

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Women are the active users and have the primary responsibilities to collect forest product in agriculture-based society. The collection of the firewood for cooking, leaf litter for the cattle and the compost fertilizer and fodder (daura ghas) is the major responsibilities of the women (Molnar, 1992).

It has not made access to the poor women, lower caste women and women of the disadvantaged group like Tharus of the community(WG-CIFM, 2002). Community forestry in Nepal has come a long way since it was introduced. Nepal was one of the first Asian countries to introduce the community forestry program to overcome the environmental problems (Bird, 2000).

Community forest management policy was introduced in Nepal in 1978. As government failure on forest protection then the concept of community forest management was came to exist. This policy made the people authorized of them management of the forest near of their community under the community level organization.Later on the provision has been made to form a separate independent group of the forest users to manage the forest as the Community Forest User Group (CFUG), which is an autonomous, self-governing organization by the policy level and responsible for the preparing their own constitution and operational plan to run the programs as their own wishes (WG-CIFM, 2002).

Community Forest (CF) is defined as a forest handed over by government to local peoples for control, management and utilization. “Community forestry is a village-level forestry activity, decided on collectively and implemented on communal land, where local populations participate in the planning, establishing, managing and harvesting of forest crops, and so receive a major proportion of the socio-economic and ecological benefits from the forests” (Martel & Whyte, 1992).

The female role in forest is necessary, despite the fact that women are still largely under-represented at all institutional levels in Nepal, forestry is now the sector where the presence of women in key positions is highest (Pokharel et al., 2008). The attention

towards female social inclusion and empowerment in Nepal increased substantially in recent years at different levels within society and in particular in the forestry sector as testified by the recent Gender Equality and Social Inclusion strategy (Pradhan, 2010)

Considering the multilateral significance of community forest (e.g. subsistence ecological balance etc) and vital role of Tharu women in CF management, this research has been conducted to address some common issues in these regards. The research is related to the case study of Kumroj Community Forest User Group, which lies in ward no 3, 4 and 8 of Kumroj VDC in Chitwan district. This study focuses on the participation level of Tharu women to find out the role of the women in community forest management.

1.2 Statement of the Research questions

Based upon above-mentioned general background, this study occurred to answer the following questions:

-) What are the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the Tharu women of Kumroj Community Forest?
-) How far Tharu women users understand the CF management?
-) What is the condition of forest after the involvement of the Tharu women?
-) Are the Tharu women empowering and participating themselves in various activities and programmes held by community forests ?
-) Do Tharu women have different decision making role in women –CFUGs?If yes,How far the decisions made by the tharu-women have been implemented?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to find out Tharu women's participation in community forest management in Kumroj Community Forest User Group(CFUG). The specific objectives of the study are;

-) To find out the level of Tharu women's participation in Community Forest (CF) activities through CFUG's activities.
-) To determine Tharu women's participation in decision making process of CFUG.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Women can play vital role in the protection and management of forest resources, which ultimately leads to the national development of the country. In the Nepalese context, rural women are the most frequent users of the forest resources. Therefore, their involvement and contribution in the CF management process need to be identified and incorporated in to the CF management policies and strategies. Different development agencies are paying focus on Tharu women's participation in Forest Resources Management. This study is useful for identifying the strength and weakness of women's mobilization and management practices of local societies and for developing plan for future course. That is why, this study will concerns whether there is actual participation of Tharu women or not in community forest management.

This research basically studies the socio-economic status of the Tharu community of the study area. Under this circumstance, caste, religion, demography, literacy, land-holding size, livestock raising, occupation, income and expenditure, food sufficiency etc have been discussed in detail. Likewise, it will explains community forestry related studies with Tharu women that belongs peoples' perception, resources collection, decision making process, condition of CF after Tharu women's involvement and hindering factors of Tharu women's empowerment and participation in CF. Similarly, it also explains the different dimensions of women's participation in CF management. Within this, it was only focused Tharu women's empowerment and participation in CF management, collection activities, monitoring and evaluation processes.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The status and position of women is still sub-ordinate due to the patriarchal socio-cultural structure of the society. Existing socio-cultural and economic characteristics of societies like caste system, marital status, occupational condition, level of education, access to information etc are the determining factors to rise or restrict the status/ position of women in society. With reference to these socio-economic variables, a conceptual framework is being designed to study the effect of these variables in the participation of Tharu women in CF management in the study area.

Two sets of variables, dependent and independent, was used to study the Tharu women's participation position in CF management. The first set consisting of biological and social

factors like age, sex, gender, family pattern; economic factors like occupation, income sources and institutional sources like policies, roles etc. On the basis of these factors, the effect on dependent variable i.e. Tharu women's participation in CF management has been studied.

1.6 Operational Definition of the Variables

Variables are used to identify the socio-economic factors that affect the Tharu women's role in community forestry. Some of the variables that has been used are single dimensional and hence are not necessary to define, where as some variables are multidimensional and are defined as below:

-) Family Type: Composition of the family of the respondent(Tharu).
-) Education: Level of education of the respondent (Tharu)
-) Gender Disparity: Unfair or prejudiced behavior towards Tharu women by men,
-) Caste/Ethnic composition: The major caste/ethnic groups of the study area.
-) Occupation: Major work on which respondent depends on for livelihood.
-) Role in community: Major role or title in executive committee of CFUG
-) Economic Status: Total amount of property of the household
-) Income: Total earning of the household
-) Policy and practices: Policies and practices of the Government, Forest Committee and other agencies involved in the study area
-) Agencies: Agencies working in the study area (GO, NGOs, INGOs, Local agencies)

1.7 Organization of the Study

The **first chapter** 'Introduction provides the background, Statement of the Research questions, objectives, significance, conceptual framework and operational definition of the variables of the study. The **second chapter** is 'Literature Review' in which the previous studies, done by different persons both individually and institutionally has been reviewed with their major findings. Similarly different articles, books, journals and dissertations has been reviewed.

The third chapter deals with the 'Research Methodology'. In this chapter study area and rationale for selection, research design, sampling procedure, nature and sources of data, different data collection techniques and tools, limitations of the study are being described.

Fourth Chapter covers a socio-economic and cultural background of the study population. It includes demographic characteristics, caste/ethnic composition, age and sex wise distribution of the respondents, their educational, occupational and income status.

Fifth chapter carry information on 'Tharu Women's Participation in Community Forest Activities'. Tharu Women's participation in General Meeting and Executive Meeting of User Group, their involvement in resource collection, monitoring and evaluation, protection and distribution etc are described.

In last and **sixth chapter** summary , Conclusion and Recommendation' of the study is managed.

CHAPTER - TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community forest management policy was introduced in Nepal in 1978. As government failure on forest protection then the concept of community forest management was came to exist. This policy made the people authorized of them management of the forest near of their community under the community level organization. Later on the provision has been made to form a separate independent group of the forest users to manage the forest as the Community Forest User Group (CFUG), which is an autonomous, self-governing organization by the policy level and responsible for the preparing their own constitution and operational plan to run the programs as their own wishes (WG-CIFM, 2002).

Nepal was one of the first Asian countries to introduce the community forestry program to overcome the environmental problems (Bird, 2000).

2.1 Community Forestry as Common Property Resource

The common property is used to refer to a resource or a collective system for managing the resource. According to the Berker (1989) 'a class of resources for which exclusion is difficult and joint use involves subtract ability'. There was confusion related to the concept of common property resources. Common property of ten has been used to refer to the resources available to all and consequently not owned or managed by anyone and also to the situation where access is limited to a specific group that hold the right in common (Berker, 1989).

Community forestry or village forestry can be perceived as the control, management and use of forest resources by villagers. It seeks to increase the level of awareness of local people and to involve them actively in all aspects of forestry activities. Community forestry is perceived as "any form of forestry activities undertaken specifically and principally to provide communal benefits to the people living in the villages or small communities in the vicinity of the forest area which involves them directly in its management" (Fisher, 1991). The community forestry has been implemented in several countries including Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. In different countries it covers private planting (encouraging people to

plant trees in their own land) and/or community planting (planting and managing trees in public lands). Community forestry has been implemented in Nepal means growing trees on public and communal land as opposed to private farms (Gurung, 1992).

According to the Arnold (1992), the forest of the many region of the world have been used and managed as common property. People are depended on the forest's output, which are managed collectively by the user as a group. He as defined the concept of common property system as: "Resource, used by the particular group of the user (to the exclusion of the others) an institutional sets rules to govern rules and monitor and enforce the rules. Thus common property system functions only if the group is organized or can organize themselves."

2.2 Community Forestry in Nepal

Forests cover about 4 billion hectares, nearly 31 percent of the earth's land surface. The rate of deforestation has slowed down in recent years. From 1990 to 2000 the estimated net change in forest area was -8.3 million hectares while from 2000 to 2010 it was about - 5.2 million hectares per year . This reduction in forest depletion is attributed to large-scale planting of trees and forest protection programmes (FAO, 2010).

During the initial period of democracy (1951-61), the forests were nationalized (under the Private Forests Nationalization Act of 1957 and the Birta Abolition Act of 1959), partly to break the feudal power structures. These acts transferred most of the forest land to the state, under the control of the Department of Forest (DoF). The DoF lacked the capacity to assume management of mid-hills forests or to implement the strict protection-oriented terms of the 1961 Forest Act, and 1967 Forest Protection (Special Arrangement) Act. This led to a lack of effective regulation of forest product extraction. In many areas, especially those with strong local leadership, little change was initially felt(Gilmour, King and Hoblely, 1992).

Nepal Government's Forestry Department (DoF) staff gradually recognized shortcomings of the then prevailing exclusionary model of forest management. Bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank, pushed for reform of the forestry sector from the 1970s onwards. In the 1980's community forestry initiatives were promoted by the DoF and bilateral projects. This was initially within the structure of the prevailing

panchayat system; a fact that has a major negative effect on their development as many sections of the community saw them more as means of entrenching local elites than enabling real participatory management. The situation changed dramatically following the abolition of the *panchayats* after the 1990 revolution, since when a range of new approaches have been adopted (Baginski, *et al.* 1999).

The concept of community forestry is not new anymore, but there is a growing interest among policy makers, donors, and development practitioners to understand the extent to which community forestry contributes on economy of individual households and nation in general. Nepal's community forestry is a unique model of devolution in Asia and has experience of more than two decades. Therefore, it is time to assess the economic implication of community forestry in Nepal, for self learning and scaling up of good practices to other countries.

As a result of devolving managerial rights to user groups, the community forestry programme has had noteworthy achievements, including forest restoration, social inclusion and representation, improvement of community infrastructure, rural development, and contributions to poverty reduction. Barren lands, denuded hills and degraded forestlands have been converted into productive woodlands. Lost greenery is now restored. Forest management by communities has contributed to environmental improvement, although the total contribution has not been quantified. With improved forest conditions, the availability of forest products, local people's rights of access and the supply of forest products to poorer households have increased (Gautam et al, 2004).

The widely discussed underpinning assumption under which Nepal's community forestry program has been defined is the 'bottom-up' development approach. As Gilmour and Fisher (1991) have defined community forestry program of Nepal is a paradigm shift from top down to bottom up. Nepal's forestry change is a shift from the industrial forestry towards the Panchayat forest and Panchayat protect forest. The phrase was coined 'forest for local community development' to accept the peoples first and the tree second in forest management. This rhetoric was developed with the assumption that traditional professional forestry paradigm (industrial) forestry is the barriers to the establishment of genuine multidisciplinary approach, to develop the authority of the forest management to the community (Gilmour, King and Hobley, 1992). The traditional 'top-down' forestry paradigm was an ideology supporting the 'protection' of the forest where new paradigm

supports the effective sustainable management of the common forest resource for the conservation as well as for the use (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991).The community forestry development program in Nepal has been considered as an 'innovative' bottom-up paradigm, because it puts peoples at the centre of the forestry and makes everything else peripheral (Gilmour, King and Hobley, 1992).

According to Gilmour and Fisher (1991), this innovative bottom-up forestry paradigm includes:

-) By the policy, villagers are empowered to take decision about their forest resources.
-) Proper reorganization of the organizational power and capabilities of villagers.
-) Technical forestry to the social (community) forestry.
-) Only protection of the forest to the conservation and sustainable utilization of the forest.

2.2.1. Evolution of the Community Forest Management Policy

Rural Nepali economy is highly based on agriculture, although subsidiary occupations are government and private job, their main occupation is agriculture and livestock raising. Therefore the most important natural resource for them forest resource for various reasons (i.e. daily animal feeding, firewood for cooking and pole for making house) (Amatya and Shrestha, 2002). People have a certain relation with the forest and certain mechanism of the forest management based on particular environment and people's culture. Traditional, indigenous forest management have been practiced from several hundred years ago in Nepal (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991), which has been based on the practical experiences of the community dwellers that differs from community to

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) was prepared in 1988 and approved in 1989. It has the 25 years policy and planning framework. MPES has defined the concept of the community forestry user group as (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991) quotes "..... to entrust the user with the task of protecting and managing forests.....".In the Master Plan's socio-economic objectives, community forestry has been conceptualized for the subsistence needs' the CF program aims to develop and manage forest resource through the active participation of the individuals and communities to meet their basic needs.

Some features of the MPFS, 1988 are as follows (Bartlett, 1992; WGCIFM, 2002; Joshi and Pokharel, 1998):

- Accessible forest will be managed by empowering local community.
- Decentralization should be applied in the forest management.
- Satisfaction of the community's basic needs.
- Sustainable utilization of the forest resource.
- People's participation on decision making and sharing the benefit for the long-term forest management with the task of socio-economic growth of the people.
- Women and poor should be involved in the management of community forestry.

After the restoration of the democracy in 1990 the local communities got more empowered in every aspect. This made the peoples more interested to make their participation in the forest management also. The definition of the community with respect to the forest management changed from the political unit 'panchayat' to the user group, all the user of the certain forest area. FUG has been defined as 'a group of the local forest act to protect, manage and the use of forest resources of one or more areas' (HMG/N, 2002).

According to the (WG-CIFM, 2002), "The 1993 Forest Act clearly defined the forest user group (FUG) as an autonomous and corporate bodies with perpetual succession. FUGs were defined as a group of the households using or development on forest resources. FUGs are identified by the district forest office (DFO) based on the household survey to access forest dependence."

According to this Act, after the reorganization of the users, the members develop a constitution and five-year's management and protection plan. Each FUG is supposed to make an executive committee (EC) of 10-15 members of its users. The role of the forest department is to facilitate the functionary of the FUGs and provide technical assistance as according to the necessary (WG-CIFM, 2002). Therefore this policy has provided a strategies legal framework for the expansion of the community forestry.

2.2.2 Major Objectives of the Community Forestry Policy

As already discussed, the essential philosophy of the community forestry of Nepal is based on the idea that forest should be managed by the local people or the real forest user for their own benefit (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). Some major aims or the objectives of

the progressive community forestry policies of the Nepal are (Bartlett, 1992; Neupane, 1992):

- To establish and to empower the forest user groups assisted by the field staffs of the forest department.
- To prepare operational plans of the forest management initiated by the forest user group.
- To give priority to mobilize women's participation in the forest management, as far as possible.
- To provide any income from the forest product after covering the costs of the forest operation to the 'forest user groups'.

2.2.3. Devolution of the power in Forest Management

The trend towards devolution and the decentralization of forest resource management responsibilities was highlighted in Nepal as devolution of the forest management and the utilization right to FUG (FAO, 1995). Decentralization and the devolution of the power is the dominant theme of the contemporary forestry policy and management discussion. Because of the failure of the centralized policy to produce the desired result, an attempt to the decentralization of the forest policy was made (Singh, 2000).

Devolution of the power refers to the relocating the power away from the center focal point. In the context of the community forestry of the Nepal, it describes the relocation of the administrative function or power from center location to regional and local office of the forest, local political body or to the natural user (Fisher, 2000). In Nepal, the evaluation of the forestry policy since late 70s has encouraged the community forest management (i.e. PPF, PF, MPFS). FUG is the example of the devolution of the power from government to the user giving high priority to the small-scale utilities and use purpose of the forest rather from the economic point of view. Although macro level board policy (such as MPFS) has guided the community forestry development process, it is actually a community level FUG that is well equipped and authorized to take all decisions of the local forest like making the constitution, OP, sharing of the benefit and etc.

Although the board policy has certain guideline and policy framework to guide the forest management, the FUG makes suitable OP and constitution as according to the social structural framework of the particular community. That can bring large differences in the policy implication and practices (WG-CIFM, 2002). So, it can be fine example of the devolution of the power in the forest management of Nepal.

The devolution of the power in community forestry has emphasized upon the local people's participation in the forest management. Participation has been a catchword of the bottom-up forest development approach. The basic philosophy of the Nepal's community forestry program is people's participation (the forest should be capable to fulfill the basic needs of the people through their participation). The management policy of the forest cannot be in isolation of the people who are supposed to be benefited. Therefore participatory resource management has seen as an appropriate solution to ensure the equitable and sustainable use of the forest (Dahal, 2003). To achieve this aim devolution of power or empower the local people to management their forest is the first necessary step.

2.2.4. 'Social Equity', the Second Generation Issue of the Community Forestry

Social equity issue refers to the unequal power relation between rich and poor, high and low caste, women and men and so on. The social issue has been considered as the second-generation issue of the community forestry. The agenda of the equity has been focal point of the social issue (Winrock, 2002).

According to the Gilmour and Fisher (1991), from two different reasons equity is related to the community forestry. First is the philosophical argument's community forestry is aimed to meet the need of the diverse group of the society. It must insure the disadvantaged group's people's access to by the policy level and empower them to make equal control in CFUG.

The second is 'the political reason'. The program should benefit various interest groups in community. The membership in CFUG doesn't adequately represent poor and occupation caste group's participation. They have not the equal access due to various reasons (i.e. social hierarchy) in the intra CFUG activities, mainly in benefit sharing and decision-

making. The issue of the intra CFUG equity is generally related to these problems (Grosen, 2002; Tiwari, 2002).

According to the Tiwari(2002) followings are the reasons from which women are not equally behaved in community forest activities;

-) Traditional value of the caste, class ethnicity and gender.
-) Dominance of elite and high caste group's users in executive committee.
-) Dominance of the executive committee on the user groups.
-) Exclusion of the some community member from the user groups.
-) Domination of the certain interest group in the FUG level decision making process and less chance to for the rest of the interest group (men dominates the women)
-) Distribution of the forest product among the members, which are against the interest of the resource poor members.
-) Inadequate representation and the virtually non-involvement of all interest groups in setting institutional rules and arrangements.

The word 'community' in the community forestry indicates a homogenous group having common interests. But the community members are diverse in terms of their occupation, wealth, education and the caste/ethnicity although it may be a homogenous group in terms of physical characteristics such as geography. The issue of the intra CFUG equity is very important where the members of the community are diverse in terms of the socio-cultural and economic factor. Within a community there are the groups of the people who have the same interest common characteristics in certain thing; this is termed as the interest group (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). With respect to even the forest management too, the identification of the needs roles and authority of all interest group within a user group in crucial to maintain the intra-CFUG equity.

Participation itself doesn't always secure all kinds of the community's people's involvement. Because it is a vague term and its notion doesn't secure all people's power over the decision-making and benefit sharing (Fisher, 2000). But it is incomplete to secure the al interest groups peoples participation equally socially disadvantaged people's (such as the poor, women and so called low caste) access has still in question. The cause is the community level's powerful people's domination upon the common property

resource. FUG is not often comprised of household of the diverse social economic status and diverse forest based interest. In EC, generally poor women and disadvantaged people are often ignored and decision-making (Graner, 1997). According to her (1997), the community forestry often unsuccessful to secure the basic needs of the poor and low caste peoples basic needs because of the elite and high caste people's domination in FUG. According to her study in the Sindhupalchok district she has concluded that:

-) Member in user group are predominant from the economically advantaged group.
-) Economically disadvantaged groups are often excluded from the membership.
-) Economically disadvantaged groups may lose access to VITAL resources.

The term 'environmental Justice' also concerns to the equitable distribution of the resource, fair treatment of people of all races, culture and income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of the environmental law, regulation and policies (Adhikari, 2003). He (2003) has maintained that Nepal's problem of the caste based discrimination of the functional; participation in the community forestry can be better understood as the 'environmental cosmism' because caste has become the major determinant of the exclusion and inclusion of the people in community forestry.

2.2.5. Policy for the Women

Community forestry policy has recognized women as the real user and possible manager of the forest. As earlier mentioned, the major statement of the government policy is people's participation, the policy has remained successful from this point of view because it has made a remarkable success in involving people in community forest resource management (Dahal, 2003).

Within the people's participation one major aspects or widely discussed topic is the women's participation. The importance of women in CF has created a situation to think about the women's access, role and involvement in CFUG for the policy maker (Gronow et al., 1989). Therefore, address to women in policy statement has been made to create an easy platform for the women's involvement in community forest management.

One of the major plans of the forest sector in Nepal, the master plan for the forestry sector (MPFS) has given special attention for the participation of the women's component in

forest management. The plan has recommended certain percent representatives in the FUG should be women as the basic requirement to form the user's group (Khadka, 1999). 2052 B.S. and revised in 2058 B.S. has indicated that there should be one third (33%) women in FUG (Timsina, 2002). The operational guideline for the community forestry has acquainted these things for the encouragement of the women's participation in the community forestry management.

The ninth and the tenth development plan possess poverty alleviation as the main objectives of it. To achieve it good community forest resource management is required. Both have mentioned the role of the forest resource for the sustainable development - 'Community forest resource management will meet local requirements for the forest products as well as income and the employment opportunities for the sustainable development - 'Community forest resource management will meet local requirements for the forest products as well as income and the employment opportunities for the communities.' For this, it has stressed to involve women in community forest resource management to ensure the participation of them in mainstream of the development. Therefore the development plans has emphasized on the inclusion of the women in forest management with special program targeted to socio-economic development of them i.e. income generating activities for women (HMG/N, 1997, 2002, 2012). FECOFUN(2010), an umbrella organization of the FUGs has mentioned in its constitution compulsory provision of 50% of EC member in FUG should be women.

2.2.6. Women's Participation in Community Forestry in Nepal

"Participatory development" and "community driven development" became common themes across countries with natural resources to protect (Hobley and Shakya, 2012). Much of the research which looks at the effects of collective action institutions concentrate on India and Nepal. The reason for this lies in the recent reforms enacted by the governments to address issues of environmental degradation. The results seem to suggest that CFUGs in Nepal have been successful in reducing firewood extraction and hence forest degradation. This study focuses on the short term effects of these institutions as it evaluates the effect of the 1993 reform in 1996. Two other recent studies do not find any significant correlation between firewood collection and the presence of FUGs in communities in Nepal (Baland et al., 2010).

Most development specialists recognize that forest plays a significant role in rural women's life and rural women play a vital role in forest management. However, at the early stage of emergence of community forestry, women's participation on this sector as well as other development sector was neglected. In this context, Hoskins (1982) says, "Though women in rural areas are directly dependant on forestry related sources, many forestry projects are designed without any recognition of the impact the proposed activity will have on them.

The remaining empirical analysis mostly concentrates on relatively small case studies which acknowledge the success of FUGs activities in Nepal in halting deforestation (Kumar, 2002; Hobley and Shakya, 2012). However, these latter studies ignore the potential endogeneity of community group formation on relevant outcomes. Baland et al. (2010) demonstrate that ignoring this potential endogeneity bias may lead to an under-estimation of the benefits of community forest management. However, the success of community forestry in Nepal has been challenged in a more recent literature which stresses how most of the benefits accrued to local elites (Malla et al.,2008). Participation in FUGs is found to be higher for more economically advantaged groups (Agrawal and Gupta, 2005).

Richer households benefit more in terms of forest access and distribution of benefits than poorer ones, highlighting the importance of making these groups more inclusive (Adhikari et al.,2004). The exclusion of some sub-groups within these local community institutions may indeed cause failure in terms of both equity and efficiency of these groups (Agarwal, 2009). The success or failure of collective action institutions depends also on their design and characteristics (Olson, 1965; Wade, 1987; Ostrom, 1990; Baland and Platteau, 1996; Edmonds, 2003). For example, many local community groups are created with the assistance of donors.

Differences between donors in terms of funding or objectives may reflect the attributes of the groups which as a result will have different characteristics (e.g., number of members, area covered). This heterogeneity eventually affects the success or failure of some of these groups and, more generally, of programmes which devolve to local communities the management of natural resources (Grosen, 2003).

Baland et al. (2007), while proclaiming the potential of small rural communities in achieving the goals of environmental protection and economic development, emphasize that group heterogeneity may lead to a failure of these institutions. Often a failure of collective action institutions in protecting common property resources (e.g. forest) results from inequalities within the groups which prevent them from successfully cooperating. The authors stress the relevance of various dimensions of inequality.

Some recent research focused on explaining why gender matters in environmental collective action and what type of differences women can make to the management of forests (Mai et al., 2011; Agarwal, 2010). A higher presence of women may indeed generate different outcomes in terms of forest conditions. Agarwal (2009) illustrates that one mechanism through which a higher female presence in the groups improves forest conditions is through a better quality of forest protection. Women who take up some responsibilities within the group have the incentive to follow the rules (Bardhan and Dayton-Johnson, 2007) and to bring their concerns into the group's discussions. Female involvement in the decision-making process would also help to spread awareness of the rules among village women, generating an informational flow. The gender composition of the ECs of FUGs may affect differently the type of rules on forest access, resource extraction and the distribution of benefits defined within the groups given different female priorities in terms of resource extraction. Agarwal (2009) finds that groups with more women tend to favour stricter rules which in turn favour forest regeneration. She stresses also that rules which are too strict are difficult to enforce and may favour violations and conflicts. Hence a well balanced strictness of rules may facilitate forest protection giving incentive to FUG members to cooperate. The results show that more women in ECs appear to favour stricter rules which would allow forests to regenerate.

The knowledge of women regarding forest can be gauged when forest department staffs were initially quite surprised to find that men were ill-informed as to the exact amount of fuel and fodder required by village households and its local availability in the surrounding forests. His study reveals that, "Ask my wife", was a common reply to such questions, which were usually directed by a male extension worker to the male head of the household (Molnar,1987).

Participation:

Organization + empowerment + contribution = people's participation

Nepal is an apposite country to analyse as the forest is one of the most important natural resource in the country. In addition, the large majority of the population in the rural areas depends on forest resources for subsistence (CBS, 2004, 2011). Recently, commercial interests over the forest sector started to emerge. These new patterns are increasing the awareness that this shift could potentially lift the population relying on forests out of subsistence (Pokharel et al., 2008). Forestry now represents a productive sector of the economy and is estimated to comprise around 10 percent of Nepal's GDP (Hobley and Shakya, 2012). Concerns over forest degradation have emerged in Nepal since the 1980s. According to FAO, in 2010 Nepal forest coverage was estimated at about 3.6 million hectares, which represents nearly 25.4 percent of the total land area of Nepal. Despite the decreasing rate of forest degradation in the last number of years, recent estimates suggest that between 1990-2010 Nepal lost a quarter of its forest cover (FAO, 2010).

2.2.7. Equity among the Women in FUG

Strategies to increase women's control over the local natural resource management must address the question of gender relation. To understand gender issue in forest management it is necessary to look at the gender roles and division in term of ownership and control over and access to resource, knowledge and the product of their labour (Sarin, 1992). Probably all the societies, women have little value to men because of the subordinate social status. In the rural Nepalese society, there is no equal opportunity for the men and women in all sectors.

When question of the equity in community forest management comes, it often gives the notion of the equal opportunity for the women the disadvantaged and the lower caste's people. Gender and equity has been the major agenda of the contemporary debate on the people's participation in the community forestry. It is related to the gender balance participation in FUG and it basically rests on the leadership, benefit sharing decision-making and the representing the certain interest group.

Both policy and the implementation strategies and the programs of the donor agencies have focused to make better status of women in forest management and tried to make at

least token participant of them in executive committee of the user groups (Bennett, 2003). But nominal discussion has been made so far about the equity among the women or intra women equity. The policy seems considering women as the single interest group as we know women as an interest group from the gender balance participation's perspective. But in reality women is not the homogenous group in every respect. With in the women they have the diverse interest according to the caste, economic status, household position, educational status and age group (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991; Singh 2000). The woman of the user's household doesn't have the same types of access and opportunities and constraints to make the desired involvement in CFUG activities. But those minority women who have the dominant figure in the society are getting the easy access inn the mane of certain part of the women's representatives in FUG' beneficial activities such as training. In reality they don't represents or make it beneficial for all the women who also have the same kind of the right. The women of a blacksmith household, women of the landless household and the regular forest user women etc. are not getting chance or getting less chance. In the country, women of the elite class, women member of the village level figures, educated women who is not related to the forest as rest of the community women are getting the privileges in the name of the women's participation (HMG/N, 2002). In this way in reality the real user, poor, lower caste and occupation caste group's women have been excluded from making any meaningful intervention. Therefore securing an easy access of the all types or basically disadvantaged groups' women seems most necessary to make possible the real essence of the women's participation.

2.2.8. Community Forest and Tharu Community

Guneratne summarized in his Ph.D. theis on the Tharu of Chiwan that - "the most important issue acting as a catalyst for the genesis of Tharu identity has been the loss of land both a symbol of identity and the poor factor in the development of ethnic consciousness. Although the Tharus are the indigenous people of the Terai. Who cleaned the forest land for cultivation for the first time, they failed to understand the significance of registration of land; and last but by no means the least. Many of them last some or all of their lands due to in migration through chicanery (Gaueratne , 1994).

Some writers say Tharus are migrated from Thar desert of India so they are called Tharus(Sharma Janaklal "A study of our society" Sajha publication2029 B.S). Some say

at some time by a war with Muslim in Rajasthan Rajputs were killed and Rajput women left their place with their servants. The generation by the relationship between rajput women and their servants are Tharus. But some scholars do not agree with this logic because it will be the history just about late 500 years. But the face of Tharus looks like Mangolian Considered to be the direct descendent of Lord Buddha (Gautama Buddha). Many scholars support the logic Suddhodhana being Tharu king of Kapilvastu, Lumbini, Nepal the birth place of Buddha. Relating with Gautam Buddha history of Tharu is more than 2500 years. Tharu word has come from the word sthabir which is related with Buddha religion (Sharma and Malla, 2029 B.S.). Gautam Buddha was a Tharu (Singh, 2003). About the history of Lord Buddha Archeological findings have also been supporting that Tharu people were living in that area for quite long time. Chitwan district is situated at the middle Terai of Nepal. 44 years ago it was known as Death Valley. Because of the malaria it was not suitable place for living. Tharu indigenous people were living at that dangerous situation. All villages of Tharus were inside the jungle. Tharus were famous for their ability to survive in the most malarial parts of the Terai that were deadly to outsiders. In 1902 a British observer noted, "Plainsmen and paharis generally die if they sleep in the Terai before November 1 or after June 1." although others thought that Tharus weren't totally immune . Contemporary medical research comparing Tharu with other ethnic groups living nearby found an incidence of malaria nearly seven times lower among Tharu . The researchers believed such a large difference pointed to genetic factors rather than behavioral or dietary differences. This was confirmed by follow-up investigation finding genes for Thalassemia in nearly all Tharu studied (Modiyano, *et al* 1991).

Tharu people themselves say that they are people of the forest. In Chitwan, they have lived in the forests for hundreds of years practicing a short fallow shifting cultivation. They planted rice, mustard, corn and lentils, but also collected forest products such as wild fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants and materials to build their houses; hunted deer, rabbit and wild boar, and went fishing in the rivers and oxbow lakes (Lean, 1999).

The "forest people" came from many regions at different times to seek place and shelter of the jungle the environment then molded them, over a very long period of time into groups of special people. All of them called the Tharu (Mayer, 1995).

However, forest degradation is still very high in many countries. Indeed, the management and protection of common property resources and of forests in particular has been and remains a global challenge. Over the past decades the widespread concerns on deforestation and forest degradation, specically of the Himalayan forest, have raised questions on the best ways to limit and counteract this trend and to understand its causes(FAO,2010).

CHAPTER -THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methods applied to collect and analyze the data in the study. Only one method is not sufficient to gather all kinds of information related to the study. To make study more reliable, various data collection techniques has been applied. Further, this chapter also gives information regarding location of study area, types of research design, data collection techniques, universe and sample, nature and source of data and data analysis techniques.

3.1 Study Area and Rationale for Selection

The Kumroj Community Forest User Group (KCFUG) has been selected for the study. The Kumroj community forest situated in ward no 4,5 and 8 of Kumroj Village Development Committee of Chitwan district, which was formally handed over to the locals in 1994 by the District Forest Office. This is only the CF of this VDC.

The whole VDC comprised of different castes and ethnic groups like Tharus, Brahmin, Chhetris, Tamang, Darai, Gurung and other ethnic groups. There are all total more than 25 castes and ethnic groups in a single VDC. The highest number of inhabitants was of Tharu which is followed by Brahmins and Chhetris. That is why; Community Forest Users in this area are peoples from various castes and ethnic groups Tharus. Women from these distinct castes and Tharu community have distinct roles in private and public spheres of society . For example, Tharu women have more freedom in public spheres compared to that of Brahmin women. This can be one of the most important and determinant factors for the women of the study area in terms of their participation and decision level in CF activities.

Similarly, Kumroj VDC is one of the remotest VDC of Chitwan district, where facilities of education (especially female and women education), attitudes and awareness on women's participation in every aspects of society are lacking. In such a scenario, this is one of the community forests in Chitwan district where women's participation is noteworthy.

Despite that, seasonal labor migration and international migration also prevail in Kumroj VDC, where considerable numbers of male peoples go to India or Gulf countries for income. In the absence of male member (house head), it comes under women responsibilities to handle the family as well as concern on public activities like attending

CF meeting or collecting Forest resources from CF. That is why, women's participation in Kumroj Community is important from this particular area. But some research says Tharu men have less migration for jobs. Tharus never went abroad for employment – a life that kept them isolated in their own localities (Gurung, 1992).

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive research design has been used to describe and help to fact-finding inquiries on the selected topic that is "The role of Tharu women's participation in community forest management". In this research Descriptive research design has been adopted in order to analyze and interpret the qualitative and quantitative data collected from the primary and secondary sources. As per nature of the research, data related to socio-economic phenomenon, dimensions of participation, knowledge and attitude, involvement of women in CF management and motivational and hindering factors etc has been collected based on existing situation.

3.3 The Universe and Sample

At present, there are 7891 community forests and more than 18,000 Forests User Groups all over Nepal (FECOFUN, 2010). However, the scope of our study was limited to the Kumroj Community Forest situated at ward no 4,5 and 8 of Kumroj VDC in Chitwan district. There are more than 1682 households (with around 7561 population) in Kumroj VDC that are members of the Kumroj Community Forest. Out of 1682 households of CFUG, about 463 are Tharu (Rana) households. which is considered as the universe of the study.

First of all, total households of Tharus, which are the users of Kumroj Forestry were taken for the purpose of the study. Out of the total Tharu households (463) of the study area 30 percent (i.e 138 households) has been selected for the study.

Tharu households were stratified on the basis of Gender, General Members, Executive Committee Members, users and service holders. For sample selection, Stratified Random Sampling method has applied, where every household have equal chance of selection.

Respondents have been selected from each stratum by using lottery system to get the sample size. Household heads from each sampled households have been interviewed as the respondents.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

In order to achieve the objectives of the research, primary and secondary data of qualitative and quantitative nature has been used.

Qualitative data are related with socio-economic dimensions of Tharu women participation, motivating and hindering factors responsible for Tharu women's participation. These data has been collected from primary and secondary sources. Since the nature of the study is more qualitative, preference been given to qualitative data from the field study, based upon primary data collection techniques. Quantitative data has been collected by household survey and other secondary sources like published and unpublished books, documents, journals, dissertations, VDC, DDC profiles and by the source of internet etc.

3.5. Data Collection Techniques

Various methods and techniques of data collection has been planned to apply during the research to obtain the required information that is necessary to meet the objectives of the study.

Household questionnaire survey has been used to gather information from the respondents through interview, where respondent are head of the households or active women of the household. Similarly, observation by the help of checklist, key informants' interview has been used during the course of the field study.

3.5.1. Household Survey Questionnaire

In order to collect data regarding to socio-economic condition, women participation and demographic, 138 Tharu households have been surveyed. For the study, an interrelated semi-structured survey questionnaire (see annex- 1) was developed and has been tested for the interview with the respondents.

3.5.2. Key Informants' Interview

The key informants of this research were FUG members, FUG Management committee members, government officials of district forest office, senior person from Tharu community and local leaders and senior research scholars working in the community forestry area. 10 key informants who were tharu have been interviewed during the study

to get more accuracy. The key informants have been interviewed to gather information on the principal issues such as history of CF, socio-economic condition, Tharu women's participation in CF management, institutional development of FUG, socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in community forestry.

3.5.3 Observation

In course of fieldwork, simple observation have been done. A walk through forest, Tharu community and other communities visit to know the living standard of the Tharus and other peoples, gender behavior, forest product collection, men and women's working hours, structures of house etc. have been simply observed. Information received from the observation has used to analyze with the information received from other resources.

3.6 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, simple statistical tools such as editing, tabulation, percentage, have been used. Interpretation has made on the basis of result which have been assisted by qualitative/quantitative information available from both primary and secondary sources. Emphasis have been given to reflect the natural, same and exact interpretation of the respondents' words and the real picture of the field reality as far as possible.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The data which was collected in this study have been certain limitations, upon which the analysis, interpretation and validity of the data have based. They are as follows:

-) The study has been based mostly on primary data and this might differ or may not match the data at the national level. Therefore, any inconsistency or discrepancy on the part of the data of the study should not be given much importance.
-) The whole range of the study have concentrated around the 'Kumroj Community Forest User Group' and therefore the statistics and data in this research have been strictly limited to this particular community forestry group.
-) Due to time and financial constraints, it has not possible to conduct a survey of all the Tharu households involved in Kumroj CFUG and only 138 households of the total households has been chosen as based on random sampling.

This study describes the Tharu women's involvement in CF management and field level reality. How this strategy is being practiced. It also focuses on how effective the policy is to include different interest group's Tharu women and its impact on overall Tharu women's involvement.

This study of Kumroj VDC may not be enough to generalize all over the nation. But, it can be useful for the same ecological, socio-economic and socio-biological area of the nation.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY AREA

4.1 History of the Study Area

The Kumroj Community forest lies within the Kumroj village Development Committee (VDC) located outside the northern boundary of the Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP). This forest is bordered by the Rapti River in the South, RCNP in the west and Settlements in the north and east. Because proximity to the Rapti River puts agricultural lands in this area at risk from recent floods during the monsoon, the local people, with support from the small farmer's Development project and CARE Nepal, initiated a small scale reforestation programme at the edge of the agricultural field in the late 1980s. This was the first step towards what would become the Kumroj community forest.

Tharus, the indigenous people of the Chitwan valley and the hill migrants (mainly Bramhin, Chhetri, Magar, Gurung, Newar and Tamang) are the local inhabitants. The residences are subsistence farmers, agriculture and livestock raising being the mainstay of their economy. Major crops include rice, wheat, maize and mustard with newly practiced vegetable farming.

Since 1992, the king National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), with Support from the German Embassy, German- Nepal Friendship Association (GNFA), the bio-diversity Conservation Network (BCN) and save the Tiger Fund (STF), initiated a community Forest program to restore more than 1000 hectares of severely degraded land adjacent to the CNP, Creating a largest community forestry program of this type in the Terai region. This area, called the Kumroj community forest, is now managed by the local user's group with the technical support of NTNC's Nepal conservation research and Training center (NCRTC). Altogether 1682 households with a population of over 9390 , directly benefit from this forest. The Kumroj community forest was officially handed over for its management to the local user's group of Kumroj village Development Committee (VDC) 1-9 in November 1996 by the district forest office of Chitwan.

4.1.1 Social Characteristics of Study Area

The description of the social characteristics includes the demographic structure by ward and sex of study area, Caste and Ethnic Composition of the study area, Educational Condition of respondents according to sex and Occupational Structure of the sample Households and distribution of Household head by gender.

4.1.2 Demographic Structure by Ward and Sex

The total households of this VDC is 1682 and the total population is 9390 among which 4749 are male and 4641 are female (KCFUG official records). The following table has present the ward wise and sex wise distribution of population.

Table 1: Population by Ward and Sex

Ward No.	Total HHs	Population					
		Male	%	Female	%	Percentage	Total Population
1	197	546	49.59	513	50.41	100	1059
2	166	487	57.27	454	42.72	100	941
3	253	671	49.74	679	50.29	100	1350
4	226	578	51.33	548	48.66	100	1126
5	173	526	49.52	536	50.47	100	1062
6	136	418	50.92	403	49.08	100	821
7	212	603	50.25	597	49.75	100	1200
8	244	691	50.08	698	49.92	100	1389
9	74	229	51.8	213	48.19	100	442
Total	1682	4749	50.58	4641	49.42	100	9390

Source: Kumroj VDC Records, 2013.

From the above table, it is clear that the average household size is 5.22 for Kumroj VDC, which is approximately equal to national average. It also shows the population of female is 49.42 percent in Kumroj VDC.

4.1.3 Caste and Ethnic Composition of the Study Area

The total population of the Kumroj Community FUG is 9390. Where men's population is 4749 and women's population is 4641 and the total number of users household is 1682 of the different caste and ethnic groups.

Table 2: The Caste/Ethnic Composition of the Study Area

Caste/Ethnic Group	Population	Percent
Tharu	3282	34.95
Brahman-hill	2833	30.17
Chhetri	1413	15.05
Tamang	315	3.35
Darai	292	3.11
Gurung	270	2.88
Kami	255	2.72
Newar	212	2.26
Bote	115	1.22
Damai/Dholi	92	0.98
Sarki	76	0.81
Magar	53	0.56
Kayastha	32	0.34
Majhi	28	0.30
Sherpa	21	0.22
Yadav	16	0.17
Sanyasi	12	0.13
Thakuri	13	0.14
Teli	12	0.13
Dusadh/Paswan	9	0.10
Rai	8	0.09
Kumhar	6	0.06
Others	25	0.27
Total	9390	100.00

Source: Kumroj VDC Records, 2013.

The user groups are diverse in term of the caste and ethnicity. In total 9390 people are users; there are users of different caste/ethnic group. Most of the users belong to the Tharu, Brahman and chhetri Caste group.

4.2 Socio-Economic status of sample households

This topic includes the source of income, land distribution

4.2.1 Educational Condition of Respondents According to Sex

Education has been taken as basic human need. But, Because of various reasons people are unable to acquire a higher degree of education. In the study area economic status, lack of opportunity, lack of interest, cultural traits, norms values etc were the main reasons of not having high education by the local peoples as talked with key informants.

There is one government high school, two lower secondary schools and three primary schools, two English medium primary schools. As the educational condition is considered, the number of well educated female population is negligible. The following table shows their educational status.

Table 3: Educational condition of Respondents

Educational Status	No of Respondents				Total	
	Male	%	Female	%	No.	%
Illiterate	31	38.27	24	42.11	55	39.86
Literate	18	22.22	10	17.54	28	20.29
Primary	8	9.88	9	15.79	17	12.32
Lower Secondary	9	11.11	4	7.02	13	9.42
Secondary	5	6.17	6	10.53	11	7.97
SLC and Above	10	12.35	4	7.02	14	10.14
Total	81	100	57	100	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Total literacy rate of the study area is 60.14 percent and illiterate is 39.86 percent. Female literacy is 57.89 percent and male literacy is 61.73 percent. In total among the school age population 42.11 percent female are illiterate while 38.27 percent male are illiterate. Female educational rate is lower than male. Informal literacy programs had made some women literate.

4.2.2 Occupational Structure of the Respondents

Agriculture is the main economic base of the people in the study area. However agricultural activities are still primitive and crude. The most ethnic communities mainly depend on agriculture and as a waged labour too. As the country's deteriorating condition

could not easily promote their sources of income, so now a day some young members of the study area have also been attracted towards gulf countries for getting occupation as the wage labours. They comparatively make more amount of money than in Nepal.

The following table gives about the occupation of the study area.

Table 4: Occupational structure of Respondents

Main Occupation	Respondents	Percent
Agriculture	114	82.61
Non-Agriculture	24	17.39
Total	138	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

The above table shows that 82.61 percent of Respondents are engaged in agriculture while only 17.39 percent are engaged in non-agriculture activities. Non-agricultural activities are as; business, service, non- agricultural labour etc.

Due to facility of irrigation, the paddy is produced twice a year, early paddy is planted in Chitra-Baishkh and harvested in Jestha-Ahad while the late paddy is planted in Ashad-Shrawan and harvested in Kartik-Mangsir. A part from paddy, people also cultivated pulses like Mash, Mushuro in small area of land; vegetable are grown near the homesteads mainly from home consumption. Main vegetables grown are Potatoes, Radish, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Brinjal (Bhanta) and leafy vegetables (Rayo, Palungo, Chamsur). The production of fruits is very low in the study area.

4.2.3 Distribution of Household Head by Gender

Table 5 shows the condition of household head by gender in each Tharu household of the Kumroj Community Forestry users group.

Table 5: Distribution of Household Head by Gender in the Study Area

Male		Female		Total
Number	%	Number	%	
87	63.04%	51	36.96	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Above table shows 63.04 percent Tharu household heads are male and 36.96 percent household heads are female in the study area.

4.2.4 Source of income of the Households

The main sources of income are agriculture in rural area. Agriculture income mainly consists from agriculture products and livestock. For there cattle rearing they somehow depends on near CF. In rural areas non-agriculture sectors such as remittance, labour, service, business and cottage industry are also contributing in total income. The following table 6 gives about the source of income of the study area.

Table 6: Source of income of Households

Source	Number	Percent
Agriculture	73	52.90
Livestock	20	14.49
Remittance	9	6.52
Labour (Wage)	17	12.32
Service	6	4.35
Borrowing	13	9.42
Total	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

The above table shows that most of the people or almost 52.90 percent households engage in agriculture as accepting it as their major occupation; 67.39 percent of the total income from agriculture and livestock. while remaining 32.61 percent of total income is generated from non-agriculture sector.

4.2.5 Land Distribution of Respondent

Agriculture income mainly consists from agriculture products and livestock in rural area for which people need proper land for cultivation and collection of fodder for livestock. Tharu people are very honest in agriculture but most tharu family are big in family size but they have small land which is not enough for the survival of their family. we divided land size in five categories and tabulated the information collected at field survey as below.

Table 7: Land Distribution of Respondents

S.N	Area of land	Number of Respondents	Percent of HH
1	Landless	7	5.07
2	Less than 5 kattha	19	13.77
3	5 to 20 kattha	47	34.06
4	1 to 5 bigha	41	29.71
5	5 to 10 bigha	16	11.59
6	More than 10 bigha	8	5.80
	Total	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Above table shows out of 138 Tharu households 7 households have not their own lands and 19 households which is 13.76% have less than 5 kattha of land. Households who has 5 kattha to 1 bigha are 34.05 percent and 29.71 percent of households of tharu have land of 1 bigha 5 bigha. Households holding 5 bigha to 10 bigha is only 11.59 percent and only 8 households(5.79 %) holding more than 10 bigha of land as their land property.

4.3 Natural Resources and Place of interest of Kumroj Community Forest

Vegetation: The Kumroj community Forest is riverine forest type which has been revived by fencing off the area and allowing it to regenerate naturally/plantation. The main tree species are simal (Bombax Ceiba), Vellor (Trewia nudiflora), Kutmiro (Litsea Monopetala) with Sissoo (Dalbergia Sissoo) and Khair (Acacia Catechu) in the plantation site. The simal tree, which dominates and forms the upper canopy of the tree layer, has a spiny bark when young develops buttresses at the base in older stage. The grasslands form another diverse and complex community in the forest with a greater number of floodplain species. The wetlands and rivers consisted different hydrophytes which are essential for wildlife diet.

Wildlife: After only eight years of protection, Kumroj community forest has been quickly colonized by wildlife Over 159 species of birds, including colorful parakeets and scarlet minivets and the endangered dusky horn owl, large grass warbler, lesser adjutant stork, lesser spotted eagle, yellow bittern, darter, black stork and bristled grass warbler have been recorded. There are more than fifteen individuals of the endangered greater one horned rhinoceros, three species of deer, marsh mugger crocodiles and some resident

tigers in the forest. Jackal, Small Indian civet, wild boar, Python, Five-striped squirrel, gray fox, yellow throated martin, golden monitor lizard and Jungle cat are also found here. The tall simal and other trees served as the favorable habitat for avian species.

The users' group has constructed a Machan (view tower) with two rooms and four beds for visitors who want to experience Jungle life in the night. From the Machan, visitors have a spectacular view to observe animals and bird watching in a peaceful setting. Grassland and waterholes have been renovated to enhance game viewing as part of the habitat management program. Even from the elephant back it is safe and easy to watch the wildlife.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY FOREST ACTIVITY

Various objective based studies, (Upadhyay 1995, Kanel & Kanel 2006 and Pokhrel et al. 2008) on Nepal's CFUG showed that, it is often observed and widely debated that in most cases, 5 community forest has not addressed the problems of poor and indigenous people as well as of women though much income from the sale of forest products had been generated (Dutta 2007).

In the initial stages of community forest practice in Nepal women's participation was ignored in community forest planning cycle. This has implication on poor management of community forestry. Realizing this, gradually the community forest policies were changed and priority was given to women and their participation in community forest activities. Upadhyay (2005) claim that while effective participation in decision-making would enable women to influence formulation of rules and regulations in their interest; however, that does not necessarily guarantee that women enjoy access to the incentives derived from FUG.

The government policy for at least 33 percent women representation in Forest Users Group Committee and more in all CFUG activities has been encouraging women's participation in forestry sector. However, women are either absent in FUC or their role in decision making is not influential enough. Some prior research studies aiming to understand women's participation in CFUG and related decision-making process have been done.

5.1 Involvement in Forest Resources Collection by Gender

In KCFUG households used to collect grass and firewood annually and the entire household used to collect firewood and grass, timber is collected according to their need. Following table shows the involvement in forest resources collection by gender.

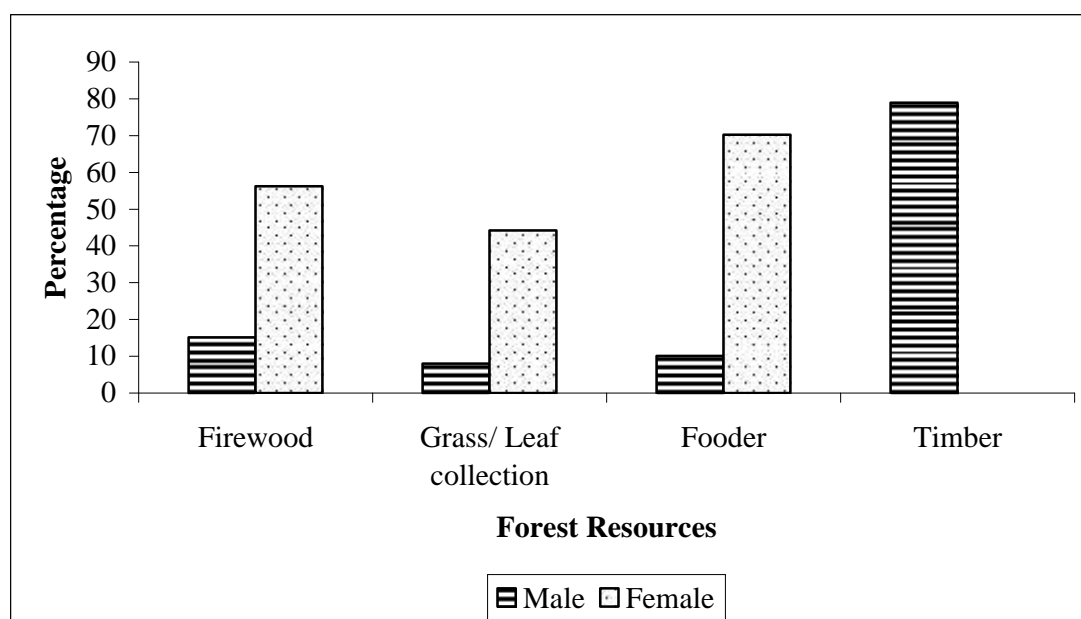
Table 8: Involvement in Forest Resource Collection by Gender

Forest Resources	Household members involved in forest resource collection						Total no of respondents	
	Male	%	Female	%	Both	%	No.	%
Firewood	23	15.18	76	56.25	39	28.57	138	100
Grass/ Leaf collection	12	8.03	61	44.20	65	47.10	138	100
Fooder	14	10.14	97	70.28	27	19.5	138	100
Timber	109	78.98	-	-	29	21.01	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

In this study 138 household from tharu community were taken for sample. Among them male only 15.18 percent and female of 56.25 percent are responsible for the firewood collection. whereas for the fodder collection for the cattles 70.28 percent of female visit community forest whereas for timber collection 78.98 percent male visit community forest. Above table shows that high involvement of female in forest resources collection.

Figure 1: Involvement in Forest Resource Collection by Gender



5.2 Participation in General Meeting of KCFUG by Age and Sex

General meeting of user group held one times per year. There is compulsory provision to attend the general meeting of KCFUG but some household don't go in general meeting. The information condition of meeting attends by age and gender was collected by household survey. Following table presents the sex and age composition of KCFUG Meeting attends.

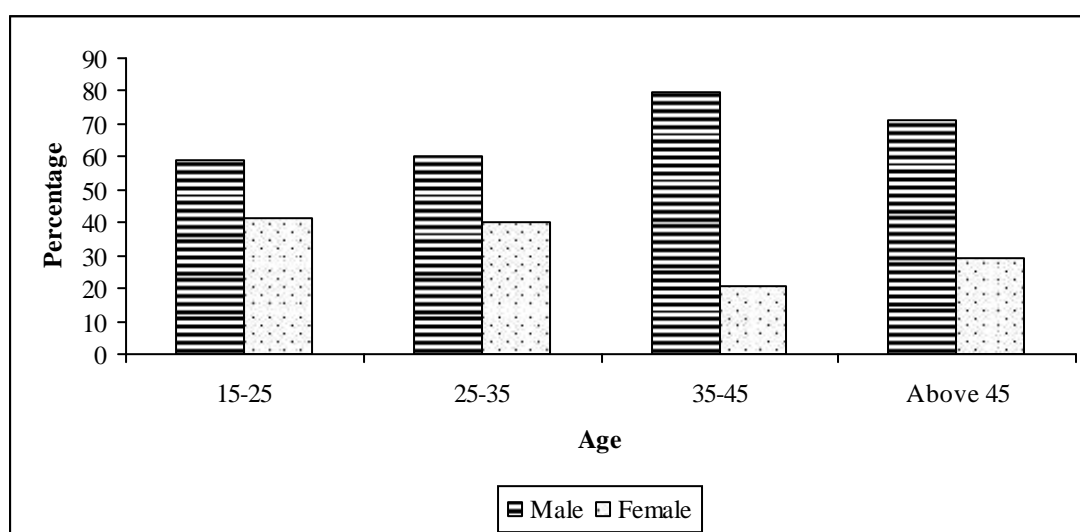
Table9:Distribution of Household Members Participated in General Meeting by Age and Sex

Meeting attend by age	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
15-25	10	58.82	7	41.18	17	11.72
25-35	15	60.00	10	40.00	25	17.25
35-45	27	79.41	8	20.58	34	23.45
Above 45	49	71.02	12	28.99	69	47.58
Total	101	73.19	37	26.81	138	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

According to field survey, male participation is higher than female participation in general meeting. In general meeting during survey period 73.19% were from male and 26.81% were from female participated.

Figure2: Household member Participated in General Meeting by Age and Sex



5.3 Different between past and present management system of CFUG

Some local peoples thought that the present community forest management has no change and it is as it was in the past condition of the community forest but some thought the community people improved the position of community forest in the present and where females are playing major roles.

Table 10: Different between Past and Present Management System of CFUG

Difference situations	No. of respondents agree(Tharu women)	Percent (%)
Present management is better than past	26	18.84 %
Past management is fair and good	31	22.46
Women has equal representation in present management committee than past	13	9.42%
No change than past	28	20.28%
Don't know	40	28.98%
TOTAL	138	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

In the above table out of 138 respondents 26 people (18.84 %) told that present management system of the CFUG is better than past where 28 people(20.28 %) thought there is no change in present than that of past and 40 respondent don't know about the difference. On the other hand, only 13 respondents (9.42 %) thought Women has equal representation in present management committee than past.

5.4 Role of Women and Tharu Women in KCFUG General Meeting

In KCFUG, only 26.21 percent of women attendance is found in general meeting. Only physical attendance is not enough to make decision in meeting. 38 women, who involved in general meeting, were taken in sample to study the role of women in decision making process. Following table shows the role of women in general meeting of KCFUG. But mostly tharu women don't know about the importance of tharu women's role in forest management, only 27 women (19.56%) out of total 138 household survey respondent thought it is important but other 92 respondents (66.66 %) thought only male has importance to management of CF and other 19 respondents (13.76 %) don't know about it. (General Meeting is Supreme body of KCFUG)

Table 11: Role of Women in Decision Making in KCFUG General Meeting

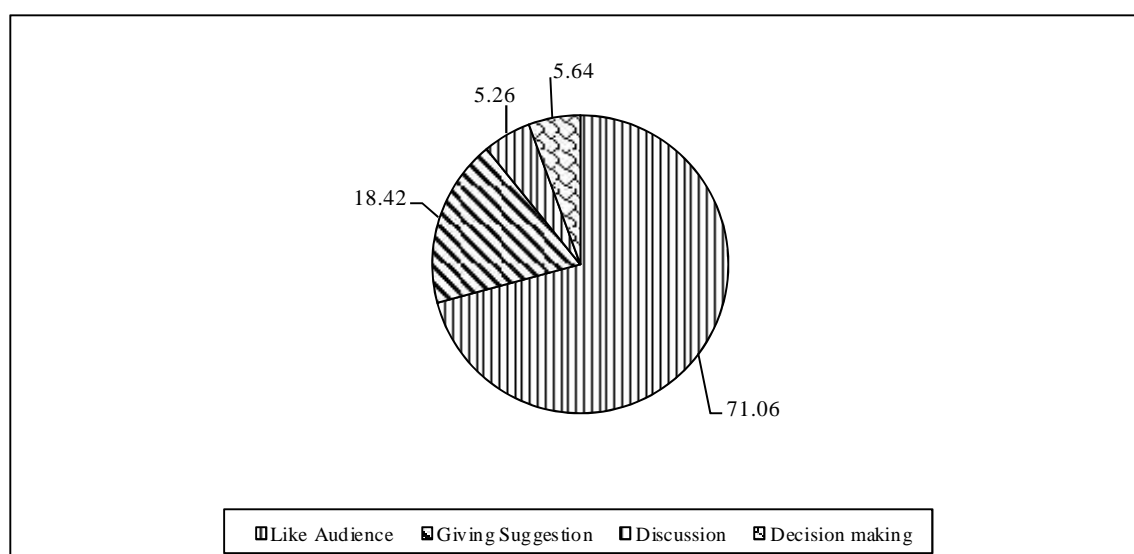
Role of women in general meeting	No. of Respondents by meeting attended	Percent
Like Audience	27 (female)+	71.06
Giving Suggestion	7 (female)+	18.42
Discussion	2(female)+	5.26
Decision making	2 (female)	5.64
Total Tharu women in General Meating	38	100%
Absent in General-meating	100(male and female)	
Total (with absents in GM)	138	

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Among 38 Female respondents, who involved in general meeting, 71.06 percent member used to attend meeting like audience, 18.42 percent member attend meeting giving suggestions, 5.26 percent member attend meeting taking part in discussion and 5.64% female attend meeting sharing in decision making.

On the other side out of that total 138 respondents only 38 women are involved in general meeting which is just 27.53 percent.

Figure 5: Role of Women in Decision Making in KCFUG General Meeting



5.5 Motivational Factor for Women's Participation

In this study, following 5 alternative factors was given for selection about the motivational factor, which factor motivates them to involve in community forest activities. Following table show the view of respondents about the motivational factor.

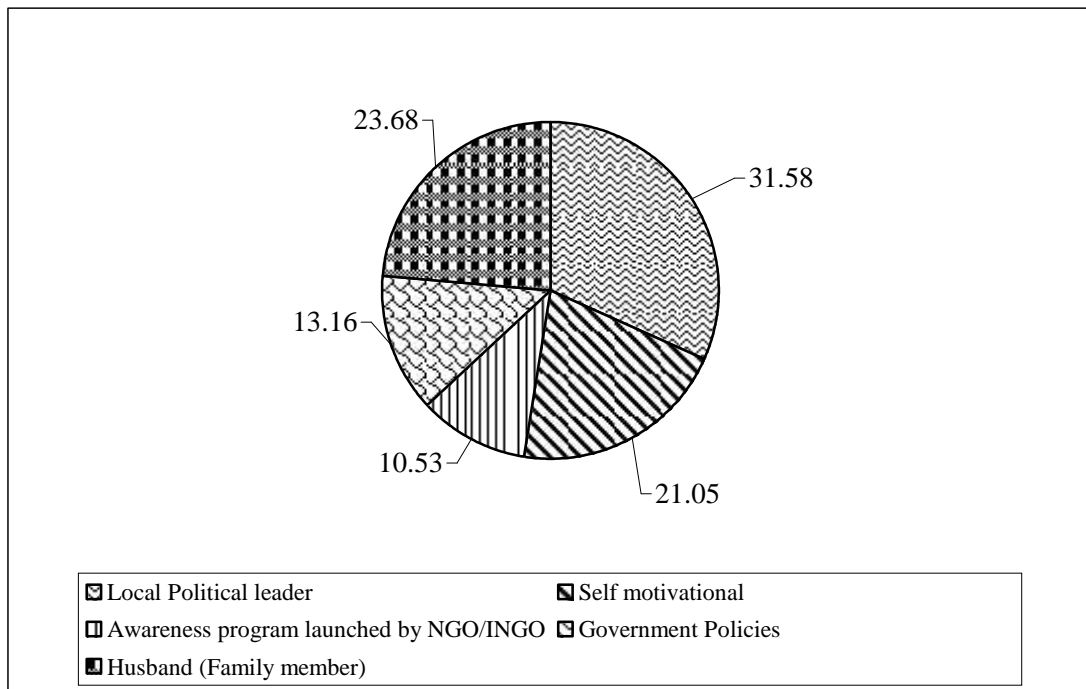
Table 12: Distribution of Respondents by Motivational Factor for Women in Community Forest Activities

S.N.	Motivational factor	No. of female Respondents at general meeting	Percent
1	Local Political leader	12	31.58
2	Self motivational	8	21.05
3	Awareness program by NGO/INGO	4	10.53
4	Government Policies	5	13.16
5	Husband (Family member)	9	23.68
	Total no. of respondents in GM	38	100.00
	Absents from sample HHs	100	
	Total Sample HHs	138	

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Above table 12 shows, local political leader (31.58%) and husband (23.68%) (Family member) are more effective motivational persons to motivate women for community forest activities.

Figure 6: Distribution of Respondents by Motivational Factor for Women in Community Forest Activities



5.6 Obstacles for women's participation in CF activities

The main obstacles of women's participation in community forest and other local development activities in the study area were:

- i. Traditional male dominated culture
- ii. Lack of time / Household work load
- iii. Lack of knowledge about the rules of community forest
- iv. Poor economic condition
- v. Lack of Permission to attend meeting
- vi. Lack of Empowerment among Female
- vii. Feeling of needless to participate
- viii. Less chance to keep view for women in every development activities
- ix. Illiteracy

5.7 Participation of Women Having the Heterogeneous or Diverse Identities

As already discussed in the literature review section, women's roles, access, rights, position and the involvement in the FUG is determined by their position and status in community. The socio-cultural background, educational status, economic and the class/ethnicity plays major roles to shape the women's involvement in the community forest management.

The macro government level policy as well as the micro FUG level policy has addressed the need of women's participation in forest resource management like - 'Priority will be given to the poor, women and disadvantaged group of the community. But it has not addressed and sufficiently recognized the different interest group among the women like poor women, so-called lower caste women (dalit women) and the socio-economically disadvantaged group's women like tharu- women in this contest. The FUG level policy also has repeated the same sentences in their operational plan and the constitution. Those have focused on the representation of the tharu women in management in decision making. But the OP and the constitution have not made specific condition as according to the social diversity and the interest of the all users. It has also categorized women a single interest group supposing all the women have same background and characteristics.

This superficial identification of the tharu women as the single category has made the chance of the participation of the tharu women from the dominant social group like the elite class women, high caste women, outspoken and the powerful women of the community. The women representative of the EC so far having the post are from the Brahman and the Chhetri caste. During the interview the other so called lower caste and the ethnic group's tharu women expressed that they are never asked to be the women representative of the forest user group and nobody told them to be an EC member. Although all the women have the same access and right to hold the post and to take the benefit through the forest management, only the socially selected women are offered and accept the post. In other opportunities also same things repeats, like taking the post of the EC. For example the woman who has appeared on some type of the forest management training in the range post is also not from the tharu community, they are from Brahman caste. On the reaction of that, other women of the communities told that they didn't tell everybody or make discussion even with other users regarding that there

are such kinds of the opportunities for the women. Rather they without informing the tharu women they selected a woman for the training. For this matter the chairperson's view was that although women make comment now for the decisions but they were neither interested nor capable to attend the trainings. Discussion within the few FUG members, we choose the most appropriate women for the trainings. According to the Tharu and the Blacksmith women they don't know that when the FUG formed and how the EC woman member become their representatives. In reality, according to the EC member women first the men of the communities gather at one place they discuss and called only those women whom they like to call. She was also called in such way and requested to be an EC member, not by calling all the women making discussion within them or making selection among them.

Therefore, in practice also there is no involvement of the women having heterogeneous background although the communities are heterogeneous in terms of various characteristics.

The policies are not effective to include all interest groups of women including tharu women groups in community forest management. It has indirectly effective the overall women's involvement. If there will be specific provision to participate actively by the all caste/class, economic and education level women, and certainly there will be more women's involvement. Because it will make a suitable environment for all women equal participation even from the socially disadvantaged groups like tharu community and can maintain the 'equity among women's in community forest management. But neither the policy in the government and the FUG level nor the field practices seem sensitive to make equity among the women to make the tharu women's involvement better. If the OP of the FUG has made any specific provision and the participatory strategy to apply according to the characteristics of the user women at the FUG level, it can fulfill the gap of the government policy and create a practical approach for the inclusion of the all interest group's women including tharu women.

5.8 Views of Local people about Women's Role Including Tharu Women, Towards Community Forest

In this study, views of local people were collected from the key informants and in the course of data collection local people were consulted informally. Various kinds of views were found about the women' role toward the community forest management and other development activities. Views of local people are divided in two parts; positive views and negative views for presentation.

5.8.1 Positive Views about Women

Positive views of local people about the role of women are as follows:

- i) Tharu-Women are also helping to manage community forest.
- ii) Tharu-Women used to help for forest watchman to conserve forest.
- iii) Tharu-Women respect and follow KCFUG rules.
- iv) Tharu-Women can be active if they have chance to do something.
- v) The Tharu-Women used to participate in CF meeting and they share their ideas and used to take part in discussion and decision making process.

Tharu Women of study area are positive about community forest. Unless they are busier in their household work , they are helping to manage the forest. Tharu-Women are actively participating in general meeting of CF and they follow and respect rules, they help for forest guard for forest rearing. They have no experience to take part in discussion in decision making but they are trying to keep their views in CF general meeting. If they have training, awareness programs, get support and encouragement from males they can play active role in forest management and other development activities. They must be included in development activities without gender bias.

5.8.2 Negative views about Tharu-women

In the study area, some of the local people's view that Tharu-women cannot play good role for forest management. The negative views do not want to participate in CF meeting.

- i) Tharu-Women do not want to participate in CF meeting.
- ii) Tharu-Women have no idea and ability to manage forest.
- iii) Tharu-Women don't care about public concerns.
- iv) Tharu-Women must manage their internal household tasks, it is not a duty of women to attend meeting and be active in social development activities.

- v) Tharu-women couldn't be able to be active and to play dominant and creative roles even they have chance to do something.
- vi) Tharu-Women have no wide concept, to manage public concerns without bias.

According to the some local people views, women did not want to participate in development activities. They have no interest about the social development activities. They have no interest about the social development activities including CF management. By tradition, task of women is inside the household and agriculture field. Women are of narrow concept; they couldn't make social issues with neutral way. They couldn't play dominant role in public activities even they have chance to do so.

The negative views about women are affected by the traditional male dominated concept. The strong supporter of traditional male dominant cultural system has negative views about women's role towards public concerns. The next group of local people believes that social development is not possible without proper involvement of women in local development activities including the use and management of resources and this case all tharu women must be involved in development activities of the community and as well as the development of nation.

5.9 Constitution Procedure and terms of committee member selection

User committee comprised of 15 members; among them 33 percent seats are secured for women. But in KCFUG, there are only 2 female members. It means 13.33 percent seats are filled by female in practice now. The term of committee member is of 5 years generally. The Users committee members are used to select by the consensus of the general meeting of the user group. If any opposition rises, members must be selected through election among the member of the user group. About the process of women member selection for the EC in the CFUG, we found following response from respondents:

Table 12: Constitution Procedure and Terms of Committee Member Selection

Process of selection/ response	No. of respondents Agree	Percent (%)
Some Elites people of society chose their close women member of CFUG for EC	47	34.04
One vote from one household system is implemented for selection	0	0
Women members select their leader for Executive Committee	0	0
People who have a political support is chosen for Executive Committee	59	42.75
I don't know	32	23.18
TOTAL	138	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

In the table 12, we can see the 47 people (34.04 %) told that Some Elites people of society chose their close women member of CFUG for Executive committee (EC), 59 people (42.75 %) told that People who have a political support is chosen for Executive Committee. No one agreed that Women members select their leader for Executive Committee and system for One vote from one household is not implemented for selection too. Where 32 people told that they don't know about the selection process of women members for EC.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary and Conclusion

The study is based on primary and secondary data and the nature of the data is qualitative. Among the total households, only 138 households are chosen by caste or ethnicity for the study. Female respondents were selected for interview and male as well as females were selected according to the convenience for household survey. Key informants and focus group discussion also used to collect information.

The total population of the users of the Kumroj FUG is the total population of this VDC. According to vdc records, Total population of Kumroj VDC is 9390. Among them males are 4749 and females are 4641 and average family size is 5.22.

According to the field survey, male literacy rate is 61.73 percent, Female literacy rate is 57.89 percent and total literacy rate is 60.14 percent.

In study area, 63.04 percent sampled household heads are male and 36.96 percent household heads are female. In forest resource collection, females involved in firewood collection is 56.25 percent, in grass cutting is 44.20 percent, but male involvement in firewood collection is 15.18 percent, in Grass cutting is 8.03 percent in timber cutting and collection is 78.96 percent. In timber collection hired workers also has been used. In grass and firewood collection participation of female is high.

Community forest user groups could be seen as an organization developed for varied kinds of innovation for welfare of the locals.

Tharu women are not present in equal number to the other women and men in different types of decisions but they are present in making community forestry foundation i.e. operation plan preparation, constitution and committee formation.

Women CF increases political inclusion of women in community based natural resource management. There is very little representation of Tharu respondents in key positions (chairperson, vicechairperson secretary, treasurer and joint secretary). Though Tharus and women are said to be directly related to forest their presence in management body of

community forestry whether it is key position or general position (executive committee member) is lower than the men and Other caste respectively.

Participation of women in general meeting of KCFUG is 26.81 percent and participation of males are 73.19 percent. Participation of female in meeting was like audience is high. Taking part actively in general meeting, sharing in decision making and discussion is very low. According to the government policy (master plan, 1988) minimum 1/3 of the committee members must be female but in KCFUG committee there are just 2 female members among 15 members of the total committee.

According to the field study, obstacles for women to participate community forest activities are as follows.

- i) Traditional male dominated culture.
- ii) Lack of time/Household work load.
- iii) Lack of knowledge about community forestry.
- iv) Poor economic condition.
- v) Lack of permission to attend meeting.
- vi) Lack of empowerment.
- vii) Feeling of women needless to participate in public concern.
- viii) Less chance to view for women in every sector of development activities.
- ix) Illiteracy.

According to the field observation and view of all of the respondents the condition of forest is very good compared to the past condition.

In Kumroj CFUG, awareness program are not launched to make women's active involvement in forest management activities and there is male dominated cultural system is existing. So women's involvement in development activities is very low.

The policy has not made the identification of the different interest groups women in CF management but all the women have been considered as a single category. So that policy and implementation strategies of this FUG seems insufficient to make compulsory involvement or pull the women having diverse social identities in CF management. So, policy is ineffective to address social differentiation of women and not sensitive to the heterogeneity of the women with in this single identify as 'women'. Therefore, replacing

the reorganization of women a single interest group to women has diverse interest group can be a next important step of the Policy. In FUG level, strategy having participatory approach not only for the user but having sensitivity to social diversity can include all the interest group's women in community forest management.

6.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the major findings of this study, the following specifics are recommended.

Awareness should be created and/or enhanced in the Tharu women for being included in the CFUG as the main stakeholder of the CF.

-) There should be equi-proportional participation of Tharu women in decision making forum, so that leadership development from the Tharu women may be possible.
-) Focus should be given to introduce alternative strategies to bring women in to main stream of development in general and their role in decision making process in CF management in specific for gender equity.
-) Poverty deprives people of information gadget and lessens opportunities for them to get educated. The poor therefore remain illiterate, which make them unable to read and understand the public notice. Therefore home to home visit should be the method of dissemination.
-) General meeting and letter to individual methods should be adopted for faster dissemination at the user group level.
-) Male and Female motivational program should be launched to make man more helpful and feeling of housework is not only of female's duty.
-) Studies related to why some ethnic and lower caste people residing near the forest are excluded to be a member of users group and how Tharu women and excluded peoples can be involved in decision making should be carried out.
-) Income generation from forest resources should be launched and opportunity should be given to women users.

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