↓

FUG and Committee Meeting

↓

Interview with Committee/UG

↓

Data Processing and Analysis

↓

Presentation of the Findings

observed during observation. The CF meetings were observed on 30 December 2012 and 17 September 2013.

3.6 Data Processing, Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting data using different instruments, data analysis was carried out focusing on mainly three aspects; namely aggregate tables and chart to show the qualitative and quantitative interpretation of the responses of different categories of the respondents, simple use of statistical calculation and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative responses. The livelihoods approach (LA) is used to analyze and interpret the socio-economic and environmental benefits to local people through Bamdibhir CFUG.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The respondents were assured that any kind of information and personal issues will not be used for other purposes. The rapport was built with the respondents to get information easily and in friendly environment.

CHAPTER – IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE PEOPLE AND THE RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Geographical Condition

The research area (Chapakot VDC) lies in the West of Kaski, some 10 Kilometers from Pokhara city. It is situated on the top of Phewa Lake. Chapakot VDC is surrounded by Pumdi Bhumdi VDC in the East and in the North, Kaskikot in the South, and Fewa Lake in the East. The research area, Bamdibhir community forest is situated along the Harpan Khola, which flows to Phewa Lake. The VDC is rich in natural resources such as, forest and water. An agricultural gravel road links from Pokhara to the major parts of the VDC, with seasonal transportation within VDC. However, because of the fragile landscape and step terraces, soil erosion is high with small scale landslide in rainy season. Soil erosion has been the constant problem for Fewa Lake with huge amount of sedimentation every year.

4.2 Demography

Chapakot VDC has 785 households with 3081 population. Brahmin, Dalit and Gurung are the major castes in this VDC. Of the population, about 70% are literate. The following table shows the demographic situation of the VDC.
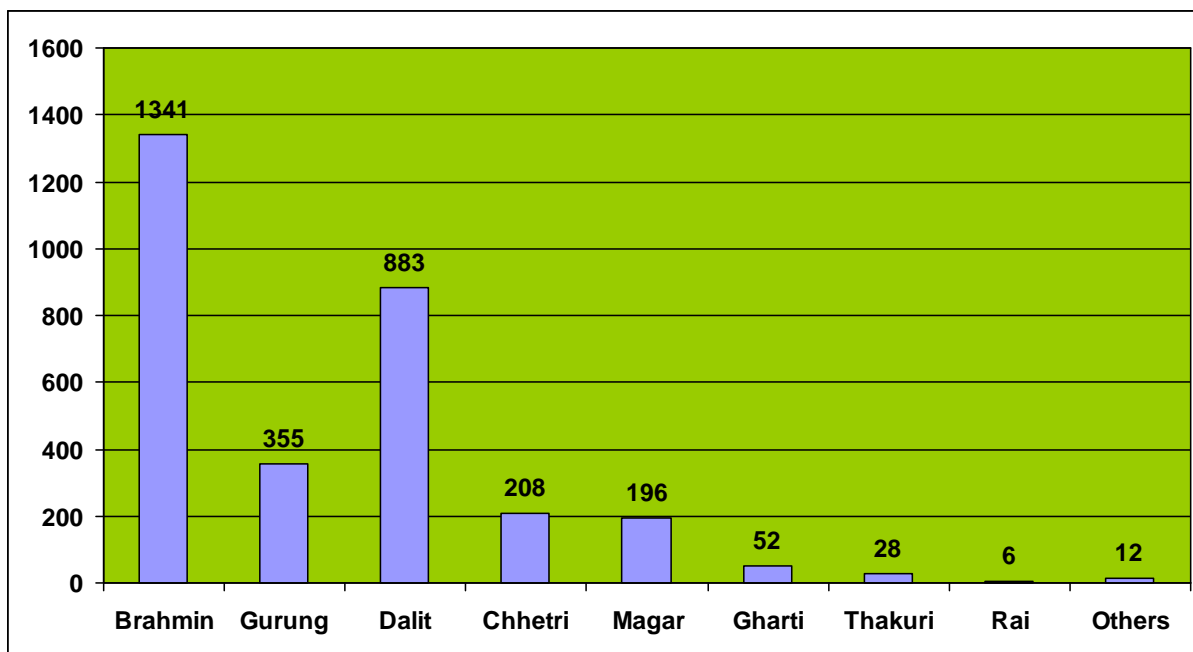
Table 3: Demographic Composition

Caste	Population	Population %
Brahmin	1341	43.5%
Gurung	355	11.5%
Dalit	883	28.7%
Chhetri	208	6.8%
Magar	196	6.4%
Gharti	52	1.7%
Thakuri	28	0.9%
Rai	6	0.2%
Others	12	0.4%
Total	3081	100%

Table 4: Population by Gender

| Male	1395	45.3%
Female	1686	54.7%
Total	3081	100%

Source: VDC profile of Nepal, 2010

Graph1: Demographic Composition

The table and the graph show that Brahmin and Dalit are the major castes of this VDC which share 43.5% and 28.7% respectively. Female population is significantly higher than the male population. Male – Female composition is shown in the graph below.

Graph2: Composition of population by sex
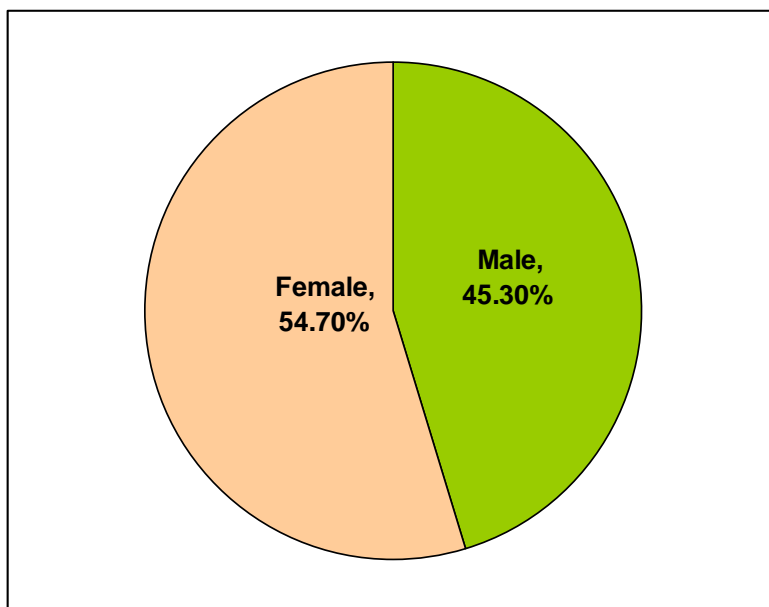
The graph shows that female population in this VDC is higher than the national composition.

4.3 Livelihoods

The major livelihoods of the study area and of the VDC as a whole are farming. People rely on agriculture for their living. However, the agriculture is subsistence. Remittance has become a major source of cash for the majority of the households. Off farm activities are limited as the agriculture has not been commercialized. Seasonal and off-seasonal vegetable cultivation is also limited to household needs though some farmers are trying to develop in commercial scale. Agriculture is basically rain fed. Lack of irrigation facility has confined people's farming activities and thereby level of income.

Livestock is closely associated with the agriculture. Agriculture manure is supplied through the livestock raising, though using chemical fertilizers have become common. Livestock raising is dependent on forest resources. Farmers supply fodder from the forest. Fuel wood and timber are the daily needs, which are supplied from the forest. Hence the opulence of the local community is interlinked with natural resources and their livelihoods.

4.4 History of Bamdibhir Community Forest

History of Bamdibhir CF goes back to early 1980s, when the area presently covered by the forest was completely naked because of a landslide in Jilikh area. The forest area was completely destroyed, arable land was covered by debris, soil loss was increased day by day and the whole area became barren. People were also migrated from the area to look for a safe habitat. People were deprived from using of forest products. People had to make a distance walk to get fodder, fuel wood, timber and other forest products.

The conservation of the forest was started in the initiation of Fewalake Watershed Management Project in 1980. Plantation activities were started and the other means of conservation were also applied. For the first time, the community people had also realized the importance of the conservation of forest to ease their lives and livelihoods. When the Phewalake Watershed Management Project was started, the conservation works were started in participation with the local communities. The forest area was fenced by gabion wires and the human activities were also managed in the area.

The forest then was handed over to the community as community forest in 1993. The forest covers 48.5 ha. of land with varieties of frees such as Chilaune, Katus, Mauwa, Chanp, Painyu etc. . After the establishment of CF, CFUG took various initiatives to conserve and

utilize the forest. The users had a challenge to bring the forest in previous conditions in one hand and had to fulfill their daily forest needs on the other hand. The constitution of the

CFUG and the action plan guided users to move ahead with conservation motives. The users started to plant bamboos, coffee plants, and broom

grass inside the forest. Natural forest was gradually grown up once the conservation activities were progressively carried out. It is the community participation which ensured the restoration of forest. The photographs show how a deserted area was transformed in to a dense forest by the initiative of local people.
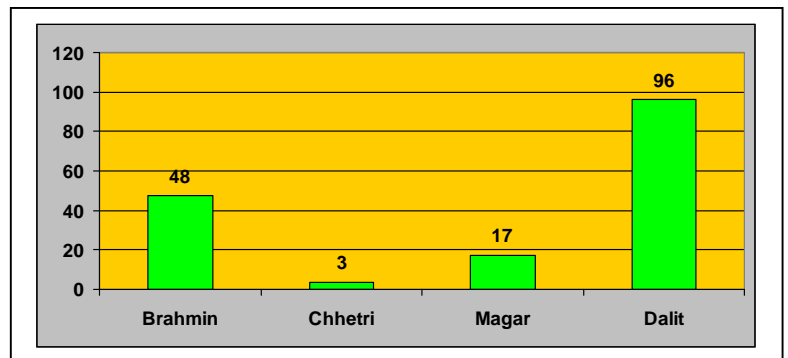
4.5 Composition of CFUG

Bamdibhir Community Forest covers Ward no. 3, 5 and 6 of Chapakot VDC. Altogether 164 households are depending on the forest. The composition of UG is as follow:

Table 5 : Caste/ethnic composition of CFUG   Graph 3: Caste/ethnic composition of CFUG

S.N	Caste	No of Household	% of Household
1	Brahmin	48	29%
2	Chhetri	3	2%
3	Magar	17	10%
4	Dalit	96	59%
Total		**164**	**100%**

Source: CFUG record book

Majority of the users of this community forest are from disadvantaged group (Dalit). They consist 96 (59%) households out of 164. Likewise, Brahmin are in the second position (29%) and the Magars in the third (10%). A small number (3 households) is from chhetri community. The following graph shows the proportion of the composition of UG.

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Graph 4: Distribution of Respondents by Caste/ ethnicity
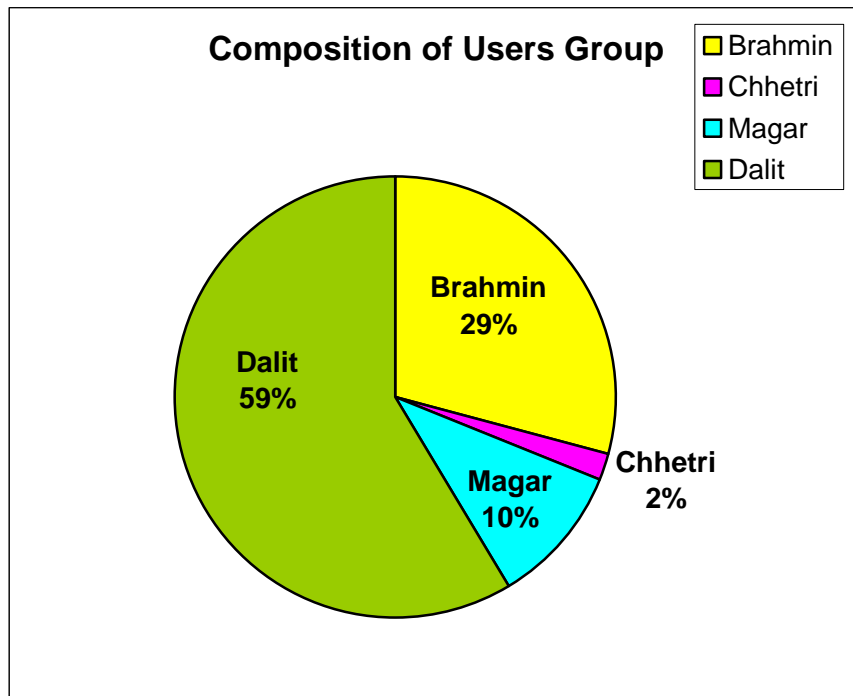
The chart shows the proportion of the composition of users group of the community forest. Majority of the users are from Dalit community (59%) followed by the Brahmin (29%).

4.6 Characteristics of the Respondents

The community forest is managed by a group of 11 members as executive committee. Of the 11 members, 5 are from Brahmin community followed by 3 Dalits. The following tables show the composition of the executive committee.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents/ Users' Committee by caste/ethnicity

S.N	Caste	No of member	Percentage
1	Brahmin	5	45%
2	Chhetri	1	9%
3	Magar	2	18%
4	Dalit	3	27%
	Total	**11**	**100%**

Source: CFUG record book

Table 7: Composition of respondents/ Users' Committee by gender

Male	6	55%
Female	5	45%
Total	11	100%

The following table shows the comparative analysis of the composition of UG by caste/ethnicity and their representation in the executive committee.

Table 8: Composition of UG and representation in Users' Committee by caste

S.N	Caste	Composition of UG		Representation in Users Committee	
		No of Household	% of Household	No. of Members	Percentage
1	Brahmin	48	29%	5	45%
2	Chhetri	3	2%	1	9%
3	Magar	17	10%	2	18%
4	Dalit	96	59%	3	27%
	Total	164	100%	11	100%

Source: CFUG record book

The table shows that the representation of Dalit in the decision making is lower than their presence in the Ward. The Dalits in the users group are 59% whereas they are only 27% in the executive committee. Similarly, 29% percent Brahmin represent 45% in the decision making and 2% chhetris represent 9% in the committee.

Five randomly selected UG members were also interviewed as key informants interview. Out of five UG members, 3 were women. Majority of the women members were selected for interview since women are the one who most rely on forest and are affected the most. The UG members were interviewed how they perceive participation and whether their participation in different stages of decision making was meaningful.

The interview was carried out with the committee members individually as well as in a group. Focus group discussion was carried out in committee meetings. Key informants interview was taken as a source of validating information provided by the committee members. Information received from both individual semi-structured interview and the focus group discussion were triangulated each other to reach into the conclusion.

CHAPTER – V
RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Spontaneous participation of the community people in development works in general and the forests conservation in particular is closely linked with their livelihoods pattern. There are three main livelihood patterns in the mid hills. For most households agriculture is the primary livelihood activity, based on the ownership of small terraces of irrigated and / or non-irrigated farmland. Middle-class households commonly have land holdings and cattle with modest private tree resources and grazing land. They tend to be heavily dependent on inputs to their farming systems from common forestland. Poorer and landless households depend on non land based activities such as laboring, artisanal work and NTFP collection.

The poorer households depend on forest more than the richer ones. Richer households may supplement farming with incomes from local businesses or service employment. They commonly have irrigated as well as non-irrigated land holdings; extensive on farm tree resources, grazing; land private forest; and a substantial number of livestock. The main crops on irrigated land are rice and wheat, and on non-irrigated land, maize and other cereals and lentils.

Due to the limited size of land-holdings, hill agriculture systems depend on interdependence between arable land, livestock and forest components. Broadleaf forests, particularly Katus-Chilaune, supply the most useful range of products for agriculture, such as fuel wood, fodder, leaf litter, foliage, small poles and fence-sticks. In addition to agricultural needs, virtually all households depend on forests for a variety of domestic needs such as fuel and construction material. Furthermore, forests support certain rural livelihoods, e.g. as a source of charcoal for blacksmiths, fodder for livestock, berries for alcohol distilling, bamboos for local handicrafts such as Doko, Dalo, Namlo, Mandro, Bhakari etc. and medicinal plants.

The research carried out in Bamdibhir Community Forest shows that the community forest has become an important means to increase natural, social, human, financial, and to some extent the physical capital of community forest users of the study area.

5.1 Natural Capital

Community forests handed over to community are natural capitals. Evidences show that there are positive changes in both forest condition and the availability of forest products, with a concurrent reduction in the time spent for collecting forest products. As the history shows, the CF was not only protected but also UGs had planted different kinds of seedlings to protect their settlement from landslide in one hand and provide forest products to the users on the other hand. It has not only conserved the soil and protected the landslide but also expanded the forest resources with easy access and benefit to the forest products. Bamdibhir CFUG has protected 48.5 ha of forests, where different kinds of income generating species such as, broom grass, coffee, bamboo etc. are also planted.

5.2 Social Capital

It is reported that the community forestry process has increased social cohesion, which has enhanced social capital of those who have been powerless, left in isolation and excluded from mainstream social and political processes. The committee members and the users proudly say that 164 households are working jointly for their shared benefits; their networks have been strengthened, social unity has been increased and solidarity among the members has enhanced. Annual general meeting of users and decision on consensus, yearly plan for the protection and utilization of forest products, collection of fuel wood and leaf litter jointly are other examples of enhanced social capital. Moreover, participation of users in trail improvement, drinking water construction, school repair, bridge construction have strengthened the social unity and network of the users.

5.3 Human Capital

The committee members and the general users have acquired a number of trainings and participated in various workshops and exposure visits organized by number of governmental and n non-governmental organizations. It has increased knowledge and skill related to forest management and individual livelihoods. The training has been very much useful in leadership development, organizational management, conflict management, program planning etc. As of January 2014, more than 200 users/committee members have acquired different kinds of trainings and participated in various workshops and seminars. These have contributed in human capital development among the users.

5.4 Financial Capital

Fund generated from the sale of forest products, levies and outside grants are the sources of financial capital of the CFUG. As of January 2014, there is more than 3 lakhs as CF fund. This amount is invested in community development activities as well as management of CF. The users have established low interest credit scheme which has directly supported to poorer households.

5.5 Physical Capital

CFUG has carried out many community development activities on its own. Construction of village trails; support in school building construction, construction of fence, maintenance of drinking water are some of the good examples of physical capital created through Bamdibhir Community Forest.

Table 8: Activities carried out and amount invested to improve physical capital by Bamdibhir CF

S.N	Physical activities	Amount invested
1	Trail road improvement	NRs. 4,000.00
2	Bridge construction	NRs. 31,500.00
3	Drinking water construction (2 bags of cement)	NRs. 1,200.00 (equivalent)
4	School building maintenance (wood)	NRs. 1,500.00 (equivalent)
5	Child care center (8 benches)	NRs. 16,000.00 (equivalent)

Source: CFUG Record Book

Table 8 shows that CF has become a sustainable source of community development at local level.

5.6 Issues and Challenges in Community Forestry

Despite achievements and contribution mentioned above that community forestry has made in general, there are many unresolved issues and challenges in all areas of capital as well as governance. Although CFUG has been successful in terms of their institutional capacity to get people organized and form capital at group level, the forest dependent poorer households are the ones who are most deprived of such common resources. While trends towards resource degradation have been arrested and in many cases forest cover is reported to be improved, the livelihoods of the local forest dependent communities, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, have not improved as expected.

Furthermore, one of the major challenges is the lack of sufficient financial capital to support the poorest forest users that relates to low social capital in FUGs, as well as FUG institutional arrangements and decision-making processes that reinforce those trends. The poorest are the ones who are suffered the most since they cannot afford to participate; can hardly speak; are rarely heard; and hardly benefit from community forestry. Given the unequal social structure in terms of class and caste, there is unequal access to decision-making, to opportunities, and to contribute to and benefit from the CF. Although, marginalized people have also participated in CF management; their meaningful participation is still under the question. As a result, poor peoples' access to resources has been still under scrutiny, with consequent negative impacts on their livelihoods.

It has been increasingly recognized that inequitable distribution of benefits, combined with uneven sense of ownership and motivation in the FUGs, and lack of clear options, as well as technical knowledge (and some policy implementation constraints) have resulted in relatively 'passive' managements of forests. Leadership positions on community forest user groups and among other stakeholders are typically captured by power elites, and their management systems are somewhat rigid and top-down. This also reflects a lack of human capital in terms of knowledge and skills (and incentives) to undertake successful participatory decision-making in highly heterogeneous environments, as well as to generate and apply necessary forestry and institutional knowledge.

5.7 Major Findings of the Study

The interview carried out with the users and the committee members, observation of the CF, review of the reports and other documents of CFUG have reveled following findings:

5.7.1 Forests conservation and community development

The CFUG has carried out various activities both for the improvement of the forest condition as well as to fulfill basic forest needs of the users. To improve the forest condition, it has constructed a gabion fence to protect seedlings from cattle grazing. Seedlings such as bamboo and some cash crops such as broom grass, coffee, cardamom are planted. The users regularly involve in thinning and pruning and cleaning.

The fund generated from CF is used for various community development activities. It has mainly invested in school support, income generation of poor households, trail road

improvement, drinking water and health care support to deprived families. For income generation, the money is mobilized within the CFUG at low interest rate. The committee identifies the poor household to be supported. The households are identified as rich, medium and poor category by means of wellbeing (wealth) ranking and separated as "Ka", "Kha" and "Ga" group. Those who fall on group "Ga" will have priority to use the fund. The interest rate is fixed at 15% per annum.

5.7.2 Fund collection

CF collects fund from various sources. Selling of bamboo, coffee, broom, timber, amount received from new member as entrant fee and punishment fee are the major sources of income. Besides, interest received from investment is another permanent source of group fund. Recently, the Hariyo Ban programme has provided approximately NRs. 2,00,000.00 to protect the forests.

5.7.3 Benefits received from CF

The committee members and the users say that the CF has provided with significant benefits to the users; greatly supporting in the daily needs. The benefit received form the forest is providing fodder, firewood and timber for the users. The users are provided fodder, leaf litter and firewood free of cost. Timber is provided at a cheap price. There are several indirect benefits to the users from the forest. The users loudly say that after the restoration of the forest, water sources are increased, soil erosion is controlled and the whole settlement has become safer. In addition to that, the forest has significantly helped in maintaining ecosystem and bio-diversity. As the forest is closer from Phewa Lake and many migrated birds come to this area every year, the forest has become an important habitat for them. Wild animals like tiger, deer, squirrel, and jackal are increasing.

5.7.4 Respondents' involvement in planning and decision making

While asked with the committee members, women and men, Dalit and Janajatis individually, they proudly say that they do actively involve in planning and decision making process of the CF. The planning is carried out mainly in an annual general convention of the users. Committee members prepare a plan for the year and present in the meeting of the users. The general convention then finalizes the plan and gives mandate to the committee to execute.

Besides such meeting, the committee members meet once in every month as their regular meeting and decide on the urgent issues. The women members say that their voices are also equally heard and responded. The following graphs show the result of interview with the committee members. One interesting thing is that the CF management is dominated by women, their involvement both in conservation and planning and decision making is prominent.
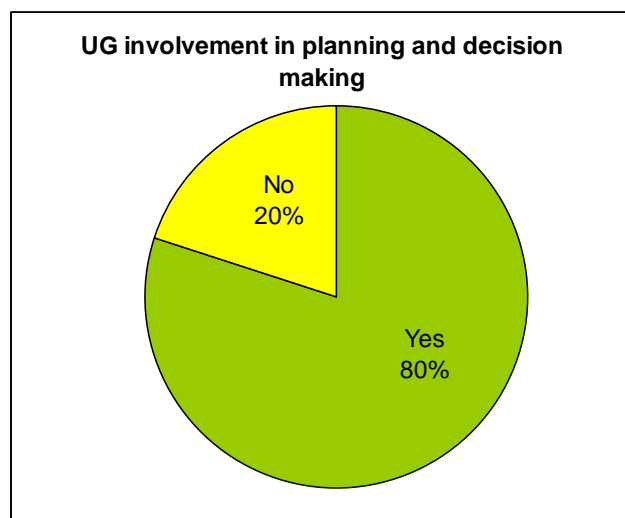
Graph 5 and 6: Committee members' involvement in planning and decision making
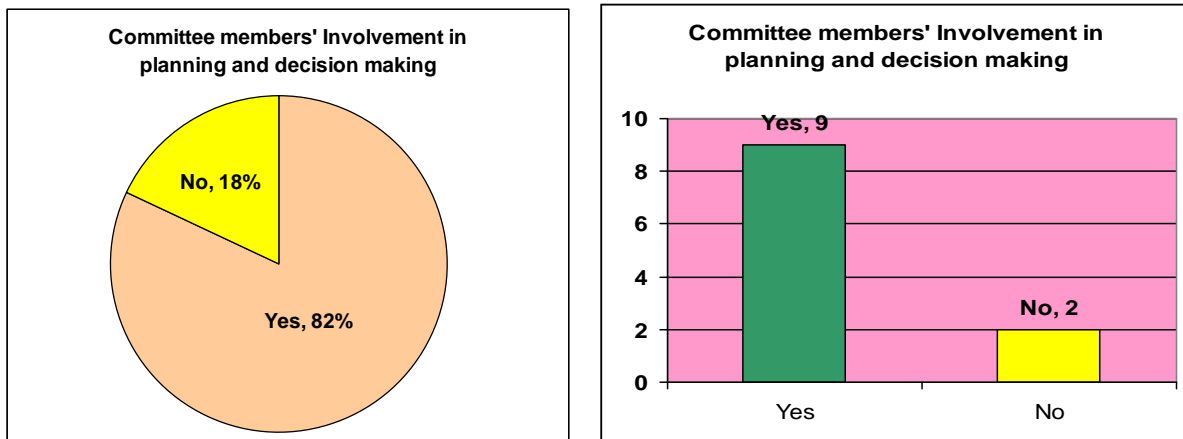
The roles of the members are clearly identified in their constitution. The members know and understand their individual and group roles and act accordingly. While asked about the understanding of the committee members on forest act and regulations, they say that they are provided trainings from DFO on the rules and regulations of the CF and the role of CFUG.

The involvement of CFUG on planning and decision making is also encouraging. Out of five members asked about their involvement in planning and decision making, 4 members said that they involved in this process. However, one member said that he has not involved/ or does not know about it. The graph 7 shows that 80% of the UGs interviewed responded as "yes" and only the 20% (one member) said that he has not involved in planning and decision making process of Bamdibhir Community Forest management.

Graph 7 : UG members' involvement in planning and decision making

5.7.5 Respondents' participation in implementation and monitoring

The committee members and the users say that they univocally involve in implementing CF activities. Mainly, users involve in thinning and pruning works, cleaning, fence repair, plantation etc. Monitoring, they understand is taking care of the forest. The members turn by turn guard the forest to protect. While asked whether the users who have small landholding with fewer or no cattle complain about the equal participation in implementation and monitoring, they say that they do not have any objection on it as they are also making a living through the forest. For those who are landless and reside at the lower part of the forest are also contributing equally as they understand that the forest has protected their habitat and getting benefits in terms of firewood, timber and other daily needs.

5.7.6 Respondents' participation in evaluation

While asked about the involvement of committee members in evaluation, they say that they are responsible individually as well as collectively to evaluate the activities carried out by CFUG. Evaluation, they understand in their context is when the committee members receive request of timber from users, they visit user's house to see whether he/she really need it. Once they are confirmed, then they make a decision.

The evaluation, they understand further is that their plan and progresses are reviewed in yearly general meeting. Their policies and programmes are reviewed and further plans are prepared for improvement. UG members also do participate in evaluation by involving in planning and review meeting, daily *heralo* (forest guarder) and annual general meeting.

5.7.7 Benefit sharing from CF activities

Benefits received from the forest are shared equally to the users. According to the committee members and the key informants, no discrimination is made while distributing benefits on the basis of economic status, caste and ethnicity. Rather CF fund is mobilized to the poorest of the poor. Fodder, litter, firewood are distributed free of cost. Timber is distributed based on the demand. The rate is applied equally and the quantity proportionately.

5.7.8 Role of CF in users' livelihood

The CF has significantly contributed to the livelihoods of the users. Some entrepreneurs (at least three users) have made their living through the forest by making bamboo materials. The CFUG provides a small bamboo at Rs. 10 and a bigger one at Rs. 50, which is more than half

as compared to the price set for non users. While asked with these entrepreneurs, they say that they have been making thousands of rupees out of these bamboos.

Livestock and farming are interrelated in hills. Fodder for the livestock is provided from the forest. Leaf litter is used for manure. Water sources are the basics for users which have spiral role in the lives. Timber is available at cheap price, if not; the users had to spend a huge amount of money in the market.

Jung Bahadur Rana Magar, 59, was migrated from Chapakot VDC Ward no. 3 in to Bamdi some 20 years ago for the sake of better life. As Bamdi Area was totally deserted by the landslide some 35 years ago, people from different parts of the VDC as well as surrounding VDCs started to migrate in this area once the landslide was controlled. Many people migrated as sukumbasis (landless people), some others with marginal land. Mr. Rana had no other sources of income except seasonal labour when he settled down at Bamdi. When bamboo plants grew inside the Bamdibhir CF, he decided to utilize them for his livelihood. He then approached to the forest users committee and proposed his plan. The CF committee decided to provide him bamboo at relatively cheaper rate. He then started making different kinds of bamboo crafts such as rack, bamboo temple, arm chair, showcase, sofa, table etc. Mr. Rana established a small table saw to support his work. He is now making around Nrs.15000 per month as net income. While asked about the changes due to this business in his living he says, "thanks to the CF which changed my life. I can now easily earn two breads for my family, can meet subsistence needs and live a decent life".

Mr. Rana has been able to save a little amount out of his earning and deposited it in to a local cooperative. His skills have been transferred to his family members as they do also support in his daily work. While asked about the market, he says that businessmen from Pokhara city approach to him and collect his products. Mr. Rana is proud of his business and says, "I am getting older and can not work hard. This has been a kind of "pension" for my life and my family as I can stay at home, work in my convenience with my family members and earn something to make a living". Mr. Rana also suggests to young ones and unemployed local people that resources are there and they can adopt an alternative livelihood for a better life.

Mr. Rana is also actively involved in forest conservation. He states that the local people have great role in promoting sustainable local development as they are the primary users. So far as the forest management is concerned, he opines that unless the local people get involved both in conservation and utilization of local forests, its proper management can not be expected. He further says, "we have to save our forests for our generations too". This case study reveals that Bamdibhir CF has become one of the models in participatory resource management, which has provided opportunities to live a better life for users.

5.7.9 Governance system of CF

The CF has monthly meeting system. The members discuss about the issues related to the forest and of the users. To maintain the transparency, there is general convention of the users annually. The CFUG plan is prepared in close consultation with the users. Committee members are individually and collectively accountable to the users. The committee is inclusive. Women involvement in CF management is remarkable.

The record keeping system of CF has been established. Income and expenditures are recorded in a separate account book. Bank account is opened and it follows the banking transaction. Income and expenditure of the CFUG is audited by a registered auditor annually. The audit report is provided to the concerned stakeholders. Minutes of CF committee meetings, annual general convention and others are securely kept. The committee members change in every two year. The general convention selects the committee members. The public auditing is organized to ensure the transparency of CFUG.

A system of reward and punishment is established. Inactive members are changed on consensus. CFUG has established a governing rule. Constitution of CFUG is the prime rule which is followed by the users. The committee has prepared some guiding rules to make the committee members and the users accountable and responsive.

5.7.10 Constraints of people participation in rural development

Committee members and the users say that because of the migration of young ones into the cities and in abroad, productive manpower is dramatically reduced in the villages and this has been a major problem in managing community development activities including forest management. The other problem of involving people in managing forest is that people have to spend majority of their time to manage their daily needs, and as a result they have little time to participate in community affairs. However, the users agree that the people participation changed the face of Bamdibhir by conserving forest and other forest resources.

Involvement of women in rural development is constrained by their involvement in household activities. Although this is a general trend in all over the country, the users, however, say that Bamdibhir CF is managed mainly by women. It seems that the people who are suffered more take charge of eliminating such problems. Women have to depend more on the forest products especially in fodder, firewood, leaf litter and water.

The status of occupational caste (OC) people in general is low as compared to other ethnic groups in Nepal. This situation does not exactly fit in this Community Forestry. Although, the social status is still discriminated, economically they are equal or more opulent than other general users. The reason behind that is that the young ones from OC families are in abroad. The users say that the participation of OC group is equal in conserving CF and its management.

Interview with the committee members and general users, observation of the forest, study of the history of the forest and its management practices and current management system depict that the CF has become one of the models in the field of participatory forest management in Nepal. While talking about the changes, members say that it was a "desert" before starting conservation work in early 1980s. Involvement of local people in conservation activity since them gradually improved the status of the forest and now it is so dense that people have no any fear of landslide; and daily needs of hundreds of users are fulfilled. It shows that the ownership feeling of the community really counts for development.

While asked with the key informants about the role of committee members in taking initiative of managing forest, they are satisfied with their overall behaviour. They say that the users have right to change any member of the committee if someone does not work appropriately. Users are also satisfied with the impartial behaviour and decision of the committee members. The users believe that Bamdibhir is only the alternative to support their daily lives.

While asking about the role of general users in decision making and planning, they refer to the annual general meeting of the users to provide their comments, suggestions and inputs. Further, they can attend monthly meeting of the committee and express their concerns. For development works, the committee takes charge of informing users. The users then equally participate in any activity planned by the committee. Someone who denies participating is punished as their set rule.

It seems that there is no conflict between the committee members and the general users in terms of management and utilization of forest. The information provided by the committee members in terms of planning, decision making, benefit sharing and conservation works does not contradict each other. It could be concluded that there is a kind of good harmony among the users, whether they are in the status of committee member or as general user.

CHAPTER –VI
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Summary

Community forestry is a successful participatory approach for forest conservation and management in Nepal. In the mid hills of Nepal, community forestry programs have played an important role in improving forest condition by adopting better forest protection and management measures. Through forest management, users are generating incomes that are used in community development activities. Forest products such as, tree and grass fodder, fuel wood and timber etc. are used to meet user's subsistence needs. Group incomes are also raised from firewood, timber, fines, penalties and donations from various organizations. Forest user groups are using this amount to undertake community development activities such as drinking water, trail improvement, school building construction, saving and credit and so on.

In community forests, free access to collect forest products has been restricted in order to improve the forest condition. The result of this practice is a decrease of forest product supply, including tree and grass fodder from the community forest. It has directly affected poorer households keeping livestock. Forest resources are very important for them in maintaining their livestock population needed for generating income for survival, as they have small landholdings that are not sufficient to grow tree and grass fodder to support their livestock.

Poverty is rampant everywhere in developing countries like Nepal. In this context, participation needs to be viewed as a means to uplift poor and marginalized people from the vicious circle of poverty that they are trapped in so that every such citizen can think of and live a life with dignity. Otherwise, it will be a difficult task for anyone to answer a question like why are we talking of participation and why is it for?

Community forestry activities also increase the contributory burden of poorer households for forest protection and management. As a user, every household, whether rich or poor pays an equal amount for fodder and fuel wood, timber and other forest products.

Finally, the community forestry program has encouraged community development work that demands compulsory labour contribution and has had a direct effect on poorer households in generating daily income for livelihood because they have to engage in community development activities rather than working as casual laborers to generate income.

Community forestry is the main strategy in Nepal's forestry sector policy. Over the past more than 25 years tremendous shifts in policy and legislation have occurred to empower users as managers of forests. Despite encouraging progress in the handover of national forests to communities, the level to which this has taken place has not been sufficient to meet the national need. The programme is successful in increasing the planting of degraded sites, in forming local level institutions for resource management, in increasing the biodiversity, in improving the supply of forest products to farmers and in improving the environmental situation in the hills of Nepal. In addition, community development works in rural areas of the country have begun with funds generated through the voluntary involvement of CFUGs in the management of forest resources.

However, there are insufficient numbers of field staff available with the DFO to deliver a quality extension services to support improved CF practices. An extensive review of the process and organizations involved to develop future strategies is required, not only to complete the handover process in an acceptable timeframe, but also to introduce production-oriented forest management system in CF. Future challenges include maintaining people's participation with increased CFUGs funds, the maturity of the programme and variable sizes of forests. The continuous reform of existing policies to address present challenges is imperative in order to establish CF as a policy that works for the poorer and weaker section of Nepalese society.

FUGs have become established local institutions. Local people are found to be generally very satisfied with the result of CF and there is widespread local agreement on the basic principles of community forestry. It is the overwhelming finding of this study that the FUG is diligently protecting forest and regulating product extraction. The previous trend of widespread forest degradation has generally been reversed and communities are beginning to benefit from improved forest product flows, as well as wider community development. Although many of the FUGs have been hesitant to mobilize their funds for non-forest related activities, the study

has reveled that the CF has started community development activities, such as credit facilities, trail improvement, drinking water source protection and support to schools.

The Self-Governance Act (1998) in Nepal has sought to coordinate development planning and implementation at District Development Committee (DDC) and Village Development Committee (VDC) level. However, line agencies continue to establish 'proprietary' user groups for each different function (agriculture, livestock, watershed management, etc.) below ward level, leading to a 'disintegration' of development planning at the grassroots. It is not unusual for the chairperson of one group to also be chairperson of other group. Coordination and integration is now needed at the grassroots level so that local people can 'own' and manage their own development agenda. Since it is now clear that FUG will remain as grassroots institutions for local resource management below the VDC and ward level, they represent a key opportunity for coordinating grassroots local development planning and implementation across line agencies. At least, the FUG should start coordinating their planning processes and activities with Ward and VDC.

The study of Bamdibhir CF further revealed some facts as below:
1. Local people can be the most effective managers of forests, given the right institutional arrangements and conditions. The 'right institutional conditions' for successful forest management are:
• Participation based on an authentic sense of ownership. The legal independence of FUGs has helped this, although sometimes the DFO's rejection of an FUG's proposed changes to the Constitution and Operational Plan can give users the sense that the forest really belongs to the DFO.
• Clear formation procedures. The best performing FUGs are often those, which have had a good start, in terms of identification of actual forest users, awareness raising, inclusive decision-making, and clear definition of forest boundaries.

2. FUGs can effectively utilize the energies of members through robust and inclusive planning and decision-making processes. Community forestry has been criticized as a 'poor policy for poor people'. But the study has found that it can be a very "empowering policy for poor people". Users follow a micro-level action planning process, based on discussions at tole-level and involving tole-representatives in the FUG committee. This process enables

them to plan activities on a year by year basis and update their activity plans as needs and opportunities change.

3. Community forestry has beneficial impact on household livelihoods. FUGs are improving users' livelihoods not only through forest management, but also through wider community development activities. Among the various benefits are improved flows of forest products on a sustainable basis, improved social capital, improvement in community infrastructure such as schools and roads, and livelihood opportunities such as NTFP collection and credit facilities. The study has revealed that some of the members have been able to make their living through bamboo products.

4. FUG level decision-making processes are crucial to determining the impact of community forestry. Poorer households are benefiting from the outputs of the CF as they are provided with the first priority in utilizing the fund as credit.

6.2 Conclusion

This study was carried out with 3 specific objectives: (1) To critically examine people participation for Bamdibhir CF management; (2) To critically analyze the role of Bamdibhir CFUG in resource management and livelihoods improvement of local people ; and (3) To analyze the socio-economic and environmental benefits to local people through Bamdibhir CFUG. The study suggests that the Bamdibhir CF has significantly contributed in livelihoods improvement of the users by allowing various opportunities. As case study suggests, the Bamdibhir CF has become one of the prominent sources of livelihoods for CFUG members. It has further enhanced existing livelihoods by providing basic needs such as, fodder, leaf litter, firewood, timber etc.

Similarly, it has contributed to uplift the socio-economic conditions of women, poor and marginalized communities. As majority of the users of this CF are from Dalit community, their social status has been improved by equally involving in planning, decision making, implementation, monitoring and review of CF activities. There are several direct benefits to Dalits and women from saving and credit program implemented through CF fund.

The condition of Bamdibhir CF now, as reported by the respondents, is the outcome of the meaningful participation of users in forest conservation. Firstly, the users involved to

improve/restore the forest condition. As the forest developed, the users started to utilize it. Hence, It could be argued that people are the one who can conserve forest on their own provided that they are given the right of conservation and utilization. It further reiterates on the significance of bottom up approaches in conservation and development.

6.3 Recommendations

The community forest has made a tremendous progress both in terms of conservation of natural resources, more importantly forest resources and its utilization by providing firewood, timber, litter, fodder and other forest products. However, as the fund of the CF is increasing day by day and the number of users are also increasing in an alarming rate (through migration); the CF should take further initiatives mainly in the following areas:

) The regular meeting of the users committee is one the precondition for the institutionalization of CFUG. It is important to regularly monitor the forest activities, hear voice and grievances of the users, discourage malpractices, and establish law and order situation. The regular meeting gives a forum to establish good network and relation with other stakeholders as well.

) The record keeping system of the CFUG should be improved as transparency is one of the key factors in improving forest governance. Records of both income and expenditure as well as the record of benefits from the forest should be kept intact. The record of the meetings and its decisions should be kept clearly in the minute.

) The forest product utilization and forest conservation plan should be prepared every year. This kind of plan should be more participatory, with active and wider participation of the users. Such plan is precondition for the sustainability of the forest and equitable distribution of the benefits.

) Poor, marginalized and disadvantaged groups and households facing vulnerable situations should be given special consideration in utilization of the forest products.

) The balance between conservation efforts and the utilization practices should be maintained carefully. As the forest has been able to restore the landslide, been able to provide basic forest needs to the users, and has become a model of forest management, both the users and the users' committee should ensure that the forest would be handed over to the coming generations in good condition.

) The Fund collected from CF should be utilized to reducing poverty with saving credit like activities. The CF should be a permanent source of the users for their self-development.

⟩ To improve the governance situation by making CFUG activities more transparent, public auditing of CF should be organized once a year where overall status of the forest including income and expenditures should be disclosed among the users.

⟩ The users' committee should gradually start preparing a medium term plan of conservation and utilization of forest. This kind of plans leads users to set up a vision and move forward to achieving it.

⟩ Institutional capacity is fundamental to sustainability. Therefore, the committee should take initiatives to develop the management and leadership capacity of the committee members as well as the users. For such action, a strong link with the stakeholders including DFO should be established.

⟩ Making committee members more accountable and responsive to the users as well as making all users accountable to the forest is important to improving the forest governance. The committee members as well as users should be aware of their roles and responsibilities of conservation of the forest. It helps to improve forest governance as a whole.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Interview Questionnaire

People Participation for Bamdibhir Community Forest Management in Chapakot, Kaski

Interview questionnaire for CFUG members
of

Bamdibhir Community Forest, Chapakot VDC ward no. 3, 5 and 6, Kaski

1. Respondent's personal detail

Respondent's Name	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation	Village/ tole	Position

Education		*Occupation*		*Sex*	
1.	*Illiterate*	*A.*	*Farming*	*F=*	*Female*
2.	*Primary*	*B.*	*Wage labor*	*M=*	*Male*
3.	*Lower Secondary*	*C.*	*Service:*		
4.	*SLC pass*	*D.*	*Other*		
5.	*Intermediate*				
6.	*Graduate*				
7.	*Masters*				

1.1 Caste/Ethnicity:Bramin/Chhetri/Gurung/Lower caste/other…

1.2 Landholding: _____ Ropani

2. What kind of activities are carried out by CF?

Name of activity	Check	Name of activity	Check
A. Group		I. Toilet	
B. Non Formal Education		J. Landslide	
C. Water source Protection		K. Trail Improvement	
D. Drinking water		L. Trail bridge	
E. Irrigation		M. Conservation pond	

F. Tree plantation		N. Training/Study tour	
G. Gully control		O. Income generation	
H. River bank protection		P. School support	
I. Saving Credit		Q. Others	

3. What type of benefit did you get from the above activities?

Name of Activity	Types of benefit

4. Respondent's involvement in CF management

4.1 Do you take part in the planning and decision-making of CF?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, what was your role, in general?

4.2 Participation in implementation and monitoring

Do you take part in implementation and monitoring?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Name of activities	Contribution in implementation			Involvement in monitoring		
	Cash only	Kind/ Physical only	Both cash & kind	Fully involved	Partially involved	Not involved

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4.3 Participation in evaluation

Do you take part in Evaluation of CF activities? [ ] Yes [ ] No

What is your opinion on people's participation in evaluation of the rural development programs?

4.4 Benefit Sharing

Have you benefited from CF activities? [ ] Yes [ ] No

What is your opinion on benefit sharing practices of your CF?

1	Benefits are equally shared to all peoples of wards and toles
2	Benefits are shared to the upper caste people, OC and DAG are excluded
3	Upper caste people are given first priority on benefits and OC and DAG less
4	Others

5. What is the governance system of your CF?

5.1 CF meeting:

5.2 Record keeping system:

5.3 Transparency mechanism:

5.4 Rule of law:

6. How do you collect fund for CF?

a.   d.

b.   e.

c.   f.

7. Constraints of people participation in CF management

7.1 What are the constraints of people participation in rural development activities t?

a.

b.

c.

7.2 What are the constraints for women participation in rural development activities?

a.

b.

c.

7.3 What are the constraints for Occupational Caste participation in rural development activities?

a.

b.

c.

8. Overall Observation

What is your overall observation on people's participation in rural development?

Interviewer: Date of interview:

Annex 2 : Namelist of Bamdibhir Community Forest Users Committee

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S.N	Name	Position
1	Gopal Prasad Parajuli	Chairperson
2	Durga Prasad Parajuli	Vice Chairperson
3	Brihaspati Parajuli	Secretary
4	Rekha Devkota	Treasurer
5	Man Buja B.K	Member
6	Bishnu Maya B.K	Member
7	Lal Bahadur Rana	Member
8	Laxmi B.K	Member
9	Udaya Bahadur Chhetri	Member
10	Tulasi Sapkota	Member
11	Min Bahadur B.K	Member