

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Of all vegetation type, the forest renders the greatest influence on environment which is connected to the regulation of atmospheric, hydrological, and soil processes, so the preservation of forest cover has enormous value for the sustainable development of the sustainable development of an environment.

Forest is the super combination of biotic and versatile renewable natural resources. It is the main source of fire-wood, timber, liters and animal fodder and plays a vital role in the rural livelihood. These resources are indispensable to about 90 percent of the rural population is directly involved in managing forest as a part of their everyday life. Therefore, forest is an important natural resource that is highly essential for all living creatures in the world. Though Nepal was rich in forest resource and there was a saying that "*HARIYO BAN NEPAL KO DHAN*" but it depleted very rapidly in the last few decades. Nepal's forest is decreasing in both quantity and quality over the last few decades. The rapid socio-economic change in Nepal has placed a new demand on forest resource. As the forest declines, number of problems related to environmental degradation such soil erosion, landslides, desertification, climatic hazards etc emerge. Many acts were implemented (private forest nationalization Act in 1957, Forest Act in 1961, The Forest preservation Act in 1967) in order to conserve and preserve the forest resource. However, these implemented Acts did not work and the deforestation problem increased rapidly.

However, the effort has played vital role to keep the balance between people, forest and environment by changing the forest management policy of the government in the recent decades. In this new policy, there is a shift from government ownership and management of forests to community or user group management with a strong desire of empowering local communities and thereby institutionalizing their participation.

Now the government and development practicenor have begun to take local people's participation as essential for the assessment, monitoring and evaluation the forest management practices in village communities in Nepal. The decision also states that 18, 76000 ha of forest area (32% of the total land area of Nepal) can be converted in to community forestry, and 15, 85,000 ha of non-forest area (27% of total land area) can gradually be developed as community forests.

Policy makers have acknowledged the importance of women's activities in forestry. Many studies (Acharya and benett 1981, Gurung, 1987; New Era 1983; Siddique1989; Landis 1964; Prasai et al 1987 & Wener M. 1981) shown that women are primary users of the forest. According to above studies, Women spent significant portion of their times in forest related activities such as fuel-wood and fodder collection, fetching water, farming, grazing animals and cooking. Considering this, it is clear that women have to be involved to make a community forest program successful.

For rural women, deforestation means that more time and energy that used to be spent on household chores. Deforestation directly affects the women. Those who consume more forest products should participate in forest management activities (Gurung, 1987:1). Siddiqui (1989) views that, rural women are among the most frequent and much important forest user in Nepal but still have a very marginal role in forestry programs. Although the government policy is to empower women to participate in community forestry planning and implementation process nevertheless, Nepal socio-cultural practices still seem to be reluctant to let women go ahead. The involvement of women must be recognized as an essential element for achieving successes in any

development work including community forestry. Women are the primary users of forest resources without the co-operation and participation of women in forest development efforts will continue to flounder (Gurung, 1987:3)

Community Forestry Program is based on partnership between local community and government and is one of the nationally prioritized forestry programs in Nepal. Its main objective is to achieve forest resources by converting accessible national forest into a community forest in sustainable manner. It has been taken as a small scale village level forestry practices where decisions and actions are made on a group basis so that the community people can interlink forest with their social life. Although this program is taken as the most successful program in Nepal, It can't cover all cast, gender, class, and different strata of people. If we are able to increase the level of participation of women in the community forestry program who are the primary users of forest products, without the feeling of cocksureness i.e. so called male dominated society we definitely can achieve the higher degree of success and satisfaction in the sustainable use of forest resource.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As many other renewable sources of energy Forest is one and main. Nepal has been losing much of its forest cover and this problem is in a very critical condition. Forest is decreasing at an alarming rate and the government effort to solve the problem is very nominal. 30 years ago, about 57 percent of the Nepal's land area was covered by forest and at present that figure even by optimistic estimates has been reduced to 30 percent (Various literatures). It is causing multi-dimensional problem such as the water retaining capacity of natural vegetation has weakened, water source are drying, the runoff has increased in both scale and intensity causing fertile soil erosion, landslides, desertification, climatic hazards, life of the people have become harder due to scarce of fuel-wood and fodder water and so forth.

Local people's involvement in the forest management activities has been acknowledged as a main strategy of the forest policy of Nepal for sustainable and effective management and conservation of the forest (Chhetri et. al; 1992). At the same time, poverty alleviation has become the development agenda. Nepal's effort for the poverty alleviation has been reflected in its periodic plan. The ongoing government policies too, emphasize the forest as a major sector to reduce poverty in New-Nepal.

Various reports on research and critiques, too, suggest that participation of Women in community forestry is just as a 'token', no effective. Keeping this in mind the present study has been tried to pursuit the following research questions.

1. What is the degree of women participation in CF at present?
2. What are the key factors that hinder or foster in obtaining women's participation for community forestry management and conservation?
3. How women participation can be increased?
4. How women are taking part in the process of decision-making, benefit sharing and implementation process of community forestry?
5. What is the socio-economic status of women of community forest user group?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to evaluate the contribution of local women's experiences in the resource conservation, exploitation pattern and socio-economic parameters of the 'Community Forest' in the study area. This participation ranges from

forest management, decision making process and benefit sharing. And the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

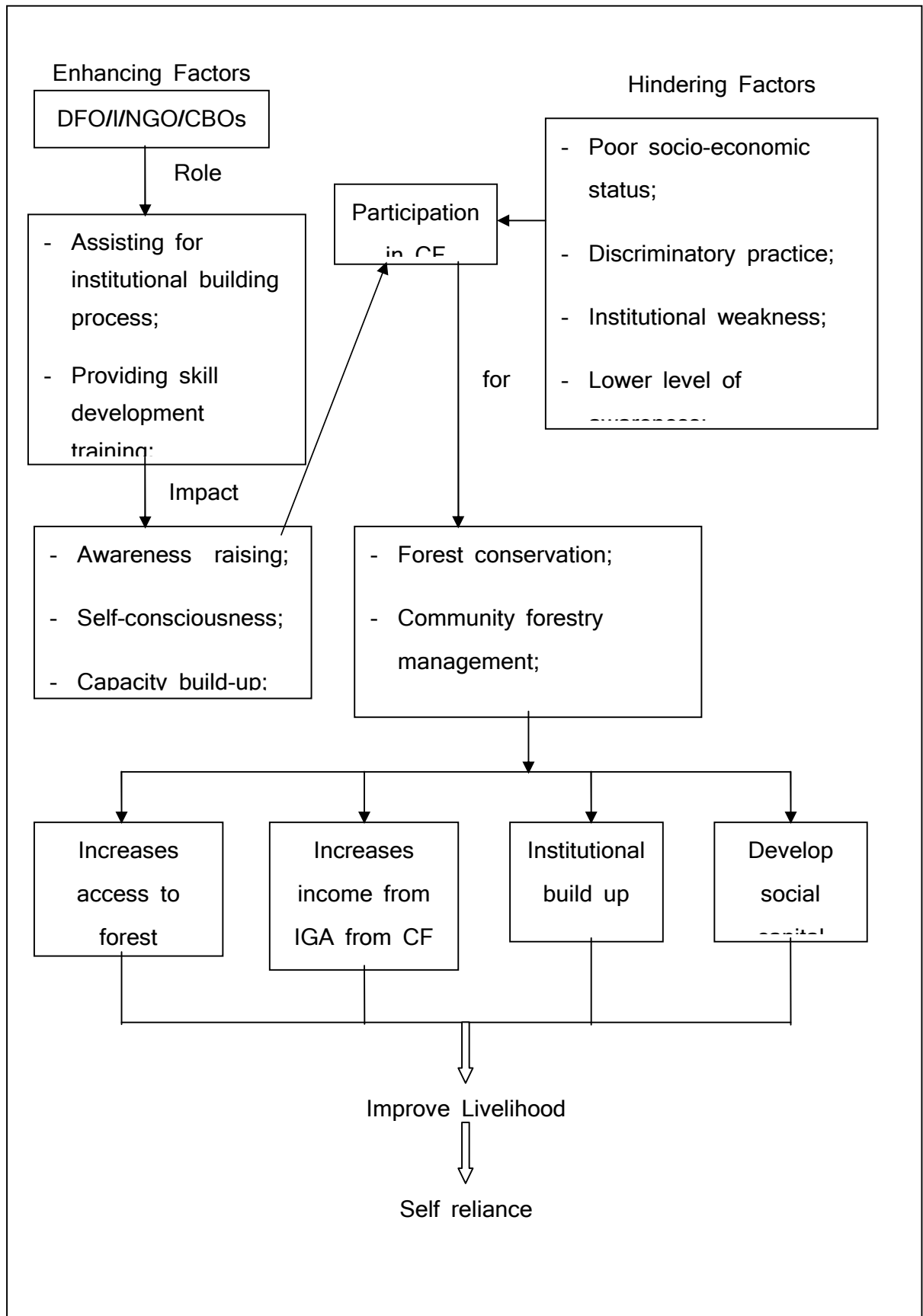
1. To examine the access of women involvement in Community Forestry Management.
2. To identify the major hindering and enhancing factors for women's Participation in Community Forest Management.
3. To identify the solution to make Community Forestry Program more inclusive for women
4. To assess the local people's perception towards women's role in the community forest management in the study area.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

From the very beginning human beings are dependent on Natural resources for food, shelter and cloths. Being a notable natural resource, "Forest" has also that kind of potentiality for poverty reduction of the rural people. Involvement of local women and improving rural technology we should make the resource commercial in sustainable way. We can achieve economic growth, rural development, and sustainable development and improve living standard of rural people by the institutionalizing the natural resource "Forest" in particular area. A conceptual framework has been designed to make the analysis more precise.

The conceptual framework

1. Promoting factors for effective participation.



2. Dimension of effective participation

	Dimension of effective participation	Activities for promoting effective participation
Participation in CF	Forest management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Encouraging Agro-Forestry practice.) Formulating and implementing operational plan of a CF effectively.) Encouraging the feeling of responsibility for protecting forest, as a common resource.) Managing the forest by self-discipline.) Promoting indigenous knowledge
	Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Providing sufficient room to articulate interests and voice of all CUFM members.) Making decisions on consensus basis.) Motivating people for participation.
	Monitoring & evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Implementing the decisions of operational plan of a CF effectively.) Encouraging - developing feeling of responsibilities among CFUG member for protecting forest.) Managing the forest by self-discipline.
	Benefit sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Providing accessibility to forest products (fuel wood, fodder, litter, green grass etc.)) Promoting transparency to mobilize CF fund.) Promoting equity concept for distribution of opportunities and benefits from CF.

The conceptual framework I and II illustrate how to develop community forestry program effectively. The conceptual framework - I is intended to show promoting factors for effective participation. The promoting factors like DFO supports to handover the forest to the local community people and formation of CFUGs. Similarly, I/NGOs facilitate the local people by providing awareness traveling and skill development traveling and organizing educational tours so that women can develop the level of awareness and can enrich their capacities. Similarly, conceptual framework - II shows the dimension of participation and ways to promote effective participation.

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is since long time the forest has been haphazardly destroyed used at large extent. Nepalese government has realized that forests cannot be protected without involving local communities in forest management. This is why the management roles have been shifted from government to the community people.

However, the involvement of women is still under consideration. There has been no sufficient study, which examine the participation of women in community forest management and the factors affecting in their participation. To fill this gap, this study aims at accumulation considerable information regarding participation of women in management experience and achievements of community forest by women that may help concerned government agencies, donor agencies, planners, policy makers, social activities, future researchers to plan similar projects better. The study has brought the findings on socio-economic and environmental impacts and the role of rural women in resource utilization in rural economy. The efforts of rural people for the management of 'forest resource' all are discussed in this research. Therefore, the finding of this research study is instructive to everyone interested in natural resource management

1.6 Definition of Key Concepts and Variables

The researcher has used some of the concepts and variables in the study to clarify the readers.

Community Forest: A forest area handed over to a group of people entrusted to manage, use and protect under the provision of Forest Act and forest by-laws. .

Forest User Group (FUG): A group of forest users of a particular forest area. Members of a FUG assume rights and responsibilities for using and managing the local forests as per operational plan developed by the FUG and approved by DFO.

Interest Group: The households who depend on the forest for subsistence and who are recognized by other users as having the principal responsibility for forest management

Forest User Group Assembly: A meeting concerned with the management of a particular forest and attended by all users and representatives of user groups. Major decisions are made in the assembly meetings.

Range Post: Range-post is a geographical area in a district administered by the forest ranger.

Operational Plan: It is a document of working strategy to manage a community forest.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Main focus of the study has been given to women's status and their involvement in forest management. It is helpful document for others who are interested in "the study of forest management'. Due to time and budget, small and nearest area was selected for the study. Some selective social science research tools are used in the research work which is also the limitation of the study As this study is a partial fulfillment of the requirement of Master's Degree, there may be short-comings that would have debarred the present study to be a study one. The study is not free from the following short-comings.

- * The findings of the study are localized to Suwarna CF of Saptari district.
- * The findings of the study may not be generalized to the wider area.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This dissertation has been divided into eight chapters. The First Chapter includes introduction of the study. Similarly, the Second and Third Chapters briefly deal with literature review and research methodology of the study respectively. Chapter Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh chapter include brief account of study area, sampled population, collected information according to requirement to the study and its analysis. After data analysis, last chapter includes summery, conclusion, and recommendations related to different aspects.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to review various forest related issues, policies, problems and solutions related to community forestry management system. The thesis felt benefited from the contribution made by many scholars, institutions and researchers who have devoted their time to study forestry issues of Nepal. There are several books, articles, bulletins, booklets; studies are found regarding community forestry management in Nepal written by foreign as well as Nepalese writers. Some of these studies have reviewed and this chapter has been organized as:

2.1 Emergence of Community Forestry

The concept of community forestry was initially defined in the late 70s when the FAO released its landmark publication as “any situation which intimately involves local people in a forest activity.” According to FAO, the community forestry departed from previous conceptions and centered on the idea of people participation getting local population to plan and execute their own project on a self-help basis. It embraces a spectrum of situation ranging from wordless areas which are short of wood and other forest products for local needs, through the growing of trees at the farm level to provide cash crops and the processing of forest product at the household artisan or small industries level to generate income to the activities of forest dwelling communities. Thus community forestry was planned as encompassing activities by individuals households, men and women, farmers, and other people as well as those involving a community as a whole (FAO, 1978).

2.2 Definition of Community Forestry

The term Community Forestry has become buzz word these days. It is the combination of two words: community, and forestry. The term community, in its broadest sense, refers to any group of persons united by a 'community of interest in certain geographical area. In this sense a community may refer a professional group, a residential unit, or a club or a voluntary association prevailing in a geographical location.

On other hand, Forest is a biological community dominated by trees and other wood vegetation. Thus, when we use these two words together, community forestry means something like "people forestry". This acknowledges that community forestry activities are aimed at providing direct benefits to rural people and that "the people" should have a major and vital role in decision making. At this level, that is, as a statement about the philosophy behind community forestry, there is nothing wrong with the term (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991)

According to Fisher and Malla, community forestry or village forestry is seen as the control, management and use of forest resources by villagers. It seeks to increase the level of awareness of local people and actively to involve them in all aspects of forestry activities (Fisher And Malla, 1987).

Fisher defined community forestry 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).

Generally speaking, the community forestry has been implemented in several countries including Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. The program in different countries covers private planting (encouraging people to plant trees in their own land) and/or community planting (planting and managing trees in public lands).

The first publication which developed a concept of community forestry in Nepal was a discussion paper by Campbell and Mahat, 1977 (Gilmour, 1988: 3). The legislation outlining the government's shift in policy from government control to community control of some of the forest resources was passed in 1978 (Gilmour, 1988: 3; Wallace, 1987: 5 and Gurung, 1987: 4).

The Community Forestry Program is also accepted as a strategy to overcome the problems posed by the private forest nationalization process in 1957 for forest conservation efforts in the country (Chhetri, 1990).

Community Forest is defined as "small scale, village level forestry practices where decisions and actions are made on a collective basis. The rural people participate in planning, establishment, management and harvesting of forest resources and receive a major proportion of the socio-economic and ecological benefits from the forest products". After the implementation of Community Forestry, these products are equally distributed to all the CFUG members. In addition to it, people have started getting different traveling opportunities as well as they come in contact with different NGOs and INGOs. This contact helps them in planning the community forest for poverty alleviation through income generation (Gautam, 2001).

Based on the above definitions, we can conclude that, community forestry is forest conservation, management and utilization by the local community. A group of people who are actively participate to conserve and manage their local forests for their benefit by themselves for the sustainable natural resource management especially forest.

2.3 Implementation of Community Forestry in Nepal

This program in Nepal is considered to be one of the highly successful programs. It is also considered as problem solving strategy. The forest user groups are the means of achieving this goal. Forest in Nepal is an integral part of the farming system and is closely associated with the livelihood of the rural poor people as they derive the Forest Timber Products (FTPs) and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) (Chhetri, 1992).

When we study Nepalese history, Nepal's forestry sector was administrated under the feudal system for a long period. Rana and former rulers used *These* forest as their ascribed property from their forefather. The democratic movement of 1950 removed Rana rulers from power and prevented the misuse of forest by nationalizing all forests in 1957. Forests were considered to be the property of Rana rulers before the nationalization.

Community forestry has received high priority in the forestry sector program to the government as reflected in both the Master Plan for the forestry sector HMG: 1988 and the Eighth Five Year Plan (NPC, 1992). The main thrust of the community forestry policy of the government is the phased transfer of management and utilization of community forest to the actual users based on simple operational plans which are prepared and endorsed jointly by the Forest Users and the Assistant Ranger from the District Forest Office. Assistant Rangers are supposed to apply rules, schedule and other institutional arrangement made for forest production management and utilization (Kanel and Niraula, 2004).

Box 1: Historical Time Line of the Forest Management Policy in Nepal

Year	Policy/Act/Regulation	Remarks
Up to 1846	Conversion of forest to agricultural land Protection of Terai forest.	Increase the tax base of the state as a buffer against foreign invasion.
1846-1950	Forest land given as Birta to influential officials. Exploitation of Terai forest.	Conversion of forests to agricultural and land Export of timber of India.
1957	Private Forest Nationalization Act	Indiscriminate cutting of forest.
1961	Indiscriminate cutting of forest.	Protection, Management and Utilization of forests entrusted to the DFO.
1967	Forest Preservation Act (Special Provision)	The power of the DFO as a law enforcing agent strengthened further.
1976	National Forestry Plan	Recognized the need for people's participation in forest management.
1978	Panchayat Forest Regulation and Panchayat Protected Forest Regulation.	Handing over of limited areas of government forest land to the control of Panchayat(s).

1981	Forestry Sector Policy of the Sixth Five year Plan (1981-85).	Emphasized community participation in the management, conservation and use of forest resources.
1982	Decentralization Act	Moves towards transferring the control of forests to local people strengthened.
1988	Master Plan for the Forestry Sector Nepal	Covered all aspects of forestry designed to take Nepal's forestry into 21 st century; strongly emphasized community forestry; and recognized the role of real user in forest management.
1993	Forest Act	Regulatory function of DFO still intact but significantly softened. Forests can be handed over to FUG by the DFO.
1995	Forest Regulations	Procedural guidelines for implementation of the Forest Act 1993.

Source: ICIMOD, 1999

Principal features of community forestry policy 1990:

-) All the forests can be handed over to users (no area limit).
-) The forest users groups have to manage the forests as per the approved constitution and operational plan.
-) Any national forest suitable to be converted into community forest will not be assigned to other such as leasehold forest.
-) District Forest Officer can hand over forest to FUG.
-) FUG can use surplus fund in any kinds of community development works.
-) The FUG can fix the price of forestry products irrespective of government royalty.
-) The FUG can plant long term cash crops without the main forestry crops.
-) FUG can transport any forest products simply by informing the DFO.
-) FUG will not be disturbed by political boundary while handing over the forests.
-) The FUG can establish forest based industries.
-) FUG can punish misuses who offend against the ruled of the operational plan.

Community forestry is considerable a successful model of forest management in the hills of Nepal. However, the implementation of community forestry in the Terai region has been slower than in the hills. There has been widespread skepticism in the forest administration and among international donors about whether community forestry is also feasible in the Terai region. In contrast to the extensive body of knowledge on community forestry in the hills, however, little is known about the potential of community forestry in the Terai (Chakraborty and et al., 1997).

2.4 People's Participation in Community Forestry

A development program can be successful by the active participation of local people. Success will depend to the high degree on identifying measures to stimulate the active participation of the millions of small farmers and landless people who daily use forest and trees to meet their needs. Oakley includes a typical set of objectives of forestry program designed on the basis of greater people's participation.

- To involve people in forestry activities and provide the basic needs for forest resources by increasing the production of fuel wood, fodder and timber.
- To promote self-reliance among communities through active participation on the management of forest resource (Oakley 1991).

The govt. of Nepal has come forward to note “people’s participation in the development of forestry sector involves giving full authority to rural people to plan and initiate their own program. Unless the rural people (men and women) participate in the management and conservation of forests, the situation of forests in the country will continue to deteriorate (HMGN/WECS, 1995 cited in Chhetri, 1999).

People’s participation is the most essential feature of Community Forest. Infield practice, idea of people’s participation in Community Forest has gained high level of popularity in Nepal. The institutional arrangement and policy behind this program is popular in Nepal. But the gap between rhetoric and realities is seen in the practices. It is happening because of an inadequate understanding of how the idea of people’s participation and empowering the people could be effectively put into practice. It is realized that people’s participation is the best way to achieve the objective on effective protection and management of forest resources. It is suggested for popular participation that existing local practices, institution, organizational structure and local user group should be recognized. Nepal has successfully implemented community forestry program with the active participation of local people. Forest committee formed by user groups take the responsibility of protecting, planting and conserving natural forest. People participate in all stage of decision making, planning and reaping benefits. They show ample interest in nursery and plantation works. Women are the major collectors of the forest products such as fire wood, fodder and dry leaf. So consequences of deforestation directly impact on woman. District Forest Office and other line agencies most motivate women to participate in Community Forestry Program through extension and awareness classes (Kasthaya, 1991).

2.5 Women’s Participation in Community Forestry

Involvement of women is crucial for the success of community forestry. Women are the major collectors of forest product such as firewood, fodder and fruits, grass, etc. They have done most of domestic works. Therefore, it is they who suffer the social and economic consequences of deforestation, most directly having to spend more and more time and walk longer distances to in search of these essential forest products that has affected both health and time of rural women. However, they should not be considered in isolation and total community participation should be effected (Ojha, 1989).

Most of the case are not single women participated in the forest user’s group program through self-interest and motivation. Most women were simply nominated, and they had no idea that they were participation as members said that they were there because their husband or father had forced them to participate (Dahal D.R.1994:78).

If the forests are to be successfully managed by local users, then women must participate, they are responsible for collecting most of the fuel wood, fodder, leaf compost and bedding, as well as controlling grazing. They also provide much of the labour for nurseries and tree planting. The men, on the other hand generally take care of cutting and selling timber, and of administrative decisions about the forest.

Women have worked successfully on all female forestry committees in Nepal. Rural people and professional foresters generally agree that women are capable for doing committee work of learning how to do it. Gurung mention that people participation is the most essential feature of community forestry. A genuine participation approach is important and the association of participation in the program should grow out of the community organizing process (Gurung, 1999).

The need and necessity of women's participation having been accepted as reality in forestry and their situation being understood in its true perspective, the strategy proposed visualize all men and women concerned with the program promoting the required focused on women (Siddiqu, 1989). The importance of women in forestry activities is acknowledged by policy makers. The master plan for the forestry sector emphasis on extension approach, aimed at gaining the confidence of wood cutters and others, particularly women, who actually make the daily management decisions (HMGN, 1988).

2.6 Empirical Studies on Community Forestry Management

Shrestha deals with gender issues in community forestry. This study highlights the condition on maximum female participation in community forestry and focus on possible ways for solving the problems faced by women in community forestry. She argued that 'socio-cultural problems limited women' active participation in community forestry. Although women were participated in implementation phase, their participation in decision making and planning phase is very low. The study concluded that gender issues should be taken in to consideration in both planning and implementation state of community forestry (Shrestha, 2004).

Gurung deals with people's participation in forest development. The study reveals that different factors such as leadership, awareness of the problems, benefit distribution mechanisms and religious have an important role in determining the success and failure of forestry development (Gurung, 1987).

Chhetri and Nurse Deals with equity in community forest users group. They concluded that equity in decision making and allocation of resources are more complex process. More equitable decision making and allocation of fund may only be achieved by FUGs as they become stronger, experienced and more effective in the course of time (Chhetri and Nurse, 1992).

Dhami et al deals with the decision making system in community forest user group. The study concluded that occupational caste such as *Kami, Damai and Sarki* the ethnic minorities were found less active in decisions making process. Similarly, elites found to play important role in decision making as they could influence others easily and decisions are made in compliance with their opinion. The study recommended that consensus system of decision making should be prioritized over other forms so far as practicable (Dhami et al, 2004).

Kayastha argued that forest creates ample job opportunities for employment and income and therefore can change the socio-economic status of people towards positive direction. A good number of village people are employed in logging timber forest industries and afforestation activity. A lot of people in the villages become self-employed by making bullock carts, tools and furniture from timber. Some people even specialize in manufacturing wooden handicrafts and can earn good income by selling them. Similarly, a lot of poor families in the village collect fuel wood from the forest and sell them in the nearby markets and towns. It brings significant income in the village (Kayastha, 1991).

Malla (1970) viewed that the empowerment of rural disadvantaged groups of people especially women, poor and landless and low caste is also realized by the new extension method. Dahal viewed that involving women poor, low caste people in development activities is problematic. Therefore, they are taken as a disadvantaged group to development activities as well as Community Forestry Program (Dahal, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals briefly with the research methodology applied in the study. This is a purely academic research based on social science. The major content of this chapter include: rationale for the selection of the study area, research design, nature and source of data, sampling procedure, variables and operationalization, data collection techniques and instruments, method of data analysis, limitation of the study and ethical consideration.

3.1 Rationale for the Selection of the Study Area

The rationale for the selection of study area includes:

- ❖ It is not much far away from its head quarter and it is linked with the rural road. So, it was easy to reach and travel in the VDC for data collection.
- ❖ It is one of the oldest CFUG of the Saptari district.
- ❖ The study area consists of diversified population ranging from various castes/ ethnic groups and from different economic, education level. Those factors widely affects the women to involve in the community forest management
- ❖ No study has been carried out on women's participation in community forestry management in this area.
- ❖ This study will be useful to other parts of CFUGs in Saptari district because of their similar geographical structure, social and cultural situation.

3.2 Research Design

This present study has given emphasis on both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the phenomenon. In short:

- i. The research design is based on descriptive and exploratory.
- ii. It is descriptive as it is based on detailed investigation and records of the participation of Women's in community forestry management, decision making process, implementation and monitoring and benefit sharing from the forest products.
- iii. It is exploratory in the sense that analysis focused on exploring whether women's participation in community forest is effective or not. An attempt has been made to make the community forest management process more inclusive for Rural Women.

3.3 Nature and Source of Data

This research is field-based study. The nature of the data in the study is both quantitative and qualitative. The sources of data were both primary and secondary. So both primary and secondary data have been collected for the purpose of study.

- i. Primary data are based on household survey, observation, interview, focus group discussion and case study.
- ii. Both published and unpublished documents, records, books and relevant materials related to the subject matter have been incorporated as secondary data.

3.4 Universe and Sample

For this study Suwarna Community Forestry User Group was deliberately selected. The SCFUG covered ward no. 4, 5 and 8 of the Suwarna VDC. The sample size was determined on the basis of the total households in the study area. There are 430 households in these three wards, among them 80 households (more than 18 %) were taken as sample households.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection (Techniques and Tools)

For the collection of primary data, the following techniques were adopted.

Household Survey: Household survey was conducted to gather more information about the population characteristics of women. Various information regarding the participation of women members of the CF was collected from structured questionnaire.

Observation: Participation observation was applied during research to study the location, and concerning relations of women with other people including forest-user group communities, their perception, involvement of women in management and access of forest resources for Women etc.

Focus Group Discussion: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) technique was applied for both male and female members of the CF to discuss about the past and present situation of community forestry management, people's perception about management, and operation of forest resources, dissatisfaction of Women. Check list was prepared for conducting focus group discussion.

Interview with Key Informants: Some knowledgeable persons such as elderly persons, members of forest-user group committee, range-post staff, and community based representative personnel of WWF, staff of DFO, teachers and local leaders were selected as key informants to carryout research. Checklist and guidelines were prepared for key informant's interview.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis and Presentation

The collected data were edited, coded, classified and tabulated for data organization. The quantitative data have been presented in tabular form and suitable statistical tools like percentage, ratio, mean etc. has been adopted for data analysis. Pie-chart, Bar-diagram and trend analysis have been presented to make figure attractive.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA

4.1 District Introduction

Saptari district is known as food store of Nepal which lies in Sagarmatha zone of the Eastern development region of Nepal. It has been named through its world's famous Himalayan peak Sagarmatha. The district is situated at the latitude of 87° 55' East to 87° 16' East and at the longitude of 26° 23' North to 26° 5' North and 152-m to 914-m altitude above the sea level . It occupies a total area of 1257 sq.k.m. Among the total area, about 74541 ha is cultivated land. For political and administrative purposes, the district has been divided into 6 constituencies, 1 municipality, 114 VDCs and 15 Ilaka. Rajbiraj is the head quarter of the district. According to the **population census of 2001**, total population of this district is 6, 23,226. Among the total population, 50.15 percent are male and 49.85 percent are female. Likewise, the total number of households is 1, 20,185 and average density of population seems 455/ km². The population of this district has been composed by Yadav (39.55%), Tharu (13.99%), Muslim (10.95%), Chhetri (8.38%), Brahmin (7.94%), Newar (4.43%) and remaining others. Agriculture is the main occupation and major source of livelihood of the people of this district. The climate of the district is moderate with a maximum temperature of 30.6°C and the minimum temperature 14.2°C in average. (source: Saptari DDC: 2007).

4.2 Introduction of the Suwarna VDC

Agriculture is the main occupation and the main source for the livelihood of the VDCs people. According to the village profile; 2007, about 76 percent people are directly engaged in agriculture, 4.55 percent engaged in small own business, 4.47 percent engaged in governmental/non governmental service and 5.83 percent engaged in others different kinds of work. People, especially youths go to the different parts of the country and foreign countries for job (Village Profile, 2002).

4.2.1 Climate

The climate of the VDC is tropical. The maximum temperatures of the VDC reach up to 34°C-36°C in summer and 18.59°C in winter. The minimum temperatures of the VDC reach down 15.69°C in summer and 5.6°C in winter. The average Rainfall of the VDC is 200 mm.

4.2.2 Natural Resources

In general land, forest and water are the important natural resources of the VDC. Brief account of these resources is as follows:

4.2.2.1 Land

Land is one of the most exploited and utilized natural resources in the study area. The total area of the VDC is 5016 hectare. Among the total population 76 percent people are involved in agricultural activities on the basis of availability of irrigation facilities, land is classified as Bari and Khet.

4.2.2.2 Forest

Another important natural resource of the area is forest. The total forest area of VDC is 2257 ha among this 552 ha of forest area is managed by Suwarna Community Forest User Group.

4.2.2.3 Water

Even though water is one of the most important resources of Suwarna VDC, one major river (Valuwahi river) is located border of study area. Other main water resources are Khado canal and Chandra canal. These resources are useful for drinking water supply and irrigation facility. Three irrigation cannels were constructed in the VDC for agricultural purpose. Different type of drinking water projects is supplying drinking water to the people of VDC.

4.2.3 Demographic Profile

The total population of the VDC is 14521. Among them, 49.08 per cent are male and 50.92 per cent are female. The total household number of the VDC is 2868 and the average family size is 5.24. The majority of the population belongs to different castes and ethnic groups, viz. Yadav 19.66 per cent, Brahman and Kshetri 54.71 per cent, Newar 4.11 per cent, Kami, Damai and Sharki 15.07 per cent, vyas 1.03 per cent, Karna 1.39 per cent and others 1.25 per cent. Among the total population, 68.64 per cent are literate and 31.36 per cent are illiterate. Among the total literacy, 72 percent male and 55 percent female are literate.

4.2.4 Age Structure

Table 4.1: Age Structure of Population of Suwarna VDC

Age Group	Total	Percentage
0-9	3631	25.01
10-19	3625	24.96
20-29	2273	15.65
30-39	1764	12.15
40-49	1376	9.48
50-59	892	6.14
60 and +	960	6.61
Total	14521	100.00

Source: National Labour Academy, Oxfam, 2004

DESCRIPTION OF SUWARNA COMMUNITY FOREST USER GROUP

5.1 Establishment of SCFUG

Suwarna Community Forest User Group was registered in 2049/2/15 and the forest was handed to the user group on 2053/9/15. Population of ward no. 4, 5, and 8 are the users of the SCF. This community forest is distributed in ward number 4, 5 and 8. The total area of three wards (4, 5, and 8) is 2006 ha. Among this 552 ha is covered by Suwarna community forest area. Out of total CF area 111 ha is already handed to the user group and rest is conservation area which is yet to be handed over. SCF is rich in bio-diversity. Variability among living organisms from all sources is called biodiversity. In simple form, flora and fauna are biodiversity categories. In the study community forest, the major flora includes Sal, Sisoo, Masala, Chilaune, Bamboo and Simal as a major timber plants. The medicinal plants include Kurilo, Amala, Hadjoda, Nimpata, Bojho, etc.

5.1.1 Objectives of the SCFUG

-) Protection, development, management and utilization of the forest
-) Supply of timber, firewood and other forest resources according to their requirement
-) To collect the fund from the selling of the extra forest resources from the requirement of the member
-) To conserve water resources
-) To control soil erosion
-) Mobilization of Women Group to preserve and conserve the forest
-) To establish the Nursery and distribute the plants to make self- dependent by Plantation on private land`

5.1.3 Distribution System of Forest Resources

The distribution system of forest resources in CFUG are as follows:

Box 2: Distribution of Forest Products

Forest Product	Time for Collecting	System	Distribution
Fire wood	Once in Magh &	Can take from dry	30- 40 Bhari per

	Phalgun	branches, Green branches during thinning.	HH. Rs.105 per HH
Timber	Mangsir & Paush	Dry wood only	Per cubic ft Rs. 350
Beam for housing	As per FUGC discretion and user's requirement	As per the decision by the FUGC meeting	As when needed
Fencing materials	All round the year	As per FUG decision	As when needed
Fodder	Within Sawaan	As per FUG decision	As when needed
Grass	All round the year	As per user's requirement	Free up cost
Leaves & Litter	All round the year		
Plough	Magh & Phalgun	As per the decision by FUGC meeting	Four plough per HH per year with the cost of Rs. 20

Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.1.4 Penalties

SCFUG has made the provision of penalties in its operational plan based on the Forest Act 2049, to control the activities against the operational plan. Following table shows the rates of penalties about the main forest resources.

Box 3: Rate of Penalties to User based on Operational Plan

S.N	Forest Resources	Penalties
1	Grass cutting	20
2	Timber	250
3	Green wood	120
4	Dry wood	30
5	Leaf litter	15
6	Bedding	15

7	Grazing	60
8	Coal making	60
9	Hunting	According to law
10	Firing	According to law
11	Absent in Forest development activities	50
12	Sayula	35
13	Ballaballi	35

Source: Operational plan 2059, SCFUG

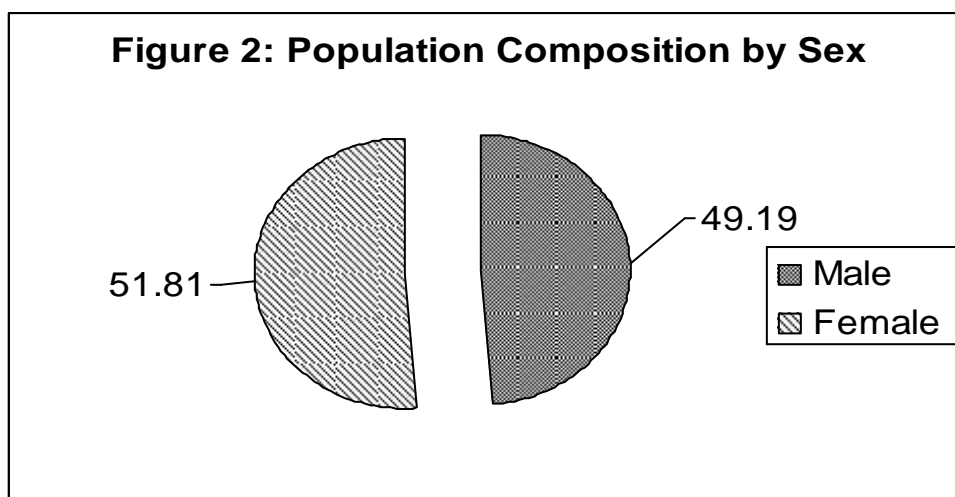
5.2 Age and Sex Structure of the Sampled Population

The age group of the sampled population is mainly dominated by nonworking age group in the study area. The field survey shows that, large percent of the people (24.94%) is in 10-19 years age group, 24.20 percent of the total population is below 10 years, 17.04 percent of the total population is lies in 20-29 years age group, 12.59 percent of the total population is lies in 30-39 age group, 9.14 percent of the total population lies in 40-49 age group, 6.17 percent of total population lies in 50-59 age group and 5.92 percent of total population lies in 60 and above years age group, respectively. Likewise, among the total sampled population 49.19 percent are male and remaining 51.81 percent are female. These are given in the table and figure below:

Table 5.1: Age Structure of the Sampled Population

Age Group	Total	Percentage
0-9	98	24.20
10-19	101	24.94
20-29	69	17.04
30-39	51	12.59
40-49	37	9.14
50-59	25	6.17
60 and +	24	5.92
Total	405	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011



Source: Field Survey, 2011

5.3.1 Land Holding

Land is the most important factor for rural income and employment generation. The households can be categorized (rich household, medium household and poor household) according to the quantity of ownership of the land. The size of the landholdings in the study area is unequally distributed. The landholding size of the surveyed households is given in the table below:

Table 5.2: Landholding Size of the Sampled Households

(Land in Kattha)

Land size	Khet		Bari	
	Households	Percentage	Households	Percentage
0-10	28	35.00	60	75.00
11-20	35	43.75	15	18.75
21-30	12	15.00	5	6.25
31-40	5	6.25	0	0.00
Total	80	100.00	80	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2011

* One Kattha is equivalent to 0.0335 hector

5.3.3 Agricultural Production

Rice, maize, wheat, paddy, millet and potato are the major agricultural production produce by the households in the study area. Because of low availability of the plain land the productivity of the land is also low. According to the respondents and key informants, the HHs of the study area is not sufficient to food by their own production. Only few HHs are totally depend on for food on their-own agricultural production for

full year. Most of the HHs is borrowed agricultural production from market and local land lord.

5.3.4.2 Occupational Structure of the Sampled Population

Like the respondents occupation, agriculture is also the main occupation of the sampled population.

Table No. 5.5: Occupational Distribution of Sampled Population

Occupation	No.	Percentage
Agriculture	195	48.15
Service	45	11.11
Business	19	4.69
Study	124	30.62
Wage labour	15	3.70
Others	7	1.73
Total	405	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011

CHAPTER SIX

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT

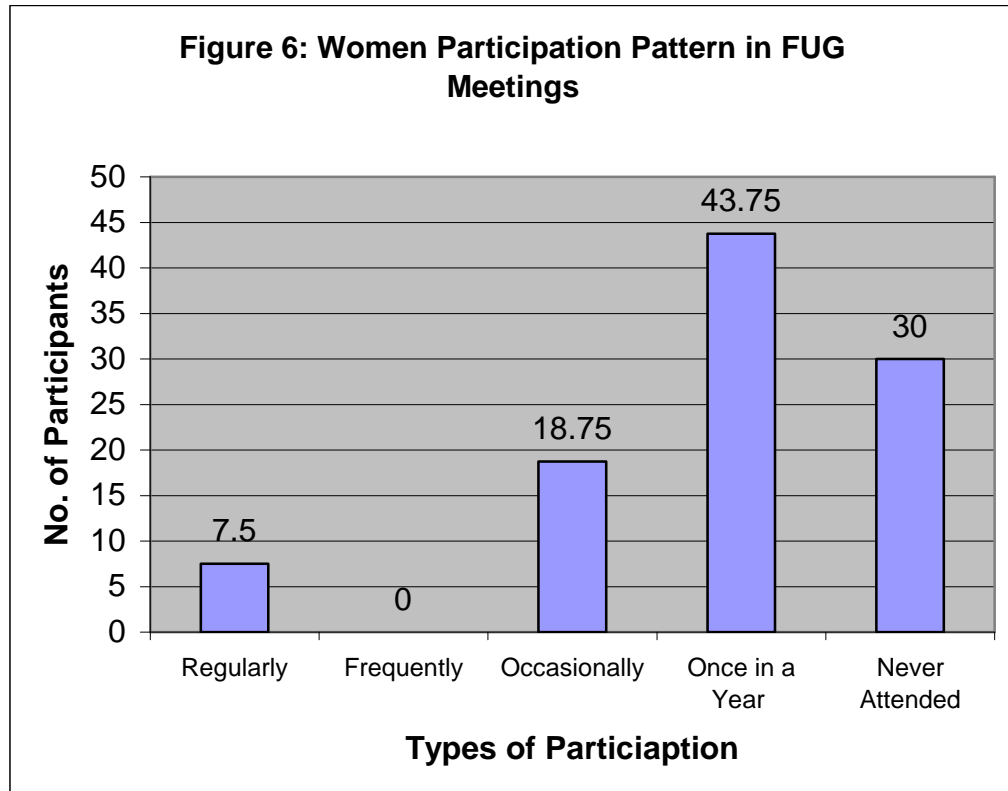
This is the main section of the study. Basically, it concerns with the specific objectives and their corresponding results. The results are totally based on the data collected from primary and secondary sources. Four dimensions of participation such as women's involvement in decision-making and planning process, implementation process, monitoring and evaluation process and benefit sharing are discussed as their participation in community forest management. These dimensions included various sub-dimensions. However, only common but important issues of each dimension are considered while analyzing the results.

6. 1 Women's Involvement in Decision Making Process

In Suwarna community forest, the FUG makes decisions through committee meetings and group assemblies. Meeting of group or committee relied on the issue to be decided. Committee members decide minor issue whereas group decides major issue. Women's involvement in decision-making process in CF development and management is considered in terms of their involvement in committee regular meeting and general assembly, constitution preparation meeting, name registration in CFUG, involvement in operational plan preparation, using voting right for executive committee member selection and involvement in conflict management.

6.1.1 Frequency of Women's Participation FUG Meetings and Assembly

FUG meetings and assemblies are means of decision making. Therefore, the frequency of meeting attends by women also determine the women involvement in decision-making process of CF. because major decisions are made between committee members during the regular meetings and the general assemblies. However, the women's participation pattern in FUG meetings is shown in figure below:

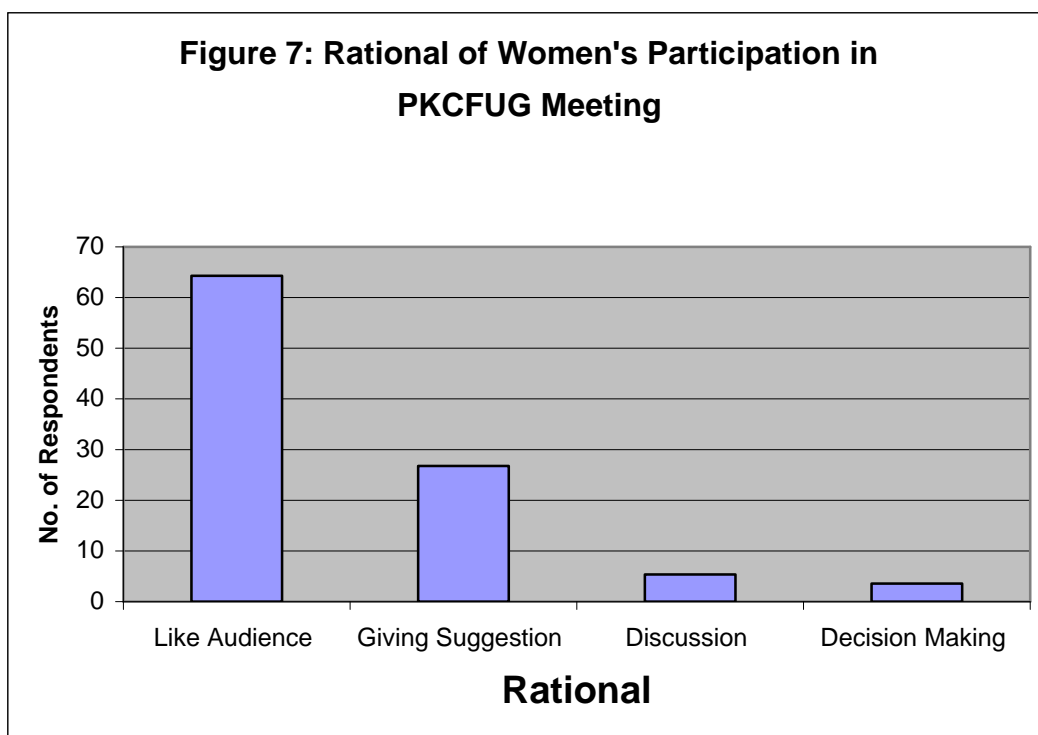


Source: Field Survey, 2011

The meeting includes CFUG committee regular meeting and general assembly. Above, figure shows that 7.5 percent of women are attending community forest user's group committee meeting regularly. 30 percent women have never attended CF related meeting. 43.75 percent of women have been attending annual assembly regularly.

6.1.2 Types of Women's Participation in Decision Making Process

Self motivated participation is considered the real participation. Though, women's representation is very low but they are the key agent in the management of CF. However, the rational for participation in Community forest management by respondents is given in figure below:



Source: Field Survey, 2011

According to the field survey, among 80 respondents, 24 were not attending meeting. Among 56 meeting attend women 64.28 percent of women use to attend meeting like audience, 26.78 percent member giving suggestions, 5.37 percent attend meeting taking part in discussion and 3.57 attend meeting sharing in decision-making. Compulsory provision of meeting attends and absence of male member in family makes the high attendance of women in meeting but the attendance of women is like audience is high. And the percentage of women for decision making purpose is found very low. Details of women's involvement in decision-making process are given in table below:

Table 6.1: Women's Participation in Decision Making Process

Description	Participant	
	Number	percentage
Involvement in Constitution Preparation	6	7.5
Name Registration from Family as CF User	9	11.25
Involvement in OP Preparation	6	7.5
Practicing Voting Right	8	10
Conflict Managing	5	6.25
Total	80	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011

6.1.3 Women's Representation in FUG Executive Committee

During the study it is found that the executive committee members were selected through the unanimous decisions. There are total 13 Executive Committee members in Suwarna Community Forest User Group, among them 6 female members were represented in EC of FUG. The CFUG consists of 46 percent women members in EC,

which is not that much lower from gender balance perspective. Unfortunately, men in EC have occupied the vital portfolios such as chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary etc., which is presented in the table below:

Table No.6.2: Women's Representation in FUG Executive Committee

Name	Designation	Age	Sex	Education
Jeetu Chaudhary	Chairperson	57	M	B.A.
Gokul Parsad Mandal	Vice-Chairperson	32	M	I.A.
Krishna Yadav	Secretary	28	M	I.A.
Jeet maya Mandal	Vice-Secretary	46	F	Literate
Jas maya Yadav	Treasurer	35	F	Literate
Parsad Deo	Member	42	M	Literate
KamalaYadav	Member	40	F	Literate
Pooja B.k.	Member	28	F	Literate
Dhan kumari Yadav	Member	30	F	Literate
Krishna Pedisai	Member	41	M	Literate
Harka raj Pandit	Member	37	M	Literate
Suk Yadav	Member	32	F	Literate

Source: Field Survey, 2011

6.1.4 Socio-economic Status of Women Executive Members

The socio-economic status of women EC members was assessed based on their age, education and economic status through conducting FGD.

Table 6.3: Women in Executive Committee by Socio-economic Status

Name	Designation	Age	Edu	MS	Occupation	Religion
Jeetmaya Yadav	Vic-secretary	46	Literate	Married	Agriculture	Hindu
Jasmaya Yadav	Treasurer	35	Literate	Married	Agriculture	Hindu
Kamala Yadav	Member	40	Literate	Married	Agriculture	Hindu
Pooja Yadav	Member	28	Literate	Married	Agriculture	“
Sukmaya Yadav	Member	32	Literate	Married	Shop, Agri.	“
Dhanmaya Giri	Member	30	Literate	Married	Agriculture	Hindu

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Attendance of EC member in monthly meeting was assessed based on the minute books of (last five years) the concerned FUG. According to women respondents this was mainly due to inappropriate time of meeting. In their opinion, the monthly meeting used to conduct during morning, which is the peak hour of women. Women EC members seem more dependent on male members due to lower confidence and knowledge about subject matter. Hence women's decision-making process in CFM is highly influenced by the educational status. Women EC member's participation was passive in the vital discussion and in taking decision.

6.2 Women's Involvement in Implementation Process

Implementation is the real practice of operational plan, constitution and other decision made by the user group. It is the main responsibility of the user committee to implement all decisions an operational plan with the full participation of users. Implementation of decision includes which area of the forest is considered for the application of management operation, what period of the year is allocated for the harvesting of forest products, planting and distribution of forest products, how and what practices are to be applied in the planting, harvesting and protection and so on.

6.2.1 Women Participation in Protection of Forest

Suwarna Community forest user group has not appointed paid watchman for the protection of forest but for this purpose there are thirteen area committee (*Tol Samiti*) has established (each area committee has included 40-45 HH) and they protect forest by volunteer guarding on the regular rotational basis as a "Ban Heralu"

Table 6.4: Participation level of Women in Protection of Forest

Participation Level	Participant	
	Number	Percentage
High	12	15.00
Moderate	18	22.50
Less	22	27.50
Never	28	35.00
Total	80	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011

6.2.2 Participation of Women in Forest Management Activities

Forest management is the scientific operation that is applied in forest. Forest management operation includes plantation, weeding, thinning and pruning, clearing bushes, shingling, collection/transporting forest products and fire line construction inside the forest area. It needs technical knowledge for the forest management. Therefore, management operation needs technical assistance form DFO. So, users as well as DFO often play several roles simultaneously in forest management.

Suwarna CFUG planted more trees seedlings inside the forest area. Every year they carry out thinning, pruning and clearing operation in the forest.

Table No.6.5: Women's Participation in Forest Management Operation

S.N.	Description	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Plantation	8	10
2	Weeding	21	26.25
3	Thinning/Pruning	17	21.25
45	Bush Clearing	13	16.25
5	Collection of forest products	21	26.25
Total		80	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011

6.3 Women's Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation Process

Some common issues regarding monitoring and evaluation aspects such as involvement in monitoring of silviculture activities, involvement in regular assessment of community forest (quantitative and qualitative) and involvement in reviewing of operational plan were selected for the study. Detail of involvement is given the table below:

Table 6.6: Women's Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation Process

Activities	Respondents	
	Number	Percentage
Monitoring in Silvicultura Activities	12	15.00
Quality Control	1	1.50
Reviewing OP	2	2.50
Not Involved in any activities	65	81.25
Total	80	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

6.4 Women's Involvement in Benefit Sharing

A detail of women's involvement in benefit sharing process is described below:

a) Sharing of Forest Product - After the establishment of CF, women of the study area are benefited remarkably. According to the respondents, almost of the forest related work like fuel wood and fodder collection have to perform by women. Before establishment of CF they had to walk far for this purpose. But, now the forest products

are easy to get comparing to a decade ago. The CFUG had distributed the community forest area 5 Kattha per household for the purpose of protection, development and utilization of Community forest.

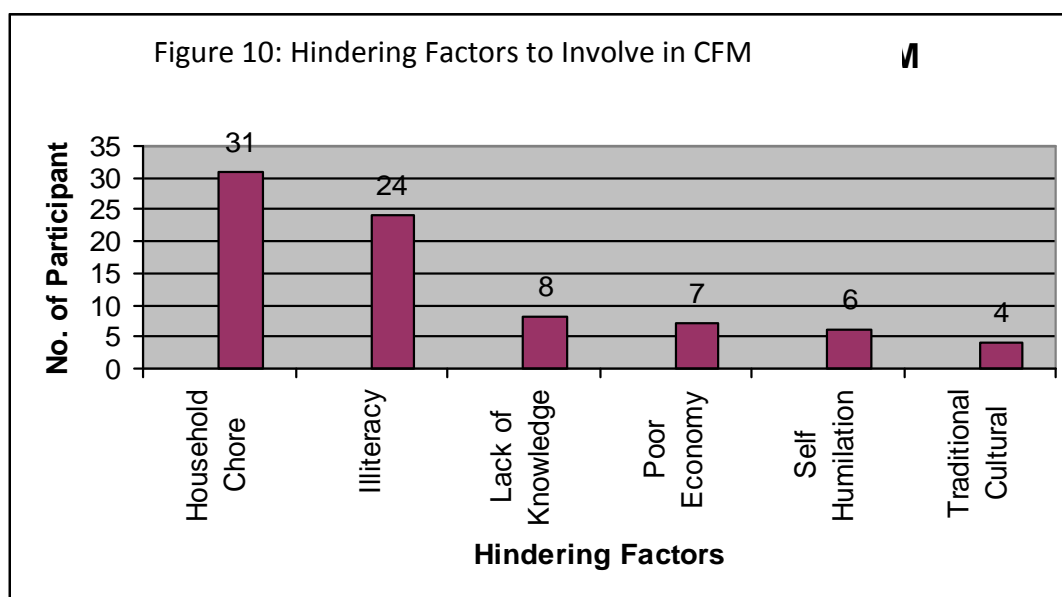
Users were found mainly concerned with distribution of timber and non-timber forest products from CF. In the initial days due to limited production of timber the CFUG was found adopted equal sharing of forest products to be available from the CF. According to the executive committee members, now users are getting timber as per need based, season based and cost based as determined by committee and forestry technicians.

b) Human Resource Development: Mainly the travelling, workshops and study tour were considered under the HRD activity. The younger and adult user was found very enthusiastic in HRD activities. However, elderly people were found not so interested to participate in travelling and visits.

It was found that planning, management and awareness related activities were conducted mainly by the Illaka forest office, Rajbiraj. The data reveals that there is dominance of male in such travellings. Researcher found various reasons behind low participation of female. Some of them are - lack of female representative in the executive committee, depends on range post, conduction of travellings without female consultation. Beside lack of awareness was also found among them which hinder them in their meaningful participation. During the study, it is found that Suwarna community forest user's group has conducted limited number of community development activities from the income of the community forest. Some of them are timber supporting program for school building, road construction within the community forest area, river bank protection and donation to victims of natural disaster.

6.5.3 Hindering Factors for Women Participation in Community Forestry Activities

Various factors, which negatively influence to women's participation in community forest management and other local development activities in the study area is analyzed accordingly.



Source: Field Survey, 2011

a) Household Chore: In the study area, higher involvement of women in child rearing, feeding household members and livestock and agricultural work makes the women busier.

b) Illiteracy: Women are more illiterate than male in study area. According to the respondents, women of the community are lacked with formal education. Thus they have problem to read & write the rules, regulations and minutes of the CF meeting.

c) Lack of Knowledge about Rules of Community Forest: According to the respondents, inadequate knowledge and skills about the CF is next problem of women.

d) Poor Economic Condition: In the study area most of the households are poor. They spend their time for substantial economic activities. Due to the poor economic condition, they have lack of time and education. So, poor women have obstacles to participate in public activities.

e) Self-humiliation: Females have humiliation feeling in study area. They feel that they are not able than male for discussion, decision-making and forest rearing. They also feel that they couldn't make good relation with district forestry staff and they are not capable to do managerial task than male. The humiliation feeling makes the women passive in community forest management.

f) Traditional Male Dominated Culture: In the study area, there is existing Hindu culture system. According to the culture, meeting attend, decision-making and participate in public activities are the duty of male not of female. Male used to give less chance to keep view for women in every development activities. So, this is also one of the problems for women's participation in community forest management.

CHAPTER SEVEN

VIEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE ABOUT WOMEN'S ROLE TOWARDS COMMUNITY FOREST

In this chapter, views of local people were collected from the key informants and the courses of data collection local people were consulted informally. Various views were found about the women's 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.

7.1. Positive Views about Women

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

-) Women are also helping to manage community forest.
-) Women used to help for forest watchman to rear forest.
-) Women respects and follows FUG rules
-) Women can be active if they have chance to do something
-) Women used to participate in CF meeting and they share their ideas and used to take part in discussion and decision-making process.

7.2 Negative Views about Women

In study some of the local people view that women cannot play good role for forest management. The negative views of local people are as follows:

-) Women do not want to participate in CF meeting
-) Women have no idea and ability to manage forest
-) Women don't care about public concerns
-) Women must manage their internal household tasks, it is not a duty of women to attend meeting and be active in social development activities
-) Women couldn't be able to be active and to play dominant and creative roles even they have chance to do something
-) Women have not wide concept, to mange public concerns without bias

The negative view about women is 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 management of resources.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study, draws conclusion about the role of women in community forest management and provides recommendations to make women more active in CFM for the stakeholders concerned.

8.1 Summary

Participation has become the essence of the modern development context. The Community Forestry Program is a popular program to protect and manage the forest resources in a sustainable way. For the successful management of the program, effective participation of the CFUG members is essential. This thesis is conducted to assess the effectiveness of Women's participation in CF with different objectives.

On the basis of the study, some major findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

-) There are various caste and cultural groups who are the users of CF. The Suwarna Forest User Group is a multi ethnic group where Yadav, Chhetri, Gurung, Brahman, Limbu, Magar, Tamang and Newar work together.
-) Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in the study area. But agricultural production is not sufficient for their livelihood. So, people of the area are involved themselves in subsidiary occupation in various types of services as well as foreign employment.
-) The Suwarna FUG has made rules for protection, management, benefit sharing and implementing following those rules and regulations. The main leadership has been taken from Yadav community.
-) Women participation in general assemblies and regular meetings of FUG is not satisfactory. In the study area, women's participation in CFM is found limited. Women's involvement in operational plan preparation is found very low and was not active and decisive.
-) The study has revealed that the involvement of women in implementation part of the CFM is higher than that of other parts like decision-making, monitoring & evaluation. Some exceptional women have been found contributing in decision-making process to a certain level.
-) Access of ordinary women in sub-dimensions of decision-making found lower.
-) The FUG consists of 46% women members in EC which is not that much lower from gender balance perspective. But men have occupied the vital portfolios.
-) Women EC member's participation was passive in the vital discussion and in taking decision.
-) The women EC members seem more dependent on male members due to lower confidence and knowledge on subject matter.
-) Both women & men found involved in forest products collection and transportation. However, the degree of women's involvement was again higher in the actual field.
-) The field survey found the FUG used to consider each household as a unit of user and distribution FPs based on household concept. There is no gender based forest resources distribution system in the study area.
-) SCFUG found weak in conducting number of travelling. EC totally depends on range post and do not arranged travelling and visits by own imitation.

-) SCFUG has conducted limited number of community development activities in study area from the income of CF. Respondent reported that both sexes are getting benefit from those social and community development activities.
-) There is lack of special program targeted to women like, skill development and income generating activities which support them to become self-reliant.
-) Involvement rate of women in each sub-issue of Monitoring and Evaluation process found lower in the study area. However, involvement in monitoring in silvicultura activities found higher as compared to other sub-issues. Only EC members and forest technicians took part in M & E.
-) In every year the proportion of women's involvement in general assembly found higher.
-) Majority of the respondents of the study area were involved in forest resource management for the fulfillment of day to day requirement of forest products.
-) Majority of the respondents guided to involve CFM with their villagers/society. On the other hand, peer groups found effective tool of motivation.
-) Maximum workload is the major problem of women to involve in CF management. Likewise, lack of knowledge, self-humiliation and illiteracy among women found other problems.
-) The findings reveal that education is the major influencing factor in decision making and leading the group in user committee.
-) Most of women are found untYadavned and unaware of the activities lunched by the GOs/NGOs.

8.2 Conclusion

The concept of community forestry programs a vital one for preserving and developing natural resources in general and forest resources in particular in Nepal. Forest is one of the major resources of rural livelihood. It is the source of food, firewood, timber, fodder, leaves and litters etc. The rapidly increasing population growth and its subsequent effects on natural resources particularly forest resources has been noticing since long.

For the better management and enhancing the forest resources the CF program is launched in Nepal since 1978. The community forest is the forest handed over to the local community on which they have the full authority to use, protect and manage CF in their own way so that t they can fulfill their basic needs for fire-wood, timber and other forest products in a sustainable manner. Women are the primary user of forest resources and their roles increasing in CFM. Thus, the ultimate manager's and users of the forest are women.

The research unit "Suwarna Community Forest" was handed over to the user group in 2053/9/15. It lies in the ward no. 4, 5 and 8 of Suwarna VDC & 430 households are directly involved at present. Yadav and Chhetri are the major caste groups. User group is highly dominated by Yadav so; their representation in user committee is also high. The level of income of the people of this area is medium and their economic activities are subsistence farming with livestock.

Suwarna community forest is used mainly for fire-wood, fodder, grass, leaf litter, poles and timber. The forest products are collected for the domestic purposes. General rules for using forest products are outlined in the FUG constitutional forest operational plan.

During the field observation most of the women were busy the whole day in doing productive as well as reproductive work. Most of women were involved in vegetable

arming, animal husbandry, farming, caring family members and labor work. Due to this women had no leisure time, while men were only busy in productive work.

Women collect fire-wood during the scheduled community distribution time. They fulfilled their additional requirement of firewood from agricultural residues. It took an average of 5.27 hours for collecting a Bhari of fire-wood in the past. These days fire wood collection from CF is much more time saving and easier.

Timber is used for house construction and HH tools. Except very few houses, others houses are made by the timber and forest products. Fodder is the main animal feed for the live stock in this area. People used this fodder for stale-feed which is important for animal husbandry. Every HH maintain livestock for domestic purposes. Therefore, collection leaves and flitters become the main job of the local people. Tree leaves and litter are collected specially for bedding purposes.

Forest is an integral part of the farming system in general and therefore, the management of CF has helped to protect the fragile ecosystem Nepal succeeded to protect the several species of medicine plants in particular.

Women's participation is important in almost all aspects and activities of CFM. But the self-motivated participation is considered the real participation. The importance of women's participation noticed from the period of formation to the protection of forest.

Findings of this study show that women can play significant role in CF development, protection and management. Hence, success of the community forestry program largely depends upon degree of women's participation in its management from the very beginning. Women's participation in CFM was greatly determined by various factors like biophysical situation of CF, socio-economic and cultural practices, institutional culture of the EC, government's forestry policy, extension efforts of forestry organizations, perception and attitude towards CF and allied issues, and status of women in the family and society. Women's participation as executive committee members and their presence in regular meeting were found satisfactory but their participation in discussion was found passive. Participation of ordinary women was found very low in decision making process due to deep rooted patriarchal domination in the society.

Participation of women in implementation process was found high. Male's influences in decision making in the family, requirements of forest products to women, and tendency of giving less response to social works, prevailed in the community are the reasons for it. Women's participation in monitoring and evaluation process was found poor in the PSCFUG due to lack of knowledge on women in this regard.

In the case of benefit sharing from social and development activities implemented by FUG, access of both sexes was found almost equal in the study area. But there was lacking of women focused development activities. For the better involvement of women in CFM human resource development activities should be launched effectively and sufficiently.

The participation on forest management by women is limited due to social role. Women are found highly busy involving household chores and household level forestry activities. However, majorities of women are participated in the group interview and discussion.

Women were motivated to participate in CFM due to requirement of forest products, attachment with forest and women involved success stories carried out in different parts of the country. Similarly, women considered the self inspiration, their villagers, concerned EC, forestry technicians, local political leaders and husband (family member) as potential sources of motivation to involve in CFM. Factors like regular household's chores, inadequate knowledge, illiteracy, poor economic condition, self

humiliation, patriarchal influence in the family and society, and backbiting nature of society found as hindering factors of women participation in Community forest management.

The level of women's participation depends upon the composition of FUG executive committee. Generally, an adult committee member participates actively. Usually, married women do not leave the village, as there are high chances of young women leave the village after they get married.

Regular income sources and participatory decision making roles and professional development opportunity thrust the degree of women's participation. The system of utilization of local human resources, knowledge and resources also plays vital role in the pattern of women participation.

As long as more people are clear about the benefits joining after FUG and clear about the rights and authorities of groups as well as less conflict between members, higher would be the participation of women in community forestry management.

Educational status of the people plays a key role for better involvement of women. High educational status of the women, higher would be the participation of women. Similarly, if more constant support from DFO and other line agencies are provided and professional development opportunities among FUG members are available, greater would be the chances of generating women's participation in Community forest management.

Even today, two types of issues are outstanding regarding women's participation. First issue is quantitative aspect of women's involvement in different activities of CFM and second is qualitative aspect of women's involvement, which is very difficult to analyze and interpret. Involvement of women in equal proportion with male in all dimensions of Community forestry management is the burning issue of the forest resource management.

8.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions can be formulated:

8.3.1 Recommendations Related with Stakeholders

Community forest itself is a complex phenomenon, which is interrelated with various stakeholders in different steps and aspects of its management. The policy-makers, concerned EC and local governmental organization and non-governmental organizational are major stakeholders of CF. Therefore, some recommendations are provided to the major stakeholders to boost up women's participation in Community forest management.

8.3.3 Related with Respective FUG

Forest user group is a corporate body that is authorized regarding operational plan preparation, forest resource distribution and CFM as a whole. In this context, FUG has a crucial role in policy formulation at local level and user mobilization. Some recommendations related with FUG are as follows:

Key positions such as chairman, secretary and treasures should be assigned to women. Such type of practice helps to boost up knowledge, morale and feeling of responsibility among women that ultimately will increase women's participation.

-) User group has no sufficient technical knowledge on forest management. Thus, more travelling should be conducted in this field.
-) User group has given more emphasis only on protection but is not applying management operation effectively. They should increase their participation in forest management.
-) Women participation in decision making should be increased through awareness. They should be encouraged to hold responsible position in user committee.
-) The FUG should organize non-formal education program to women. So that the importance of CFM for the present as well as future generation could be well understood.
-) A gender sensitizing travelling should be organized at village to minimize the feeling of misconception regarding women's involvement and their leadership in development process.
-) User to users especially women to women system (peer education) of awareness should be adopted for awareness and women empowerment.
-) Operational plan should be prepared with equal presence of both sexes and maximum number of users.

8.3.4 Related with GOs/NGOs

The GOs/NGOs launching in the FUG area play a catalytic role in the community. GOs/NGOs have a vital role in supporting and sensitizing the users. Major recommendations related with development agencies are as follows:

-) These organizations should provide facilitation support to FUG member to improve women's participation in CF development and management.
-) Travelling materials of technical aspect should be provided to user committee as reference material.
-) Users are aware of the value of forest products but lack of technical knowledge on how to grow. Therefore, technical knowledge should be provided to them and linked them to appropriate market.
-) Several studies could be made on this subject with more explanation and emphasis on ethnic perspectives.

Thank You

Appendix-A

Central Department of Rural Development
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur
Women's Participation in Community Forestry Program
(A Case Study of Suwarna Community Forest User Group in Saptari district)
Questionnaire for M.A. Thesis - 2011

Questionnaire for Household Survey

Date:

Name of the respondent:

Age:

Occupation:

Sex:

Cast:

Religion:

Marital status:

Education:

VDC:

Ward No:

Details of the family member's of the Household

S.N.	Name of Member	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Remark
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Appendix-B

Section A: Demographic and Socio-Economic Identification of CFUG Members

- A-1 Which religion do you follow?
 a. Hinduism b. Buddhism C. Christianity d. Others
- A-2 What level of education have you received?
 a. Non Formal Education b. Primary Level c. Lower Secondary Level
 b. d. Secondary Level e. Above Secondary Level
- A-3 How old are you?Years
- A-4 What is your major occupation?
 a. Agriculture b. Wage labor c. Service d. Business e. others
 (remittance/pension)
- A-5 What is your secondary occupation?
 a. Agriculture b. Wage labor c. Service d. Business e. others
 (remittance/pension)
- A-6 May I know your monthly income from all sources?
 a. below Rs.2000 b. Rs.2000-3500 c. Rs. 3500 –
 5000 d. Rs. 5000 and above
- A-7 Do you have own land?
 a. Yes b. No
- A-8 How much land do you have?

Land Type	Farm size	Adhiya/Rent	Own land
Khet			
Bari			

- A-9 Have you tamed cattle too? (Yes/no) if yes,

Animal	Number
Buffalo	
Cow/Oxen	
Goats/Sheep	
Pig	

- A-10 Is your annual income sufficient to sustain your livelihood through the year?
 a. Yes b. No
- A-11 How long your family income holds your livelihood?
 a. Up to 6 months b. 6-9 month c. 9-12 month d. 1 year
 and above

- A-12 What is your House type?
a. Pakki b. Semi- Pakki c. Kachhi
- A-13 What about Other facilities?
a. Drinking water b. Toilet c. Bio-gas d. Electricity e. Telephone
- A-14 Do you have your private jungle?
a. Yes b. No
- A-15 From which forest do you collect forest products?
a. Private forest b. National Forest c. Community Forest

Appendix-C

Community forest related information Section B: Participation in Decision Making Process

- B-1 When was this Community forest user group established?
.....
- B-2 Are you informed when the general Assembly of the CFUG members was held?
a. Yes. b. No
- B-3 What contribution did you make when establish this CFUG?
a. Cash donation b. Labor contribution c. Formulation of policy & plan
d. Participation in the meeting e. In registration process f. Nothing
- B-4 Whose name has been registered in CFUG from your family?
Sex:
Position:
- B-5 Do you use to participate during operational plan preparation?
a. Yes b. No

- B-6 How do you participate while formulating policies related to the community forest?
- a. Regular b. Irregular c. Not at all
- B-7 Are you willingly participating in the decision making process?
- a. Yes b. No
- B-8 Do you used to involve in decision making process? If yes specify.
- a. involvement in constitution preparation
- b. Name registration from family as community forest user
- c. Involvement in operational plan preparation
- d. Practicing voting Right
- e. Conflict management
- B-9 If you participate, how many times?
- a. Regularly b. Frequently c. Occasionally
- d. Once in a year
- B-10 Are you aware of the decisions made at your presence? a. Yes b. No
- B-11 If not, may I know the reason behind it?
- a. Lack of interest b. Household miseries c. Dominance of elites
- B-12 what is your role while being participated?
- a. Proposer b. Supportive c. Decisive d. Passive
- B-13 While being participated have you ever influenced the plan formulation and decision making process for your betterment? a. yes b. No
- B-14 If not may I know the reason behind it?
- a. No access to CFUG committee b. Dominance of elites
- c. Lack of leadership quality d. Institutional weakness
- B-15 Are you satisfy with the FUG committee of your community forest?
- a. Yes b. No
- B-16 May I know the reason of your dissatisfaction, please?
- a. Poor representation of women in the CFUG Committee
- b. Dominance of elites
- c. Nepotism and Favoritism
- d. Monopoly nature of CFUG members

Appendix-D

Section C: Participation in implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

C-1 How effectively is decision of operational plan implemented?

- a. Effectively b. Normally c. Not implemented

C-2 Do you use to involve in implementation and monitoring part of the CF management? If yes how?

- a. Bush clearing b. Product collecting c. Thinning and Pruning
d. Plantation e. Weeding

C-3 Do you involve in protection of forest? (As a Ban Heralu etc.)

- a. Regularly b. Frequently c. Occasionally
d. Never

C-4 Do you know the community development social activities conducted by CFUG?

- a. School building b. Drinking water c. Road/Bridge
d. Irrigation e. Temple f. Nothing

C-5 How do you participate in monitoring and evaluation process in the CF Management?

- a. Regular b. Irregular c. Not at all

C-6 Have you taken part in any forest travelling? a. Yes b. No

If yes,

Name of the travellingDuration...

C-7 If you (women) have not participated in travelling what is the reason?

- a. Lack of information b. Lack of time c. Lack of interest d. Lack of education

C-8 Do you follow the forest protection mechanism adopted by the CF effectively?

- a. Yes b. No

C-9 Do you observe any improvement in forest quality?

- a. Yes b. No

C-10 In your opinion, who should play the major role for the protection of the forest?

- a. District forest office b. FUG members c. FUG committee members d. Forest Guard

C-11 Have you received any travelling for monitoring and evaluation of the CF.?

- a. Yes b. No

C-12 Have you ever discussed in meetings about the annual progress report of CF?

- a. Yes b. No

C-13 If not May I know the reasons behind it?

- a. Fear of elite's b. Domination of malec. Lack of interest

Section D: Participation in Benefit Sharing

D-1 Are forest products being used according to the rules of the operational plan of the CF?

- a. Yes b. No

D-2 Is Sharing of benefits equal for all the CFUG members?

- a. Yes b. No

D-3 Do you use to involve in forest product distribution/allocation?

- a. Yes b. No

If no, what is the reason.....?

D-4 Who is receiving the benefits more?

- a. Elites b. Members of FUG Committee c. Secondary
user group

D-5 Are you obtaining forest products from the CF easily?

- a. Yes b. No

D-6 Is the principle of equity followed in distribution of forest product?

- a. Yes b. No

Appendix-E

Section-E : Other Informations related to Women participation in Community Forest Management

E-1 how did you motivate in CF management?

- a. Requirement of forest products b. Affection with forest c. Event/
Success story

E-2 If you are not participated, what are the obstacles?

- a. Traditional culture b. Illiteracy c. House hold chore

d. Lack of knowledge and skill about CF e. Poor economic condition

f. Self- humiliation

E-3 what are the source of motivation for involve women in CFM.

a. Local political leader b. Family/Husband c. Forest Technician d.

Executive Committee

e. Villagers/ Society F. Government Policy

E-4 Have you got family support to involve in CF management activities?

a. Yes b. No

E-5 Tell me about male/female participation in harvesting and fetching forest products.

Activity	Male	Female	Both
Firewood collection			
Grass cutting collection			
Leaf liter cutting / bedding collection			

E-6 How far has community forest helped in providing forest products? Is that capable for meeting the needs of the users?

a. very much b. not significantly c. not good

E-7 what do you think about the present forest condition?

a. Increased b. Decreased c. As it is d. don't

know

E-8 Do you have any idea on local people's perception towards women's participation in community forest management activities?

a. Positive b. Negative c. Indifferent attitude

E-9 what are your suggestions for the improvement of women involvement in Community forest management? (In short)

THANK YOU

Appendix-F

Focus Group Discussion : Women SFUG Members of the CF

1. Does the operational plan of the Community Forestry address the problems of women?
2. How has women participation influenced the decision making process of the CFUG members?
3. How has women participation influenced the monitoring and evaluation process of the CFUG members?
4. What are the major benefits that you have been receiving from this community forest?
5. What are the major programs of this CF sanctioned for women?
6. What are the principal reasons of women participation for being not effective in forest management?
7. What measures should be adopted to make women participation inclusive for forest management?

Interview of Key Respondents: Ranger of DFO, Teachers, Range Post Staff, Community Based Representative Personnel of WWF, Local Leaders and Members of the CFUG Committee

1. In your opinion, can Community Forestry Program help to reduce poverty even at national level?
2. What are the principal reasons of women's participation for being not effective?
3. What measures should be adopted to make women's participation inclusive for forest management?

Appendix-G

Checklist

Details of community forest:

- a) Date of hand-over:
- b) Area:
- b) Total number of households:
- d) Total number of women headed household:
- e) Status of forest (past and present):
- f) Status of bio-diversity:
- g) Representation of ethnic groups in CFU committee:
- h) Programs sanctioned for women
- i) Participation of women's in General Assembly (of last 3 years)
from the minute book)
- j) Rules for recruiting and terminating FUG members.

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